

# THE POLITICS OF THE PAST: REDEVELOPMENT IN LONDON

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the role of heritage values in urban transformation in contemporary London. Two cases of urban redevelopment are explored in detail: the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment in the City of London and the Market redevelopment in Spitalfields. The particular concern is how heritage values have a multitude of expressions and can serve a variety of differentially empowered interests. This diverse and complex manifestation of the heritage impulse is explored through the thematic tension of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities.

The study is located in a revised Marxist approach to cultural studies. It attempts to extend the critique of the current popular interest in the past and also the understanding of how culture and capital intersect in urban processes. The study has a number of distinctive methodological features including the reliance on a two case approach and the attention to contextualized discursive practices.

The thesis concludes by examining the consequences of the 'hegemony of heritage' in contemporary urban redevelopment and particularly in relation to power in the city and the understanding of the intersection between culture and capital.



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Thesis and its Context

This thesis explores the role of heritage values in processes of urban transformation. The study focuses on two contemporary cases of proposed redevelopment in London: one situated in the Bank Junction in the City of London (the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment), the other in the Spitalfields area immediately east of the City (the Spitalfields Market redevelopment). The thesis deals with two inter-related but potentially divergent heritage impulses: firstly, efforts to conserve the historic built environment, and secondly, efforts to protect or preserve social groupings and associated ways of life or cultural practices. These two examples of the heritage impulse are elaborated through the heuristic themes of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities.

This study draws upon a number of new developments in geographic thought. It is located in a cultural geography tradition which has gained new vigour in the past decade through fruitful dialogues with Marxist geography, theories of cultural politics, locality studies and an avowedly postmodern human geography (see Cosgrove 1983; Cosgrove and Jackson 1987). There is a renewed emphasis on culture and a more critical theory of culture is being applied to traditional human geography concerns. This is apparent in two converging strands of the discipline: the 'new cultural geography' (e.g. Cosgrove 1985a, 1985b; Cosgrove and Daniels 1988; Daniels 1989; Jackson 1989) and the 'new regional geography' (e.g. Gregory 1988, 1989; Sayer 1989a, 1989b; Thrift 1990).

One element of the 'new cultural geography' is concerned with the relationship between society and the environment, and works within a revised 'landscape' tradition (e.g. Cosgrove 1983, 1985a, 1985b; Cosgrove and Daniels 1988; Daniels 1989; Ley 1987, 1988a, 1988b). Such studies have adopted a more reflexive modelling of the relationship between culture and the environment, set in a mutually constitutive relationship. The application of a revised and more radical concept of culture to the traditional geographical concern of landscape has resulted in a better understanding of power and ideology in the culture/landscape relationship. On the one hand, a revised understanding of 'culture' which takes account of power and the material, is considered constitutive of landscape and environment. On the other hand, the human-made environment, and representations of the environment, are acknowledged as means

through which certain cultural, political and material relations are reproduced, sustained or contested. Landscape and environment are no longer seen as a mere 'reflection' of society, a cultural artefact. Rather, they are part of authored realms with their own history, lineage and context and which are differentially empowered. Geography has moved closer to what has been called a 'politics of landscape' (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, 7). Landscapes and the representations of landscape (verbal and visual) can distort and mystify as well as expose material and ideological underpinnings: the 'duplicity' of landscape (Daniels 1989). The emphasis has shifted away from searching for 'real' or 'authentic' meanings, and towards an understanding of the 'flickering text' (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, 8; see Duncan 1990 in the context of the city).

The 'new regional geography', which traces its lineage to locality studies, has emerged from revised approaches to the geography of production (see Cooke 1986, 1989; Giddens 1984; Gregory 1988, 1989; Massey 1984; Massey and Allen 1985; Morgan and Sayer 1988; Sayer 1985, 1989b; Thrift 1983b; Warde 1988). In part these studies have been concerned with how general processes and structures have been modified by their local settings. But there has also been a growing recognition that local settings play a constitutive role in (re)producing more general structures and practices (Sayer 1989a, 1989b; Thrift 1983a, 1983b, 1990). Increasingly, local cultures and practices are being recognized as significant in such local variations. The emphasis on locality is associated with a more general reappraisal within geography (and elsewhere in the social sciences) of the importance of place (Agnew 1987; Eyles 1985; Gregory 1987; Gregory and Urry 1985; Jackson 1986, 1987a; Pred 1984). While there has been considerable discussion of the need to acknowledge local cultures in these studies, few have explicitly documented the detailed workings of the dialectic between local cultures and modes of (re)production (exceptions include Jackson forthcoming; Rose 1989; Sayer 1989b; Thrift 1990). The diverse range of studies encompassed by these two broad strands of geography provide clues to the emergence of a more critical and reflexive theorization of culture and environment which may be applied to the urban scene. It parallels a growing emphasis on culture in the urban processes emergent within traditional political economy studies of the city (e.g. Harvey 1989b, 1990; Smith and Williams 1986; Zukin 1988a, 1988b), and reiterates developments in some of the more self consciously, postmodern geographies (Gregory 1987; Soja 1989; Duncan 1990).

The specific concern of my study was inspired by the upsurge in popular interest in the past (Lowenthal 1985). This renewed popular interest has been variably manifest: there has been a burgeoning of representations of the past in museums; references to



past times proliferate in the media and in fashion; architectural design has shifted towards contextualism and to historical referencing; urban planning has increasingly concerned itself with conservation and the enhancement of indigenous qualities of townscape. This multiply-manifest interest in the past has recently become the focus for a sustained critique. My study is an attempt to elaborate and extend a number of the issues that arise from this general cultural phenomenon and from the critique that it has generated.

Part of the critique has centred on uncovering the ways in which heritage is invented and how such contrived pasts serve the interests of dominant and powerful sections of society, working to appropriate, sanitize and depoliticize 'darker' or more radical aspects of history (Plumb 1969; Samuel 1988a; Wright 1985a).<sup>1</sup> Attention has also been given to the role these 'invented traditions' play in the formation of national imaginings (Anderson, B. 1983; Colls and Dodd 1986; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Wright 1985a).

The much publicized, polemical contribution of Robert Hewison (1987) has drawn critical attention, almost irretrievably, towards the contrived realm of the museum, and to what Hewison calls the 'heritage industry'. It is in the context of the museum and the associated tourist trade that the commodification of the past is most clearly apparent (Hewison 1987; Horne 1984; Lumley 1988; Wright 1985a). Hewison argues that through the heritage industry, history has been debased, a contention that reifies history and reverberates with elitism. Hewison sets the process of the commodification of the past into a broader analysis, inspired by Wiener (1981), which sees Britain in a state of economic and social decline and identifies the shift to the past as a response to that decline.

Hewison's thesis of decline is problematic. Firstly, he conflates economic decline and real or perceived social decline in what becomes a simple, economically-determined explanation. More importantly, his account of economic decline seems to disregard the economic condition of the very sectors in society which provide an impetus for the industry he decries. Thrift (1988, 1989), for example, notes the link between the anything-but-declining service sector and the contemporary heritage aesthetic,

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<sup>1</sup>My empirical work has presented an interesting problematic in relation to the interface between the theory and practice of research. Some of the 'thinkers' who contribute to my theoretical framework are also participants in the case studies. For example, Charles Jencks was a witness for Peter Palumbo in the No. 1 Poultry case and Raphael Samuel was a campaigner against the Market redevelopment in Spitalfields. Samuel has the unusual status of being both a shaper of my theoretical critique and an object of my own critique. See Bramwell (1989) for an account of similar dilemma in her account of the Green Movement.

particularly in arenas of consumption such as housing or shopping precincts. Evidence from the service sector suggests that it may well be the very opposite of decline which sustains the heritage industry. Others, both from the side of 'heritage' (Binney and Hanna 1978) and from those taking a more critical perspective (Jager 1986; Wright 1985c, 1989; Zukin 1988a, 1988b) argue that 'heritage' is an ingredient in urban regeneration and economic restructuring. My own cases also provide material which suggests that the return to the past cannot be depicted simply as a response to economic decline.

The attention the heritage critique has given to the production of heritage and contrived representational realms, such as museums, films, architecture, and rituals, has weakened its capacity to explain effectively how this cultural trend has gained such dominance. Most of the critiques have ignored the issue of 'consumption'; that is, how these representations are accepted or rejected by those who experience them. Nor do the majority of those who critique the 'heritage industry' tackle how heritage permeates other aspects of daily life. Wright's (1985a) collection of essays deal in part with the production of heritage: the museums, the grand rituals, the raising of the Mary Rose. But he also consciously seeks other expressions of heritage. Wright tackles directly the issue of how heritage values have gained such pervasive dominance in contemporary British society by asserting that the hegemonic capacity of heritage is tied to its variable permeation of everyday historical consciousness; what Wright (1985a, 5) describes as the 'practical truth' or 'constitutive subjectivity' of heritage. He moves closer to exploring not only the 'production' of heritage but its 'consumption' or, more accurately, its reproduction in the wider sphere of everyday life. This takes us into a more diverse empirical realm in which a 'multiplicity of traditions and histories' are acknowledged (Wright 1985a, 129). Wright's perspective also acknowledges the recursive relationship between culture, ideology and power. Heritage it is not simply a case of the dominant imagination being reproduced and imposed on, for example, a duped and excluded working class or racial minority. Rather it is a more complex and interactive process which has the potential for compliance but also the capacity for active resistance (Bommes and Wright 1982).

My study seeks to expand the heritage critique by addressing a number of the shortcomings I have identified. These issues are explored in the specific context of the city and urban transformation, a context so far largely neglected in studies directly associated with the heritage critique. A number of urbanists working from a political economy perspective have begun to touch upon the importance of a constellation of phenomena such as meaning, ideology, and social practices, which can be loosely held under the concept of culture. Such studies have, to varying degrees, begun to



unpack the role of heritage values, as an example of the interface between culture and capital, in urban change.

As such, this study engages with two disparate but converging strands. Firstly, it attempts to elaborate the heritage critique by applying some of its critical insights to the urban scene. Secondly, it attempts to extend current understandings of the relationship between culture and processes of urban transformation through an approach which is rooted not in political economy but in cultural politics. The study extends the understanding of the role of heritage values in the city in a number of ways:

1. By applying a number of the critical insights relating to heritage and its relationship to ideology and power to the urban scene.
2. By extending the understanding of popular interest in heritage and its implications by theorizing it in terms of cultural politics. In this regard I move away from a singular dominant ideology thesis to incorporate a multiply-expressed, shifting and contested depiction of heritage interests.
3. By elaborating the links between the heritage impulse, as a cultural phenomenon, and capital and other material processes and the mutually-constitutive relationship between culture and capital.
4. By extending the empirical concern of heritage studies away from artefacts and representations towards alternate heritage manifestations based around cultural practices and ways of life.

The study is clearly cultural in its empirical focus and in its theoretical underpinnings. Its theoretical roots lie in a revised Marxist approach to cultural politics. It engages with a number of post-structuralist and postmodernist theories of culture which assist in opening out traditional Marxist approaches. The theorization of culture applied in the thesis retains a commitment to seeing culture in terms of power (hegemony) and sets the understanding of culture in the context of a mutually-constitutive relationship with the material, in this case, processes of capital accumulation.

The study adopts a number of distinctive methodological and conceptual strategies which elicit a range of divergent and competing views of heritage and the valued past. Firstly, I work through a two case approach which draws together two distinctive but not unrelated localities. Secondly, I have selected two cases where there is open conflict around proposed urban redevelopment. Thirdly, I pay particular attention to a range of distinctive and differently empowered interests participating in these conflicts. In combination, these various strategies ensure that the study produces an empirical



base which highlights the diverse and contested nature of contemporary interest in the past.

In attempting to document and understand the nature of the contemporary interest in the past and the way it intersects with processes of urban transformation, I have adopted a methodology which is based on contextualized discursive practices. The initial source of understanding is the discourses produced by the two cases of conflict over redevelopment. In dealing with these discourses I pay particular attention to their rhetorical form and the language used. Insights gained through attention to discourse are elaborated and verified through contextualization based on ethnographic detail, historical information and attention to economic and political processes. Discourse is seen as part of a broader realm of practice in which authorship, ideological lineage and the relationship to material processes are critical.

This approach points to new directions in geographical methodology. Firstly, it explores the value of language in geographical understanding. Secondly, it extends the ways in which geographers can explore a traditional concern with meaning and the environment. In particular it is intended to challenge approaches to meaning and the environment which treat the landscape as text and seek to read meaning from that text. My study methodology highlights the need to explore the social constitution of meaning in a political context (see Duncan 1990). Further, the study points to the way in which meanings associated with the city have material consequences: some meanings are more powerful than others; some have wider acceptability; some are more easily incorporated into or are less challenging to urban processes.

The remainder of this chapter will introduce the case study areas and the specific planning conflicts and end with a resume of the thesis structure.

## 1.2. The Case Studies

In the centre of the City of London, surrounding an area known as Bank Junction, is a collection of monumental buildings which, by their style and use, reflect the significant financial role played by the City. Less than a mile east of Bank Junction, abutting the eastern edge of the City, lies the inner city area of Spitalfields. Here dereliction and decay reflect many of the serious and long-standing social and economic difficulties which have dogged this area (Figure 1.1.). Both materially and symbolically these two adjacent areas reflect the essential disparities in British society: extremes of wealth and poverty; a scene of glory and power and a scene of poverty and despair. In both the City and Spitalfields recent proposals to redevelop have met with fierce opposition. The basis of this opposition has come from quite distinct groups and has been couched



FIGURE 1.1. LONDON SHOWING TWO REDEVELOPMENT SITES OF NO. 1 POULTRY AND SPITALFIELDS MARKET

past which highlights the diverse and contested nature of contemporary interest in the past.

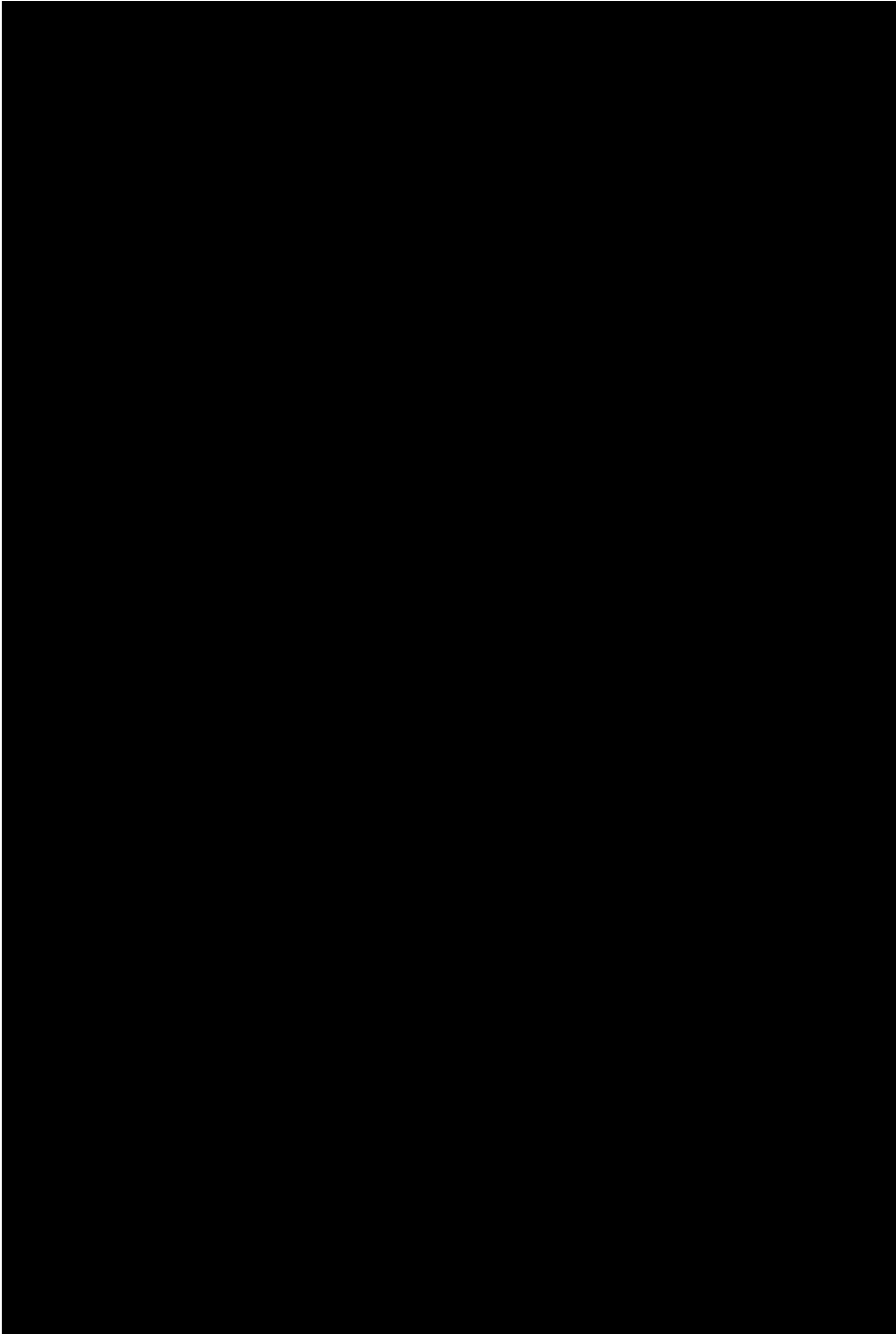
In attempting to document and understand the nature of the contemporary interest in the past and the way it intersects with processes of urban transformation, I have adopted a methodology which is based on contextualized discursive practices. The initial source of understanding is the discourses produced by the two cases of conflict over redevelopment. In dealing with these discourses, I pay particular attention to their rhetorical formation and the language used. Insights gained through attention to discourses are elaborated and verified through contextualization based on ethnographic detail. Historical information and attention to economic and political processes. Discourse is seen as part of a broader realm of practice in which authorship, ideological lineage and the relationship to material processes are critical.

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The remainder of this chapter will introduce the case study areas and the specific planning context and end with a resume of the thesis argument.

### 1.2. The Case Areas

In the centre of the City of London, surrounding an area known as Bank Junction, is a collection of monumental buildings which, by their style and use, reflect the significant financial role played by the City. Less than a mile east of Bank Junction, abutting the eastern edge of the City, lies the inner city area of Spitalfields. Here demolition and decay reflect the loss of the houses and long-standing small and economic differences which have shaped the area (Figure 1.1). Both materially and symbolically, these two adjacent areas represent the extreme of poverty and decay. In both the poverty of social class and power and a sense of poverty and despair. In both the City and Spitalfields, recent proposals for redevelopment have met with fierce opposition. The basis of this opposition are common urban planning goals, and has been couched



in quite distinct terms; these distinctions are critical to the understanding of these two areas and the processes under investigation. Although different, the two redevelopment conflicts provided the basis for my two case exploration of the politics of the past in urban transformation.

In the centre of the City of London six major roads meet at Bank Junction. Around the Junction are sited three major buildings: the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange and the Mansion House. The radial street pattern, part medieval and part the product of Victorian road building, gives the sense of a focal point or hub. The buildings surrounding this hub are 'home' for three of the prime City functions: banking, exchange markets, and the Lord Mayor, head of the City's local government. In form and function, Bank Junction readily submits to the popular title of 'the Heart of the City' and previously was heralded as 'Heart of the Empire'.

The City of London is a space given over to finance and business. There is a resident population of only 5,864 but a daily working population of almost 300,000. Almost 30%, the largest single proportion, work in the Banking and Finance sector (Corporation of London 1986a, 1987a, 1987c). In 1984 the City's financial institutions contributed more than £6,000m to the national economy (Corporation of London 1986a, 13). The City is one of the grand triumvirate of world banking centres along with Tokyo and New York: it had 21.6% share of international banking transactions in 1987. The financial dominance of the City was initially established through Britain's imperial role. Although the twentieth century saw the demise of this role, in the postwar years the City maintained financial supremacy through growth in Euro-currency markets: that is, dealing in foreign currencies (see McRae and Cairncross 1985; Pryke 1988). Recent transformations of the City's financial practices, through deregulation and technological improvements (the so-called 'Big Bang') have consolidated its role as a leading global financial centre.

The City is also a centre of history (in part reflected by an annual tourist population of 3 million) and this is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the Bank Junction area. In recognition of its exceptional architectural and townscape character, Bank Junction was designated by the Corporation of London as a Conservation Area in 1971. In 1974 the Bank Conservation Area was extended to the north and east and in 1981 it was again extended to the west, specifically incorporating those historic buildings on the proposed redevelopment site (Corporation of London 1981, 1). This is the most extensive Conservation Area in the City and covers most of the central core. The Bank Junction is surrounded by listed buildings. Of the eight major buildings which immediately face the Junction, two are listed Grade A ecclesiastical buildings (Wren's



St. Stephen Walbrook and Hawksmoor's St Mary Woolnoth), four are listed Grade I (Dance's Mansion House, Soane's Bank of England, Lutyen's Midland Bank, and The Royal Exchange) and the others are listed Grade II. Of the more modest Mid-Victorian group of buildings on the development site itself, eight are listed.

The planning controversy associated with Bank Junction, which forms the basis of the City case study, is a product of the City being both a financial and a historical centre. The Bank planning controversy has been variously described by the British press as 'the Palumbo saga' (Piloti 1988, 9), 'a melodrama' (Pawley 1988, 23) and 'the longest running planning battle in UK planning history' (Mallett 1988, 4). Since 1962 the developer Peter Palumbo, through his development company City Acre Property Investment Trust, has been attempting to redevelop a section of the Bank Junction. During this time Palumbo has commissioned two designs from well known architects. The first, known as the Mansion House Square scheme, was an eighteen storey, modernist tower designed by Mies van der Rohe. This was refused planning permission and so a second scheme was commissioned from James Stirling. The second redevelopment proposal, known as the No. 1 Poultry Scheme, forms the main focus of this study.

The two schemes envisaged complete redevelopment of the site. Both were refused planning permission and listed building consent, and went to public inquiry. Palumbo's plans have met with fierce opposition from conservationists and the Corporation of London. Conservation interests opposed the schemes on the grounds that they would result in the demolition of a group of Victorian offices, some of which are listed, and would irrevocably change the character of a designated Conservation Area. The conservation interests dubbed the proposed redevelopments as 'test cases for conservation'. There was also opposition to the scheme from a collection of 'local' interests, most notably the church and retailers.

Immediately east of the City of London lies the area of Spitalfields and the Spitalfields Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market. A Market has operated on the site since 1682 and throughout this century its operations and the site have been in the control of the Corporation of London. The Wholesale Market is one element in a large, street market complex centred on this part of the East End. By the early 1980s, when the Spitalfields Market became the subject of redevelopment speculation, the Market covered some 11 acres of land, employed around 1,000 people and was considered to be one of the Corporation's most successful of London's surviving inner city markets (House of Commons Select Committee Hearing 1988).



The Spitalfields area which surrounds the Market is the most deprived area in the most deprived Borough in London.<sup>2</sup> The Borough's population is predominantly working class and in 1981 the unemployment rate in Spitalfields was nearly 30% (LBTH 1981a, 10). Over 90% of the population are housed in public housing. The population of the Spitalfields ward, the focus of this case study, is approximately 150,000. The Borough of Tower Hamlets overall has a large Bangladeshi population and a large proportion is centred in Spitalfields. In 1984 some 10-13% of the Tower Hamlets population was estimated to be Bangladeshi and they made up 37% of the residents of Spitalfields ward (LBTH 1984). Many of the Bangladeshi population work in the local clothing industry doing piece work. Deprivation, the large immigrant population and the reliance on the clothing trade have long been features of Spitalfields. French Huguenots settled in Spitalfields in the eighteenth century and were followed by successive waves of Irish, Jewish, and Cypriot immigrants. The working class status and deprived conditions in the area has meant it has long been a stronghold of the Left. The Labour Party held power in Spitalfields for almost 40 years before it was replaced by a Liberal administration in 1986.

Since the 1950s the unique Georgian housing stock of Spitalfields has been the focal point of conservation interests. Tower Hamlets designated three Conservation Area in 1969 (Artillery Lane Conservation Area, Elder Street Conservation Area and Fournier Street Conservation Area) and many of the houses are listed. Since the 1970s there has been a conservation-led process of restoration of these houses which surround the Spitalfields Market redevelopment site.

The Market scheme proposes the relocation of the Spitalfields Market and redevelopment of the site for mixed-use but with a predominance of offices and retailing designed to meet City needs. The redevelopment process began in the early 1980s and two companies, Rosehaugh Stanhope and the Spitalfields Development Group, have been in competition for the right to redevelop the site. The proposed redevelopment has met with fierce opposition from the local Left but, perhaps surprisingly, was initially lauded by the conservationists. These varying responses to the Market redevelopment proposal form the central focus of the Spitalfields case analysis.

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<sup>2</sup>Much of the socio-economic description of Spitalfields has had to be based on the now dated 1981 census but, where possible, more recent statistics have been used.

### 1.3. Thesis Organization

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical terrain of the thesis: firstly, in terms of the general approach to culture; secondly, in terms of approaches to the theme of culture and the city; and finally, in terms of studies dealing specifically with heritage values in an urban context. The theoretical issues point to a particular methodological approach which is detailed in Chapter 3. The two case approach is described and justified. The methods used to produce an empirical basis for an analysis of contextualized discursive practices are detailed. The strategy of presenting the empirical material through the thematic tension of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities is outlined. Chapter 4 acts as a transition point between the introductory chapters and the presentation of the detailed case material. It provides an historical introduction to the themes of Making Monuments (efforts to conserve the historic built environment) and Imagining Communities (efforts to retrieve and protect ways of life). This chapter introduces a number of ideas and organizations which play a critical role in the case studies. Chapters 5-8 present the case material by working through the two cases of the City and Spitalfields respectively; firstly, under the theme of Making Monuments and secondly, under the theme of Imagining Communities. Chapter 9 summarizes the content of the thesis, highlights areas for future research and presents conclusions.

The study presents a detailed depiction of the multiply-expressed heritage impulse in the context of London. As will be shown, heritage is a domain of contest between differently empowered interests who mobilize different pasts; some powerful, some resistant, some which operate in tension with capital and others which actively collude with capital. This study explores these differing manifestations of the heritage impulse and the implications they have in terms of understanding urban processes and power in the city.



## CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL TERRAIN

The theoretical underpinnings of my research can be reviewed under three separate but interrelated headings which move from broad theoretical concerns towards issues of particular relevance to my empirical focus: firstly, the theme of culture, ideology and power; secondly, the city from a cultural perspective; thirdly, the contemporary popular interest in the past in the context of the city.

### 2.1. Culture, Ideology and Power

The conception of culture from which this study develops is essentially rooted in a revised Marxist perspective, generated by Gramsci and developed in Britain through Raymond Williams and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.<sup>1</sup> This emphasis has not precluded the adoption of theoretical and methodological approaches to culture which reside outside of the Marxist tradition and have added to its on-going revision. In particular, post-structuralist perspectives dealing specifically with the issue of power and discursive realms have much to offer in the understanding of culture.

In Keywords (1976, 87) Raymond Williams states that 'culture' is one of the most complicated words in the English language. Its 'complication' is apparent in persistent tensions associated with its theorization, such as culturalist/materialist or idealist/structuralist dichotomies (Williams 1981, 12-13). The concept of culture used in this study takes distance from idealist positions which seek out the 'informing spirit' of 'ways of life' (Bennett 1986a; Johnson et al. 1986; Williams 1981). Nor does this study follow a reductionist structuralist procedure of defining rules, conventions or structures of cultural practices and products (as pioneered by Levi-Strauss). The work does however declare allegiance to Marxist/materialist approaches to culture, albeit to a substantially revised version.

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<sup>1</sup>In the theorizing of culture the terms 'culture' and 'ideology' are closely intertwined. McLennan et al. (1977), suggest that there has been a blurring of the two concepts in cultural studies and that this has veiled some of the important theoretical departures between the two concepts. Although culture and ideology are not one and the same they are in part expressive manifestations of each other and mutually constitutive. Ideologies can 'work' through culture(s), and culture(s) can shape ideological positionings.

Early Marxist/materialist approaches were marked by their emphasis on cultural production and the conditions of that production. In its most reductionist formulation this became a project of tracing the economic determinants of cultural products. Two inter-related assumptions underpinned this approach. One is the now debunked Marxist assumption that culture is part of the superstructure and floats above, but is determined by, a more powerful driving base of capital. A second assumption derives from the theorizing of ideology and the original Marxist assumption that ideology is 'false consciousness'. Early Marxist accounts of culture redressed an existing imbalance in culturalist perspectives by asserting that there was a connection between culture and other dimensions of the social and material world. Post-structuralists are correct in asserting the limits of Marxist/materialist approaches yet it is all too easy to forget how radical and significant this shift in theorizing culture has been in terms of pre-existing culturalist perspectives.

Complaints against a rigid Marxist/materialist approach remain valid. As Williams states:

Instead of making cultural history material, which was the next radical move, it was made dependent, secondary, 'superstructural': a realm of 'mere' ideas, beliefs, arts, customs, determined by the basic material history (Williams 1977a, 19).

This reductionist determinism was seen as integral to the explanatory power of Marxist/materialist approaches. However, Williams (1977a, 19) notes that rather than empowering explanation, strict adherence actually kept analysts away from understanding the constitutive role culture plays in society.

A revised Marxist position has seen the radical reconceptualization of the relationship between society, culture and the material. Culture is no longer seen as part of a superstructure which is peripheral to a more important 'base'. For example, for Williams (1977a, 11) culture, society and economy are 'historically intertwined'. Nor is ideology still conceived of as 'false consciousness', a distortion of some other 'reality'. Taking a cue from Althusser, theorists have begun to conceive of ideologies not just as ideas, and false ones at that, but as practices and frameworks through which material conditions are interpreted and given sense (e.g. Williams 1981; Hall 1980).

In side-stepping these dilemmas and attempting to find an alternative and more dynamic explanatory model a number of theorists (in Britain most notably Raymond Williams and the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies) have turned to the concept



of hegemony as developed by Antonio Gramsci (1971, 1973, 1985). Gramsci's development and elaboration of the concept of hegemony has overcome many of the more persistent tensions in traditional Marxist views of culture and ideology (Hall 1980). In particular it has allowed for a theorizing of ideology and culture which takes account of power.

In essence hegemony as postulated by Gramsci (1971) refers to those processes whereby a social group has gained a position of social, political and cultural power by way of civil society and the state. The critical emphasis of Gramsci is that he locates domination not only in terms of decrees issued by the State or ruling classes, for example, but as a process in which dominant interests transform 'moral values and customs in civil society' (Hall et al. 1977, 47; Jackson 1989, 53). Hegemony conceives of domination as depending on the acceptance of more powerful ideas as 'common sense' by subordinated groups. Williams (1981, 145) states it thus:

an integral form of class rule...exists not only in political and economic institutions and relationships but also in active forms of experience and consciousness.

Gramsci's emphasis on 'civil society' and 'common sense' as critical elements of hegemony opened the way for a new evaluation of the role of both culture and ideology in society. It demonstrated a complex interlocking of the cultural, social, political and material. Cultural practices are not simply superstructural 'reflections' of a more 'real' social and economic structure. Rather, 'they are among the basic processes' of the formation of these social and economic structures (Williams 1977a, 111). Williams (1977a, 97), for example, replaces 'reflection' with the concept of 'mediation', allowing for a more reflexive and interactive relationship between differentially empowered interests in society.

Gramsci's conception of hegemony as applied and revised through British cultural studies is not static or functionalist. 'Civil society' becomes 'the terrain in which classes [and other divisions] contest for power' and is the area of social life in which the relations between the dominant and subordinated are mapped out (Hall et al. 1977, 47). Hall (1980, 36) suggests that 'hegemony is always the (temporary) mastery of a particular theatre of struggle'. Williams (1977a, 112) explains that hegemony:

does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and mobilized. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged.

This contingent and adjusting conceptualization of hegemony works away from a simple dominant ideology thesis (Abercrombie et al. 1980). 'The people' are not seen as cultural dupes, engaging in cultural practices and beliefs imposed by the more powerful. It also works against seeing popular culture simply as the site of spontaneously oppositional practices and beliefs, of a more 'genuine' or 'authentic' nature than those more powerful expressions. Rather:

...forms and practices-varying in content from one historical period to another-...constitute the terrain on which dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural values and ideologies meet and intermingle, in different mixes and permutations, vying with one another in their attempts to secure the spaces within which they can become influential in framing and organizing popular experience and consciousness (Bennett 1986b, 19).

This presents a far more complex theorizing of the nature of dominant culture. The nexus of the power of dominant cultural values is in how they reach into and reshape subdominant cultures. Even oppositional cultures are in part formed and shaped by the very struggle with dominant culture (Bennett 1986b, 19).

From a revised Marxist position, understanding culture and the role it plays in society demands an understanding of culture's part in broader processes and relations of power, based not only around class divisions (the traditional Marxist concern), but other divisions such as gender or race:

A cultural practice does not carry its politics with it, as if written upon its brow forever and a day; rather, its political functioning depends on the network of social and ideological relations in which it is inscribed as a consequence of the ways in which, in a particular conjuncture, is articulated to other practices (Bennett 1986a, xvi)

The concept of hegemony as outlined here is germane to my analysis of divergent views of a valued past in the urban redevelopment process. It provides a way of theorizing the differential power of the ideas and interests represented in the struggles over urban redevelopment in the City of London and Spitalfields.

Hegemony is on the one hand the struggle by the dominant to control, transform or incorporate alternate views, and on the other hand the effort of those with alternate views to resist or negotiate dominant views. Thus one of the most 'interesting and difficult' challenges for cultural analysis is 'to grasp the hegemonic in its active and



formative but also its transformational processes' (Williams 1977a, 113). The challenge of 'grasping' the shifting relationships between the dominant and the subdominant has placed considerable emphasis on certain cultural forms through which differentially empowered ideologies are expressed, contested and renegotiated. In particular there has been considerable emphasis on discursive and representational realms, on the 'text'. By moving attention to modes of representation there was an attempt to understand how certain ideas gained widespread credence and legitimacy, that is, the 'condition for the popularity [and power] of cultural forms' (Johnson et al. 1986, 294; see also Woollacott 1982, 95).

Yet even some of the seminal Marxist studies to focus on text and discursive realms retain problems. For example, the Hall et al. (1978) study, Policing the Crisis, attempted to demonstrate the role of discursive practices in the postwar economic crisis through press reports. In its attention to discursive realms the study broke new ground in understanding the relationship between culture and the material. Yet, as Woollacott (1982, 109) points out, there remained a tendency to assume that the 'crisis' which formed the main focus of analysis, was already in operation in the realm of politics and economics and that the cultural and ideological realm were not instrumental in its formation. This criticism is valid for much of the British cultural studies work which often slips back into these familiar and deeply rooted assumptions about both the relative roles of culture and the material in constituting the social realm as well as the status of ideology as 'false truth'.

Williams' treatment of text and language offers clues to the partial revision of this dilemma. He treats language as both a signifying system and as an activity, that is 'practical consciousness'. He outlines the project of cultural studies to be in part the analysis of 'cultural institutions and formations, and...actual relations between these and...the material means of cultural production and...actual cultural forms' (Williams 1981, 14). Williams sees language as an activity which is integral to the constitutive role of culture in society. Language does not simply reflect or express the material 'reality', this 'reality' is grasped through language. Signs, and the meanings they carry, are a part of the material world, and part of the reproduction of the conditions of that material world (Williams 1977a, 21-43).

In the continuing search for a theoretical framework which will uncover the processes by which culture, ideology and power intersect with yet not privilege the material, Marxist studies have begun to converge with other theorists not working from an explicit Marxist perspective. Significant advances in understanding culture and

hegemony have come from outside the British Marxist tradition and some of these have informed the approach to culture taken in this study.

Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural' or 'symbolic capital' helps to redress some of the tensions apparent in the theorizing of the relationship between the cultural and the material realms and squarely sets the consideration of culture alongside a consideration of power. Bourdieu (1986, 1) defines an 'economy of cultural goods'. His is a culture of 'taste' where certain cultural products are more privileged and have greater power or 'competence' than others. His is also an anthropological culture, where it is acknowledged that certain groups are empowered or disempowered by their differential access to and control of privileged and privileging cultural capital. Thus there are those in society who have a high level of 'symbolic capital' and are empowered by this and will actively seek to enforce and protect this power. Bourdieu's conception of culture forces attention towards defining the fields of power and the position within that field of power from which certain views are voiced. These fields of power and constraint are the key features of Bourdieu's habitus (Rabinow 1986, 252).

Stauth and Turner (1988, 522), in their appraisal of nostalgia and mass culture, note that Bourdieu's position is useful in theorizing cultural phenomena but that it tends to entail a total commitment to a dominant ideology thesis and does not provide adequate theorizing of resistance or transformations of cultural systems. Contrary to this would be a position which accommodates the possibility and potential of alternate views to subvert or undermine the established order (Abercrombie et al. 1980). Lash (1988, 1990) has also applied the concept of 'cultural capital' to his analysis of late capitalist society. His view that late capitalism is producing a 'semiotic society' which finds, unlike preceding capitalist phases, its 'regulating principle' in 'representational goods' is revealing but simplistic and demonstrates both the explanatory potential and limits of Bourdieu. Despite such short-comings, Bourdieu's idea of 'cultural capital' may be usefully extended to a more dynamic and complex concept and it has proven a useful analytical tool in my own work.

Geertz provides an important, but possibly over-rated, perspective on culture and he is frequently referred to in contemporary studies on ideology and meaning. Geertz (1973, 5) views culture as 'semiotic', as 'webs of significance' in which construable signs and symbols are complexly interwoven. He provides a more flexible view of culture than those who trace a lineage to Marxist conceptions offering a way of seeing many dimensions of culture, and most significantly practice and action, as symbolic. He suggests (1983, 207) that it is through the process of symbolic action that ideologies



are given 'public existence'. Geertz's emphasis on action and practice, and the ethnographically-based essays he presents, are a valuable addition to the understanding of culture and ideology.

Ricoeur (1986) adopts Geertz's emphasis on action as an important ingredient in his deliberations on ideology and the relationship between representation and praxis. Giddens (1979, 191-2) also acknowledges the potential of Geertz's emphasis on practice in developing a theory of ideology and 'lived experience'. While my own work does focus to a large extent on discourses associated with the process of urban transformation, the issues of action (and inaction) and practice are critical. Discourse is but one element in a broader sphere of practice which also includes other forms of symbolic action. Within this thesis, the discourses produced by the two cases of urban redevelopment are significant not simply as texts but also as acts of speaking. It becomes important in this conception who speaks, where they speak, how it is decided what is spoken. The events and actions which lead to the expression of the discourses constitute an important element of understanding for they locate discourse in the broader realm of cultural practice.

Geertz is not troubled by the many tensions that beset Marxist approaches which seem forever bound to justify their emphasis on culture and to reconcile that emphasis with material processes. Herein lies not only the liberating potential of Geertz but also his limitation. For while Geertz advocates a position which locates significant events in a broader context, this context rarely includes the material. Contextual settings for Geertz tend to be linked to ever-broadening cultural and social realms and relationships within these realms. Geertz also lacks an adequate theorizing of power (see Gellner 1988; Giddens 1979; Phipps 1989). His most explicit essay on ideology and culture (Geertz 1983) does explore the issue of how certain systems of meaning gain dominance. Rejecting Marxist explanations based on hegemony, his final hypothesis problematically and unsatisfactorily asserts that dominant ideologies draw their power from their 'capacity to grasp, formulate, and communicate social realities' (Geertz 1983, 208). His 'explanation' of the nexus between culture and power by-passes the very process by which certain ideas and meaning are empowered and can sustain that power in the social world.

Other developments in anthropology which have emerged under a post-structuralist banner provide further consolidation of the shift towards a more reflexive view of culture based around divergent and differently empowered discursive realms (Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986). Clifford (1986, 12)



suggests that culture can be viewed as 'poetics', that is, 'an interplay of voices, of positioned utterances'. Culture is in part defined through discursive and relational communicative processes which are enacted 'historically, between subjects in relations of power' (Clifford 1986, 15). Although the attention to 'polyvocality' could lead to relativism and an over-emphasis on the micro-scale, Marcus (1986) shows that there is space within this revised approach for accounts of the connection between the micro-scale of discursive realms and macro-scale systems and processes more traditionally the concern of Marxist studies.

Foucault's exploration of the 'politics of truth' provides useful insights into the nexus between power and knowledge (see Dews 1984; Weeks 1982). As Smart (1986, 160) notes, Foucault's dual analytic focus on forms of knowledge and relations of power has helped to elaborate 'the complex multiple processes from which the strategic constitution of forms of hegemony may emerge'. Foucault's concern is with the practices and discourses which rationalize and legitimate particular forms of domination by a claim to 'truth'. He offers an important and well demonstrated insight into methodology through his 'archaeology' of 'systems of knowledge' and his 'genealogy' of 'modalities of power'. These two methodological strategies assist in establishing:

...the diverse, intersecting, and often divergent, but never autonomous series that enable us to circumscribe the 'locus' of the event, the margins of its unpredictability, the conditions of its emergence (Foucault 1971, 'The Discourse on Language', quoted in Sheridan 1980, 129).

Foucault sees discourse and discursive realms as deeply connected with practice. His 'archaeology' outlines the procedures for investigating the production, regulation, distribution and circulation of discursive statements. Yet this is not pursued through a single historical narrative; unearthing discontinuities is one of the prime contributions of Foucault's archaeology. Through attention to 'genealogy' Foucault explores the politics of power and truth statements. This is a search for origins in which the rituals and practices of communication are as significant as the messages there encoded (see Davidson 1986, 224; Said 1986, 153; Sheridan 1980, 125-127). Foucault sees the power of discursive realms as residing not only in the content and production of individual discourses but also in the relationship between discourses, in the inter-textual realm. The prescriptions and procedures Foucault advocates allow for an understanding of how cultural expressions, manifest as discourses and practices, gain power not simply as 'the homogeneous domination of one group or class over another, but as a net-like, circulating organization' (Davidson 1986, 226).

A widely identified short-coming of at least some of the post-structuralist approaches identified above, is their over-emphasis on domination and their failure to engage with discourses of resistance or to adhere to the political project of subverting domination. Foucault in particular has almost unfailingly concentrated on understanding hegemony through attention to the powerful and the dominant. Even those who do concentrate on the marginalized and less powerful, at times do little more than give the oppressed a voice (Clifford 1986) or assert the construction of oppression through the discourses of the dominant (Said 1978). While such perspectives have assisted in the understanding of hegemony, there remains a need to concentrate on how dominant ideologies gain legitimacy in the experience of subordination. British cultural studies with their almost unflinching commitment to political change have continued to provide the landmark studies of this kind (e.g. Gilroy 1987; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdidge 1979; Thompson 1963; Willis 1977).

Post-structuralist approaches to culture provide some valuable additions to the concepts of culture which trace a lineage to Marxist/materialist positions. Their elucidation of the importance of texts and 'intertextuality' as part of the mechanism by which certain discourses gain and sustain dominance, and possibly have that dominance challenged or reshaped, has been invaluable in understanding the workings of culture. The attention to polyvocality holds the potential to move Marxist analyses away from simplistic depictions of the nature of domination and subordination. It is not necessarily contradictory or disempowering to acknowledge the role of intertextual processes and the critical appropriation of some post-structuralist approaches can provide important new directions (see Eagleton 1985; Geras 1987; Laclau and Mouffe 1987). Yet texts and discursive realms must continue to be seen as part of a more complex process. Johnson et al. (1986, 297) stress that 'ultimately...the individual text is only a means to a wider cultural study, a kind of raw material for part of the practice'. For Johnson et al. (1986, 297), 'the objects' of cultural studies 'are not "texts" but the forms that people live by, in each moment of their circulation, including their textual embodiments'. Discursive realms assist in our understanding of culture but it is important to retain a sense of culture as a domain of action and practice. Practices are not always discursive in the narrow sense, although they have symbolic and communicative capacities. Marxist/materialist approaches remain valuable in that they attempt to 'ground' explanation both in terms of cultural practices and in the relationship between cultural products and process of production (and consumption),



be they material, social, cultural or, as is now generally assumed, a complex of all of these.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2. Culture and the City

My case material is generated by two examples of conflict over proposed redevelopment in London. The work, therefore, is 'urban' in nature and deals with social movements and conflicts, themes which have become prime concerns within urban studies. I acknowledge the presence of a wide range of approaches to these themes, but in the following explore only those which have directly shaped this study.

The theme of culture and the city has been a consistent, if variably treated, theme in urban studies. The ecological studies of the Chicago school of urban sociology marked the beginning of an attention to urban cultures (see Park and Burgess 1967). The short-comings of the Chicago school have been widely accepted (see Hannertz 1980; Jackson 1985b; Jackson and Smith 1981, 1984; Saunders 1981), although it is now acknowledged that these studies were instrumental in the establishment of a tradition of urban ethnography. More recently anthropology began to see the city as a fruitful area of research. Hannertz (1980) established both a theoretical and a methodological programme for anthropological studies of the city.<sup>3</sup> Ethnographic studies of the city are now commonplace (see Jackson 1985, for overview), although it is rare for such studies to be tied to a theoretical project of understanding and explaining urbanism or the urban condition *per se*. Thus Jackson (1985b, 171) can conclude that most ethnographic studies of the city are 'in the city, rather than of the city'.

The long political economy tradition within urban sociology and geography has attempted to answer theoretical questions deriving from a consideration of urbanism and the urban condition as a product or manifestation of capitalism (see Castells 1977; Harvey 1973, 1982, 1985a; Saunders 1981). As part of the description of capitalism as manifest in the urban form, a number of studies have given particular attention to the analysis of urban disparities and inequities. It is from this concern with the inequities apparent in urban life and structures, and through the commitment to the socialist project of change, that many of those working from a political economy perspective have turned their attention to power in the city and to urban conflict and protest (see

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<sup>2</sup>Some post-structuralists (see Collins 1987; Hirst 1980) take umbrage with this position on the basis that the obsession with 'commodification' presupposes a uniformity of intention and function, a sustaining of the simple dominant ideology thesis.

<sup>3</sup>Essentially through applying Mitchell's network analysis or Goffman's dramaturgical perspective (city as theatre) to the urban scene.

Castells 1978, 1983; Harloe 1981; Harvey 1985b, 1989a; Ley 1983b (from a humanist position); Mingione 1981; Olives 1976; Saunders 1979, 1981). The two cases which form the focus of my study provide examples of social protest and action around the allocation, distribution and control of resources in the urban environment; be they material resources such as housing, or aesthetic or cultural resources, such as the design of a building or the historical status of a building. As such the cases link with other studies which are concerned with the origins and operations of urban social movements. Again, such studies do influence my analysis and in part provide a means for contextualizing the cultural practices which form the main focus of the study. However, an explanation of urban social movements per se is not the driving theme of the research. A concurrent study of the Spitalfields area (Woodward, in preparation) deals specifically with these issues.

Concomitant with the general shift in urban studies towards understanding protest, power and conflict has been an increasing emphasis on a constellation of phenomena variously described as 'consciousness', 'ideology' or 'culture'. Castells and Harvey at one time both attacked culturalism, as evident in the Chicago studies of the city (Jackson 1989, 29-30). Castells (1977, 75) talked of 'the myth of urban culture', while Harvey (1973, 84-85) at one time viewed culture simply as a morphological concept rather than as a constitutive force in the city. However, Harvey has never been completely dismissive of culture. In the same volume he acknowledges that:

...if we are to understand spatial form, we must first enquire into the symbolic qualities of that form (Harvey 1973, 32).

In Harvey's later work (e.g. 1978, 1979, 1985b, 1989a, 1989b) culture (expressed generally in terms of ideology and consciousness) has become increasingly central to his analysis of the urban condition under capitalism. Culture in terms of the social meaning of space has also become more important in Castells' explanation of urban social movements (Castells 1983).

Marxist perspectives in urban studies have begun to treat the cultural dimension of the urban condition and the urban process seriously (Berman 1982; Castells 1983; Harvey 1985b, 1989a, 1989b; Gottdiener 1985). Zukin (1988a, 432) notes that economic determinism has receded and has been replaced by a 'more open materialist analysis that embraces culture and politics as well as economic structures'. Thus the traditional Marxist formulation of 'base' economics and 'superstructure' culture, as discussed in the preceding section, is being reformulated with specific reference to the



understanding of the city and I return to the details of the contributions such studies have made later in this section.

While some geographers and others concerned with urbanism as a product of capitalism have approached 'culture' by way of consciousness and ideology, there is another strand of research which has privileged 'culture' by way of an emphasis on 'meaning' in the urban environment. Early approaches to this theme tended to focus on subjective notions of the environment, drawing on cognitive analysis (e.g. Downs and Stea 1973; Lynch 1960). The narrow quantifying approach of these studies was later opened up through the injection of a phenomenologically-inspired humanist perspective, which saw human consciousness and experience of the world as valid and valuable ways of understanding the interface between people and the urban environment. Broadly cast under the catchphrase 'sense of place', the various contributions from this field did much to allow for the consideration of value and meaning (e.g. Buttimer and Seamon 1974; Ley and Samuels 1978; Relph 1976; Tuan 1974). There has been general criticism of this work: its openness to subjectivism and idealism, its methodological difficulties and, more significantly, its failure to incorporate material conditions and constraints and concepts of power (Gregory 1978, 1981; Jackson and Smith 1984; Ley 1981).

One of the earliest attempts from within geography to apply a radicalized concept of culture to an understanding of the city was that by Agnew et al. (1984). By approaching the 'city in a cultural context', this edited volume specifically aims to provide an approach to the city which works away from, but advances and compliments, rational economic explanations. The emphasis is on the 'constitutive' role that 'the practices and ideas that arise from collective and individual experiences' have in the urban condition (Agnew et al. 1984, 1). The aim of the volume is to take culture out of the 'corridor' in which it had been 'left to lurk' (Walton 1984, 77) and reinstate it as an explanatory force in terms of understanding the city.

According to the introduction of this edited volume, the concept of culture adopted owes much to revised Marxist concepts outlined previously. Agnew et al. (1984, 5) reject 'naive dualisms' which separate culture from 'material reality'. They acknowledge the importance of theorizing power in relation to culture and do so through Gramsci's concept of hegemony. However, the collected essays only occasionally match the theoretical assertions made in this introduction. Lewandowski's (1984) study of how Tamil Nadu political ideology is inserted in the Madras townscape by way of traditional Hindu symbolism shows both how ideology can be manifest in the



urban environment and how traditional cultural values can serve to legitimate new political ends. Duncan and Duncan's (1984) analysis of Anglophile suburban landscapes in North America similarly demonstrates how dominant values are imprinted on the landscape and how this ideological landscape can legitimate and reinforce existing relations of domination and subordination. In a different context again, Cuthbert (1987) explores the coming together of an imperial landscape and a socialist political ideology in Hong Kong. These themes are of critical importance to my own analysis of Spitalfields and the City of London, but my own cases also show that a too simplistic application of a dominant ideology thesis can overlook residual and potential tensions and oppositions.

Carl Schorske's (1961) insightful study of the Ringstrasse in fin-de-siècle Vienna has done much to broaden the understanding of the relationship between culture and the built environment, and has been drawn upon by geographers working both from a Marxist and a humanist perspective (e.g. Harvey 1979, 1989a, 1989b; Ley 1987). Schorske (1961, xxi) notes that historians have too long used artefacts of high culture as mere reflections of dominant and supposedly uncontested ideology. The significance of his reading of the Ringstrasse is that he is able to expose not only the intended and dominant liberal values which gave rise to the Ringstrasse, but also oppositional views. By exploring two contemporary critiques of the Ringstrasse, those of Otto Wagner and Camillo Sitte, Schorske is able to point to some of the diversity and tension that underlies the relationship between ideology and the environment.

Schorske highlights the way in which the built environment attests to the processes of domination and power in the city. The presence of a particular built form is itself an act of power for there are ideas and visions which are never built. Other, less powerful visions remain ungrounded, literally, in the built environment (see Barker and Hyde 1982, on 'unbuilt' London). Knox acknowledges this in his consideration of social production and the built environment when he notes that, 'the great bulk of the urban fabric symbolizes the impotence of the majority of its inhabitants' (Knox 1982b, 293). To confine studies of culture and the urban to mere 'readings' of the existing built environment, as if a 'text', privileges the powerful from the outset. It ignores those less powerful visions which did not win out and get built and it certainly has the potential to overlook the contests that so often precede the final statement of hegemony, the act of a building being erected.

My own case studies are particularly and deliberately concerned with highlighting this arena of contest. This points to one of the significant features of my cases. I have not

selected a built environment and attempted to 'read' it. The built environment in both cases is noticeably in a state of flux, for in these cases people are arguing about what should or should not be built, what should or should not be preserved. These case studies allow me to enter into the very realm of contest and negotiation that studies based around a reading of the landscape as a reflection of dominant ideology can only glimpse.

Those studies within geography which have, in varying ways, elaborated on Schorske's approach (e.g. Harvey 1979, 1989b; Ley 1987) are of particular relevance to this work. Harvey, despite often being cited as providing an approach to urban analysis which rejects meaning and culture (see Agnew et al. 1984), has considered the issue of ideology and the built environment in relation to Paris and in particular the Sacré-Coeur (1979). He has elaborated this approach in his account of the condition of postmodernity (1989b). Harvey's analysis of the 'struggle to build the Sacré-Coeur' exposes the complexity of meaning behind this monument and the unifying myth that is associated with it. Through a sustained historical account of the political, social and economic context he reveals the diversity of social groups associated with the vision to build a monument on Montmartre. Harvey shows that this vision did not go unopposed. Montmartre, although apparently unified under a common mythology, was a site of contest between 'those who struggled for and against the embellishment of that spot' (Harvey 1979, 381).

Ley's (1987) attempt to transfer the approach of Schorske to contemporary Vancouver is far less successful in retaining this sense of contest and differential power. Ley aims not to be 'reductionist', 'mechanically reading off the imprint of one domain upon another' (Ley 1987, 40). His study of ideology and the built environment of Vancouver consciously seeks out diversity by examining how differing planning ideologies (one 'rationalist', one 'expressive') are manifest in two different areas of Vancouver. His two cases are intended to provide a spatial 'synchronicity' which parallels Schorske's exploration of differing but interconnected cultural expressions in fin-de-siècle Vienna (Schorske 1961, xxii). Yet by tracing the imprint of two distinct ideologies through two separate case studies Ley side-steps the very issue of contest and differential power which is apparent in both Schorske and Harvey<sup>4</sup>.

My study is similar to Ley's in that it is also based around two cases consciously selected because of their distinctiveness. But the two cases are also sites of

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<sup>4</sup>I return to Ley's two case approach in Chapter 3 when discussing methodology.



interconnected conflict. They assist in drawing the analysis closer to an understanding of the working of hegemony by elucidating struggle in interconnected but distinct settings. If it is accepted that there is a dominant urban aesthetic and ideology, such as the current emphasis on 'heritage' in urban style, an understanding of its hegemonic status necessitates exploration of the dynamic, shifting terrain of its pervasiveness. Thus what is of interest in an exploration of two obviously distinct cases is not only the differences, but also the disconcerting parallels which speak to a more complex and pervasive dynamic of hegemony.

Jackson (1989, 177) notes that much of the new work in the 'culture and landscape' tradition tends to argue 'from a world of exterior surfaces and appearances to an inner world of meaning and experience'. There is a tendency to treat the landscape or built environment as 'text'. At times such studies (and the aforementioned are exceptions) can leave us with little more than an insight into the personal tastes of the author. For example, Relph's 'analysis' of the modern urban environment asserts that 'the best source of information about landscapes are landscapes themselves' (Relph 1987, 5). This internalization of the explanatory power of landscape gives us little insight into the reflexive relationship between the modern urban environment and ideologies, politics and material processes.

The conceptualization of the landscape or representations of the landscape as 'texts' which can be 'read' reflects more general trends within social theory and in particular the turn to discursive and representational realms as a source of understanding. In part this has seen the application of linguistic theories to the environment, a project most clearly apparent in urban semiotics. Within this approach the built environment is conceived as a means of communication (see Appleyard 1979). Messages are encoded in the environment and the task of the semiotician is to decode or to read the messages locked therein (Greimas 1986).

Much of the early work on meaning and environment wrought under the name of semiotics suffers from a too literal transferral of linguistic analysis to the built environment (see, for example, Krampen 1979). Such studies share a search for the deep structures or the 'syntax' of meaning or the 'grammar' of the built environment and are often highly codified and mechanistic (e.g. Eco 1986, for critique; Knox 1982b, 293). Symbols, as expressed in the urban environment, are abstracted from their historical, social and material contexts. The source of understanding is assumed to be in the material objects produced rather than in the ideology of which they are a



product.<sup>5</sup> As Dickens (1980, 355) asserts, 'the theory has been wound...around the commodities themselves rather than the social contexts in which they have been produced'. At worst, semiotic studies can become, like some landscape studies, vehicles for individualistic, although often entertaining, pronouncements on the meaning of the built environment which are not grounded outside of the author's own perceptions (see Barthes 1986), or a search for origins and essences which belies the fluidity of meaning and the built environment (see Preziosi 1979).

Not all semiotic studies of the built environment are without an understanding of the social and political context. Barthes' *Mythologies* (1973) is overtly political in its exposure of how culture can render dominant bourgeois values 'natural' (although, as noted, some of his work errs from this). Increasingly, studies within semiology are moving away from privileging the built environment as the source of meaning and turning to an approach which takes account of social, political and material contexts (e.g. Gottdiener and Lagopoulos 1986). In doing so ethnography and history become important. As Ledrut notes, 'if there is an urban semiology, it is dependent upon an urban anthropology' (Ledrut 1986a, 119). In Ledrut's (1986b, 244) formulation, a full understanding of the meaning of the built environment relies on exploring the relationship between urban images and differentially empowered social groups such as planners and various sections of the 'public'. This 'socio-semiotic' approach (Gottdiener and Lagopoulos 1986; Gottdiener 1985) acknowledges that meanings associated with the built environment are not innate but under the authorship of certain social groups and interests. This takes us away from the idea of 'zeitgeist', the identification of a collective intention of an age, towards an understanding based around multiple and contested meanings (Ledrut 1986a, 119; see also Knox 1984).

It is in the advancement of a socio-semiotics grounded in historical materialism that we begin to see a conflation between the programme advocated by a revised semiotics and the type of approach to meaning and the environment which are emerging from geography. No longer is the environment per se the source of meaning, but discourses and practices surrounding environment. In the context of the city, for example, Choay (1986a, 173) notes it is now necessary to replace the idea of a 'language of the city' with an understanding of the 'language on the city'. This has generated a number of studies (some from within geography) which look specifically at discourses directly

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<sup>5</sup>See Broadbent et al. (1980) and Jencks (1984), for examples of this and Dickens (1980) and Gottdiener and Lagopoulos (1986) for a critique of this process.



associated with the built environment.<sup>6</sup> As Knox (1982b, 294) suggests, in the relevant context of the built environment, it is important not simply to know that the environment is meaningful but to know who is communicating through the environment, to what audience and to what purposes. In outlining this agenda, Knox clearly sets the built environment as part of a discursive realm.

Some of these studies confine their attention the discourses of 'experts' directly involved in producing the built environment: planners, architects and social visionaries (see Anderson, R. 1988; Choay 1986a, 1986b; Dear 1986; Domosh 1987; Duncan and Duncan 1988; Foote 1985; Goss 1988; Knox 1987; Moore Milroy 1989; Teymur 1982). Knox (1987, 543), for example, conceives of 'unpacking' meanings associated with the built environment in terms of authors/designers/developers and readers/viewers/users. Dear (1986, 1989) has given attention to the discourses and rhetorical modes of planners in the context of tensions between modernist and postmodernist planning practices. Similarly, Rydin and Myerson (1989) have provided an insightful and relevant rhetorical analysis of the political discourses associated with green belt planning. In their attention to a range of rhetorical modes (including argument, tropes and narratives) their methodology shares much with my thesis (see Chapter 3). A detailed empirical example of the complexity of gentrification has been provided by Mill's (1988) study of gentrification in Vancouver in which the process is understood through differentially empowered interests, practices and discourses. Similarly, Bagguley et al. (1990) in investigating local mediations of economic restructuring stress the need to also think in terms of cultural restructuring. They explore this through an example which has some parallels to this study: an examination of varying responses to the Lancaster Local Plan. The value of this case lies not simply in its attention to culture through architecture (which emphasizes culture as artefact), but in its recognition that planning struggles are not just about competing architectural aesthetics but also about struggles by differing interests to realize 'projects' of race, class and gender (Bagguley et al. 1990, 151). Most significantly, in its attention to varying discourses this study points to a methodological programme for understanding how culture 'works'. They stress the need to acknowledge varying interests and their complex engagement with and 'deployment' of a 'repertoire of discourses' which are contingently and variably adopted and adapted. As is clear, the attention to discourses has become an increasingly important aspect of the way in which meaning is analysed in the urban context.

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<sup>6</sup>This trend in the study of the urban environment parallels a more general growing concern within geography with language (e.g. Pred 1989a, 1989b).



Anderson, R. (1988) provides a directly relevant example of the examination of discourses on the built environment in his study of the press responses to two recent London redevelopment proposals, including the Mansion House Square redevelopment, predecessor to the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment. Anderson attempts to document the recursive and intertextual production and reproduction of meanings associated with the urban environment. He uses Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to outline the hegemony of 'expert' architectural discourse, partly based around an aesthetic which draws on historicism. In many ways this work crosses with my own, not least because of the closeness of the subject matter. But, as will become apparent in the following chapter on methodology I depart dramatically from the procedures used by Anderson and extend his inferences about historicism and contemporary urban transformation.

This empirical shift towards representations of, or expert discourses on, the environment has methodological implications. Featherstone (1988), in the context of exploring the condition of postmodernity, notes that such an empirical emphasis provides a restrictive notion of experience. There is, he argues, a 'sociological objection' to this privileging of the intellectual and he suggests that these sources are limited in their capacity to provide evidence on the 'everyday' dimension of meaning and practice. Such sources or perspectives are refracted representations of 'ordinary life', already subject to certain political and ideological reworkings at the hands of their 'expert' authors.<sup>7</sup> Featherstone also tackles the emphasis on representation itself, be it visual or verbal. He notes that this empirical emphasis shifts attention away from practice and action.

Some of the recent studies of discourses on the urban environment have managed to move away from the problems that Featherstone identifies. To a large extent this has been achieved by combining an interest in discursive realms with attention to practices. Shields (1989), for example, in his study of shopping malls in Canada extends the socio-semiotic approach provided by Gottdiener (1986a, 1986b) by stressing not only the need to identify the nature of the language 'on' and 'of' these environments, but also to note the sort of activities and practices associated with the use and consumption of these environments, the 'social spatializing' associated with the shopping mall. Shields' attention to the theatre of the use of the mall is but one way the concept of practice or 'ways of doing' may be incorporated into studies which are alert

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<sup>7</sup> Although I also shy from the idea that there are indeed 'ordinary people' and an 'everyday life' somehow divested of ideology in which we find an innocent 'truth'.



to but do not wish to 'over-privilege' uncontextualized discourses as a source of understanding. The conceptualization of 'expert' discourses as part of urban planning practices is an alternate strategy in contextualizing discourses and asserting their function within the urban scene as more than simply language (see Cuff 1989; Dear 1989; Rydin and Myerson 1989).

My study attempts to explore meanings associated with the urban environment as constituted and constructed, promoted and opposed, verbalized and visualized, acted upon or not acted upon by those who are directly involved in the politics surrounding the proposed changes to the urban environments of the City of London and Spitalfields. The study is attentive to the meanings and values ascribed to the urban environment by those actively participating, or trying to participate, in its production. The challenge becomes one of avoiding becoming lost 'amid a virtual infinity of meanings' and being able to ground these diverse expressions within a broader understanding of the processes at work (Jackson 1988, 264). For example, Duncan and Duncan (1988) suggest the concept of a 'textual community', which implies an ethnographically-grounded understanding of discourses and texts and offers a way of adding some socio-historical coherence to the 'reading' of landscapes. Attention to such contextual features, be they ethnographic or material, helps in avoiding the 'seduction' of discursive and textual 'poetics' and allows for the grasping of the 'politics' of production, reproduction and consumption.<sup>8</sup>

My own work emphasizes the 'production of meaning' (Gottdiener 1986a) in relation to the urban environment under change. I see this as a contested and complex realm in which a political concept of culture, theorized through hegemony and associated with material processes, is critical. Gottdiener's socio-semiology (1986a) is alert to the same issues. He advocates an approach which recognizes that 'space has history' which is grounded in shifting and contentious group interaction based around signifying practices and non-semiological processes. For Gottdiener, urban space:

...not only signifies some meaning, but also represents the end result of an economic and political process through which one among many meanings and conflicting uses has acquired hegemony...Urban space...represents the material manifestation of dominant interests...The surface naturalness of appearance and taken-for-granted quality provides false testimony for what is a constant, often contentious process of group

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<sup>8</sup>See, for example, Gregory (1987) and Soja's self-conscious postmodern geography (1986, 1989).



struggle over the control of space (Gottdiener 1986a, 214-215).

Gottdiener touches upon the realm of contest and negotiation which is the nexus of my own study. In keeping with this conception of meaning and the urban environment Gottdiener sees the compelling realm of research to be an examination of:

...the struggles for control of spaces and the manner by which certain ideological representations succeed while other fail to materialize their traces (Gottdiener 1986a, 216).

This study, with its focus on two cases of conflict around urban redevelopment in London, offers a context in which this highly political process of contest around real and imagined environments can be explored.<sup>9</sup>

While there is much rhetoric about the need to bring together cultural and material concerns in the analysis of meaning and the environment, there are few examples of applied research where this has successfully been achieved. In many of the historical/cultural studies which work from landscape tradition we enter the 'material' realm simply through broad sweep assertions about the nature of capitalism and its material processes. Similarly, while new trends within locality studies have begun to point to the need to address local cultures in understanding economic restructuring, most have only touched upon an elaboration how culture and capital intersect in the local context (see Jackson forthcoming; Sayer 1989a, 1989b; Thrift 1990).

Successfully combining an understanding of the intersection between cultural values with a detailed analysis of economic and political forces has been a persistently difficult empirical project. A number of relevant exceptions have been generated by those working from a revised political economy perspective and specifically concerned with urban transformations (e.g. Beauregard 1984, 1986, 1989; Harvey 1979, 1985b, 1987, 1989a, 1989b; King, A. 1990; Smith and Williams 1986; Zukin 1986, 1988a, 1988b). Some of the most interesting and relevant studies have focused on the process of 'gentrification' and the role of taste and consumption practices in the revalorization of urban areas.

In the opening out of Marxist perspectives Zukin (1988a) notes that postmodernism, and particularly Jameson's (1984) article on the 'cultural logic of late capitalism', had

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<sup>9</sup>Appleyard (1979, 277) stresses situations of conflict as a source of heightened meaning in his more mechanistic conception of the built environment as communication. Similarly, Pahl (1975, 151) identified the built environment as a product of urban conflict in which 'ideologies rise and fall'.



an enormous impact on urban studies. In Zukin's view (1988a, 433) it allowed urban studies 'to bring culture out of the superstructure and study it along with politics and economics, as a basic determinant of material forms'. However, in this same article Zukin warns against the 'seductiveness' of literary as opposed to conventional political and economic models of the city and suggests that there is a need to move beyond the 'sensual evocation' of the city that postmodern studies tend to generate. She calls for attention not only to the 'consumption' of space but the 'production' of space: postmodernism as a 'social process' (Zukin 1988a, 434). Thus it is important to acknowledge the aesthetics of postmodernism, such as the historic environment and heritage, but it is also important to push our understanding beyond a mere documentation of this process, to deal with the 'relationship between visualization and social reconstruction' (Zukin 1988a, 434). An adequate analysis of 'postmodernization' requires attention to both the 'structural forces and political, economic and cultural institutions' (Zukin 1988a, 435). Zukin (1986, 1988a, 1988b) has applied her programme to the transformation of loft space in New York's SoHo. She concentrates primarily upon the real estate market, but does so with a keen eye for how culture, expressed through the art market and historical preservation, intersects and becomes a critical ingredient in economic and political processes that have transformed New York's loft space into 'valorized' space. As such, culture does matter in her analysis of the transformation of loft space.

Beauregard's appraisal of explanations of the gentrification process also highlights the need to incorporate an understanding of the cultural mediation of this form of urban transformation. His attention to 'taste', imagery, familial practices and different discourses of gentrification (from those of the promoters to those of the analyst) highlights the significant and multi-dimensional way in which culture intersects with capital in this urban process. Beauregard points out that the gentrification process is far more than simply economic restructuring or an urban manifestation of uneven development. Smith, N., who originally proposed the uneven development thesis (1984), has also revised and extended his explanation of gentrification and other examples of urban transformation around a more complex theorizing of culture and capital (see Smith, N. 1986).

In Harvey's sustained analysis of the condition of postmodernity much attention is given to cultural expressions, in art, literature, architecture, film. However, Harvey's description of the cultural manifestations of the postmodern condition does not see him betray his commitment to explanation by way of a Marxist analysis based around capital (if flexible) accumulation. His analysis is firmly grounded in the view forwarded



by Jameson (1984), which sees all these changes as symptoms or cultural expressions of time-space compression under late capitalism. In such 'disruptive' times, Harvey (1989b, 327-327) somewhat glibly argues, we 'turn to aesthetics'. A problematic thesis also forwarded by Lash (1990).

In many of these studies which emanate from those who have strong connections to a Marxist political economy perspective, culture does ultimately still 'serve' capital. Although these studies offer us ways to reconcile the false dichotomy between culture and material (the old base/superstructure opposition) by acknowledging the role of culture in capital processes, they have difficulty providing a detailed account of how culture 'works' in this 'collusion'. What are the means by which culture can come to 'serve' capital, if indeed that is all it does? Or more importantly, how does culture work to create and reproduce disparities which may manifest themselves in economic and material terms?

My study does not concentrate in detail upon the forces of capital that give rise to the processes of urban change exposed in the case studies, it is a study which approaches these processes from a cultural perspective. However, it is hoped that the exploration of the cultural practices surrounding these changes builds on the understanding of the way in which values and meanings associated with the urban environment become a constituent part of processes of transformation therein.

### 2.3. Heritage and the City

Many of the studies which have sought to explore the nexus between culture and urban transformation have focused upon 'heritage' landscapes and conservation values. They are clearly manifest examples of 'culture' in the city. In this final section I examine these studies within the context of the recent contemporary British interest in the past and the critique of this interest, the 'heritage debate', as outlined in the Introduction. An exploration of how heritage values have become a part of urban transformation provides one way of extending the empirical focus of the heritage critique outside of contrived realms such as the museum. Exploring heritage in this context has the potential to uncover how the heritage ideology and aesthetic has gained and maintains its pervasiveness, how conservation ideas variously manifest themselves and, significantly, how they intersect with other interests that do not see conservation or heritage as primary goals.

Bommes and Wright (1982) identify a relevant tension between heritage interests and the push for new accumulative cycles of capital associated with property



redevelopment. Such cycles of accumulation entail 'widespread change and actual demolition' bringing this process into direct conflict with heritage interests, most obviously with those seeking the preservation of historic buildings and townscapes. They suggest that the exploration of this conflict deserves far more consideration if its 'forms' are to become clearer (Bommes and Wright 1982, 275). This issue of spatial fixity and expression and capital mobility has been developed more fully within geography by Neil Smith in his uneven development thesis (Smith, N. 1982, 1984). Wright (1985a) touches, in his own journalistic but evocative style, upon this theme in his study of gentrification in Stoke Newington. In so doing he teases out many of the class and race implications of a gentrification process which is played out not simply through economics but through the consumption and transformation of the historic built environment.

An analysis of planning issues and urban forms which reflect conservation and heritage values has proved a fruitful and traditional research focus within geography. Some of these studies (see Ford 1978, 1979; Fusch and Ford 1983; Larkham 1988; Relph 1987) simply document the emergence of conservation policy and aesthetics and the impact this has had on the urban environment. They are distinctive in their uncritical acceptance of conservation and heritage aesthetics as 'good', a necessary counter to the evils of modernism in architecture and planning. Such studies do highlight the conflict between the modernist aesthetic, processes of renewal in the city and heritage impulses, but repeatedly and uncritically favour the old as a counter to the ills of modernism and processes of urban transformation under capitalism.

Tunbridge (1981) moves closer to a politicized understanding of conservation and heritage ideology in the urban scene through his description of the 'cultural function' of conservation in terms of recreation and 'lifestyle'. However, only in concluding does Tunbridge allude to the fact that there may be power/class implications in conservation policy, asserting the middle-class underpinnings of conservation and the possible 'costs' of inner city conservation to poorer-income groups in the inner cities. In later work, Tunbridge (1984) develops the issue of the intersection between heritage impulses and differentially empowered interests.

Oliver, Punter, and Hall in separate contributions to the same edited volume (Gold and Burgess 1982) provide added insights to the role heritage values play in the urban planning process. In particular, Oliver demonstrates that townscape planning has favoured the historic aesthetic and while, ideologically it celebrates diversity, it has left an indelible and identifiable imprint on the urban form. Her study, in its depiction of

uniformity in diversity and the hegemony of a particular townscape aesthetic, shows the modernist potential of the supposedly postmodern turn to an historical aesthetic in the urban scene.

From within historical geography too, there is a growing awareness of the need to examine critically the reworking of 'the past' into heritage. As yet there is little evidence of empirical-based work. Hardy (1988) proposes that historical geographers can contribute both in their traditional role as documentors of the historic landscape and in attention to meaning and ideology. He makes an interesting, but rarely developed distinction in his overview of heritage, between 'heritage as a conservative concept' and 'heritage as a radical concept'. A parallel distinction colours my work which consciously focuses on both conservative and radical manifestations of the heritage impulse in the urban context, although I take a far more critical stance on the ideological status and the tensions between these two strands of heritage. In this sense my approach to heritage also differs substantially from that advocated by Tunbridge (1989) in his response to Hardy's programme for how historical geography could engage with the issue of heritage. Tunbridge (1989, 317) suggests that heritage is an 'explicitly geographical phenomenon' which should be 'monitored...from an essentially dispassionate perspective' without advocacy or condemnation. An assertion which rests uneasily with his own empirical work which, as mentioned, has helped move the analysis of heritage environments towards an understanding of their political implications. This study differs markedly from this non-critical programme. In my attention to variable heritage impulses with differing and often contradictory ideological lineages, I seek to uncover the political implications not only of dominant rightists impulses but also of oppositional impulses.

There are a number of studies dealing with the general theme of conservation and heritage which more explicitly tackle the relationship between this cultural process and economic processes. For example, Goss's development of a critical 'architectural geography', which deals in part with heritage values and conservation, suggests that there is a need to understand the 'production' of older buildings through the role of finance and property capital (Goss 1988, 401). He points to the potential of the exploration of the theme of symbolic capital but, perhaps through a too limited interpretation of ideology, depicts this type of study as significant because of its potential to expose the role culture plays in mystifying economic relations.

Again working from the general theme of meaning and the built environment, Rowntree and Conkey (1980) seek out historic preservation activities in Salzburg. Through an



historical account of its emergence they collude with the position of Weiner (1981), suggesting that historical preservation is a response to 'stress' in society. In this account they do touch upon some of the broad dynamics in this process, for example, the shift of the preservation emphasis from an elite to a popular force. However, their prime concern is with developing the thesis of the cultural landscape, in this case the historic built environment, as a 'cosmological scheme of a society'. In pursuing this project they fail to enter into the issues of power and ideology. This is less so with Cuthbert's treatment of conservation landscapes and capital accumulation in Hong Kong. He stresses not only the link between capital and conservation aesthetics (Cuthbert 1984) but also the complexity that may arise from the intersection of an Imperial conservation ideology and an incoming socialist ideology (Cuthbert 1987). As such Cuthbert offers an insight into the complexity of conservation aesthetics not simply in their link with capital but with differentially empowered political interests in a context of change.

Working from an entirely different theoretical position, Knox (1982b, 1984, 1987) and Dear (1986) attempt to apply postmodern ideas and methods to the issue of planning in the built environment. In so doing they also tease out issues relating to urban conservation and heritage. Knox deals with shifts in planning practice and the urban environment in the post-Fordist city of flexible accumulation. At least part of that process has entailed a shift in planning towards more participatory modes aimed at 'halting renewal [and] preserving and enhancing the neighbourhood lifeworld' (Knox 1987b, 544). Knox points out that while this trend may be read as a postmodernism either of resistance or of reaction, it is more likely part of a slippery, but globally driven postmodernism of flexible accumulation. This 'postmodernism of restructuring' in planning holds the potential not only for heritage environments but also for a conflation between these values and the forces of development capital. Dear (1986) points out that there is an undercurrent of approval for the turn away from modernist planning and architectural style to a more located and historically referent urban 'style'. Yet he complains that this has made way for a planning practice of pastiche, where universal visions are replaced by more flexible but equally vulnerable strategies based around both penetration (state intervention) and commodification (capital intervention).

Some of the more recent studies on gentrification mentioned previously have also begun to reveal the link between cycles of capital accumulation in the city and heritage ideology and aesthetics. Beauregard (1986) points to the importance of the heritage aesthetic in the complex and diverse reproduction and consumption processes associated with gentrification. Zukin (1986, 1988b) provides an explicit case study of

this in her study of loft revalorization in New York's SoHo. She identifies 'heritage capital' as a specific element of the 'cultural capital' which has a critical legitimating role in economic expansion of the property market of the city through the revalorization of space. Jager (1986) documents a similar process in Melbourne where the Australian colonial aesthetic has played a role in consolidating and expressing the class basis of urban gentrification.

A number of these studies hint at the problematic tension between the processes of gentrification and the ideology (and reality) of community, a theme of particular relevance to my work. Beauregard (1986, 36), for example, implies that gentrification is 'leagues removed from the sense of "community" it was once meant to convey' because part of the gentrification process entails the commodification and manipulation of the idea of community or neighbourhood. Mills (1988) study of 'life on the upslope', Vancouver, uncovers a similar role for 'heritage' values in urban restructuring, expressed not only in historically informed architectural style but in broader counter-urban notions of the 'community' or the 'human scale'.

The turn to a more conscious historicism in the urban scene (and more generally) has become one of the contemporary cultural hallmarks included in a broader debate around the nature of modernity and postmodernity (see Berman 1982; Cooke 1990; Harvey 1989b; Jencks 1984; Lash 1988, 1990; Ryan 1988). Davis (1985) extends the exploration of this tension and argues that postmodern urban style, in part expressed through conservation planning and in part through historically informed new architecture, is underpinned by an anti-urban impulse which has the potential to 'polarize' the city into 'radically antagonistic spaces'. He suggests that a return to 'heritage' is not a return to a more 'caring' urban expression but a part of a 'massified modernism'. He points to the disempowering potential of conservation ideology and asserts that it will herald the end to urban reform. Cooke (1990) notes that a characteristic of modernity was the reification of the powerful in museums and monuments. Part of the postmodern condition (which for Cooke is a condition of late capitalism) is the opening out of this reification process to include an 'aestheticization of the ordinary past', the 'democratization' of culture and a 'policy of community' (Cooke 1990, 54-57). Cooke (1990, 105) points out that there is an appearance of an oppositional potential in its 'subversion, irreverence, parody and sensitivity to locality, and even [its] degree of popular democracy'. However, Cooke argues that the appeal to ideas of community and the authority of tradition is at once populist and reactionary.



My two cases also illustrate that 'heritage' values in the city can be expressed through a much broader set of ideas than simply the built form. Through my constructed tension between 'making monuments' and 'imagining communities' I reveal that urban heritage is far more than an issue of old buildings, it also intersects with social constructs and the revalorization and reworking of such constructs.

#### 2.4. Towards Methodology

The preceding overview of the theoretical underpinnings of this work has mapped out a number of important concepts. Working from a revised Marxist position I conceive of culture as being in a dialectically constitutive relationship with the material world, both in terms of capital and the material environment (which in the urban is such a clear expression of capital). Culture is theorized in terms of its close link with ideology and with differentially empowered interests. Understanding culture and its relationship with other social and material realms therefore requires the application of the concept of hegemony. In using this concept I work away from a dominant ideology thesis and accept the presence and importance of a dynamic and recursive hegemony, which holds the obvious capacity for domination but also the potential for resistance. Through attention to a broad realm of symbolic practices, which includes both discourse and action, it is possible to explore the complex role culture plays in urban change. I undertake this through a specific exploration of the pervasiveness of 'heritage' ideas and values in contemporary urban transformations. The theoretical programme, with its attention to contextualized discursive practices associated with heritage and the city, provides a number of specific methodological cues which are elaborated in the following chapter.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The theoretical programme outlined in the preceding chapter points to specific methodological options. It suggests a qualitative procedure based on ethnographic accounts of contextualized communicative realms of discourse and action (see Eyles and Smith 1988). In the following I deal with methodology at four levels. Firstly, I tackle the general issue of the politics of fieldwork. Secondly, I focus on issues of technique and on the manner in which the study was conducted. Thirdly, I turn to issues of analysis, that is, how sense is made of the material gathered. Finally, I address the issue of textual strategy and how the material is presented.

#### 3.1. The Politics of Fieldwork

In undertaking this research I sought to become directly involved in the conflicts associated with the two cases of urban redevelopment in the City and Spitalfields. Participatory research of this kind has its own politics associated with the interaction between the researcher and the researched. It is a method and politics that I am familiar with, albeit in a radically different context - that of Australian Aborigines (Jacobs 1988a, 1988b, 1989). In my previous work, I had access to resources and information that the Aborigines I worked with were denied. This gave me considerable 'power': I was a needed and exploitable resource in the Aboriginal community. By the same token, I was white, middle-class, female, single, and childless. These characteristics often meant that I was denied access to certain realms of Aboriginal life and knowledge.

This study has not, in the main, dealt with marginalized groups. As will become apparent in the case material, many (although not all) of the 'players' in these two urban struggles are influential people: professionals: wealthy and/or establishment figures: intellectuals. Despite this, the field work was no less imbued with a particular researcher/researched politics. A different set of my own characteristics mattered. Above all it mattered that I am Australian, that I could not be 'located' in terms of certain known families, places or classes, but could be 'located' as yet another colonial interested in her British roots.<sup>1</sup> The groups I worked with were, for the most part, well resourced and I was not seen as having skills or resources that could be of use.

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<sup>1</sup>Often in interviews respondents would talk in terms of 'we do that here' meaning 'us in Britain' or begin an explanation by saying 'in Britain..', exposing their persistent perception of me as an outsider.



Indeed, there had been so much recent criticism of heritage interests that I was occasionally even regarded with suspicion by the conservation groups. The exception to this was the local opposition group in Spitalfields who lacked many resources: here I adopted a more familiar researcher/researched relationship.

The politics of studying 'up' (powerful or privileged groups) rather than 'down' (working class or marginal or exotic groups) is rarely addressed and yet has immediate implications for field strategies. In terms of my own research, it precipitated an imbalance in my involvement with the varying groups. For example, with professionals and particularly the national heritage amenity groups, only a 'formal' participation and interaction was possible. Interviews were arranged by appointment and often were of limited duration (as short as 30 minutes). With less powerful and under-resourced interests, I was able to participate more informally and intimately.

My research produced a revealing continuum of differential access. At one end Peter Palumbo and James Stirling, developer and architect for the City redevelopment scheme, refused to speak to me. National amenity groups and local heritage groups co-operated but with a wariness which seemed to be associated in part to the recent criticisms of conservation generated by the heritage critique (see Chapter 1) and in part by their tradition of operating around exclusive class links which I failed to fit. Local action groups, both in the City and in Spitalfields, were generous with their time and I was able to become closely involved in both. The enigma of the continuum proved to be the radical academic Raphael Samuel, an experienced researcher of 'those below'. Raphael Samuel was involved in the local Spitalfields scene, and although repeatedly agreeing to meet with me to be 'interviewed', two and a half years of phonecalls did not produce the promised meeting.

Overlaying the interactional politics of fieldwork were my own politics. This too shaped the nature of my involvement in the cases. As will become apparent, varying interest groups involved in the redevelopment controversies had different political allegiances, although these were not always overtly stated. The national amenity societies and the City local opposition group were joined by a commitment to the centre/right political spectrum (Liberal, SLD, Conservative). The Spitalfields local opposition group had clear affiliations with the Left (the local Labour Party, trade unions and a variety of local Left initiatives). In terms of my personal politics my sympathies rested with the local Spitalfields campaign. Hopefully this has not precluded a critical stance on their perspective, nor an overly critical stance on the centre/right groups. These issues of researcher/researched politics contextualize the account to follow. As Clifford and Marcus (1986, 8) note, the ethnographer deals in 'partial truths' which are met through

'an open-ended series of contingent, power-laden encounters' which reflect personal and ideological characteristics of both the researcher and the researched.

The politics of fieldwork also entails the ethics of fieldwork (Jackson 1983; Smith, D.M. 1988): issues of negotiating access to groups and material, being explicit about research aims with those involved, anonymity and so forth. Once again the varying nature of the interests involved greatly influenced this area. It is now common practice with in-depth studies of identifiable groups and communities for the identity of the individuals being researched to be protected. For example, place names can be changed and real names substituted with imaginary ones. Such procedures are particularly necessary in cases where less powerful groups are being studied or where certain political imperatives demand anonymity. However, I have elected not to adopt this approach in this study.

The study is based largely around individuals and groups who are actively participating in publicly enacted conflicts over urban redevelopment. As such, they have consciously and willingly entered into a public realm independent of my research. Many of these people are professionals or are associated with official conservation groups and have a public profile even outside of the particular urban conflicts upon which I concentrate. With individuals who fall into these categories I use real names. However, there were some individuals who participated 'behind the scenes' and did so often with some risk to their professional status. Others were 'ordinary' people, with no public identity outside of these conflicts. In these cases I do not use their names.

There are also sound theoretical reasons for identifying participants when ethics allow. My theoretical position asserts the importance of understanding 'authorship': who speaks and the background of those who speak. In the case of public figures, the full implications of their 'authorship' can only be conveyed if real names are used. In some cases the public figures in these conflicts are so idiosyncratic and well known that to not use real names but to retain other descriptive details would be mere lip service to ethics.

Another aspect of the politics and ethics of fieldwork is negotiating access. A range of strategies were used which were sensitive to the differential power relations and the professional status of the various groups and individuals. In the case of national amenity groups I wrote notifying them of my research topic and my desire to talk with them. I did not seek to participate regularly in these groups as preliminary inquiries had revealed that they were virtually 'closed shops'. In the case of local groups in the City and Spitalfields, I wrote explaining my research, asking to speak with representatives, and to participate in any way I might. I had an immediate response from the local



Spitalfields group, the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers. I went to a meeting, explained my interests and was allowed to attend meetings thereafter.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the local group in the City, the CARE campaign, progress was slower. I first encountered them when the public inquiry was in full swing, when paranoia was rife and activity intense. It was not until after the inquiry, when the political scene ameliorated somewhat, and they knew me better that I was able to start attending meetings and gain access to their records.

There was a notable difference in the way I entered the City and Spitalfields cases. In the case of the City my first encounter with most of the participating groups, after the introductory letter, was at the public inquiry. The fact that I sat through the four week inquiry and took notes of everything that did not appear in written proofs of evidence became a valuable asset. Firstly, it meant I became known as the person doing the research. Secondly, although by and large the various participants in this inquiry were well resourced, there was one thing I had that they did not: a full transcript, based on my copious notes, of all the cross examination proceedings. My providing of copies of the cross examinations helped to consolidate a working relationship.

The local Spitalfields Campaign was far less well-resourced. They had little money and relied largely on volunteer help from the core of regular participants. While the more powerful and better resourced conservation groups certainly did not call on me for help, Woodward and I became a valuable resource for the Spitalfields Campaign. We could do research in the library, we could write reports for newsletters, we could flypost the developers' hoardings, we could collect signatures for petitions, we could sit up all night and do an observation survey of traffic congestion around the Market and write a report that sounded vaguely scientific. The entire relationship with the Spitalfields Campaign worked around an exchange: we did certain tasks to help the Campaign, and they let us attend meetings, interview them, pour through their correspondence and record files. The relationship became a close one and friendships and obligations were forged with this group which were not forged with participants in the City case or other Spitalfields interests.

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<sup>2</sup>I was in fact one of a number of researchers involved with the group, a situation which caused its own set of possibilities and difficulties (Jacobs and Woodward 1989). The Spitalfields group was approached by five separate researchers during its campaign. At one meeting of the Campaign there were more researchers in attendance than bona fide participants!

### 3.2. The Strategies of Research: Techniques of Concept and Method.

In the next part of this chapter I will outline the techniques and field strategies used to build an ethnography of contextualized communicative practices associated with the role of 'heritage' ideas in the dynamics of urban redevelopment in London. These strategies include, firstly, an attempt to introduce synchronicity through two case studies; secondly, the tracing of the lineage or genealogy of both the interests ('authors') and the ideas; thirdly, a sensitivity to inter-textuality, i.e. how discourses were consolidated and challenged and the relationship between public and private discourses; and finally, setting discourse into a broader field of cultural, political and material practices and processes.

In the following section I look firstly at the role of the two case approach and then turn to the detail of the techniques used in collecting data.

#### 3.2.1. Orchestrating Understanding: the two case approach.

In this study I have used two detailed case studies of urban redevelopment to generate the empirical core of the work. In method then this work engages with a range of methodologists who have advocated the use of the case study approach and, in particular, the use of a multiple case approach.

A case study approach provided the opportunity to explore my general theme of the role of 'heritage' in urban transformation by way of building an ethnography of redevelopment conflict. The case study approach allowed for the type of 'thick description' advocated by Geertz (1973). Such an approach is often adopted because of its supposed potential to work towards a 'wholeness' of understanding based on sensitivity to context, the inter-relatedness of features and dynamics of events within a case (Donovan 1988; Mitchell 1983). These are qualities of understanding which tend to be lost in abstract analytic procedures. However, case studies are not simply detailed accounts, usually in the narrative style, of a case in its 'entirety'. It may be possible to get closer to a 'wholeness' or depth of understanding through a case study approach, but such accounts still have limitations and biases.

Doubts about the explanatory powers of case studies have long dogged the method. Initially those promoting a case study approach worked in reaction to the privileged status given to quantifying methods and theory building. Thus, while a case study approach is advocated, and along with it a range of qualitative techniques, there remains an emphasis on searching for generalities, laws, universal processes (see Burgess 1982; Gluckman 1961; Goodenough 1970; Mitchell 1983; van Velsen 1967).



Case studies within this explanatory framework worked to 'test', 'validate' or 'extend' theoretical understanding. Others have taken a more 'relativist' position. For example, Pickvance (1986) also sees the comparative case approach as serving the project of building and testing theoretical models. However, he opens the way for comparative application of differing models, thereby moving away from case material serving a 'universal' theory towards a position of 'plural causation' (Pickvance 1986, 178-179).<sup>3</sup>

Recent locality studies (e.g. Bagguley et al. 1990; Cooke 1989; Lancaster Regionalism Group 1985; Massey 1984; Morgan and Sayer 1988) have sought to provide several linked (and contemporaneous) projects working to a common theoretical agenda about the local impact of industrial restructuring. These studies have done much to dismantle the idiographic-nomothetic debate associated with detailed case studies and assert the validity and necessity of the 'empirical specifications' of 'time-space distancing' (Sayer 1989b, 259; see also Thrift 1990).

In adopting a two-case approach I have sought to establish an empirical framework which would at once point to local variations of more general processes - specifically, urban transformation and the complicity of a heritage ideology in this process (Sayer 1989a, 1989b; Thrift 1990); but also expose a range of alternative and differentially empowered 'truths' about the valued past as locally expressed (Clifford 1986, 12). By drawing out complexities, contradictions and tensions in the ideas of history circulating in the urban environment, the pervasive nature of the hegemony of heritage values in urban transformation could be explored.

The selection of two distinct cases is also tied to the theoretical project of understanding cultural hegemony. Studies which have sought to access the nature of hegemony have tended to focus either on the dominant and powerful or upon the subordinated and less powerful. Documenting the multiple manifestations of an ideology within both empowered and disempowered groups is less common. For example, Marcus (1986) points out that Willis' seminal study of working class boys which attempts to explore this complexity is still based on a detailed 'ethnography of the working class, and just assumes an ethnographic perspective on the middle class' (Marcus 1986, 186). My own study holds the potential to move away from this problematic of understanding hegemony through the perspective of only one experience of that hegemonic structure. Through the two cases I encounter not just one type of dominant group, but many, and I am able to document the different ways in which they engage with 'heritage'. I am also able to explore resistant views where 'heritage' values persist but are challenged and transformed. This approach enables

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<sup>3</sup>See Wallman (1984) for a good example of a multiple case study.

me to see the many dimensions or sides of the cultural hegemony of heritage: its domination, its appropriation, resistance and collusion.

A related issue is that of synchronicity. In the chapter on theory I touched on the value of a synchronic approach in the project of contextualizing discourse (Ley 1987; Schorske 1961). My two cases offer an alternate strategy of synchronicity based on different localities which evoke different, but deeply interconnected, social, cultural and ideological perspectives. Marcus (1986, 171-173) advocates a similar strategy of 'simultaneity' through what he calls 'multi-locale ethnographies' in which selected locales are:

...explored ethnographically and mutually linked by the intended and unintended consequences of activities within them (Marcus 1986, 171).

Marcus suggests that the locales should be 'strategically selected'. My selection of two cases of simultaneously occurring redevelopment in the City of London and Spitalfields was consciously 'strategic'. The two cases cannot be justified by any argument of 'typicality', which is often of such concern to those who conceive of case studies as a legitimate part of the the model or theory building project.<sup>4</sup> My cases are in no sense 'typical' and it is their distinct but interconnected 'atypicality' that adds to their explanatory potential in my study.

As has been indicated in the introductory chapter, the two cases are set apart by their distinctive social, economic and political characteristics. As the City is a site of wealth, so Spitalfields is a site of poverty: as the City is central so Spitalfields is marginal. The patent uniqueness of and contrast between the two areas were essential criterion for their selection. The overt diversity provided the opportunity to explore how ideas about the past are variably manifest in entirely different economic, social and political contexts. Yet the two cases are geographically proximate and the two redevelopments which are the focal point of the analysis are tied to a common process of capital accumulation and urban transformation associated with the expansion of the City's financial functions. There is a connectedness between these two cases that matters. The material and cultural links between the two areas, the tense interdependence, adds depth to the exploration of the ideas circulating about the two places and the proposed redevelopments.

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<sup>4</sup>Although those who advocate the use of case studies as part of a broader theory-building project acknowledge that it is often the 'atypical' case that contributes most to the extension and elaboration of theories (Mitchell 1983, 203)



The presence of two simultaneous redevelopment controversies provided comparable 'contemporary political moments'. Both areas faced imminent change to which there was considerable opposition. These cases of urban redevelopment were seen as prime arenas through which to explore ideas about the past which were, in the context of imminent change, in open conflict. These battles teased out distinct and differentially empowered ideas about the two locations. Certain visions or representation may win while others may lose, certain views may dominate the way the urban environment is talked about while others may be marginalized. Some views may be conscious resistance, other views may be readily incorporated into or appropriated by the more powerful.

The two cases are not set within a strict comparative model but serve to illuminate one another. Kapferer follows a similar strategy in his account of nationalism in Australia and Sri Lanka in which he notes that:

...an understanding of one nationalist or cultural form is extended by placing it into a critical and dialectical relation to another [thus allowing]..vital dimensions of Australian life [to be] thrown into general significance through the lens of Sri Lanka, and vice versa (Kapferer 1988, xii).

By tracing how ideas about conserving the past manifest themselves in two parts of London around two simultaneous redevelopment projects, one case has helped to elucidate the other. I have been able to trace starkly dominant versions of the past as well as starkly resistant versions. And I have been able to see these two poles fuse and manifest themselves in complex, local versions which play with both dominant and resistant histories.

### 3.2.2. The Techniques

In pursuit of a contextualized understanding of the politics and poetics of heritage ideas in urban redevelopment I used three basis research methods, each serving a range of purposes. The methods and their use in the collection of ethnographic detail can be summarized thus:

#### 1. Participant observation:

- of public discursive realms: the planning inquiry/select committee hearing.
- of meetings of accessible interest groups: the CARE group in the City and the Campaign to Save Spitalfields From the Developer.
- of exhibitions: held in the City and Spitalfields by a variety of interests.
- of acts of protest: fly-posting of developer hoardings in Spitalfields.

## 2. Interviews (see Appendix 3.1.):

- with selected participants.
- with officials.

## 3. Archival and secondary source research:

- of public planning and policy records.
- of historical details of the localities.
- of select organizations involved in the conflicts.
- of history of conservation and oppositional historicities.
- of material context: property pressures, the City Financial, socio-economic characteristics of the localities.

In the following I examine how these various techniques serve the objective of producing an ethnography which highlights the role of heritage values in urban redevelopment.

### 3.2.2.1. Dealing with the texts: the public discourses.

These two cases of redevelopment conflict generated a vast amount of textual material: public statements, correspondence, minutes of meetings, official reports and my own field notes (interviews and observations). It proved necessary to confine the analysis and yet retain a sense of the complexity. This was achieved, firstly, by selecting a number of key 'voices' or players who were then analysed in detail. Thus, in the City case (Chapters 5 and 7) I trace the views of the developer (Peter Palumbo) and his team, the local authority (the Corporation of London) and a local opposition group which operated in close association with a national conservation society (the CARE/SAVE Britain's Heritage coalition). In the Spitalfields case (Chapters 6 and 8) I explore the views of the developers (Rosehaugh Stanhope and the Spitalfields Development Group), the local conservation societies (The Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust and the Georgian Group), and the local opposition group (the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers) (Appendix 3.2.). In differing ways these various voices provide an insight into three key themes of the work: the interests of capital, conservation and community.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of the City and the proposal to develop No. 1 Poultry, the prime starting point for the analysis is a selection of the statements made at the public inquiry. The public inquiry ran over eighteen working days between 17 May and 17 June, 1988. It

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<sup>5</sup>This has much in common with Bagguley et al. (1990) and their approach to understanding local responses to the Lancaster Plan through a variety of 'parties'.



was the second of two inquiries into the possible redevelopment of the site.<sup>6</sup> I take a selection of the proofs of evidence presented at the No. 1 Poultry inquiry, along with the cross-examination evidence associated with these proofs, as a starting point for entering the discourse generated by this redevelopment (Table 3.1.).

In the case of Spitalfields I take a selection of statements made in two Select Committee Hearings connected with the Market redevelopment. The first House of Commons Select Committee Hearing ran for 10 working days between 8 June and 30 June 1988. A second House of Lords Select Committee Hearing ran for 9 working days between 15 May and 25 May 1989.<sup>7</sup> These Hearings were the result of the requirement to pass a Private Bill through Parliament for the relocation of the existing Market. Hearings are not planning inquiries and they differ in some important respects from the public forum which is the source of material in the City case. For example, the promoters of the Bill, the Corporation of London, did not elect to call the architect or the developers of the scheme as witnesses. Consequently, I could not use statements generated by this forum to access the discourse of these two interests. Additionally (for reasons which become apparent in the analysis) the conservation interests which played an important part in the City case were not represented in the Spitalfields Hearings. Once again, I had to rely on public statements generated outside of the Hearings to trace the public discourse of these interests in relation to the Market redevelopment (Table 3.2.).

Although there are differences in the nature of the public inquiry and the Select Committee forums, all texts are the product of individuals or groups presenting their views in a public forum where opposing interests meet. This imbues the texts with a particular context, style and political imperative. Both public forums have certain structural and procedural features in common, most notably their quasi-legal format. In the case of the public planning inquiry, an Inspector heard evidence from interested parties in the form of proofs of evidence. These are written documents which the 'witnesses' read out before the Inspector and the public audience. In the case of the Select Committee Hearings, interested groups presented evidence to a committee of four parliamentarians of differing political affiliations.

In structure the two forums are quite similar. Once the 'witness' has presented evidence he or she is open to cross-examination by the other interest groups and to further questioning by the Inspector or the Select Committee. Major interest groups generally

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<sup>6</sup>An inquiry associated with the earlier Mansion House Square scheme was conducted in 1984 but I do not deal in detail with the discourse produced (see Anderson, R. 1988).

<sup>7</sup>Much of the second Hearing reiterated evidence presented in the first Hearing although there were some interesting developments of the case which were useful in the analysis.

**TABLE 3.1. Proofs of Evidence Used from the No. 1 Poultry Inquiry**

INTEREST GROUP	WITNESS	STATUS
Corporation of London	Roy Worskett	Townscape expert
Peter Palumbo, Developer	Charles Jencks James Stirling Anthony Blee	Architectural & Team Historian Architect Planner
CARE/SAVE	Victor Stock Sophie Andrea Jennifer Freeman	Rector, St Mary-le- Bow Secretary SAVE SAVE consultant

**TABLE 3.2. PROOFS OF EVIDENCE USED FROM THE SPITALFIELDS SELECT COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

INTEREST GROUP	WITNESS	STATUS
Campaign to Save Spitalfields	Jil Cove Raphael Samuel Charles Forman Kay Jordan	Chair, SSC Socialist Historian Housing expert SSBA
Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Com.	Peter Studdert	Head Planner
Spitalfields Development/ Corporation of London	Various Witnesses	



present their cases through a barrister. The legal framing does much to shape the discourse of these public forums. Major interest groups generally have a well-formulated case written in collaboration with the barrister. The flow of argument and the presentation of evidence conforms to legal practice and rhetoric in many respects. The formality of these forums means that the texts produced are highly organized and tight presentations of a particular argument, often concealing contradictions and tensions (see Kress and Hodge 1979, 12-13; also, Irvine 1984). However, the cross-examination often generates more spontaneous statements.

In both cases my analysis of the texts produced by these two forums was supplemented by analysis of a range of other public statements: exhibition texts and representations, promotional brochures or information booklets, newsletters and broadsheets. Finally in a number of cases, most notably in the case of the conservation interests and the local opposition interests, I was able to have access to organizational files. These contained, among other things, letters soliciting support or stating views. Although generally less public in intent, they were often reiterations or elaborations of more publicly stated views.

These varying sources provided one strand of the basic raw material for the analysis to follow. In relying on these materials I am sensitive to their status as public statements which in the main work to convince a larger audience, and at times must conform to official procedures imposed by the quasi-legal forums. In this sense they may be seen as the 'front' region of the communicative practice surrounding these redevelopments. Goffman (1959, 1967, 1974) has dealt at length with the distinction between back and front regions of practice. He notes that front regions are notable for their conscious coherence. Potentially compromising or contradictory features of communicative practice are confined to back regions. Certainly public statements associated with these two cases were carefully formulated, and had a logic and coherence suited to their purpose of convincing wider interests of their point of view. Despite their contrived nature, their often obvious theatricality of language and expression, the statements remain valuable sources of understanding. While I accept Goffman's distinction between front and back regions I do not assume that the front region because it is more contrived is any less 'real' or revealing. Because of its features of conformity and purposeful coercion, the front region can tell much of the basic logic of hegemony.

Although these public statements are looked at in detail they are not examined in isolation. In keeping with my theoretical assertions I have sought at all times to contextualize these public statements. I will now turn to the other techniques used to assist in this programme of contextualization.

### 3.2.2.2. Tracing lineage: the historical method.

One of the prime techniques I use to contextualize the material is the historical method. Through this I elaborate the lineage or genealogy of the ideas, the interest groups, and the individuals involved in these two cases of conflict over urban redevelopment. Firstly, in tracing the history of the ideas at work in these two cases I have paid particular attention to the emergence of conservation and community ideas which are critical elements of contemporary urban discourse and practice. This historical background has drawn on both archival and secondary sources. It has been undertaken at a general level and also in relation to the particularities of the two case areas.

A second type of lineage is that of the specific interest groups involved. This has been done using written publications or records of the selected interest groups and interviews with key members. I have been able to build a picture of their development: when they emerged, what their basic ideologies are, what their previous interests have been, how they have traditionally responded to redevelopment, what political affiliation they have, and so on.

A third strand of lineage related not to ideas or the interest group, but to the individual players. While a historical portrait of a 'group' or an 'ideology' may reveal certain features, it is important to retain a sense of the individuals involved. Individuals bring to a group their own personality and interests and recast shared ideologies in their own style, enacting values in differing ways. In developing a sense of the profiles of those involved I used a range of sources. In the case of well-known personalities (who tended to be those to refuse me an interview) I was able to rely on press coverage and on conventional sources like Who's Who. In other cases the interview became a prime source of this important personal information. The interviews provided much in terms of the 'authorship' of the public statements. It is important to know if the speaker is 'local', or 'expert', Bengali or Jewish, a committed socialist or a liberal activist. In this sense the interviews did not simply provide information on the individual but information on the context of the individual's discursive realm: the other things they were involved with, the depth and breadth or the shallowness of their commitment to the ideas presented in the public realm.

### 3.2.2.3. Behind public voices: interviews and participant observation.

A critical assumption of this work has been that the public statements are but one element of a more complex realm of discourse and practice. The historical method



outlined previously helped to reveal part of this complexity. An additional technique was to access the arenas in which the discourses were produced. This was achieved in two ways. Firstly, through the interviewing of certain players and, secondly, through participating in action and more informal discursive practices.

The interviews served both to provide details of lineage and as an opportunity for the selected players to comment on the content and style of their public statements. I asked those interviewed to comment on their use of language, the sort of images and values that I saw as underpinning their public statements. The interviews became a forum in which the publicly stated discourse was on the one hand reiterated in a less 'formal' realm, and on the other hand critically appraised by the producers.<sup>8</sup> The access I had to the records of some of the participating groups also helped in this process. Many of the letters in these records revealed the flow of action and the strategies of campaigning which worked to produce the final public statements.

The prime procedure for moving 'behind' the public discourse was the attending of meetings and participating in other less public activities (Evans 1988; Eyles 1988). I was able to attend meetings of the CARE group in the City and the Save Spitalfields Campaign, both local opposition groups. Through these meetings I gained access to discussions about the public discourse and public action. It was in the arena of the meeting that decisions were made about what should be said and done publicly. It was in the meetings that the contradictions and tensions which tend to be edited from public statements and acts were clearly manifest (Kress and Hodge 1979, 12-13). Through the meetings, public discourses and actions were set within the context both of conscious strategy and everyday practice. Attending meetings of the CARE group in the City and the Save Spitalfields group allowed me to enter the action of the conflicts. These conflicts are not simply about words and images: they are about action and, at times, inaction.

As noted, my participation in the action of the conflicts was fuller in the case of the under-resourced Spitalfields group. In the case of this group I attended meetings, often weekly, for over two years. I also attended meetings between the Campaign and other organizations, including the developers. In addition to the Campaign meetings, I attended a range of other meetings held in Spitalfields by other groups, either

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<sup>8</sup>This has some coincidence with Thompson's principle of self-reflection (1984, 145) which asserts that the 'objects' of analysis are also 'subjects capable of action and reflection' and can critically engage with discursive interpretations. As I interviewed following the public inquiries and the generation of the main public statements I was able to use the interviews to 'test' some of my preliminary interpretations in front of participants.

specifically on the Spitalfields Market redevelopment or on the other large developments proposed for this area. I was able to participate to a much lesser extent in a selection of CARE meetings in the City (five meetings only). Apart from the attendance of meetings my involvement in the action of the City case was limited.

In both cases the grand events of the action were the public inquiries and Select Committee Hearings. I attended both forums as often as possible. I took note not only of what was said but of the surroundings in which things were said, such as which exhibits were there. I also took note of who had lunch with whom, who was friendly to whom. All this provided details of the ethnography of these interests, their informal links and alliances, which were often quite different from the enforced enemy status engendered by the confrontational structure of these hearings.

Finally, I participated in informal 'meetings' and events: chats at the Royal Academy exhibition with the head of the CARE campaign, attending a Lord Mayor's dinner as a guest of City retailers, beers with the Spitalfields group at the local pub, a holiday on a canal boat called the Rosa Luxembourg owned by a Spitalfields campaigner. All these experiences added to my understanding of the contextual realm of the public discourse.

### 3.3. Giving Voice to Discourse

The preceding account has outlined the procedures adopted to collect the material upon which the thesis is based. In this next section I address the complex issue of how to analyse and deal with the vast amount of material generated by these two cases and the field techniques. Understanding for Geertz is an 'interpretive project' in which 'structures of signification' are identified through the many dimensions of context, authorship of signs and the 'flow of behaviour' within a cultural group. The methodology for presenting this interpretation is Geertz's (1973, 17) much cited 'thick description'. I have relied on an interpretive approach which synthesizes the various source materials. One particular area of my interpretative project requires some elaboration. This is the approach I have taken to dealing with discourse.

There are many ways that discourse may be understood and interpretations of discourse may be written. Although there is now widespread agreement that attention to discursive realms is a critical element of understanding in social research, there is far less agreement on the procedures that should be adopted in this project. For example, some methodologists (Kress and Hodge 1979; Fowler and Kress 1979) advocate a complex procedure of categorization of language based around transactive and relational models. Some of the procedures for understanding language in a social context are useful but they are not taken on in totality in this study. For example, R.



Anderson's (1988) parallel study of the discursive context of the Mansion House redevelopment proposal applies a rigid procedure of pragmatic content analysis entailing the identification of key words and concepts within the texts selected, and using these as a basis for analysis and interpretation. His concern with a rigid procedure tends to sacrifice interpretation for technique. Tables of frequency of use and context of use tell us little of the way these concepts work in the production and reproduction of meaning in a broader context.

An alternate approach may be that used by Clifford (1988) in his analysis of the public discourse of a trial to establish the validity of Mashpee Indian hunting rights. This study, like mine, focuses on the 'ways in which historical stories are told' in a similar context to mine, that of a formal public arena (Clifford 1988, 289). Clifford confines his interpretation of this case to the statements made in the court, arguing that to understand the statements it is sufficient to depict them within their formulated discursive realm. Clifford's 'analysis' presents the identity of authors, a summary of what they say, supplemented with Clifford's observations of the way they are dressed or their accents or the loudness of their spoken voice.

This approach to writing about discourse is completely congruent with Clifford's theoretical agenda which sees culture as a multiplicity of voices. However, as a means of understanding or interpreting discourse, it seems to fail in a number of important respects. It assumes that understanding does not need to go beyond that which is presented by the subjects under scrutiny. And while Clifford and others talk much about asserting the authorship of the researcher, the Mashpee piece seems to succeed in clouding the logic of authorship. There are no explicit statements of why certain voices were dealt with, and no statements about how Clifford's reiterations transformed the material. Above all, Clifford denies the contextual which, as I have consistently argued, is a key factor in understanding the processes of cultural production and reproduction and the workings of cultural hegemony.

The task in this thesis has been to navigate a course between the rigid linguistic approach to discourse and the fluid relativism apparent in Clifford. The path I have taken is not promoted as the only one or indeed necessarily the best one. I do not see my approach to discourse as solving the many methodological difficulties that continue to plague this area of social research but my approach does attempt to point to how this fruitful area of understanding might be incorporated into the geographical project (see also Burgess, 1989). One of the most apparent gaps in all the theoretical writings on the value of understanding discourse is the lack of both detailed technical guidelines and empirical studies. Most studies tend to focus on broad issues of methodology



rather than on the finer issues of 'doing'. A notable exception within geography is Rydin and Myerson (1989).

Some headway into the methodology of understanding discourse in a contextualized account has been provided by J.B. Thompson (1984) in his explanation of the role of linguistic features in the operation of ideology. Thompson formulates what he calls a 'methodology of interpretation' and argues that this is a process of 'synthetic construction' and 'creative projection' (Thompson 1984, 133). The analysis of discourse is one phase of a three phase procedure which also pays attention to social analysis and interpretation. Thompson (1984, 134) suggests three possible ways of approaching discourse: as narrative, as argument, and as syntactic strategy (e.g. the use of metaphor).<sup>9</sup>

In my approach to the discourses generated by these conflicts of urban redevelopment I have taken cues from Thompson's schema but am mindful of the shortcomings of his wider position. In approaching discourse as a source of understanding I use it as one element in a broader analysis. My attention to discourse is in terms of the way it serves my broader objective of understanding how ideas of history inform and shape contemporary urban redevelopment. In this applied approach to discourse I have selected two discursive features to which I pay particular attention: the narrative and the metaphorical statement.

### 3.3.1. Narratives

Narratives recast events in a coherent, usually chronologic, story. For Thompson, understanding narratives is important in the project of understanding ideology because discourses (both political and everyday) which seek to legitimate certain forms of domination often take the narrative form. Associated with the story-telling narrative is the discursive form of argument based on chains of reasoning (Silverstone 1985). Both provide an insight into 'procedures of legitimation' and 'strategies of dissimulation' which, in Thompson's (1984, 210) formulation, are key characteristics of the nexus between language, ideology and power. Lyotard (1984, 22) notes that narrative is the 'quintessential form of customary knowledge' and Barthes (1973, 143) in dealing with mythology also points to the power of the heroic narrative to ascribe a 'naturalness' to

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<sup>9</sup>The work of Thompson has not been without due criticism (see Montgomery 1986). In particular Thompson has a very limited idea of both meaning and power and does not adequately demonstrate the connection between discursive realms and the social world. In the case of power, Thompson tends to depict a world that is all domination. His concept of ideology also revives the negative inferences of ideology as 'false consciousness'.



positions, to simplify the contradictory and depoliticize the conflict-ridden. In Barthes view (1973, 110) myths can function in this way because they are made up of material which has 'already been worked on', that is, material with an everyday legitimacy and currency.<sup>10</sup>

There is a particular relationship between 'hi-stories' and narratives which is of relevance to my specific concern with ideas about the past as they relate to urban redevelopment in London. As the section on the heritage critique revealed, the past is in part an invention of present re-tellings. In my analysis of the discourses generated by the two cases of urban redevelopment, I pay particular attention to customary narratives or myths which resonate through the material presented in these planning conflicts. The argument dimension of narrative is clearly present in the evidence given at the public forums and in various public statements produced by the participants. Logical argument conforms well to the expected rhetoric of the quasi-legal, political struggles where the intention is to convince.

Perhaps less expected in these quasi-legal, confrontational public statements is the presence of the narrative 'story'. According to Silverstone (1985, 170) the 'story' provides the 'dramatic colourings of heroes, myths, of ideas of good and evil'. Silverstone takes as a model the folk tale: the story of a hero/heroine attempting to reach a goal or prize or to redeem a lack or an injustice:

The hero (it is usually a male) leaves the safety of his home to confront villainy or to solve a puzzle. On the way he meets obstacles which might or might not result in his gaining assistance or greater powers for his search. He may fail or succeed (Silverstone 1985, 170-171).

Thus the simple folk narrative has characters (the heroes, the helpers of the hero, the villains, the innocent victims) and it has the object of the search, the glittering prize. These folk narratives help in providing statements with a competence that appeals to the level of emotion and everyday discourse that technical rhetoric by-passes.

### 3.3.2. Metaphors

Silverstone (1986, 88) notes that attention to narrative does not 'exhaust' a text. I have supplemented my attention to the presence of heroic narratives with an examination of metaphorical statements. Metaphorical concepts structure our everyday thoughts and practices. Metaphor has increasingly gained the attention of those working in

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<sup>10</sup>Sayer (1989b), Livingstone and Harrison (1980, 1981) and Gregory (1987) have all dealt with the role of narrative in geographical explanation. See also Silverstone (1985) on the role of narrative in scientific explanations in the media.



sociolinguistics (e.g. Sacks 1979; Sampson 1980; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Sontag 1979). The essence of metaphor in a social sense is the understanding or experiencing of one kind of thing in terms of another. Metaphors work through their quality of reverberation, drawing on other meanings to elaborate or enhance a message and by evoking meaning through a network of associated 'entailments' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The pervasiveness of metaphors in everyday discourse suggests that they are a critical mechanism by which meaning is imbued in texts. In discussing metaphors I adopt a liberal usage and include metonymic statements: that is, the substitution of an attribute or other suggestive word for a name. Similarly, I accept that myths are in part complex narratives built around metaphors and can have quite complex and extensive linguistic form (Cooper 1986, 177; Livingstone and Harrison 1980, 128). I also accept the liberation of the application of the idea of metaphor from the strictly linguistic to incorporate metaphorical 'acts'.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) extend further the understanding of how metaphor functions by asserting that metaphor is not simply an issue of language but also of thought and action which is part of the way in which social and political realities are 'constructed'. Many sociolinguists, have focused on this political functioning of metaphor and in particular its capacity to elucidate or to conceal meaning. Unlike the narrative, which enforces unambiguous meaning, the very power of metaphor lies in its ambiguity and this can serve political ends; particularly in the context of discourses produced by differentially empowered and affiliated interests. Above all it is the capacity of metaphors to work to naturalize ideological or power-laden statements and provide them with wider credibility that is of interest to this work (Cooper 1986, 177).<sup>11</sup>

As with my attention to narrative, I trace through metaphorical statements in the discourse not in a narrowly 'linguistic' way but in a manner which seeks to elucidate some of the less apparent meanings underpinning the statements made.

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<sup>11</sup> Within geography attention is only beginning to turn to the role of metaphor in establishing meaning in texts or framing experience. The metaphor is now coming under critical attention in terms of its role in understanding meaning in landscapes or representations of landscapes (Duncan and Duncan, forthcoming; Tuan 1978). A relevant urban example is the new attention to the role of the 'frontier' metaphor in the process of urban gentrification (Smith, N. 1986). Others have turned their attention to the role of metaphors in the geographical 'representations' (Gregory 1987; Sayer 1989b).



### 3.3.3. Working the Texts

The first technical problem with such a large body of text as that generated at the public inquiries and from my interviews and observations, is deciding what is and is not important. In part this was achieved through the selection of certain 'voices', made explicit in the preceding sections. My first attempt at analysis held much in common with the inductive or grounded approach proposed by Strauss (1987). I re-read the public statements, much of which I had already heard as an observer in the public forums. In this first reading I searched out certain recurring themes and images. Some of these were 'generated' by the text itself, some related to my own theoretical agenda. Using the useful technique of 'memo-ing' described by Strauss, I began to break these texts down into certain themes.

I developed a set of themes which I felt were 'working' in the texts.<sup>12</sup> Some of these were 'in-vivo' codes (following Strauss) and were generated by the speakers, others were related to my own theoretical concerns. Taking these codes I then began to reorganize the texts: marking out where these themes occurred, noting who used them most, collecting quotable quotes. This began to take the text into a fine-grained, fragmented form. I then re-read the material both in the re-organized form and in the original form searching for the narrative structures and the use of metaphor.

Throughout the analysis of the material I have moved to and from the fine-grained to the broad sweep, at once trying to search out the details of how certain meanings are encased in the text (for example, through metaphorical strategies) but retaining a sense of the broad intended meaning and purpose of the texts (for example, their argument). Certainly, the understanding of narrative requires continual attention to the broader flow of the text as well as the fine detail.

### 3.4. Textual Strategies

This thesis presents two ethnographic accounts of the politics and poetics surrounding redevelopment in Central London. The writing of ethnographies has recently come under critical appraisal. In part this has been in response to new theoretical questions about the authority of 'authorship' and critical appraisals of writing not simply as objective documentation but also as subjective interpretation. Particular attention has been given to the capacity of texts to impose narrative order on realities which do not have such order (Barthes 1982; Foucault 1979b). In geography too, the writing of

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<sup>12</sup>Examples include national/local, monuments/communities, race/nationalism, hierarchy/democracy, developer as evil/local as good etc..

geographical texts has come under new scrutiny (Gregory 1987; Sayer 1989b; Thrift 1990). In a parallel moment in anthropology, there has been a new reflexive appraisal of the ethnographic text which has emerged, in part, in response to changing world politics (Clifford 1983, 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Ruby 1982). Anthropology now deals with the challenge of empowered indigenous accounts, or the demands of an ethnography which serves political ends such as land and hunting claims (Clifford and Marcus 1986, 9). The myth of 'unconditioned description', virulent in the anthropology of Empire and Kipling 'when hierarchy was in place and language weightless', has been challenged (Geertz 1988, 138). Ethnographic accounts are no longer accepted as objective, holistic accounts but as 'fictions' in which cultures are not simply 'represented' but also 'invented' (Clifford and Marcus 1986, 6). As Geertz (1988, 8-10) notes, ethnographies are as much 'romances' as 'lab reports' and the ethnographer has always worked to the challenge of sounding 'like a pilgrim and cartographer at the same time'.

In developing a textual strategy for the writing of my ethnographies, I have taken an important cue from the 'poetics' of these urban conflicts: the language, the metaphors, and the narratives used by those involved in the conflicts around redevelopment. I have selected two broad themes which enable exploration of a wide range of issues to do with heritage values in urban transformation. The two themes around which my ethnographic accounts are presented are Making Monuments and Imagining Communities.<sup>13</sup> These themes are not the only two that I might have selected and it is therefore necessary to make explicit my criteria for settling on them as conceptual and textual devices. These themes are present in the discourses produced by the redevelopment conflicts and are grounded in the 'reality' of the case studies. However, the decision to ascribe some explanatory power to these themes (as opposed to others which might have been inductively generated) reflects the imperatives set by my overarching concern with the role of heritage in urban transformation.

The adoption of these themes as a textual and analytical strategy is not simply a case 'of a certain modishness which creates more problems than it solves' (Sayer 1989b, 271). The two themes act as flexible explanatory concepts within the text. Using them, I am able to work away from the 'natural' chorological logic of presenting the two case studies as separate entities. Further, I avoid an over-dependence upon the chronological narrative which is often used as a substitute for analysis and explanation

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<sup>13</sup>This second theme is inspired by Benedict Anderson's (1983) study on the 'imagined communities' of nationalism. In its application in this thesis it refers not simply to communities imagined at the national scale but also other communities drawn together around a range of social and locational constructions.



(Sayer 1989b). The use of these heuristic themes is an attempt to ensure that the two cases are always seen in relation to, and in tension with, each other, rather than simply as two separate cases for comparison. As a writing device then, the two themes of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities help to deconstruct the narratives of the two cases and reconstruct them in ways which elucidate both obvious distinctions and unsettling similarities between them. The use of the two themes allows the explanatory potential of the two case synchronic approach to be properly expressed in the text (Sayer 1989b, 270).

Through the theme of Making Monuments I explore processes by which certain aspects of the social and cultural world are reified in the historic built environment either through conservation of existing buildings or through historically inspired new architecture. The process of Making Monuments is most clearly evident in the City, where we might expect monumental statements of power. In the City case I explore this theme through the 'voices' of the Corporation of London, local authority for the area, and the developer. Making Monuments is also evident in Spitalfields: on the one hand in a more diminutive and domestic form, through the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust and its efforts to reinstate set-piece Georgian houses; on the other hand, through the more familiar massive redevelopment proposals of the developers. As will be shown, in Spitalfields Making Monuments is a more complex project for it also draws on the logic and rhetoric of Imagining Communities.

The theme of Imagining Communities traces an alternate heritage impulse; the desire to protect or invent communities. Again it is a theme manifest in both the City and Spitalfields, again in differing ways. The local group CARE becomes the 'voice' through which I explore the possibly unexpected Imagined Community in the City. CARE relies upon the rhetoric of 'community' but its case is deeply connected to ideas and values generated by those advocating the conservation of the built environment. In this sense the CARE case is a subtle reworking of those interests in Spitalfields that talk 'community' but make 'monuments'.

I end the journey through the case material with the example of the Save Spitalfields Campaign which shows most clearly the theme of Imagining Community. Through the position of this campaign, tied closely to the local Left rather than the conservation movement, I explore an alternate historicity which replaces expressions of power through the built form with the expression of a deeply oppositional idea of community. Thus while I use the two themes of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities as heuristic devices to deconstruct and reconstruct the case material the divisions between them are never clear-cut, nor are the themes clearly autonomous. The

analysis passes from an example of extreme Making Monuments, in the case of the Corporation and the developer in the City, to a case of extreme Imagining Community in the case of the local Spitalfields campaign. Between these two extremes lie the cases of the CARE/SAVE coalition in the City and the Historic Buildings Trust in Spitalfields.

The reconstruction of the case material around this broad continuum holds the cases together in a new logic of differential power. I present the City case first in the analysis because the redevelopment site is a 'national set piece' and the conflict around the redevelopment was celebrated as a 'test case for conservation'. The redevelopment controversy over the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment is central to the understanding and importance of historicity in the urban scene. Hereafter, the case material is presented through 'voices' which deconstruct and reconstruct the City 'test case', ending with the oppositional extreme in which the preservation of buildings is held as antagonistic to the preservation of the community. The ordering of the varying 'voices' consciously moves from the dominant to the subordinate, the empowered to the disempowered, the hegemonic to the resistant. Through the heuristic themes the text deliberately reconstitutes the case material around a narrative of power.



## CHAPTER 4: HISTORIES AND HISTORICITIES

This chapter serves to mark out in a general sense the 'genealogies' of the ideas, discourses and practices of contemporary interests in 'heritage' as manifest in my two specific case studies. I structure this 'history of historicities' around the driving conceptual tension of the work: Making Monuments and Imagining Communities. I confine the accounts to a set of selected historical 'windows' which relate directly to the ideas circulating and the interests participating in my two cases. The accounts provide factual background and introduce some of the key themes and tensions that reappear in the case studies. This background chapter seeks to establish the 'diverse, intersecting, and often divergent, but never autonomous series' that assist in circumscribing 'the "locus" of the event, the margins of its unpredictability, the conditions of its emergence' (Foucault 1971, 'The Discourse on Language' quoted in Sheridan 1980, 129).

The particular concern of this thesis is with ideas of the past which are generated or articulated when the urban environment is under pressure to change through redevelopment. These ideas arise and are expressed through divergent and often contradictory 'historicitities': that is, everyday senses of historical consciousness and their 'symbolic capacity' to create diverse historical narratives or 'being-in-the-world' stories (Wright 1985a, 3, after Agnes Heller). These may be both the usual and the special; the naturalized and the taken for granted; the socially formed and complex (Wright 1985a, 7). Such stories reflect diverse treasured pasts but also capture contemporary contexts and future aspirations. This conception of diverse historicities, with its attention to a complex configuration of historical narratives, works away from a simple dominant ideology perspective. However, it does not preclude the theorizing of historicities as part of a differentially empowered political context in which certain versions of the past are more privileged than others (O'Brien 1986; Poster 1984, 158; Wright 1985a, 3-4).

### 4.1. William Morris: A Tension Established

William Morris' commitment both to preservation of the historic built environment and socialism encapsulates the two basic ideological strands of my empirical studies. Morris established the first group to lobby for the preservation of historic buildings: the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877) (Bassett 1980, 1). He is a hero of the conservationists. Morris was also a socialist whose vision was explicitly local and

English. He is also a hero of postwar socialism. For Morris the preservation of the historic built environment and socialist society went hand in hand. This study shows that in contemporary Britain conservation of the built environment and socialist visions rooted in the local may share a rhetoric of nostalgia but they are now more often set as contradictory tendencies.

This tension was manifest even in the earliest conservation efforts. The initial concern of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was the unsympathetic 'restoration' of mediaeval churches and the neo-Gothic fashion in architecture. Preservation was seen by SPAB as part of a general project of history deeply tied to the national imagination. Historic buildings were not 'toys' but 'sacred monuments of the nation's growth and hope' (Morris, Letters, 86, quoted in E.P. Thompson 1976, 288). The 'nation' evoked through the preservation practices of SPAB was constructed around the values and aesthetics of an educated and artistic elite. The first meetings of SPAB were attended by a small coterie of painters, architects and archaeologists, setting the tone for conservation activism which has persisted until the present day. The efforts of SPAB were confined to buildings which asserted dominant and elite orders of taste and history (Wiener 1981). Morris was alert to the contradiction of 'a small knot of cultivated people' trying to pursue a project of historical preservation in the context of the 'sordid and heart-breaking struggle for existence for the many' (May Morris quoted in E.P. Thompson 1976, 241). He partly resolved this tension by assigning a redemptive capacity to the preservation of the built environment (Williams 1958, 140). Preservation was set as a counter to a particular image and experience of modernity and the 'destructive philistinism of capitalist society' (Thompson 1976, 234-5; see also Wiener 1981, 69-91). Historic buildings were key elements in the salvation of a society suffering degradation under the rapid changes of industrialism. Preservation of historic buildings was part of the socialist project for Morris.

Morris's socialism possessed both history and geography. It celebrated and was enacted through the local and was tied to an 'organic' concept of society where control by capital and the State were replaced by the personal and voluntary bonds of society (Thompson 1976, 687; Williams 1958; Yeo 1986, 311).<sup>1</sup> Postwar moves away from centralist socialism in Britain have seen a reclaiming of Morris' indigenous vision. Both E.P. Thompson (1976) and Raymond Williams (1958) have returned to Morris in their elaboration of a revised socialism based around the local, 'organic' community (see

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<sup>1</sup>In Morris's utopian novel News From Nowhere (1890) his socialist London is a rustic, village-like folk community surrounded by pitched roofs and decorative friezes (see Relph 1987, 21; Wiener 1981, 66).



also Meier 1972; Yeo 1986). In William Morris' socialist vision, conservation of the built environment and the revolutionary potential of the organic community are intertwined. The following case studies show that these two ideas remain active in urban politics and practice but that they are now set in tension and conflict. My conceptual tension of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities allows for an exploration of these tensions.

#### 4.2. Making Monuments: Antecedents

Within this section I examine four manifestations of efforts to conserve the historic built environment: the recognition of London's historic built environment through the Survey of London; the broadening of conservation practice through the townscape movement; the legitimization of conservation ideas through conservation legislation; and the 'new conservation' of SAVE Britain's Heritage. Each provides an insight into broader developments and changes in efforts to conserve the historic built environment. Each is of direct relevance to the heritage values which are mobilized in the two case studies which follow.

##### 4.2.1. Urban Monuments: The Survey of London.

The practical and ideological lead given by Morris' SPAB was taken up and applied to the historic built environment in London later in the nineteenth century. A growing concern for the disappearing fabric of historic London, outside of the major monuments, resulted in the architect C.R. Ashbee forming the Committee for Surveying the Memorials of Greater London (Survey of London) in 1894.<sup>2</sup> The Survey called together like-minded architects and historians concerned with documenting and recording London's historic fabric as well as campaigning for its protection (Hobhouse 1987, 27).

The Survey sought to record and preserve the 'best' examples of London's historic architecture but it did not confine its interest simply to grand monuments. Its first survey, for example, was in the East End (Bromley-by-Bow). The Survey contributed to the broadening of the type of buildings thought to be worthy of preservation. The Survey of London saw its efforts as part of the antiquarian project of recording and preserving London's history and sought to create in London 'a system of municipal museums, or storehouses of history and local life' (Survey of London 1900, quoted in Survey of London 1960, xix).

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<sup>2</sup> See Roland Paul's Vanishing London (1893) and Philip Norman's London Vanished and Vanishing (1905).



The Survey was not simply concerned with 'museuming' London for the sake of historical record but with 'improving' London and Londoners. Like its predecessor SPAB, the Survey of London believed that the preservation of the historic fabric could provide relief and guidance to the present age. Preservation was to 'make nobler and more humanly enjoyable the life of the great city' (Survey of London 1900, xix-xxi). The Survey reworked Morris' socialist vision into the less radical issue of social amenity. This emphasis was consolidated when the Survey's operations came under the control of the London County Council only a few years after it was established. In this transition conservation gained new legitimacy. It began to be transformed from the special concern of an educated elite to being promoted as the right of the masses and a means of improving the condition of society, to be instituted through policy and legislation.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.2.2. The City as Visual Art: The townscape movement.

Most early conservation efforts focused on individual buildings. The development of the concept of townscape shifted this emphasis. Townscape is now an important part of contemporary planning in Britain, giving it a legitimacy which belies its lineage as a peculiarly English response to modernist planning and architecture. Townscape is an approach to planning developed and promoted in the post-war period by the editor of the Architectural Review, Hubert de Cronin Hastings and later by Gordon Cullen, one of the Review's writers.<sup>4</sup> Hastings campaigned for 'a visual policy for urban landscape' which drew on the ideas of the eighteenth century, rural, picturesque landscape movement (Hastings 1944, 3-8). Cullen subsequently published the authoritative text on townscape, turning Hastings' concept into a more formal set of townscape principles (Cullen 1961).

For Hastings, the English city was characterized by its 'infinite variety' and he argued that the aim of planning should be to 'plan irregularly, to disdain formality'. There was to be a 'contrived beauty' but it was to be a beauty 'without any order' and 'without regard to systematic arrangement' (Hastings 1944, 5-7). Hastings dubbed this 'sharawadgi'. The vision was one of the entirety, not just the single building, and how diverse elements in that entire scene related to one another. Within this, the elements of the street furniture (the walls, the lamps, the street finishes) as much as the buildings, were seen as important. Townscape celebrated and drew upon the irregular in the

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<sup>3</sup> The effort to introduce conservation as LCC responsibility met with opposition based around claims that public money was being misspent. As Lubbock's simultaneous effort to introduce the first Ancient Monuments Bill into Parliament revealed, claims of wasted public funds was often a thin disguise for concerns over the invasion of property rights (Wiener 1981; Wright 1985a).

<sup>4</sup> Hastings wrote either as 'Editor' or under the pseudonym Ivor de Wolfe (Howells 1985, 3).



urban environment: the old and the new, the grand and the modest, the planned and the unplanned. He argued for the improvement of a 'scene according to the manner suggested by itself' and stressed the genus loci of place.

The townscape approach was set in direct contrast to continental European ideas of planning and architecture based on broad sweep modernism. Townscape, in Hastings' view, was politically compatible with the English spirit and an English aesthetic based around an appreciation of 'age and quaintness' (Hastings 1945, 165). Unlike the totalitarian visions of classicism and broad sweep functionalism, townscape was founded on a democratic and plural vision. It did not impose urban landscapes but built on what was there. It did not seek uniformity or coherence, but diversity and spontaneity. Hastings injected his own 'radical' Liberalism into the legitimization of townscape. The diversity and complexity celebrated in townscape reflected his political commitment to individualism and independence from state control. He saw his political vision as having a natural legitimacy, the mark of a higher English civilization based around 'independent details' and an urge for 'freedom' (Hastings (writing as de Wolfe) 1949, 362). Hastings' visual policy was set apart from socialist visions, he was sympathetic to the forces and processes associated with laissez-faire capitalism (Hastings 1945, 167). He saw capitalism as a 'natural' force in Britain (Cullen 1949, 22) and he lamented the decline of the contribution of the landowners and the wealthy in this organic development (Cullen 1956, 101; Hastings 1944, 4).<sup>5</sup>

The emergence of townscape as a planning philosophy which paid homage to peculiarly English tastes and a laissez-faire liberalism must be set within its postwar context. The advocates of townscape celebrated and sought to preserve and enhance the very Englishness threatened both physically and morally by the war. Townscape rejected the planning dogma of 1930s modernism, which had become one emblem of fascism (Esher 1983, 42). It worked against the comprehensive replanning based on State intervention. Townscape confined planning to the aesthetic and sought to constrain state intervention in the private realm (Howells 1985, 29).<sup>6</sup> It was underpinned by a liberal ideology which identified freedom as an 'ideal force, deep within the national character' (Colls and Dodd 1986, 29). Today townscape practice is still framed as a counteraction to modernism and an advocacy of individual freedom and rights (e.g. Tugnett and Robertson 1987, 6).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Hastings presented a sustained account of his political and social vision in The Alternative Society (1980).

<sup>6</sup>Although ultimately townscape has become a vehicle for state intervention through Conservation Area policy.

<sup>7</sup>Tugnett is a planner of the new type who substitutes the broad sweep approach with the premise 'small is beautiful'. I return to many of these themes in the context of the City of London

In the formal development of Hastings's 'visual policy' Cullen provided a planning language through which the visual qualities of the city could be evaluated (Cullen 1961). Certain qualities were of particular importance: serial vision, enclosure, hierarchy, anticipation, viscosity. The city under townscape is transformed into an art piece which can be evaluated and categorized as if it were a landscape painting. Townscape is not dogmatically conservationist but it does privilege the historic environment. It has become part of planning practice through Conservation Area designation (see next section) and has left an indelible mark on the built landscape. A Conservation Area street, with its bollards and cobblestones and soft signage, is as identifiable as some of the more arrogant postwar modernist developments (Oliver 1982, 1983). It is ironic in the light of Hastings' aversion for state intervention that townscape has indeed now become a prime vehicle for such intervention through Conservation Area policy. Equally ironic is the process by which Hastings' celebrated diversity has become part of an increasingly identifiable 'culture of conservation' which favours a particular street aesthetic (Oliver 1982, 1983). There may be diversity, but often the same diversity can be seen in hundreds of other places.

#### 4.2.3. Legislation and Legitimation.

The practices and ideologies emergent in groups like the Survey of London and the townscape movement have passed into common planning practice (Appendix 4.1). The enshrining of conservation values in law provided them with a legitimacy and power which has worked to secure conservation as a common sense element of planning. In this transformation the State has become a principle instrument in the reproduction of a range of values and ideas which are middle-class in origin and at times have worked to protect and enhance powerful interests and a particular aesthetic (Hewison 1987; Wright 1985a).

The Ancient Monuments Bill, introduced to parliament by Lubbock in 1873, was the first attempt to provide for the protection of historic buildings. It took nine years for the Bill to be enacted (1882), and it was dubbed the 'monumentally ancient bill' (Binney and Lowenthal 1981, 29). This legislation was limited in its powers and confined its attention to the grand buildings of British history. Only in this century have conservation values gained solid and multi-variate expression in law. In 1908 the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments was established to begin compiling the first national list of historic buildings. Listing was given legal articulation in the 1913 Ancient Monuments

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and the No. 1 Poultry development, for Tugnett is a planner with the Corporation of London and his strong commitment to townscape deeply influenced that case.



Consolidation Act and truly became part of mainstream planning procedure through the 1944 Town and Country Planning Act and the 1947 Revision Act. The Acts legislated for the production of a list of historic buildings and for their statutory protection (Boulting 1976). Since the instigation of listing there has been considerable adjustment and alteration of the types of buildings considered eligible. Earlier listings were directed towards ancient monuments, buildings or archaeological remains which were essentially from the eighteenth century or before. The large country house, the church and grand civic buildings were quickly listed, clearly a reflection of prevailing views of what constituted the 'best' of British culture (Hewison 1987; Wiener 1981; Winks 1976; Wright 1985a).

Later listings reflected the expanding interests of the conservation lobby. For example, the newly formed Victorian Society lobbied successfully for the inclusion of Victorian buildings during the 1950s. Not only were more recent buildings becoming acceptable for listing but so too were new types of buildings such as industrial and commercial architecture, which until then had received limited acknowledgement on official registers. These commercial and industrial buildings celebrated not the Britain of grand houses and churches, but an alternate Britain associated with its industrial and manufacturing power. The listing procedure was reflecting new understandings of the national past.

Today the criteria for the selection of a building to be listed are very broad and deliberately flexible to include re-evaluations of what is considered to be of value and worthy of listing. Listing is no longer confined to the grand monuments; equally eligible is the modest terrace house, the pub, the corner store. From January 1988 the 30 year rule came into effect, which provides for buildings to be considered for listing after 30 years, and in very exceptional circumstances buildings of outstanding quality can be listed after 10 years. This has led English Heritage, the authority now responsible for listing, to consider a number of controversial applications to list modernist buildings like Centrepont Tower, Goldfinger's Alexander Fleming House at Elephant and Castle, and the Barbican Centre (Dunnett 1990). To date, English Heritage has not listed any of these buildings but there are a number of earlier modernist buildings which have been listed.

The listing of individual buildings is only one mechanism for preserving the built fabric. The introduction of legislation to allow for the protection of whole areas of special architectural and historical interest and character broadened the power of conservation interests in planning. The designation of such areas was provided for partly under the Town and Country Planning Acts of the 1960s and 70s and more

specifically through the Civic Amenities Act, 1967. Conservation Area policy seeks to preserve the 'cherished local scene' (DoE Circulars 23/77 and 8/87) and as such is the policy manifestation of the townscape concept (Dunnett 1990, 19). Through the efforts of the Civic Trust the townscape aesthetic has become manifest throughout Britain (Oliver 1982, 1983).

A major change in the administration of conservation policy came in 1983 with the passing of the National Heritage Act. Prior to 1983 the responsibility for listing had resided with the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Ancient Monuments Board for England and the Historic Buildings Council for England. In the case of London, the GLC Historic Buildings section held responsibility for the listing and administration of conservation policy. Under the Act a new administrative organization was formed: the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, known popularly as English Heritage. English Heritage deals with listing, the promotion of conservation, the enhancement of Conservation Areas and the general promotion of the knowledge and enjoyment of heritage and its preservation (Cambridgeshire County Council 1988). In the absence of the GLC and a strategic planning body for London, English Heritage have established the London Advisory Committee. This group of conservation and architectural experts advises on the desirability of listing historic buildings and new build proposals in London. As such, English Heritage has not only become an arbiter of what from the past should be saved but also what of the new is appropriate for London. The changes in conservation policy and law to encompass an ever-expanding notion of what constitutes a valued heritage environment reiterates and legitimates the growing populism of conservation ideas. In the next section I examine one group which has played an important part in establishing conservation in its broadest sense as a popular concern, SAVE Britain's Heritage.

#### 4.2.4. The New Conservation of SAVE Britain's Heritage

The number of pressure groups concerned with conservation of the historic built environment has grown in the twentieth century. Many, like the Georgian Group (established 1937), the Victorian Society (established 1958) and the 30s Society (established 1979), trace a direct lineage to SPAB. They emerged as breakaway groups in response to a broadening of the types of buildings thought worthy of conservation. Membership of these groups has generally been confined to the experts: architects, architectural historians, antiquarians. During the postwar fervour for rebuilding, redeveloping and restructuring British cities, conservationists were often seen as obstructionist eccentrics concerned only with history or urban aesthetics (Winks 1976). SAVE Britain's Heritage is a conservation lobby group which



consciously sought to transform this image of conservation. SAVE shared with existing conservation groups many of their interests and goals but it set out to repackage these concerns and change the public profile of conservation. It has become a prime force in conservation, not least in the two cases of the City and Spitalfields which form the basis of this study.

SAVE Britain's Heritage was formed in 1975, the brain-child of then Country Life journalist Marcus Binney. He identifies two main events which inspired the formation of SAVE: European Architectural Heritage Year (EAHY) and the Country House Exhibition at the Victorian and Albert Museum. Both were major publicity events and they heightened Binney's awareness of the power of the press in conservation politics (Interview Binney, 11/5/89). The existing societies were not publicists: they operated as societies to serve the enthusiast and to advise the government. Binney had his sights set beyond the 'converted' and he saw publicity as the key to unlocking mass support for conservation. The overwhelming press response to the Victoria and Albert exhibition on the threat to country houses consolidated Binney's sense that publicity was essential to the conservation cause. He established SAVE Britain's Heritage as a 'ginger group' which would be freer and more vocal in its approach to conservation lobbying than existing societies (Interview Binney, 11/5/89). SAVE sought to take the cause of conservation of the built environment out of the realm of the specialized expert, lobbying 'by stealth', and into the realm of the popular, an issue for all people (Interview Binney, 11/5/89; Pearce 1989, 2-3).

The production of publications around specific and general conservation causes and the issuing of press releases became the basic tool of the group. Early SAVE reports appeared in existing architectural journals but the organization soon established an independent publicity machine. In its first year of operation alone SAVE issued over 60 press releases (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975, 1279). Between its formation in 1975 and 1988 SAVE had published 83 separate reports on both 'general issues' and particular cases (Records of SAVE Britain's Heritage). A combative and hard-hitting journalistic style has become the hallmark of the organization.

SAVE's strategy was based around populism, the claim to speak for the common person, and a commitment to the democratization of conservation which, under existing societies, had become or was seen to have become the domain of an elite of experts and enthusiasts (Binney 1984). SAVE does not have membership but an 'open house' policy where anyone can call on the services and advice of the group. SAVE has challenged the image of conservation as the practice and concern of an educated and wealthy elite and asserted that the 'fight to save particular buildings or



groups of buildings is not the fancy of some impractical antiquarian' (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975, 1288).

Yet the active participants in SAVE fit all too readily into the image of the conservationists as middle and upper class professionals and they are often also closely involved in other, more conservative conservation societies.<sup>8</sup> Indeed the Victoria and Albert exhibition which helped seed SAVE was in direct response to the Labour Government's proposal to introduce a Wealth Tax. SAVE may claim to be an agent for the democratization of conservation but behind the popular rhetoric of its publicity material resides an active core of participants and organizers who conform to the reputation of conservation as an elitist cause. Populism, which claims to speak of common sense values but actually speaks of class specific values, is identified by Potts (1981, 160) as a 'typical' strategy of the political Right in Britain.

The democratizing ideology behind SAVE also permeates its approach to the historic built environment. SAVE has been instrumental in broadening conservation concerns. Its persistent use of the term 'conservation' as opposed to 'preservation' attests to its commitment to a more flexible approach to the historic environment. Many of SAVE's campaigns have dealt with buildings from more recent periods or with buildings which had been largely neglected by conservationists. SAVE was instrumental in generating conservation interest in the historic architecture of northern England and especially in the revalorization of industrial architecture. It established a regional office in Bradford, published reports like Satanic Mills (1979) and held exhibitions which advocated the refurbishment of industrial buildings. In the revalorization of industrial architecture and other more modest sites, conservation has been effective in appropriating, sanitizing and at times depoliticizing sites which were once the domain of the working class and which stood as symbols of oppression and at times resistance.

SAVE has been instrumental in revitalizing the association between conserving old buildings and improving society and the quality of life which underpins conservation ideology from Morris onwards (albeit in varying political frames). As its name suggests, SAVE re-activated the narrative of the redemptive potential of conservation. SAVE cast itself as the heroic saviour of a nation cast in a state of decline (Hewison 1987; Wiener 1981; Wright 1985a). SAVE 'does battle' with the evil of 'decline', leading the way to a better society and most of the SAVE publications are encased in the 'battle' metaphor.

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<sup>8</sup>Marcus Binney: Etonian and Cambridge graduate before becoming a journalist with Country Life. Sophie Andrea, long-time secretary of the group and later Chair: Cambridge graduate in architectural history and member of the financial family behind Kleinwort Benson, a neighbour to Lord Montague of Beaulieu (Interview Sophie Andrea, 18/10/88). Marianne Watson-Smyth, the current secretary of the group: from the family which for over three centuries were Bond Street perfumiers.



The themes of decline and immanent danger (symbolized by modernism and modernity) and the 'battle' metaphor are central to contemporary conservation rhetoric and manifest themselves in my two case studies.<sup>9</sup> Ironically, while conservationists have taken great pains to flesh out their aesthetic preference for earlier architectural periods with historic detail, they tend to deal in caricatures of modernism better suited to their purposes of forever damning it as the bête noir of contemporary society (Potts 1981,160).

The heroic narrative of SAVE's conservationism was underpinned by a new logic which drew partly upon the growing ecological sensibility of the 1970s and partly upon the economic recession Britain then faced. In SAVE's view, the destruction of historic buildings represented a 'regrettable loss of sound materials and useful space'. Historic buildings were not assessed simply in aesthetic or architectural terms but as a 'hard financial investment' representing 'energy, labour and materials' (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975, 1288). SAVE differentiated itself from the 'impractical antiquarians' and established itself as a group concerned with 'the battle for the sane use of all resources' (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1975, 1288).

SAVE's practical strategy was for the 'recycling' of the existing built environment: refurbishment, restoration, rehabilitation and reuse. SAVE argued that conservation of existing buildings can contribute positively to the British economy, most significantly through the tourism industry (Binney and Hanna 1978) but also through allowing small businesses to thrive (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1976). The declining inner city was of particular concern to SAVE. The contribution that conservation can make to the inner city was most clearly articulated in the SAVE publication Preserve and Prosper (Hanna and Binney 1983). In this publication SAVE compiles a collection of examples that demonstrate that conservation is 'not an obstacle to economic regeneration, but an agent and catalyst' (Hanna and Binney 1983, 1). Daniels and Matless (1989, 41) note that heritage has become 'the centre of a new "fierce spirit of renewal"' (see also Colls and Dodd 1986, 29; Matless in press; Nairn 1989, 77).

In their attention to the less grand buildings and to the regenerative powers of conservation, SAVE has tied the conservation of buildings to the broader concept of 'community' and to the 'conservation' of traditional activities and practices. SAVE advocates that 'conservation in its widest sense' has a very considerable part to play in the process of keeping declining areas, like the inner city, and their supportive activities 'viable'. (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1976, 213). SAVE argued that while there 'are no preservation orders for even the more romantic or nostalgic activities',

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Binney 1984; Cormack 1978; HRH the Prince of Wales 1989.

conservation refurbishment can help to protect such activities (SAVE Britain's Heritage 1976, 224).

Benedict Anderson's (1983) account of national communities has demonstrated that they are not 'given' or 'natural' social formations but constructs which reflect certain ideologies and interests. Similarly, recent critics of the conservation movement have made much of its links to dominant constructions of Englishness (Hewison 1987; Wiener 1981; Wright 1985a). Harvey's (1978) account of the idea as it relates to planning also shows the ideological lineage of alternate constructions of community, in this case based not on national but on other social formations or localized groupings. The idea of community mobilized by SAVE is that of the 'apolitical' and 'organic' folk community (Samuel 1981a; Williams 1976). This depiction of the community is in keeping with the liberal democratic impulse which underpins SAVE's conservation ideology. A depoliticized idea of community has played a central role in British social thought and specifically in British town planning (see Cater and Jones 1989, 182; Harvey 1978; Nairn 1981; Seabrook 1984; Simmie 1974, White and White 1962). In this context the idea of community has long been associated with social cohesion and unity (see Glass 1968, Lees 1985) and established as a 'natural' counter to modernism and urbanism (see Rydin and Myerson 1989). The conservationist rhetoric of community sees a conflation of often privileged and philanthropic sentiments, central-right politics and a commitment to social amenity. Underlying this conflation of interests and ideology is the suggestion that the stability and unity of the community envisaged depends upon the protection and reproduction of inherited and deeply inequitable social orders. As will be shown the conservation movement is involved in a process of reifying existing orders in the built form.

In the SAVE community ideology, economic decline is seen as a threat to the 'community' (and more particularly to the historic buildings) but essentially the processes of capital are seen as potentially benevolent (Samuel 1981a). They speak of individual capacity and initiative rather than centralist state control which was so manifest in postwar Britain under a Labour Welfare State. In conservation rhetoric it is the tower block, the grand motif of the Welfare State in collusion with the modernist architectural aesthetic, which stands as the antithesis of the liberal democratic rendition of community (Wright 1985b, 426; 1985c, 20; 1986, 27; 1987a, 8). SAVE's depiction of the potentially benevolent intersection of capital and community is deeply contradictory to the evocation of community generated by the Left. It is to this alternative vision and the alternate pasts evoked therein that I now turn.



### 4.3. Imagining Communities: Antecedents

Williams (1977a, 113) became 'suspicious' of the word community when he realized it had the capacity to be so broadly appropriated that 'no one used "community" in a hostile sense'. Others have similarly seen community as a problematic, a 'non-concept' which describes too many things both positive and negative (Hirst 1980; Pacione 1984). The second analytical theme of this thesis explores the varying use of the idea of community in the context of urban transformation. The preceding account of SAVE Britain's Heritage and the convergence of their conservation agenda and a community rhetoric has introduced the concept of a culturally or ideologically constructed notion of community. The conservation movement has been persistently engaged with the idea of community but the conservationists' 'apolitical' community is in direct tension with a deeply contradictory and far more radical concept of community adopted by the Left.

The historical imagination (in part expressed in efforts to conserve the built environment) has played a critical role in the articulation of liberal/Whig ideas of community which are part of an anti-modernist and anti-urbanist impulse. This is equally the case with more radical socialist imaginings of community. They may call for radical change but they share with more conservative imaginings an anti-modernist and anti-urban undercurrent. This is apparent in the most recent development in the Left politics which is both ideologically and practically committed to the idea of community and to non-centralist socialism. Morris' News From Nowhere was in fact news from somewhere: it was located in a very precise southern English, rural/village scene where human relations triumphed over relations of economy, commerce and the state. Morris's 'homely' and history-filled, socialist vision was lost during the early part of this century. Socialist thinking in Britain during the twentieth century appeared to be 'beyond' ideas of Englishness or locality. The emphasis was on the public realm and statism: socialism was a centralist movement articulated through class, the grand Leitmotif of oppression. There was little room for either local history or community in this socialism.

In postwar years there has been a shift in socialist visions and practices. Writers on the Left now argue that socialism includes 'things English' and that there is now 'a lot of... "Englishness" about in Labour and socialist circles' (Yeo 1986, 311; see also Nairn 1981). Contemporary socialism is manifesting itself through a more 'located' articulation, in which ideas of the located community are playing a greater role. Morris' socialism is being revived because it is more evidently rooted in radicalism. Yeo

(1986, 348), for example, asserts that Morris's combination of 'love of place...with principled resistance to Nation and State' is an 'exemplary' form of socialism.

In the following section I look at the radical socialist, historical imagination as it has emerged through the development of a radical 'people's history' or 'history from below'. This movement is of particular relevance to this study not least because Raphael Samuel, one of the founding members of this intellectual movement, is a key participant in the Spitalfields case. History from below has provided an alternative popular historicity which is contradictory to that often enshrined through the conservation of historic buildings. While the conservation of the built environment has sought to preserve existing orders or to depoliticize oppositional orders, the radical history movement has sought to empower the marginalized and challenge dominant historicities.

#### 4.3.1. Radical Communities: History Workshop

Nairn (1981, 303) notes the emergence of 'a gathering movement of historical revision and socialist culture' during the 1950s in Britain which he traces to New Left Review and to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, citing E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams as its early heroes. The 'popular' consolidation of this primarily academic movement came by way of Raphael Samuel and the History Workshop. Nairn (1981, 303) describes the History Workshop as a 'seminal movement' which has 'fostered a new general culture and outlook' for Britain. Williams and the History Workshop expressed their views through a committedly parochial but radical reassessment of British history (Said 1990). The new, located British socialism has provided an alternate British history, a new basis for the national imagination which resides not in grand monuments and moments but in the local, the disempowered, the resistant and the marginalized.

History Workshop began at Ruskin College in 1966 as a collection of practicing socialist historians both within academe and without (Samuel 1981a, 1981b). From the outset it sought to ensure that it was non-elitist both in subject and in practice. It actively worked to retrieve 'history from below' as a counter to the hegemony of history 'from above' and non-populist structures (Samuel and Stedman Jones 1985, 1). The emphasis of people's history has been on those areas of the past previously neglected by mainstream history which was essentially a history of wars, famous people and influential political events. Within Britain, the seminal work in the emergence of a socialist people's history was E.P. Thompson's (1963) The Making of the English Working Class. In radical people's history, the emphasis is on the life of people as constituted by relations of power and exploitation. In this sense much of the work of



Leftist people's history has dealt with the restoration of marginalized groups such as women, racial minorities, the colonized. Nairn (1981, 303) suggests that history from below has actively sought to retrieve 'every possible popular or mass contribution to the fabric of English development, emphasizing every desirable heroism or neglected workers' initiative'; with the result being 'something like a collective, endless "epic poem" of popular and radical achievement'.

While conservation of the built environment has increasingly been framed as apolitical (although it clearly does retain 'politics'), the History Workshop has from the outset made its politics explicit. The act of retrieving 'lost' or marginalized pasts is considered as a critical step in the revolutionary project itself. Socialist history is seen as an attempt to 'find strength for a better, more democratic future' (Nairn 1989, 304). It is a rediscovering or re-inventing of the past which in itself is 'a political contestation', providing the 'data' and the 'cultural bond' upon which popular mobilization against the State may draw (Nairn 1989, 305). Within this new, historically imbued revolutionary formula, the potential for change lies not in the State but in the struggle of ordinary people in local settings.

By its very nature and practice there has been an emphasis on the local, often expressed in terms of the 'community'. History Workshop traces a lineage to existing 'local history' which is marked by a 'consuming sense of place' (HWJ Editors 1979). The Workshop acknowledges the short-comings of traditional local history, its reactionary nature, but also takes from it a sense of its capacity to 'democratize British history' and empower everyday experience. Studies from within this tradition take the notion of 'community studies' and represent it in a radicalized theoretical setting. There is a close link between 'history from below' and the reification of 'community', as expressed through the idea of 'primitive communism'. Brook and Finn (1977, 129) suggest that within New Left history there was a 'smuggling' process occurring, in which radical reappraisals of the working class and other marginalized groups became inextricably rooted in the idea of community. The radical history project is well aware of these sometimes troublesome links. Samuel suggests that some radical history projects have used the democratic, self-governing community as 'historical proof that socialism...was the natural condition in which humanity had been reared' (Samuel 1980a, 34). In the radical imagination community stands as a deeply rooted oppositional force to urban modernity and capitalism, an artefact of resistance and a source of hope (Williams 1977a; Glass 1968; Lees 1985). The attention to community draws the historical consciousness of the Left close to that of the more reactionary conservationists. Both share a belief that community is an oppositional force to the



condition of modernity. However, the Left's version of community is far more radical and deeply contradictory to the processes of capital than that of the conservationists.

It is not only on the terrain of 'community' that radical historical projects and the more reactionary conservationist projects collide. The attention that conservationists have given to industrial architecture and the histories associated with these built forms has been part of the process by which the traditional concerns of radical history have been appropriated and represented in a depoliticized and sanitized form. Pasts which were once the raw material for revolutionary change in the hands of History Workshop, have become the raw material for capital reinvestment. Not surprisingly then, much of the critique of the 'heritage industry' has come from the radical history project (Samuel 1987, 1988a, 1989a, 1990; Wright 1985a). Although conservationists and radical historians are increasingly dealing with the same pasts, their political objectives and their engagement with processes of capitalism remain deeply contradictory. My Spitalfields case presents an example of these contradictory histories set in conflict and tension.

The intellectual currents apparent in History Workshop are also manifest in recent socialist political practice, most notably in the located and localized political practices of the New Urban Left (Boddy and Fudge 1984; Gyford 1985). Gyford (1985) traces the emergence of a New Urban Left in part to the 1968 May Day Manifesto in which Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and Stuart Hall called for community-based socialist action.<sup>10</sup> There is a clear link between the intellectual hub which participated in the production of the Manifesto and the intellectual project of which History Workshop is a part. Above all, there is a shared commitment to the radical potential of the community set against the oppressive qualities of centralist institutional power (Harvey 1989b, 38). Gyford (1983, 1985) documents closely the emergence of this anti-centralist and locally-based socialism in which action is initiated from the 'bottom up' (Gyford 1985, ix). Local or borough politics constitute a logical expression of, and arena for, this new form of socialism and again the Spitalfields case provides an example of the explicit political expression of the radical potential of the past and the community by way of a New Urban Left action and ideology.

#### 4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has served to provide a background to the dominance of heritage values in planning and the presence of oppositional and contradictory historicities located in

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<sup>10</sup>They called for action against local authorities but in practice NUL politics has come to incorporate local authority participation.



the Left. In doing so it has demarcated a number of ideologies and cultural practices relevant to the specific cases to follow. Heritage may be framed as an interest of all people but it is itself subject to divergent and differently empowered interests. The case studies to follow provide explicit examples of these differently empowered ideas and practices at work in local contexts of urban transformation.

## CHAPTER 5: MAKING MONUMENTS IN THE CITY OF LONDON

Send a philosopher [to London] and set him on the corner of Cheapside...The most hidden secrets of the social order will suddenly be revealed to him, he will actually see and hear the beating pulse of the world - for the City is the right hand of the world...the pulsing artery of the world.

Heinrich Heine, German poet, 1828.

In this, the first of four empirical chapters, I explore the theme of Making Monuments as manifest in the case of urban redevelopment in City of London. I explicitly focus on the views and actions of the Corporation of London and the development team of Peter Palumbo in the context of the No 1 Poultry redevelopment.<sup>1</sup>

The conceptual theme of Making Monuments explores a constellation of ideas and processes through which values are given expression in the built environment: either through conservation of the historic built environment or through new development. The making of monuments does not simply refer to the creation or conservation of buildings of monumental scale, although in this particular case social values and meanings are indeed reified through the enhancement and creation of buildings of monumental scale.

### 5.1. The No. 1 Poultry Redevelopment

The Bank Junction has long been recognized as a historic set piece in London (Figures 5.1. and 5.2.). Soane's Bank of England (1788-1808), Dance's Mansion House (1739), Tite's Royal Exchange (1841-4) and Hawksmoor's St. Mary Woolnoth (1716-27) which face the intersection were all included in the first national statutory list of historic buildings published in 1950 (Figure 5.3.).<sup>2</sup> The Bank Conservation Area was designated in 1971 (following the introduction of Conservation Area legislation). When designating the Bank Conservation Area, the Corporation described it as 'a national set piece' (Corporation of London 1970, 5). The area has also been the focus of a long-running planning battle over the proposal to redevelop

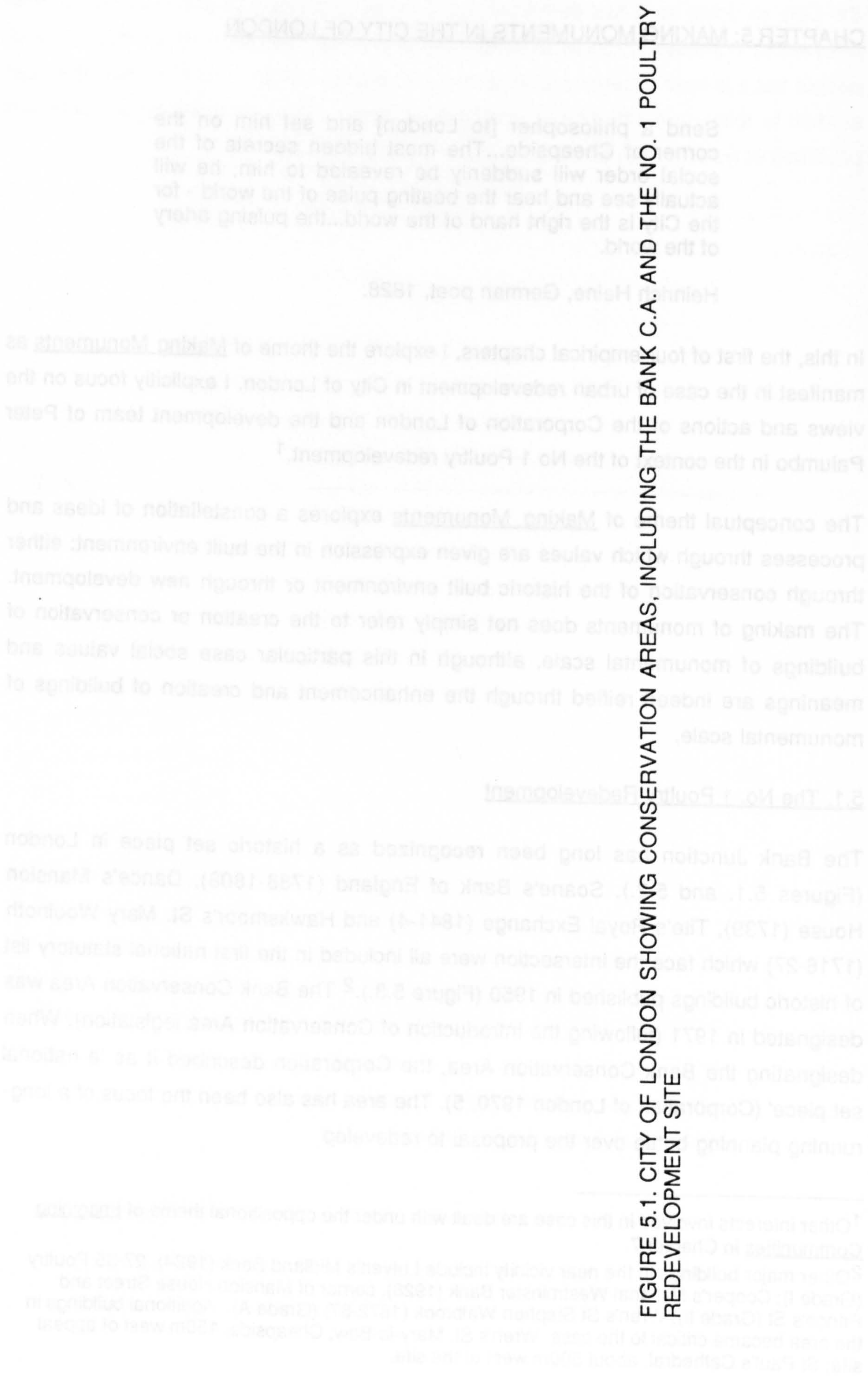
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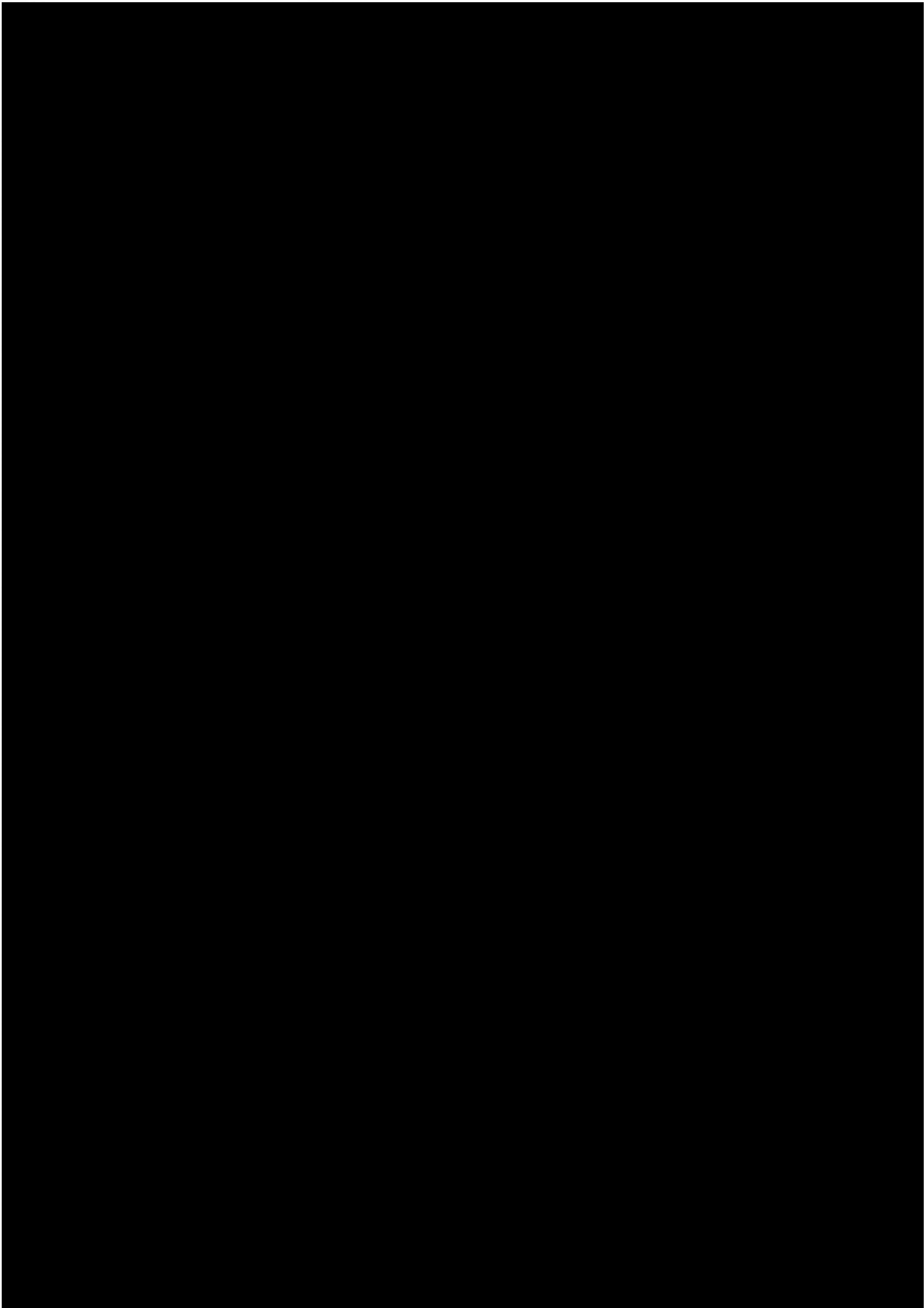
<sup>1</sup>Other interests involved in this case are dealt with under the oppositional theme of Imagining Communities in Chapter 7.

<sup>2</sup>Other major buildings in the near vicinity include Lutyen's Midland Bank (1924), 27-35 Poultry (Grade I); Cooper's National Westminster Bank (1928), corner of Mansion House Street and Prince's St (Grade II); Wren's St Stephen Walbrook (1672-87) (Grade A). Additional buildings in the area became critical to the case: Wren's St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, 150m west of appeal site; St Paul's Cathedral, about 500m west of the site.



FIGURE 5.1. CITY OF LONDON SHOWING CONSERVATION AREAS, INCLUDING THE BANK C.A. AND THE NO. 1 POULTRY REDEVELOPMENT SITE







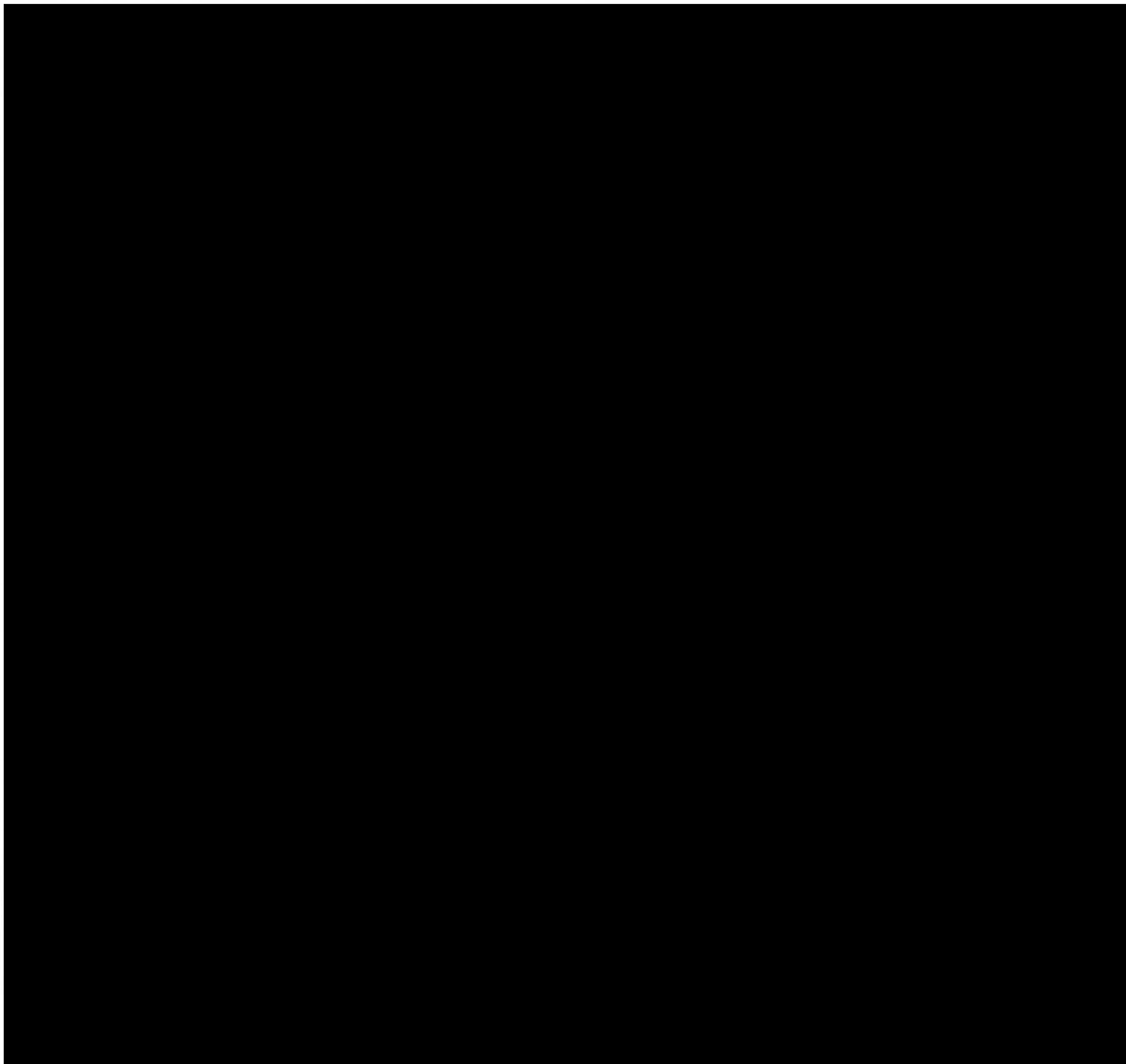


FIGURE 5.2. BANK JUNCTION SHOWING CONSERVATION AREA STATUS, LISTED BUILDINGS AND REDEVELOPMENT SITE.

The development of the junction. The controversy has involved two separate but related issues. The first, more recently, appeals to the Council of the City of London (the 'City') that there should be a planning scheme for the junction. The second, more recently, appeals to the one important point of any such scheme, the junction. The junction is the centre of the City, the City's 'heart', and the junction is a very special place.

In 1982 Peter Parker, operating through his City attorney, Sir John Gifford, submitted a redevelopment scheme for the junction. The scheme was for a 100m x 100m square and a 220 ft (68 storey) office tower. The scheme was submitted to the Corporation of London for planning permission. The scheme was submitted to the Corporation of London for planning permission. The scheme was submitted to the Corporation of London for planning permission.



FIGURE 5.3. BANK JUNCTION MONUMENTAL 'NATIONAL SET PIECE'



the western part of the Junction. The controversy has involved two separate schemes, two public inquiries and, more recently, appeals to the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords (Appendix 5.1.). That there should be a planning battle which has lasted almost thirty years testifies to the one important point of agreement between the various parties: that the site at the centre of the conflict, the immediate surrounds of Bank Junction and The City itself, is a very special place.

In 1962 Peter Palumbo, operating through his development firm City Acre Property Trust, commissioned a redevelopment scheme for the Bank Junction site from the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The Mansion House Square scheme featured a large open square and a 290 ft (18 storey) office tower (Figure 5.4.). It was submitted to the Corporation of London for planning permission in June 1968. When the developer first sought planning permission none of the buildings on the proposed development site had been listed and the site was not part of a designated Conservation Area. Both listed building and Conservation Area status were to come later. There was little overt or organized opposition to the modernist vision proposed by Palumbo. In May 1969 the Corporation of London's Planning and Communications Sub Committee and the Court of Common Council agreed in principle to the proposal but withheld final planning permission on the grounds that Palumbo had not secured a sufficient amount of the proposed development site. It took another thirteen years for Palumbo to acquire enough of the proposed development site for him to resubmit the Mies design for full planning approval (1/1/82).

By 1982, however, much had changed in planning, in architecture, and in the City itself. There had been a general strengthening and broadening of conservation policy through listing and Conservation Area designation (see Appendix 4.1.). There had been a movement in architecture away from the explicitly modernist design encapsulated by the Mies proposal towards a more historicist expression, loosely defined as postmodern architecture (see Jencks 1977). There had been a significant shift in City planning policy towards the protection and promotion of the unique historic character of the City. The strengthening of conservation policy more generally and in the City specifically, was manifest in Bank Junction. Between 1974 and 1977, seven of the buildings on the development site were listed and another was added in 1984. In 1981 the Bank Conservation Area was extended to the west to include the development site. The Corporation of London refused Palumbo planning permission for the Mies scheme on the basis of its impact on the historic fabric of the area (Marks 1984, 13). This led to the first public inquiry into the Mansion House Square proposal in 1984 (R. Anderson 1988).



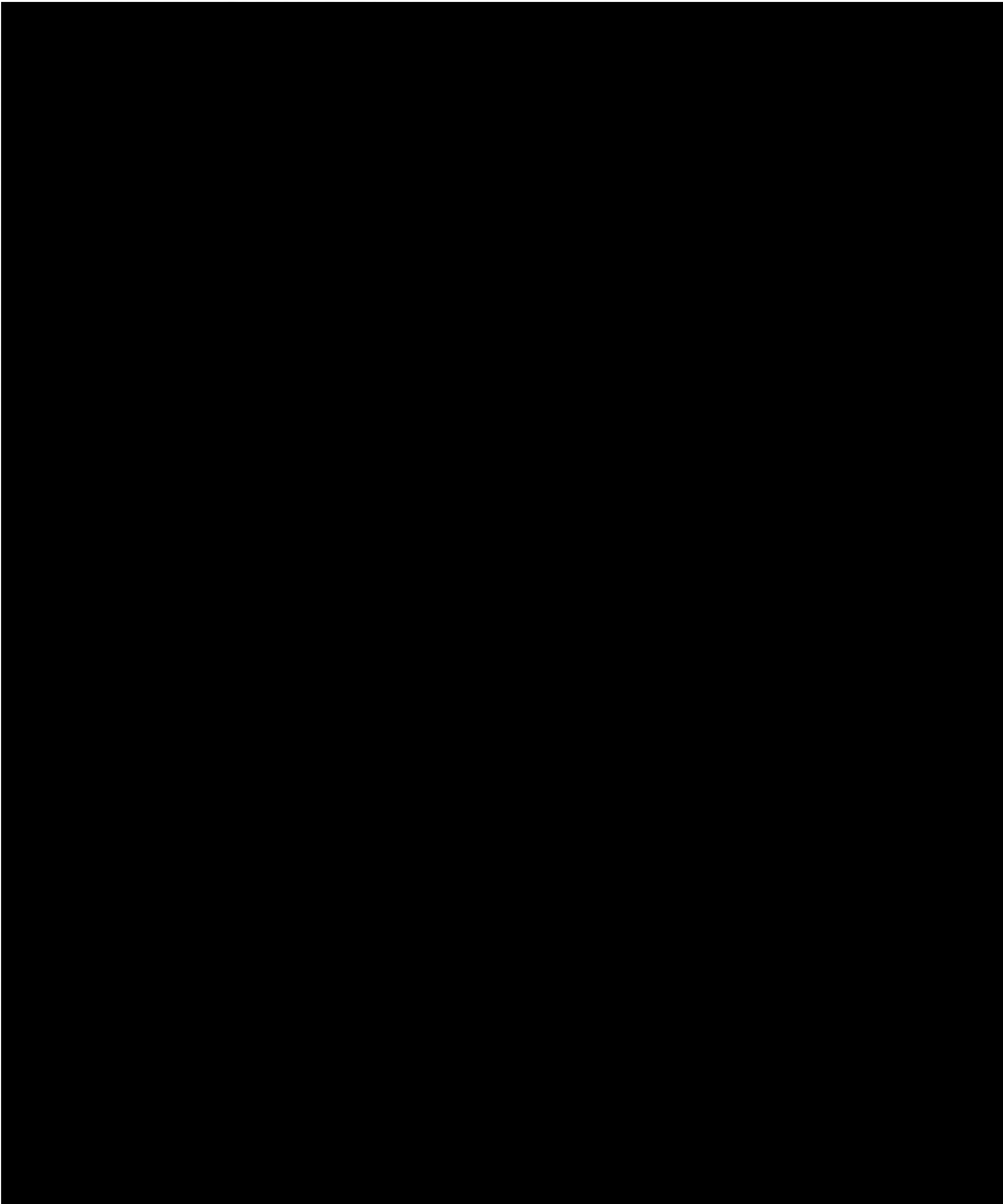


FIGURE 5.4. THE MIES MANSION HOUSE SQUARE SCHEME

SOURCE: Kutcher, A. 1976. In Lloyd,D. et al. Save The City, 164.



The Inspector's report from the first Inquiry recommended that planning permission should not be granted. However, he did not rule out the possibility of redevelopment of the site, leaving the way open for an alternate development scheme (Marks 1984, 138). The Secretary of State for the Environment, then Mr. Patrick Jenkin MP, accepted the Inspector's findings (Secretary of State Decision Letter 22/5/85). He stated that 'it would be wrong to freeze the character of the City of London' and, reiterating the Inspector's findings, did not rule out the possibility of granting planning permission and Listed Building Consent for an 'acceptable' development.

Palumbo responded quickly and only days after the decision he assembled a new team of consultants to produce an 'acceptable' proposal. James Stirling, one of the witnesses used by Palumbo in defence of the Mies scheme, was commissioned as architect. Palumbo proceeded with his second endeavour to develop the site alert to the conservation interests which had successfully thwarted his first attempt. He commissioned two proposals: one which kept the listed Mappin and Webb building (Scheme A), and one which entailed redevelopment of the entire site (Scheme B) (Figures 5.5. and 5.6. and Appendix 5.2.). There were constant negotiations between the Corporation Planning Office and the developer's team and various adjustments were made to the schemes. over the next year. The schemes were lowered by one storey, to comply with plot ratio requirements and to create less of an impact on an eastern view of St. Paul's. Scheme A was eventually dropped, unable to meet both height and plot ratio requirements set by the Corporation. A revised 'Scheme B' was submitted for full planning permission and for Listed Building Consent in May 1986.

In June 1987 the revised Scheme B and the Chief Planner's report were presented to the Corporation of London's Planning and Communications Committee. The Planning Officer recommended approval of the scheme. The Planning and Communications Committee went against the views of their Planning Officer and recommended rejection of the application.<sup>3</sup> As with all applications which are recommended for rejection, the scheme went to the Court of Common Council, the full council of the Corporation. After considerable debate, the majority opposed granting planning permission. Official refusal was issued on 16 July 1987, on the grounds of the proposed demolition of listed buildings, the impact on the character of the Conservation Area and the view of the dome of St. Paul's from Cornhill. Palumbo appealed against the decision, bringing the development proposal to its second public inquiry in less than five years.

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<sup>3</sup>On a vote of seventeen for rejecting permission and fourteen for granting permission,



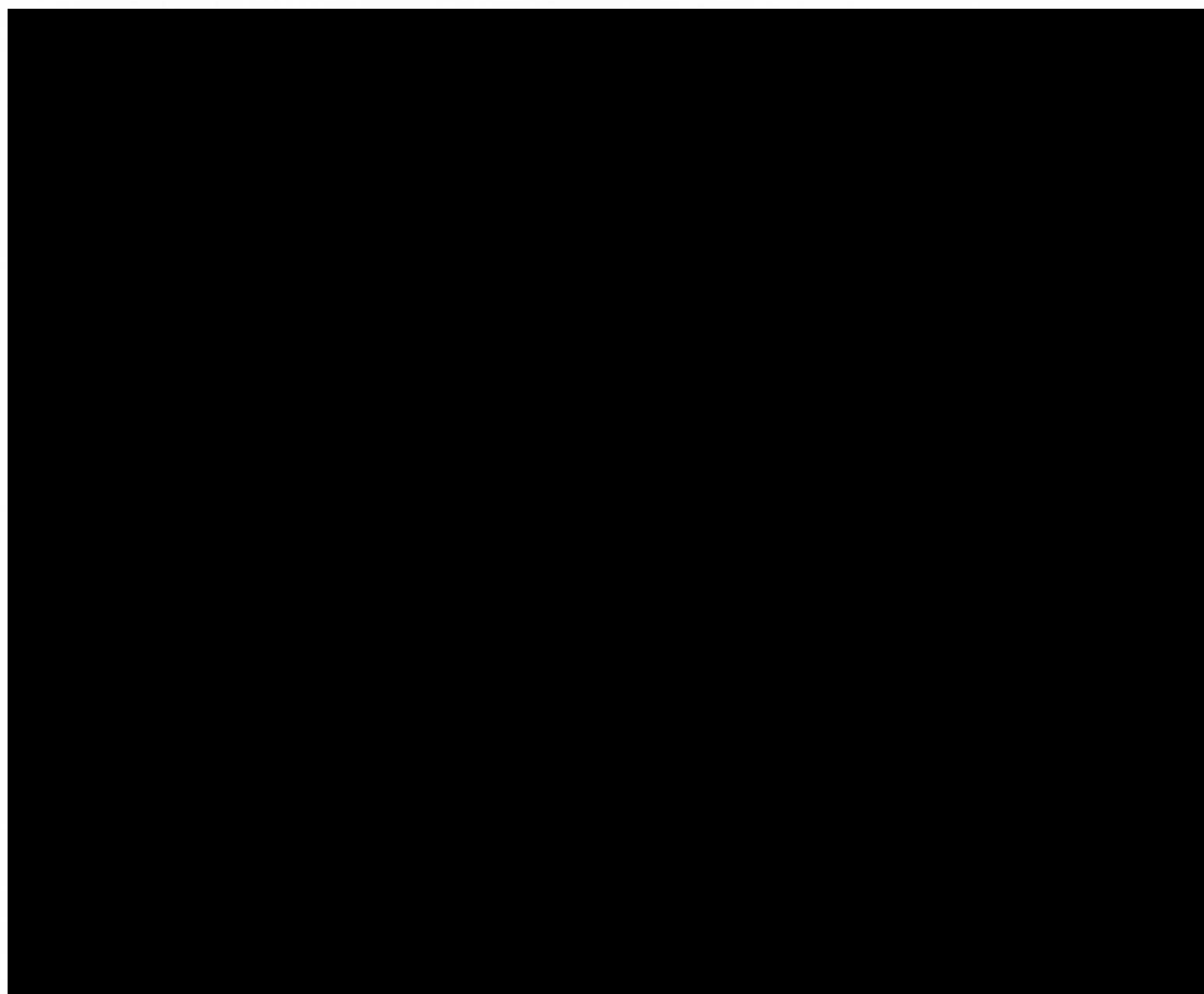


FIGURE 5.5. JAMES STIRLING'S NO 1 POULTRY (SCHEME A)

SOURCE: SAVE Britain's Heritage 1987 Give These Vigorous Victorian Buildings A Chance.







The No. 1 Poultry Inquiry ran from 17 May 1988 to 17 June 1988 bringing together virtually the same configuration of experts who had faced each other in the Mansion House Square Inquiry. Palumbo assembled a team of highly qualified and prestigious people to act as expert witnesses on his behalf, including the architect of the scheme, James Stirling, Professor St. John Wilson, Head of Architecture at Cambridge University, and Charles Jencks, the much published architectural historian and critic. Palumbo's team was met with an equally unique collection of official bodies, voluntary conservation groups, local and national amenity groups and private interests (Appendix 5.3.).

Local conservation policy was represented by the Corporation of London and broader conservation policy was represented by English Heritage. English Heritage also produced an alternate refurbishment scheme for the existing buildings on the site (see Chapter 7 and Appendix 5.4.). The official opposition to the Palumbo proposal was endorsed by a number of long-established and well respected conservation groups like the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society. SAVE Britain's Heritage, which had developed and presented a refurbishment scheme for the existing buildings on the site in the first inquiry, reappeared. Jennifer Freeman, who in the first Inquiry spoke on behalf of the Victorian Society, chose to make a separate representation in the No. 1 Poultry Inquiry. Opposition also came from a local umbrella group called CARE (The Campaign for Refurbishment) which represented 'local' interests: retailers, church users, workers and City visitors. The CARE presentation was made by the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, in whose parish the appeal site is located (see Chapter 7).

The status of the Bank Junction as a historic set piece combined with the threat the Poultry scheme posed to statutory obligations relating to listed building and Conservation Area status, gave this case wider significance. Conservation interests stressed that the issue at hand extended beyond the buildings on the appeal site, beyond the Bank Junction, beyond the City, and was a matter of national importance reflecting on the strength of hard won conservation legislation. The case was repeatedly described as 'a test case for conservation' (Various Witnesses No. 1 Poultry Public Inquiry 1988).

Although the participants in the Mansion House and the Poultry inquiries were virtually identical, the two inquiries were qualitatively different. The first inquiry had seen the coming together of development and conservationist interests around a building which in every way represented high modernism. A classic 'battle' of the post-war period was being enacted some twenty years late. As one Corporation planner noted, 'no one seriously thought it would get consent, it was just shadow boxing' (Interview



Corporation of London Planner, 12/10/88). In the No. 1 Poultry inquiry the 'battle' continued to rage but the lines were blurred. The No. 1 Poultry scheme, although advocating wholesale redevelopment, was based around a building with an asserted historicism. It was no longer a 'battle' between those who advocated historicism and those who denounced it. The conflict in the No. 1 Poultry case became one based on differing and competing expressions of historicity. It is to these that I now turn: firstly, through looking at the case of the Corporation of London in opposing the No. 1 Poultry scheme and, secondly, through the case of the developer in defending and promoting the scheme.

## 5.2. The Corporation of London's View

Hanging on the wall at the rear of the Livery Hall at Guildhall, where the No. 1 Poultry inquiry was staged, was an original painting by Neils M. Lund (Figure 5.7.). The painting was part of the Corporation of London's 'evidence' in their case against the proposed redevelopment. Lund's painting is entitled 'Heart of the Empire' and shows a misty, bustling aerial view of the City looking westwards across the Bank Junction towards the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. The appeal site and the Victorian buildings that would be demolished if the development proceeded are central to the painting and form an important visual frame for the more distant dome of St. Paul's. This painting captures the essence of the Corporation's case against the Palumbo development. It hints at the Corporation's emphasis on townscape, a concept which transforms the urban form into the picturesque, to be evaluated in the same manner as Lund's painting. It depicts what the Corporation sees to be a critical element of the Cityscape, a visual relationship between St. Paul's and the Bank Junction. The painting's title hints at the Corporation's view of the identity of the City and its wider status. These are all themes explored in the following analysis.

The Corporation of London, like the various conservation interests, advocated the retention and refurbishment of the existing buildings on the redevelopment site. In part, this position was simply a reflection of the Corporation's statutory obligations under existing conservation legislation. Yet its opposition to the redevelopment proposed by Palumbo also reveals much about its perception of, and aspirations for, the City. In its case against the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment, the Corporation injected the Bank Junction with a range of inter-related meanings which asserted a particular City identity to which the Palumbo scheme was seen to be deeply challenging. While the Corporation of London is local authority for the City, it cannot be assumed that it speaks for all City interests. The Corporation's views are only one voice in a complex configuration of internal and external interests associated with the City. The following



analysis reveals that the Corporation's decision was not in line with the original intention of the 1862 Act, but rather a response to the changing circumstances of the early 20th century.

### 3.1.1. Picturing the City: Townscape

In extending their decision to refuse planning applications, the Corporation of London relied upon only one witness, a private architect, to justify their actions. The Corporation's decision (1986) identified townscape as a key concept in the early 20th-century planning movement. The Corporation's decision to refuse planning applications was based on the Corporation's view on the subject, which was that the Corporation's decision was not in line with the original intention of the 1862 Act. The concept of townscape had become a key concept in the early 20th-century planning movement.

As noted in Chapter 4, townscape is a concept that has been used in a variety of ways in the past.



The photograph captures the heart of the Empire, showing the dense urban landscape of London. The prominent dome of St. Paul's Cathedral is the central focus, surrounded by numerous church spires and the dense fabric of the city. The foreground shows the rooftops and chimneys of buildings, suggesting a high vantage point looking over the city.

FIGURE 5.7. NIELS M. LUND'S 'HEART OF THE EMPIRE', 1902.



analysis reveals that the Corporation's position was set in tension not only with the Palumbo proposal but other interests internal and external to the City.

### 5.2.1. Picturing the City: Townscape

In defending their decision to refuse planning permission, the Corporation of London relied upon only one witness, a private townscape specialist called Roy Worskett.<sup>4</sup> Anderson (1988) identified townscape as a key concept in his analysis of the Mansion House Square inquiry and it remained the prime concept through which the Corporation's views on the subsequent No. 1 Poultry redevelopment were expressed. The concept of townscape has become a key element in the Corporation of London's planning policy.

As noted in Chapter 4, townscape is an urban application of ideas of the picturesque. It is concerned with the visual perception of the urban environment in compositional and pictorial terms: viewing cities as similar to paintings, 'as problems of composition, based on the production of a series of harmonies or contrasts...the city as visual art' (Anderson 1988, 405). The key emphasis in this visual assessment is 'serial vision'. Elements of the urban scene interact visually as the observer moves through the urban space, views are 'framed' by buildings, elements of the urban space 'interact', and surrounds are assessed in terms of their 'composition' and their emotional and psychological effects on the viewer. The impression of townscape is that of 'informality', 'accident' and 'spontaneity' but its creation and maintenance are contrived through active intervention in the urban scene, either through conservation or through the addition of certain forms (Lowenthal and Prince 1965, 193). The 'informality' celebrated by townscape implies a naturalness that belies its often contrived configuration. The viewer's response to and appreciation of picturesque townscape qualities is similarly 'naturalized'. The qualities revered through townscape are presented as reflecting a 'natural', commonsense aesthetic of the 'ordinary person'. The Corporation witness, for example, suggested that 'the public' are 'unerring about townscape' and predisposed to keeping the old 'regardless of its look or quality' (Interview Roy Worskett, 3/3/89). Townscape is presented simply as the natural way of seeing, rather than being recognized as culturally constructed.

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<sup>4</sup>Because the Chief Planner's recommendation was overturned, the Corporation had to draw a witness from outside its own ranks. There were a number of officers within the Corporation's Planning Department who opposed the scheme from the outset and were expert in townscape matters e.g. Tony Tugnut (Interview Corporation Planners, Tugnett and Goodacre, 12/10/88; Tugnett and Robertson 1987). Worskett is a townscape expert who spent the formative part of his early career working for the contemporary guardian of the townscape principle, the Civic Trust (Oliver 1983).



As was demonstrated in Chapter 4, the assertion of an indigenous identity grounded in the historical fabric and confirmed by popular endorsement was central to the original principles of the townscape movement. Yet this commonsense legitimacy belies the emergence of the townscape principle as a conscious and nationalistic counter to architectural trends appearing on the Continent, most notably modernism. The Corporation of London's townscape argument in the No. 1 Poultry case similarly rested upon a concept of indigenous City identity, popularly approved and appreciated. The Corporation's commitment to conservation came not from an antiquarian appreciation of historic buildings as markers of the past but in terms of the contribution the historic fabric makes to the 'identity of place' (Interview Roy Worskett, 3/3/89). As will be shown, at times the Corporation's case, like the original townscape concept, was rooted in nationalistic sentiments.

The ascendancy of the townscape concept in Corporation planning is a process which began in the early seventies. Initially it was adopted in response to external obligations regarding Conservation Area designation but, increasingly, the principles embodied in townscape have become central Corporation policy and tied to Corporation aspirations for the City. In 1971, when the Corporation designated its first 8 Conservation Areas, it did so reluctantly and in response to directives given to local authorities through the Civic Amenities Act, 1967. Little changed in terms of granting of planning permissions within these areas. A local Conservation Area Advisory Committee was established but it had little power or influence. The designation of Conservation Areas on the basis of townscape qualities was more a symbolic gesture of compliance to external requirements than a marked change in Corporation planning practice (Interviews Planner Corporation CAAC, 20/7/87 and Jennifer Freeman, 8/2/89).

The national amenity societies became concerned about the City's failure to respond whole-heartedly to Conservation Area policy.<sup>5</sup> Led by the Victorian Society, the various conservation/amenity groups banded together to produce the first ever townscape analysis of the City which covered the historic fabric, plot sizes, medieval street patterns, views, and visual diversity. Save The City (Lloyd et al. 1976) was intended to influence the City's first obligatory local plan which began to be developed in 1977. The report recommended the extension of existing Conservation Areas and the designation of new areas which would ensure the preservation and enhancement of existing features. One of the most significant features of the Save the City report was

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<sup>5</sup>Concern heightened with the loss of a number of historic buildings through the implementation of post-war road improvement schemes along Thames St. and Bishopsgate, leading to the demolition of the Corn Exchange and the Barings Bank respectively.



its effort to link the financial aspirations of the City with conservation concerns. This contrasted sharply with the image of conservation and finance/development interests as arch rivals in the urban scene. The report asserted that the two interests were not necessarily contradictory:

...it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the City's very special role in the nation's life is as a commercial and financial centre of world wide prestige and importance. Nothing should be done which severely restricts the City's existing or potential role in this respect. What this study strives to show is that this role can be continued and, maybe, increased while conserving as much as possible of what still survives of the City's historic fabric (Lloyd 1976, 14).

As the title suggests and as its recommendations confirm, Save The City brought the townscape principle to the Corporation of London encased in the new conservation mentality of SAVE Britain's Heritage. Indeed SAVE was a major supporter of the survey and the report.

The Save The City report, backed by lobbying from some of the contributors (most notably Jennifer Freeman) and helped by a change in personnel within the Corporation's Planning Department, laid the foundations for a shift in emphasis in City planning towards townscape. The Corporation began to extend its Conservation Area practice. In 1971 only 8 Conservation Areas existed in the City. By 1981, 21 had been designated and existing areas extended to account for 21.7% of the area of the City. By 1984, further extensions meant over a third of the City and an estimated 70% of the City core were under Conservation Area designation (Corporation of London 1985).

The increasing commitment to townscape was apparent also in the emergent Local Plan. The Draft Local Plan (1984) strongly emphasized the conservation and enhancement of the City's 'historic heritage' and articulated this concern through the language and ideology of townscape and Conservation Area practice (Corporation of London 1984, para. 12.17). Yet only five years earlier the Corporation had felt the idea so foreign to City thinking that it had had to frame it in more familiar terms:

Imagine that a current bank account has been inherited. A credit balance can be preserved even though withdrawals and compensating deposits are made from time to time. In environmental terms, conservation means not squandering the inheritance but enhancing it (Corporation of London 1979, 38).

The final Local Plan (1986) was emphatic in its assertion of the conservation/townscape approach. The 'architecture, skyline and distinctive



townscape' (including listed and unlisted buildings, street patterns, plot sizes, heights and views) were to be 'preserved and enhanced' (Corporation of London 1986a, 126). This has been implemented through restrictions on height, style guidelines, and the encouragement of refurbishment as opposed to demolition and new build.

The restraints on change and expansion of the urban fabric implied in the Local Plan's emphasis on conservation and townscape met with sharp opposition from City financial and development interests when it went to public inquiry in 1984 (Pryke 1988, Chapter 7; King 1985, 1990). The Final Plan (1986) addressed the unease expressed by financial interests in the City. It retained the strong townscape/conservation emphasis but consciously tried to reconcile this with the financial interests of the City. It opened by stating that:

The City of London...is noted for its business expertise, its wealth of history and its special architectural heritage. The combination of these three aspects gives the City a world-wide reputation which the Corporation is determined to foster and maintain...The City's ambience is much valued and distinguishes it from other international business centres. The importance of the City's business activities, which are underpinned by the benefits of its precious heritage, further the wealth and opportunities of London and the surrounding region, and also provide a significant contribution to the well-being of the national economy (Corporation of London 1986a, para. 1.1-1.3)

The Corporation argued that the City's traditions, including the historic built environment, are an attraction for businesses and financial institutions locating in the City, providing an 'ambience' and an 'asset' that competing financial centres like New York and Tokyo (and closer to home, Docklands) are unable to match (Corporation of London 1986a, para. 11.45). Conservation, expressed in townscape terms, is now seen by the Corporation to be a crucial element of City survival.

The townscape principle formed the basis of the Corporation's case against the No. 1 Poultry scheme which affected one of the earliest and most distinctive Conservation Areas of the City. The analysis reveals that the townscape concept can harbour a range of cultural constructions and serves to ensure that these values are reified in the built environment. Yet the conservation emphasis of the Corporation is, at times, deeply contradictory to other interests in the City.



### 5.2.2. Hierarchy and Democracy

The Corporation's case for the retention of the existing Victorian buildings on the appeal site of No. 1 Poultry actively acknowledged a range of intrinsic qualities in the buildings. The Corporation, like other conservation interests, stressed the historic value of the buildings, their diversity of styles and their representativeness of Victorian commercial architecture. However, for the Corporation of London the prime significance of the Victorian buildings was the way they relate to their surrounds.

The diversity and smallness of scale of the existing buildings on the appeal site were seen as relating positively to the alternate and more dominant visual theme of the area, which is one of monumentality. In Worskett's view (Proof of Evidence 1988, 51) the diversity of the existing buildings 'ameliorates' the effect of the 'massive interventions' of the other 'monolithic buildings' around Bank Junction. He likened the relationship between the less grand Victorian buildings and the grander surrounding buildings to a 'theatrical show' in which the Victorian buildings on the development site were 'the supporting cast in the townscape' (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 56). It is the 'visually subservient' nature of the buildings which is seen to be their most important contribution to the character of the area. They do not '..compete in scale with the dominance of the...Grade I buildings (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 49). The prime metaphor used by the Corporation witness to describe the visual hierarchy in Bank Junction was that of 'master and servant':

This relationship of visual master and servant between the forecourt, with its major buildings, and the subject site must be retained if the Conservation Area is to have any meaning...(RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 39).

In their relationship to the grander buildings surrounding them, the buildings on the appeal site have many of the qualities expected or required of a servant: they are 'delicate', 'subservient', 'modest' and 'deferential' (RW Proof of Evidence 1988). In contrast, the Stirling scheme was seen as a 'challenge' to the existing urban hierarchy of Bank Junction. In its height and bulk it challenged the 'visual supremacy' of the Mansion House, the Bank of England and the Royal Exchange and 'asserts' an undesirable presence (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 57).

While hierarchy is a conventional townscape concept, the Corporation's advocacy of this particular relationship reiterates certain social and cultural formations which it sees as characteristic and desirable features of the City. Hierarchy has long been associated with the cultural, social and functional character of the City. In quite distinct ways the Bank of England and the Mansion House, two of the buildings whose visual



supremacy is defended by the Corporation, are central to that hierarchy. In the No. 1 Poultry case, the Corporation of London defended the symbolic expression of a range of traditional social orders and practices in the built fabric of Bank Junction.

The Mansion House, for example, is the official home of the Lord Mayor, head of the City Civic. The Corporation, somewhat predictably, felt that the Mansion House should remain 'dominant' in the visual hierarchy of the Junction (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 39). The Mansion House allows the Corporation (which is centred at Guildhall to the north) to retain a dominant physical presence in this central City site. The emphasis on a built hierarchy reiterates traditional hierarchical structures and practices of the civic City, established over 800 years ago but which is increasingly under threat of transformation.<sup>6</sup>

Doolittle (1982) charts the troublesome history of the Corporation as a local government in the context of wider municipal reform in London. External forces, most notably Westminster, the LCC and GLC, have long pressured the Corporation to reform its arcane, often undemocratic and privileged practices. The Corporation has resisted such pressure and has only gradually reformed its practices and procedures. Both the Corporation and the closely linked Liveries are still steeped in ritual. In the case of the Liveries, ritual practices have gained precedence over many of their original functions.<sup>7</sup> In the case of the Corporation, as it slowly and reluctantly reformed its local government practices and became more like other local authorities, its residual ceremonial practices have continued to assert its special status as the first local government in Britain. The protection of the visual supremacy of Mansion House, official home of the Lord Mayor, is yet another symbolic and ritualistic expression of the Corporation's uniqueness as a local authority at a time when this uniqueness is under forced reform.<sup>8</sup>

Even within the continuing pomp and ceremony, however, a new note of 'democracy' rings out above the old reputation of privilege. For example, each year the incoming

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<sup>6</sup>To be a candidate for civic office or to enter one of the associated Liveries in the City, it is still necessary to be a 'freeman' of the City. Originally this could only be acquired through servitude (serving an apprenticeship to a freeman—thus the close historical link between the Liveries and the Corporation), through patrimony (descent from a freeman), through redemption (purchase with the approval of the existing Corporation officers) or bestowal. It is still a requirement that Corporation participants be freemen but the most common means of gaining this status in the contemporary City is via patrimony or purchase (Jenkins 1988).

<sup>7</sup>Cannadine (1983) charts a parallel process in the case of the Royal Family where a diminished governmental role was replaced by a rise in public rituals.

<sup>8</sup>Of course the property holdings of the Corporation, coupled with the fact that in some wards there are only a few voters still sets the Corporation apart as a local authority.



Mayor selects a theme which is to set the tone of the Mayoralty (and the Procession) for that term of office. The silver-oared Mayoral barge of fifteenth century water pageants and Victorian themes of 'Britannia', when elephants and camels paraded the streets of the Heart of the Empire, have given way to themes like 'It's People that Matter' (Dame Mary Donaldson, 1983-4) and 'People Count' (Sir Christopher Collett, 1988-9) (Jenkins 1988, 16-22).

Democracy resonated also in the Corporation's case against the No. 1 Poultry development. It sought to protect a townscape in which ideas of social and cultural hierarchy are reified, and yet this ambition was represented as being an expression of the 'will of the people'.<sup>9</sup> The Corporation spoke against the Palumbo scheme as the local authority for the area. But it elaborated and legitimated its official response by evoking a range of ideas which circulate around democracy and the apparent loss of power under modernism.

With other conservation interests, the Corporation argued that post-war planning ignored 'the people' and as a consequence 'they' now suffer many ugly and poorly functioning buildings. The Corporation witness suggested that 'we all...hunger...for relief from the bland repetitive facades of modern office development' (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 31). The Corporation asserted that the new democratic era in planning has come down in favour of the retention of the historic fabric:

...the difference between then and now, is that now the public, through the democratic process, has a say and quite reasonably wishes to see the historic roots and identity of our cities retained (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 55).

As the Corporation witness asserted, 'public opinion is not powerless' and the Corporation in the No. 1 Poultry case claimed that it acted as mouthpiece for the public (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 4)

Yet another twist was added to the shifting tension between hierarchy and democracy in the Corporation's case against the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment. The voice of the people was given further legitimacy through the Prince of Wales. Roy Worskett took full advantage of the recent role of the Prince of Wales as the vox populi of planning and architecture. He cited the Prince of Wales' reference to the Palumbo scheme as reminiscent of a '1930s wireless' and more particularly he quoted an address made to

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<sup>9</sup>Duncan and Duncan (1984) note a similar process in the case of struggles over 'anglophile' landscapes in Vancouver



the Corporation of London Planning and Communications Committee in December 1987 in which the Prince of Wales said:

It is not just me complaining-countless people are appalled at what has happened to their capital city but feel totally powerless to do anything about it (HRH the Prince of Wales, Address to the Corporation of London Planning and Communications Committee 1/12/1987; quoted in RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 4).

The Corporation not only joined with the Prince in advocating the democratic right of all people to speak out about their environment. Its adherence to the principle of urban hierarchy accorded with one of the Prince's ten commandments:

There is a recognizable hierarchy in towns and villages that may seem obvious... In a way they emphasize our values as well as our social organizations (HRH the Prince of Wales 1989, 81).

To abandon hierarchy in architecture and urban design could have dire consequences according to the Prince of Wales:

If you abandon these basic principles of grammar the result is discordant and inharmonious. Good architecture should be like good manners and follow a recognized code. Civilized life is made more pleasurable by a shared understanding of simple rules of conduct (HRH the Prince of Wales 1989, 80).

Thus at one level the Corporation implied the need to preserve a particular representation of power through hierarchy in the built environment. But it embedded this position in an oppositional theme of democratic right, ironically endorsed by way of the views of the Prince of Wales. The contradiction between preserving artefacts of past social hierarchies and legitimating conservation as part of a 'democratic' process has become a hallmark of twentieth century conservation (see Chapter 4). Thus, while each of the 'expert' witnesses in the No. 1 Poultry case proffered informed opinions about the architectural, historic or townscape value of the area and the existing buildings, these views were always grounded in the 'non-expert' feelings and sentiments of 'the people'. Through this process the Corporation's point of view was 'naturalized' and rendered 'apolitical'. The clearly power-laden site of Bank Junction, with its symbolic hierarchical order, was transformed through the voice of the people into the 'cherished local scene' of Conservation Area and townscape legislation.

It is in planning terms that the Corporation has most clearly conformed to external municipal reforms and, in part, this is manifest through the adoption of conservation policy. While this has resolved some of the persistent tensions between the



Corporation and external pressures to conform in terms of civic practices, it has set it in tension with the expanding and transforming financial sector of the City (King 1985, 1990; Pryke 1988). This is explored more fully in the remainder of the Chapter.

### 5.2.3. Morality and Money: The view of St. Paul's

A further elaboration of the Corporation's urge to preserve traditional City orders and to express this through the built environment was made with reference to the other great monument of the City, St. Paul's Cathedral. There is a short section of about fifteen paces on the walk westwards along Cheapside into the Bank Junction where the dome of St. Paul's looms in the skyline. This glimpsed view of the dome from Cheapside is seen by the Corporation to be the 'most striking and significant aspect' of the Bank Junction's townscape qualities (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 4). The Palumbo proposal all but obliterates this glimpsed view, leaving only the cupola visible (Figure 5.8.). The loss of this view and the townscape relationship between the buildings in and around Bank Junction and the dome of St. Paul's became a key theme in the Corporation's case against the proposed redevelopment.

The Corporation argued that the existing buildings in the area, including the buildings on the appeal site, are critical to this view. The Mappin and Webb turret 'frames' the dome and 'plays' with it and other spires in the townscape. The appeal site buildings and particularly the turret of the Mapping and Webb building were identified as an integral part of the 'superb kinetic view of the dome of St. Paul's' (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 54). It is a classic example of the type of serial vision that Cullen and others in the townscape movement have identified as desirable aspects of urban form.

The attention given to St. Paul's dome in the No. 1 Poultry case has a long lineage in the City. The post-war period of reconstruction in the City is often depicted, particularly by conservation interests, as doggedly modernist. the Prince of Wales likened the post-war rebuilding of the City to the destruction by the Luftwaffe (HRH the Prince of Wales 1987b in Jencks 1988, 47). The Save The City report asserted that the post-war planning policies of the Corporation were anti-tradition and anti-heritage, seeking to express power and progress through the new and the modern:

The post-war period was one of experimentation and radical reappraisal in architecture and planning, with the emphasis... on renewal rather than rehabilitation..Throughout this period the form, height and layout of buildings have been conditioned by the 'plot ratio' system...Vehicular circulation was given paramount importance...It was intended eventually, over a large part of the City, pedestrians would walk aloft, on first-floor walkways (Freeman 1976, 15).



This depiction of the City tells of the early twentieth-century planning: buildings are born of the car, people are disconnected from the street and the sky (see Crow 1989). Although the picture is a caricature of London, it is a caricature of what is to come. In the years when the City faced the consequences of its own damage, few parts of the plan came to fruition: London still has many examples.<sup>10</sup>

The post-war plans of the City tell of the same kind of examples of rampant modernism: the

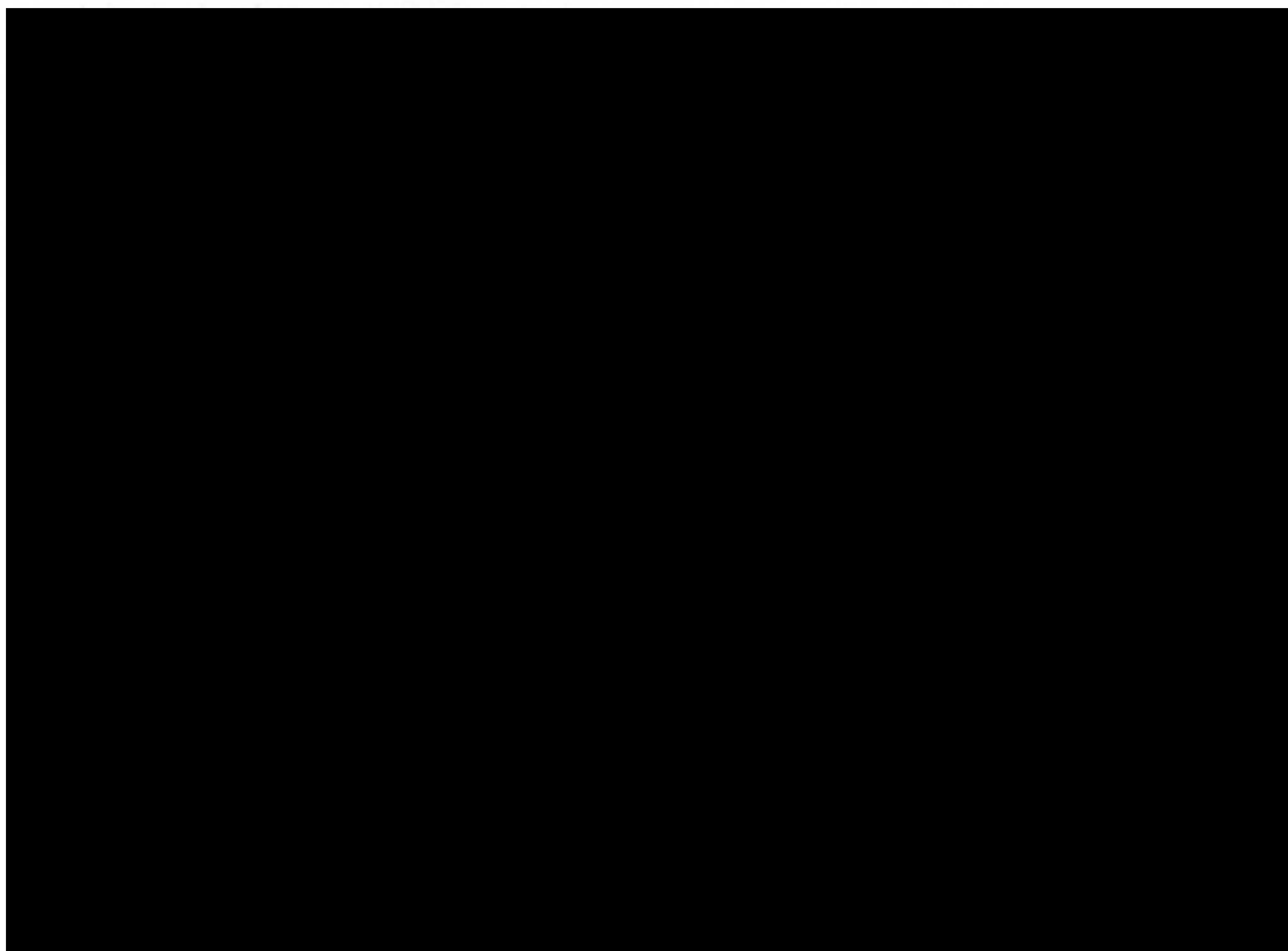


FIGURE 5.8. THE VIEW OF ST PAUL'S DOME FROM CORNHILL: EXISTING VIEW AND AFTER POULTRY

SOURCE: Worskett, R. 1988 Mansion House: Keeping the Status Quo. *Landscape*, 7. 56.



This depiction of the City calls on the classic images of modernist urban design and planning: buildings are born of calculations, not creativity; individuals give way to the car; people are disconnected from the earth and relegated to futurist walkways in the sky (see Crow 1989). Although this depiction describes, in part, the post-war vision for London, it is a caricature of what was actually conceived in those intense war and post-war years when the City faced the daunting task of reconstruction of the one third lost to bomb damage. Few parts of London can now be found where these modernist visions came to fruition: London Wall and Blackfriars underpass are the two most dramatic examples.<sup>10</sup>

The post-war plans of the Corporation may well be popularly depicted as ruthless examples of rampant modernism serving efficiency and profit-seeking but they also contain much reference to the historic fabric of the City and the need to preserve that fabric and 'respect the City's traditions and prestige' (Corporation of London 1944b, iii).<sup>11</sup> In a Report on the preliminary plan for the reconstruction, the Corporation of London (1941a) sought not to disregard the old but to achieve a 'balance' between the City's commercial role and its claims to be 'a treasure house, almost a cameo, of the nation's history'. The report claimed that:

Whenever there have been two ways of solving a problem which were equally satisfactory from a functional point of view, the choice has fallen on the scheme which was more in accord with tradition (Corporation of London 1941a, 1).

The later Holden and Holford report concluded that:

The plan for the City has literally to thread its way between the sites and buildings which everyone wants to preserve; but at the same time it cannot carry through all the necessary improvements without some consequential alterations (Holden and Holford 1951, 54).

Plans of this time did ultimately defer to the function and practical concerns of solving the congestion and light problems which characterized the inherited office space and providing improved road transport. But there was also a persistent concern with protecting the 'architectural dignity of the City' (Corporation of London 1944a, 2). It was

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<sup>10</sup>There are already rumours that parts of London wall should be considered for listing or conservation area designation because they are such fine examples of this apparently loathed planning period (Interview City Planner, 1989).

<sup>11</sup>My retrieval of an historicist sub-text in the Corporation's modernist postwar plans parallels a number of recent re-readings of modernists texts: Berman 1982; Crow 1989; Matless in press.



primarily the monumental that was seen to be worthy of preservation in the immediate post-war years. The smaller scale buildings and the narrow alleys and lanes of the City, which later were fiercely defended by the Corporation of London in the No. 1 Poultry case as essential foils to the monumental, were only given limited consideration. These urban attributes were seen as negative qualities providing 'small, badly-lit and narrow buildings' contrary to the vision of a healthy and efficient commercial centre (Holden and Holford 1951, 27; see also Holden and Holford 1947).

One of the particular historical concerns of the Corporation throughout this period of post-war replanning was the preservation of the views and surrounds of St. Paul's. St. Paul's was the edifice of Wren's rebuilding of the City's churches after the great fire of 1666 and it has long been a symbol of City survival. It has a symbolic status which gained new potency and relevance on the night of the 29/30th December 1940 when the City faced its first German attack of World War II. Almost a third of the City's fabric was destroyed in that and subsequent bombing raids. The area immediately north, east and south-east was devastated by wartime bombing but the dome of St. Paul's remained virtually intact and the evocative photographs of the dome under fire became a heroic symbol of British survival.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the Corporation's post-war plans to remodel and rebuild the City (1934-1951), there was continual reference to the need to protect and enhance the visual dominance of St. Paul's.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1934, the Corporation undertook its first study on height control in relation to St. Paul's dome and restrictions became policy by 1935 (Kutcher 1976, 161).<sup>14</sup>

The special status of St. Paul's as a 'symbol of resistance and survival' was noted in the Holden and Holford report (1951, 80). An earlier planning report stressed the immutability of the significance of St. Paul's:

Every City has a characteristic silhouette punctuated by features of precious value and sentiment to its people. The march of progress and human ingenuity, inevitably if

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<sup>12</sup>Daniels (1990) has recently begun a study of the shifting symbolic status of St. Paul's.

<sup>13</sup>It is noteworthy that it is from this historical perspective and attitude to St. Paul's and its surrounds that the Paternoster Development emerged. That this is now seen as a prime example of modernist insensitivity to its surrounds and is due to be demolished and replaced with a neo-classical scheme, denies the more general planning context of its conception.

<sup>14</sup>The period was a time of intense planning activity in the City and London generally. Rival plans for the City (e.g. Lindy and Lewis's 1945 plan (see Barker and Hyde 1982, 182-184) and the Royal Academy's 1942 plan (Royal Academy 1942)) emphasized the view of St Paul's to an even greater extent. Similarly, more general London planning documents (e.g. the 1943 London County County Plan, Abercrombie's 1944 Greater London Plan and the 1971 Greater London Development Plan) all make specific reference to the preservation of the dominance of St. Paul's in the London skyline.



imperceptibly, remodels this, yet certain landmarks survive unaltered. Such is the Dome of St. Paul's (Corporation of London 1944a, 12).

The Corporation's defence of the glimpsed view of the dome from Cornhill was an extension of a long-held reverence for the visual supremacy of the great architectural piece of the City. In reiterating this concern in the context of the No. 1 Poultry case, increased emphasis was given to the moral and social reasons for protecting a visual link between St. Paul's and Bank Junction. Once again the visual hierarchy reiterates a desirable social hierarchy. Mappin and Webb is seen as 'subservient to St. Paul', the 'servant' to this 'master' (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 46). Like the relationship of hierarchy within the Junction itself, this other relationship of hierarchy carries with it broader significance. It is the only view of the dome from the 'heart of the City' and is cast as a desirable moral presence in a part of the City dominated by financial concerns:

...it is not just a view from St. Paul's from afar. It is the relationship between Bank Junction, Mansion House and the Mappin and Webb triangle and the metropolis and Empire. [T]his viewpoint is ideal to give a sense of London as the economic centre of the Empire as well as the spiritual and other-worldly sense of the Empire (English Heritage No. 1 Poultry cross examination, 1988).

The visual relationship between the Junction and the dome reiterates a desired moral presence which off-sets or moderates the potential immorality of the money-making City. The reification of this relationship of morality and money through the visual link draws on deeply-rooted images of the immoral and godless city (see Williams 1973; Howkins 1986). The Palumbo scheme is not then only modern but, because it blocks this visual link, is also irreverent and irreligious.

#### 5.2.4. Englishness, Empire and Europe.

If Mansion House represents the traditional hierarchy of the Civic City, then it is the Bank of England which represents the pinnacle of the Financial City. In opposing the No. 1 Poultry scheme, the Corporation also defended the continued visual dominance of the Bank of England. Its position was a re-affirmation of the City's traditional hierarchy of Financial power which, like the Civic City, faced new challenges and transformations.

Sampson (1982, 265) refers to the Bank of England as the traditional 'centre-piece of the City's confidence and stability', the 'financial monarch' of the City. The Bank of England has a pervasive role in the City financial affairs (McRea and Cairncross 1985, 217). It stands central to what appears to be a rigid hierarchy of power. Yet this



hierarchy has been traditionally enforced through a range of 'informal' rules and practices (Sampson 1982, 270; see also Pryke 1988). The monumental form of the Bank which is so fiercely defended by the Corporation is underpinned by a realm of practice which is almost 'village-like'.

Sociological studies of the financial (merchant banking) sector of the City document how the Bank of England has until recently presided over relatively 'informal' financial practices based on class- and gender-specific, familial dynasties (Cassis 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Lisle-Williams 1984a, 1984b). The closeness and the power of the merchant bankers in the City has been enforced through a range of common experiences such as attendance of the same schools and colleges (like Eton and Oxbridge), intermarriage between banking families, common dress codes and membership of common clubs (Cohen 1974). Upper class values, expressed through the 'culture of the gentleman' and enacted through an 'old boy network' have provided the basis for normative and self-regulatory financial practices in the City. The Bank of England has played an important role in safeguarding not just the financial practices of the City but the hierarchical and exclusionary 'culture of the gentleman' within which these practices are so deeply embedded.<sup>15</sup>

Pryke (1988) has provided a geographical interpretation of this City sociology. In the traditional geography of the City, financial services were located in the central core close the Bank of England. The spatial proximity allowed financial practices in the City to be based on face-to-face dealings through the close class- and gender-specific network. The daily contact, facilitated by spatial proximity, reinforced social bonds and ensured that financial practices could be sustained through an 'informal', self-regulating system based on trust and reciprocity (Cohen 1974; Harris and Thane 1984). Although not a static system of social and business practice it relied on a high degree of predictability to which the Bank of England was crucial.

Since the 1960s the City has faced a number of radical transformations in the financial sector and these have challenged as never before the traditional financial practices of the City. The 'City revolution' is tied to three essential transformations: the growing internationalization of banking and securities trading, the deregulation of the securities market and the introduction of new technology (Plender and Wallace 1985, 2). These changes began during the 1960s and they culminated in the 'Big Bang' of 1986.

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<sup>15</sup>Harris and Thane (1984) suggest bankers were not as 'aristocratic' in their practices as suggested but do acknowledge definite coherence of practices and values.



The early signs of change came by way of the expansion of international banking operations in the City and the Euro-currency market. In the 1950s there was only a small Euro-currency market, but by 1973 total Euro-currency deposits were \$315m and by 1988 they exceeded \$4,500b. (Clarke 1989, 113). The Euro-currency market ensured that the City maintained and adjusted the source of its financial dominance in international terms. However, until recently not all sectors of the City Financial shared in the boom. In particular, the operations of the Stock Exchange were seen to be hindering its capacity to compete effectively with other financial centres. Change came to the Stock Exchange in October 1986, the 'Big Bang'. Fixed commissions were abolished which allowed for single capacity trading: that is, brokers/dealers acting both as agents for others and on their own behalf in the buying and selling of stock (DEGW 1985, 8). Less publicized was the lifting of unlimited liability requirements which had previously limited the companies who could join the Exchange. This 'deregulation' was accompanied by a major transformation in the technological base of the financial sector. This entailed the introduction of screen-based trading, the first of which was SEAQ (Stock Exchange Automated Quotation). The impact on the financial sector of deregulation and the new technology has been marked. Turnover in equities, for example, increased from an average of £650m per day before the Big Bang to over £1.1b per day (Clarke 1989, 125). There were also substantial changes in the structuring of the financial sector and, in particular, the conglomeration of merchant banks, stock brokers and jobbers. The heady times following the Big Bang were tempered by the 1987 October Crash when the FTSE fell a record 250 points and some 3,000 City jobs were lost.

An important part of the transformation in the City Financial has been the shift in the nature of the City's international links. The City had always been international but in the nineteenth century this was tied to the Empire, with financial business based on colonial modes of production and trade based around the exchange of British manufactured goods for raw materials and food imports from the Empire (King 1990, 9). The twentieth century has seen a shift in the City's international links away from Empire-based internationalism to a new global internationalism (King 1990, 83-87; Thrift 1986, 1987). The Euro-market has been critically important in the transformation to a global City.<sup>16</sup> Through the communications advances in the City, there is 24 hour global trading in securities. The growth in Eurodollar transactions has brought a new

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<sup>16</sup>That is, the trading of Euro-bonds and Euro-equities, for example, in Euro-currencies; currencies held outside or 'off-shore' of the country of origin (King 1990, 91; Plender and Wallace 1985, 26).



era of international prestige and has given a new lease of life to the financial sector in the City (McRea and Cairncross 1985, 18).

One manifestation of the new global City is the growth of foreign banking and broking facilities located there (Thrift 1987). In 1914, there were only 30 foreign banks; by the 1930s this had expanded to over 80 and by the early 1960s there were over 100 (Goodhart and Grant 1986, 9). The real explosion occurred during the 1960s. From 1961-71, the number of foreign banks in the City doubled and in the following decade, doubled again. In 1987, just prior to the No. 1 Poultry public inquiry, there were 453 foreign banks either directly or indirectly represented in the City (King 1990, 89) (Table 5.1). In 1982, the assets of foreign banks as a proportion of total assets of all banks in the UK was 61% (The Banker 1983). The City now compares more favourably to its competitors of New York and Tokyo in terms of its share of global securities dealings (Thrift 1987).

Another fundamental change is anticipated with European monetary (and possibly political) union and the entry of Britain into the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, along with the reunification of Germany and fears of the possible supremacy of the Deutchmark. As Nicholas Ridley (Secretary of State for Trade and Industry) has so uncompromisingly expressed, there is a resistance to these changes which is at times couched in nationalistic and racist terms (Lawson 1990).

Some have over-emphasized the ethnic specificity of the City. Harris and Thane (1984), for example, point out that City bankers have long been an 'international class', marrying across national boundaries and exploiting the links such associations provide. The qualitative difference in this new phase of the global City, is that the pertinent context for the financial City is no longer local but global and international associations are not always verified through traditional practices of inter-marriage or attendance at the same schools (King 1985, 1990; Pryke 1988; Thrift 1987). As Pryke (1989, 27) notes:

The City was to become the hub, not of a culturally familiar, slow-pace-empire-orientated regime of trade finance, but of a new fast moving capitalism, in which the City itself was to become equally international...[challenging] the culturally and nationally specific control of the City.

Sampson (1982, 263) notes that 'the square mile of the City has become like an off-shore island in the heart of the nation'.





SOURCE: Thrift (1987, 214) from The Banker, various issues.



The No. 1 Poultry conflict reflected a tension between the old Empire City and the new global 'off-shore' City. The visual hierarchy of Bank Junction not only asserted old practices but also the Englishness of these practices. This strand of the Corporation's case against the Poultry proposal was framed within a narrative of threat which drew upon a range of metaphors associated with the last great threat to the City - World War II. The Palumbo challenge to the visual hierarchy of Bank Junction was cast as foreign and anti-British. Appleyard (1979) notes that the depiction of change as alien or foreign is a consistent feature of planning controversies, but the nature in which the foreignness was articulated in the Poultry case drew heavily upon the contextual setting of internationalized financial practices and changes in the European political and economic scene.

The architectural style of the Stirling building provided much fodder for the development of the war metaphor. It was described as 'powerful', 'assertive', 'aggressive' and, most tellingly, 'militaristic' (RW Proof of Evidence 1988, 160-1). Most significantly, there were repeated references to the likeness between the James Stirling design and wartime coastal defence structures. In introducing the Corporation's case their barrister remarked that the Stirling building:

probably would be striking: with its tower at the front, its extractor ducts at the rear and the grill. It would be reminiscent of the German structures left behind in the Channel (Barrister for Corporation of London, No. 1 Poultry Inquiry 1988).

This was not simply inquiry theatrics. In cross-examining Stirling on his design, the Corporation barrister pursued his point:

CoL: You say that the prow does not overpower Mansion House, but is it not reminiscent of a German defence works?

JS: No. I notice you refer not to English bunkers but to German ones.

CoL: I am not saying German in a derogatory way, German bunkers are more powerful.

JS: You obviously know German bunkers!

(Cross Examination, No. 1 Poultry Inquiry 1988)

Allusions to the German war-time defence structures recurred throughout the Inquiry. James Stirling 'confessed' under cross-examination from the Corporation that he had, in fact, been involved in modifying some of such towers (British ones of course) during the war. Even the Inspector found it difficult to resist this theme. One day he brought in a book on the buildings of Alderney, and showed the inquiry a photograph of an



'Alderney Eyesore'. It was a German control tower at Mannez and indeed there was a striking similarity in style between this structure and the Stirling proposal!

It did not go unremarked by the conservationists that, although Stirling is acclaimed as one of Britain's 'big three' architects, he is most famous for his Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart (Figure 5.9.). A traitor to British architecture? Or an architect who better suits the old 'enemy's' taste and disposition than British taste and disposition? Whatever, the building and the architect were seen as 'foreign', 'traitors', an 'enemy' force. Palumbo's scheme to redevelop was thus cast as an act of national subversion, a 1980s attack by German values on the very heart of Britain, the City. This whole metaphorical theme turned upon the Blitz. Conservationists in the City consistently mark the Blitz as the 'beginning of the end'. The war-time destruction opened the way for massive reconstruction, much of which was executed in a modernist idiom, itself seen by conservationists as being more 'European' than British. the Prince of Wales, ever present in architectural issues today, added fuel to the 'battle of Bank Junction' by referring to the redevelopment proposed at Bank Junction as akin to the destruction wrought by the Luftwaffe (HRH the Prince of Wales 1987b, 1989; Jencks 1988).

While these nationalistic metaphors are enhanced and traded through the mouth of Royalty, they also are taken up by popular culture. Not long after the No. 1 Poultry inquiry closed, Rover cars launched their new advertising campaign. Two German-speaking businessmen drive a stylish, red Rover car. We know what they say because the advertisement is subtitled, not that subtitles are really needed. They draw up in front of Stirling's Stuttgart Gallery, and the question is asked, 'Britischer Architekt?'. One of Germany's most famous contemporary buildings is the work of a British designer. Is this the final victory? And the circulation of this metaphor does not stop here. Gavin Stamp, one of the more vocal conservationists in the No. 1 Poultry case, took up the phrase 'Britischer Architekt' to title a damning appraisal of the Poultry scheme which appeared in the The Spectator (Stamp 1988, 20). If inter-textual usage is a measure of the currency and potency of an idea, then the metaphor of No. 1 Poultry as a 1980s German attack of the City must touch deep in the British mentality.

There is indeed a notable co-incidence of style between war-time coastal bunkers and the Stirling building. But that the parallel in style should be a source of damnation for the Stirling building draws on deep-felt British sentiments towards the Germans, and the German bombing of the City during World War II. Wiener (1981, 70-71) notes that during the post-war reconstruction of England, there was a persistent comparison between the old-fashioned England and the new world Germany in which industry and modernism were seen to be running amok. A building that is stylistically similar to one







of the artefacts of this period of history, must struggle to be acclaimed as a great piece of 'British architecture'.

The return to the analogy of World War II and the consequent racialization of the No. 1 Poultry scheme is at one level simply tied to the destruction that the Corporation saw in the Poultry scheme to herald. Yet it is also set within, and gains potency through, the broader context of a changing financial City where old financial practices, based around an English elite, and civic practices focused on the local, are being challenged by new internationalized practices and associations. The Corporation of London's conservation policies and particularly their response to the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment assert and reify old practices and values which are deeply contradictory to the new face of the Financial City. The Corporation is stressing the localness and Englishness of the City at a time when City practices operate, as never before, in response to and in association with a global schema and global directives. The outwards-facing, financial City is deeply challenging to the Corporation which operates on an inward facing, local agenda. The next section, which deals with the developer's views in the No. 1 Poultry case, further explores the tension between the Corporation and the transforming financial City.

### 5.3. The Developer's View

Why is it that the present period of sustained growth in the wealth of Britain seems to be finding no Monumental expression? Where are the great buildings of the 80s? Who is dreaming of the great buildings of the 90s?...each characteristic period in a Nation's life should find some who will risk trying to build the monuments which will embody the best aspirations of the age and carry some message to the future.

William Waldergrave, Minister for Housing and Planning  
in speech to the Royal Fine Arts Commission, 1988.

Peter Palumbo, the developer of No. 1 Poultry, is no ordinary developer.<sup>17</sup> He is a second generation City property man, inheriting both his wealth and his profession from his father. His development company is now estimated to be worth some £65m. He is a patron of the arts (with particular involvement in the Tate Gallery), a member of Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, Godparent to the firstborn child of the Duke and

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<sup>17</sup>Perhaps this is best indicated by the fact that although City Acre Property is the legal company behind the Bank Junction proposals, the developer of Bank Junction is almost always referred to as Peter Palumbo.



Duchess of York and was recently appointed Chair of the Arts Council. Despite being cast in opposition to conservationist interests, Palumbo has himself promoted conservation, albeit with a modernist ilk. He has contributed £1m to the restoration of the interior of Wren's St. Stephen Walbrook, which is neighbour to both his City office and the No. 1 Poultry development site.<sup>18</sup> He 'collects' modernist houses, owning Mies's Farnsworth House in Illinois, Frank Lloyd Wright's Kentucky Knob in Pennsylvania, and Le Corbusier's pair of houses for the Jaoul family in Paris (Gardiner 1990, 22). He has carefully restored a derelict croft house on one of the six Hebridean Islands he purchased in 1985 (The Observer Profile 11/9/88, 13).

Unlike other developers he does not have a large number of concurrent, or even past, developments to his name. His career in development has largely focused on his persistent pursuit of redeveloping the Bank Junction site. This has involved acquiring 13 freehold properties and 348 leasehold interests over a twenty year period. In his individualistic style and his open patronage of the arts, he is more like the entrepreneur of past times than the contemporary developer persona of 'faceless' consortiums. In many ways Palumbo is the respectable English businessman contributing to the public realm, although the press have not been slow to highlight his Italian ancestry. It was reported that within the Palumbo family home 'the family's Italian roots were never mentioned', but this did not discourage the press from referring to Palumbo, on his appointment to the Arts Council Chair as 'Godfather for the Arts'; hinting not only at his Italian lineage but also at his recent selection as godparent to Princess Beatrice (The Observer Profile 11/9/1988, 13).

The architects Palumbo commissioned to create schemes for Bank Junction are equally exceptional. It is to be expected that a developer committed to the arts and seeking to transform one of the most important 'set pieces' of The City, would choose an architect renowned for high quality work. Both Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and James Stirling are respected designers, with 'international' reputations. Mies is claimed as one of the great modernists, instrumental in the rise of the International Style (Tafari and Dal Co 1976). Stirling too has an international reputation, and is seen as one of the three most talented contemporary British architects, along with Richard Rogers and Norman Foster. Jencks described the professional standing of Stirling:

Virtually every critic of architecture, and historians writing on the present, acknowledge James Stirling as a leading world class architect: he is referred to by his peers such as Philip Johnson, as 'Britain's greatest living architect' (CJ Proof of Evidence 1988, 17).

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<sup>18</sup>Some purists balk at the fact that the restoration has included the addition of a large central altarpiece by Henry Moore.



It was clear that the developer's team and the Corporation disagreed over the value of the existing buildings in Bank Junction. In the view of the developer's team the treasured Mappin and Webb turret was merely 'a little pigeon loft', the view of St. Paul's was simply 'a useful measure of where St. Paul's is', the Victorian buildings on the site were not modest deferential servants but 'squabbling dissenters', 'fallen down at heel' (Various witnesses No. 1 Poultry Inquiry 1988).

In the following analysis I highlight how the obviously oppositional vision of the developer was, in fact, encased within a language and logic similar to those who opposed his scheme. These common threads of language and logic attest to the pervasiveness of the ideas and constructions already encountered through the exploration of the Corporation's view. The developer obviously advocated change and capitalized on other transformations occurring in the financial, property and office sections of the City. But as the following analysis will demonstrate the legitimization of change was rooted in references to past traditions and historical precedents, as deeply imbued with historicism as the positions held by the Corporation and the conservationists.

### 5.3.1. Equity and Monumentality

The most explicit expression of deference to the past was Palumbo's shift from the high modernism of the Mies tower to the consciously contextual architectural style of Stirling. Stirling's work is noted for its attention to context.<sup>19</sup> Jencks, for example, saw Stirling as the fore-runner of the 'New Contextualism' and referred to the Poultry scheme as 'site-specific architecture' (CJ Proof of Evidence 1988, 13). His style is based around the imaginative development of classical proportioning but is far from classical in idiom. In selecting Stirling as the architect for his second attempt to redevelop Bank Junction, Palumbo was consciously addressing the issues of context and relationship to the surrounding buildings which was so central to the rejection of his first Mies proposal and the strong conservation/townscape policy of the Corporation. As Cooke (1988, 488) notes, 'modernism has become antique'.

The most striking element of the defence of the Palumbo proposal was the reliance on the same concept of townscape used by those opposing the scheme and the extension of the idea of conservation to include new development.<sup>20</sup> The developer's

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<sup>19</sup>For example, the Cloare Gallery in London (see Jencks 1973, 1980).

<sup>20</sup>Three witnesses, in addition to the architect himself, specifically addressed the issue of the quality of the proposed Stirling design and its relationship to the surrounding buildings: Anthony Blee (architectural consultant with the Sir Basil Spence Partnership); Prof. St. John Wilson



team used the townscape relationship between the proposed development and the surrounding buildings of Bank Junction as an important means of justifying the scheme's suitability and desirability. The developer's team argued that the very monumentality that the Corporation found so offensive was the most positive element of the Stirling design. The Stirling design was described positively as having qualities of 'power', 'strength', and a 'subdued monumentality' (St.JW Proof of Evidence 1988, 9-15). The monumentality of the Poultry scheme was presented as a worthy addition to this site of special importance characterized by the presence of the other monumental buildings. St. John Wilson (Proof of Evidence 1988, 13) argued that the Stirling proposal would be 'a building whose seriousness and monumental overtones much more appropriately accorded with [its] neighbours'.

The Stirling proposal was presented as an important addition which would, in accordance with Conservation Area requirements, 'enhance' the existing townscape. It shared the same 'rhythm and scale' as the rest of the Junction, it 'accorded' and 'harmonized', and was 'well-mannered' in the presence of the other grand buildings in the area (St.JW Proof of evidence 1988, 12-14; AB Proof of Evidence 1988, 27). The developer's team stressed the relationship of complimentary 'equity' between the proposal and the other monumental buildings, rather than hierarchy. In doing so, the developer continually reinforced the exceptional and powerful nature not only of his building but also of the area in general.

Jencks argued that the notion of hierarchy advocated by the Corporation was a 'dubious urbanistic metaphor'. He had an alternate vision:

What is wanted in a City, as in society, is a civilized discourse of citizens and buildings; not domination and class difference but interaction ...[a]... democratic quality (CJ Proof of Evidence 1988, 5).

In townscape terms the Stirling proposal was seen to be equal to the surrounding buildings and this reflected a desirable social and political equity.

Perhaps the most difficult townscape issue for the developer's team was that the Stirling proposal would impair the glimpsed serial view of the dome of St. Paul's from Cornhill. It was in acknowledgement of this view that, at the request of the Corporation, the scheme was reduced in height by one storey before being submitted for final planning approval. Despite this reduction, the view remained impaired and, as has been shown, this was a prime source of complaint in the Corporation's case.



Palumbo's witnesses counteracted this complaint in a manner which extended Jencks' metaphor of a 'dialogue between equals'. The central drum of the Poultry scheme, which provided a roofless rotunda, was referred to by Jencks (Proof of Evidence 1988, 9) as 'an open dome' which relied on 'the dome of the sky' and would create a 'contemporary sacred space'. The curves and rotundas of the Stirling scheme were defended as relating to and echoing the dome without, creating a dialogue between 'absent domes and present ones'. Stirling himself asserted that, while the scheme was built with context greatly in mind, it was the immediate context of the Bank Junction rather than the dome of St. Paul's which was paramount. However, Stirling also pointed out the new relationship which would be created between the central drum feature of his No. 1 Poultry scheme and the dome (Proof of Evidence 1988, 52). They are of similar dimension when viewed from Cornhill and the public access roof garden would open new views of St. Paul's previously not enjoyed in the City. The developer guaranteed public access to the roof garden so all could enjoy this new townscape feature.

### 5.3.2. Lineage and Status

In the Corporation's case the assertion of hierarchy in the urban environment was couched, somewhat ironically, within a rationale of the democratic rights of the 'common person' to have their 'cherished local scene' preserved. The developer's position on 'equity' in the built environment carried with it the reverse irony. In asserting 'equity', a new building equal to those surrounding, the metaphor of 'lineage' was of prime importance. Blee (Proof of Evidence 1988, 13), for example, argued that the Stirling proposal was of 'the right blood group' for the intersection.

This was not simply an issue of style. The status of Stirling as one of Britain's top architects was critical. Stirling became the last in a long line of great architects who have been allowed to leave their mark on this central site:

The site deserves and demands a building of great quality and strength that will be a match with its distinguished neighbours, each one of which draws strength from the fact that architects of distinction in their age were commissioned (AB Proof of Evidence 1988, 21).

Throughout the developer's defence of the scheme, comparisons were made between the work of Stirling and other architects whose work appears on and around the intersection: Hawksmoor, Lutyens, Soane. Bank Junction was recast by the



developer's team as a place of evolutionary change which has provided a site for grand architectural expressions throughout the history of the City:

If one characteristic pattern of events can be identified within this Conservation Area, it must surely be that in each generation architects of distinction in their day produced and built designs which made positive and confident statements, each one of which has tended to reinforce the importance of the City centre and compliment the Mansion House (AB Proof of Evidence 1988, 12).

The idea of lineage was extended to a new metaphorical complexity by Charles Jencks. In his writings on architecture, Jencks (1970, 1977) has always given considerable attention to the use of language and metaphor and he provided some of the more evocative and controversial metaphors of the developer's case.<sup>21</sup> At the very time when the Abortion Reforms were being discussed in Westminster, Jencks brought to the No. 1 Poultry inquiry the issue of 'the relative rights of the unborn'. Jencks argued that the conservationists were preventing the birth of 'not typical post-war architecture, not the huge dull, modern block' but 'a new genre of building' which had the potential to express the best of the contemporary era in architectural design (CJ Proof of Evidence 1988, 15). The implication was that, in their fervour to protect the past, the conservationists were preventing the future from having any examples of the architecture of the 1980s. The developer's team was able to appropriate the conservation logic and extend it to a 'total conservation' approach which also had a self-conscious eye to providing the heritage of the future. In the contemporary urban scene then, historicism and an urge to create history imbues even the most radical change.

In many respects, presenting a case for a grand building by a grand architect echoed the traditional cultural and social reputation of this central financial site. This part of the City has long been the domain of a cultural and financial elite. The developers position may well have required the demolition of one part of the 'heritage' of the site but, in other respects, it conformed with the traditional lineage of the area. It made a contemporary statement about the power of the City financial no different to those traditionally expressed and enacted in this core area of the City. The defence of this ambition in terms of 'lineage' conformed with the traditional familial practices that gave rise to and sustained the financial dominance of this area. But lineage and reputation also make hard economic sense as never before. The high quality of the design and the reputation of the architect was also seen to meet one of the more important aspects

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<sup>21</sup>Jencks (1970) wrote specifically on ideology and the 'myth of history' in architecture.



of property demand, that is the desire for buildings which enhance and project company identity through architecture. As the Baker Harris Saunders witness said (Proof of Evidence 1988,15), the 'power of the architectural statement' for tenants is 'greater than it has been at any time since the war'.

### 5.3.3. Tradition and Location

Thus far I have highlighted the historical references in the style of Stirling's work and the legitimization of the scheme on the basis of the traditional evolution of Bank Junction. Setting aside the rhetoric of the inquiry, perhaps the most overtly 'historical' act of the entire Bank Junction saga was Palumbo's desire to locate in the central core of the City. Palumbo's vision of redeveloping this central City site began over twenty years ago when the City financial still clung to its central core area around the Bank of England. Palumbo could anticipate high returns from a redevelopment that provided high quality office space in the most desirable location in the City. Although there was no fixed client for either the Mansion House Square scheme or the later Stirling scheme, there was little doubt that there would be a demand for the office space being created. As Pryke (1988, 324-393) notes in the late 1970s, just prior to Palumbo applying for full planning permission for the Mansion House Square scheme, there was an almost 'inexplicable' demand for the ever-spiraling central core office area (Pryke 1988).

By the time Palumbo had acquired all the property needed to apply for full planning permission on the Mansion House Square scheme, much had changed in the City's property market and in office requirements. These changes were a response to the transformations to the City's financial practices (King 1985, 1990; Pryke 1988, 1989). The replacement of conversational dealing by screen-based dealing has, for example, made dealing floors virtually redundant. The new technology and practices have created a demand for larger and more flexible types of office space. The average size of floorspace let in the City rose from 3,907 square feet in 1983 to 8,900 square feet in 1987. In 1961, the average area of office space per worker was 173 square feet but this had increased to 255 square feet by 1981 (DEGW 1985, 26). The new technology also requires new office specifications. There is a need for clean and uninterrupted power supplies, sufficient underfloor and duct space for cabling, easy access to cabling, and means of coping with the new heat loads generated (DEGW 1985, 12). Changing attitudes to public profiles in the business sector has also meant that clients seek quality buildings through which to express their corporate image. For the most part these new requirements could not be met within the existing built fabric of the City.

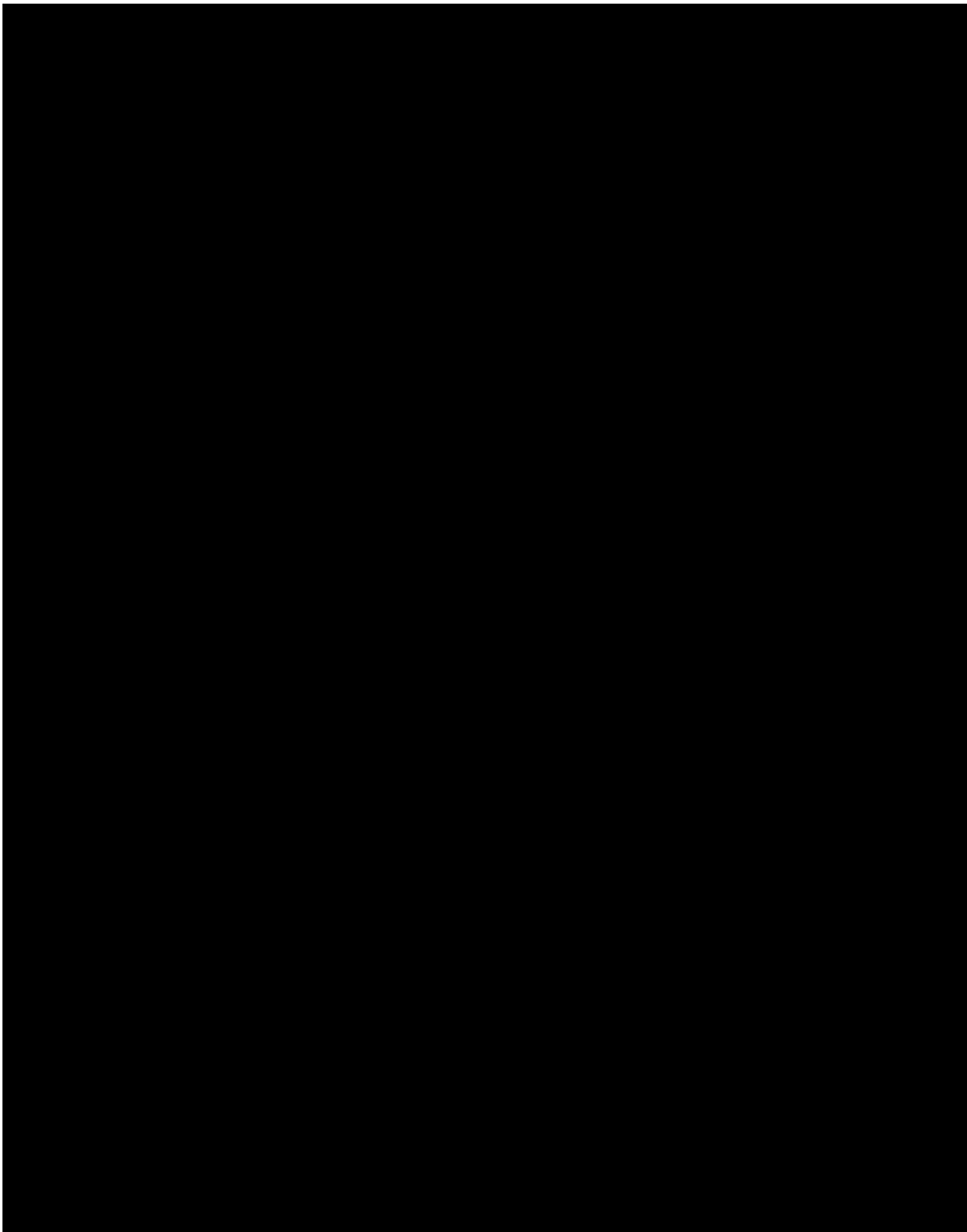


In response to these new demands, the City experienced a development boom during the 1980s. When the Poultry scheme was in public inquiry it was estimated that 13m square feet of office accommodation were under construction or to be started by the end of 1987 (Baker Harris Saunders 1987, 3) (Table 5.2.). Planning applications for office development in the City doubled in two years (Baker Harris Saunders 1988, 1). In 1987, applications and consents with the Corporation had the potential to create 21.7m square feet of office space, the equivalent of over 40% of existing City stock (Baker Harris Saunders 1987, 14).

Demand for office space had grown to the extent that around the time of the Poultry inquiry, pre-letting of offices under construction had become the norm. There was a 113% increase in the volume of office space let in the City between 1983 and 1987 (Table 5.3). The demand was reflected in rentals paid. In 1987, approximately 60% of lettings in the City achieved rents of about £30.00 per square foot (compared with 40% the previous year). The purchase of centrally located Bracken House by the Japanese construction company Ohbayashi for \$143m sent ripples through the City property market. Central City rentals around the time of the inquiry averaged £55 per square foot (Savills 1988, 10-11).

Most significantly, the property development and office rental booms had a new geography. Financial functions were pushing to the outer edges of the City and to non-City locations (Pryke 1988, 1989). For example, between 1980-3 there was an estimated 3.6m square feet of office space scheduled for completion in the City but, of this, over half was outside the core part of the City (Jones Lang Wootton 1986, 32). The shift outwards from the central core was facilitated by the more flexible practices based around the new technology. It was no longer crucial to locate near to the Bank of England. The need for larger office units was consolidating the move to fringe areas as well (Dunning and Morgan 1971). In fringe areas of the City, sites were not only cheaper but they were often larger and under single ownership, such as Broad Street and Liverpool Street, allowing for the property acquisition phase of redevelopment to proceed quickly (Pryke 1988, 385). Between June 1985 and June 1986, £1b was spent on purchasing land and buildings in the City. Of this, £390m was spent on single deals exceeding £25m, as developers sought out large sites which could be developed to provide for the new requirements (Jones Lang and Wootton 1986, 35). The massive Broadgate scheme of Rosehaugh provides a net lettable area of 1,302,000 and was valued at £730m (Baker Harris Saunders 1987, 26). Office letting figures supported this trend. In 1985, 28% of lettings were in the inner core compared with 23% in 1986 and 17% in 1987 (BHS Proof of Evidence, 23). Docklands too had become a viable

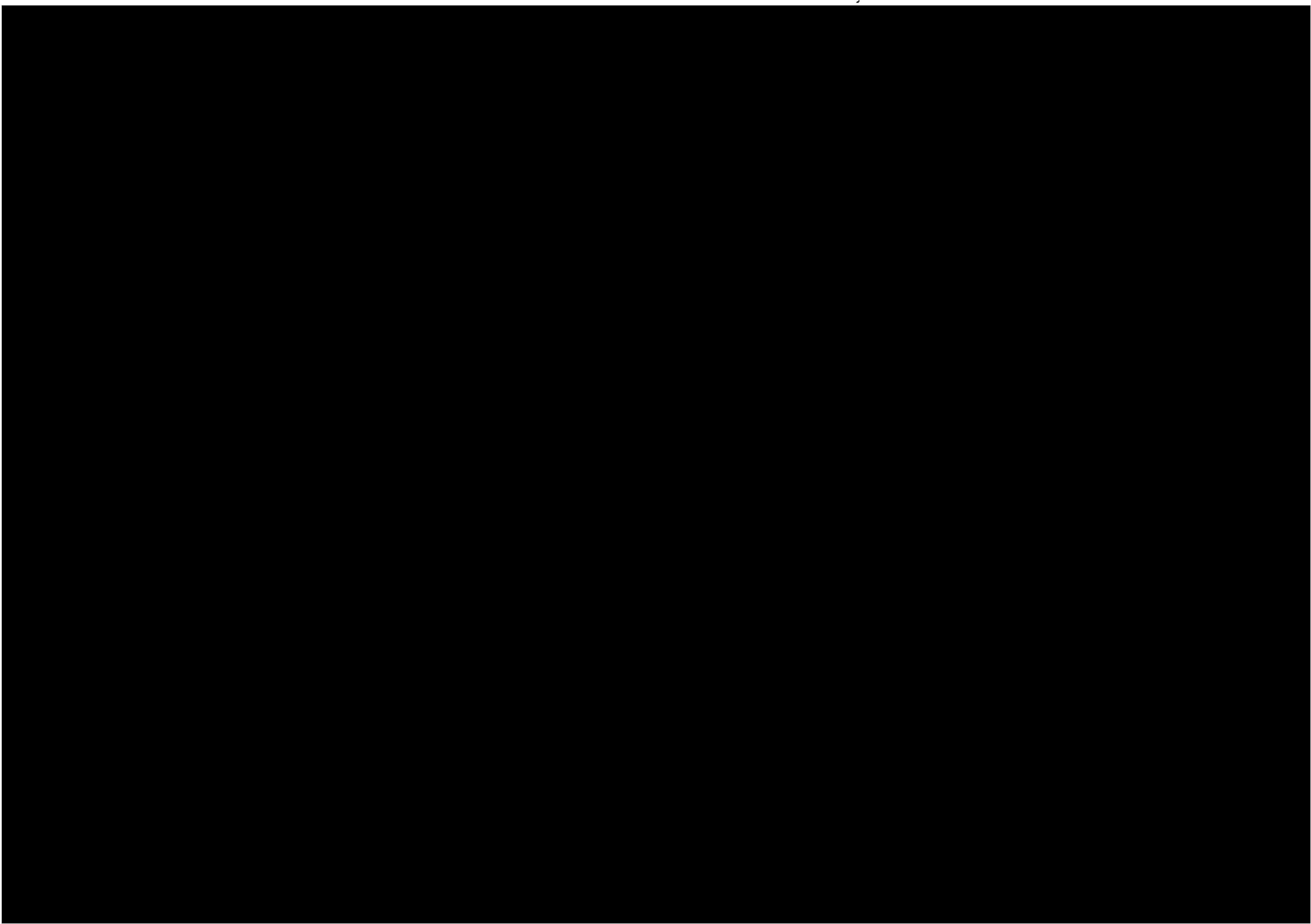




SOURCE: Baker Harris Saunders 1987.



TABLE 5.3. Volume of Office Space Let in the City: 1983-1987.



Source: Baker Harris Saunders, Proof of Evidence, No. 1 Poultry Inquiry.



alternative with, for example, an estimated 10 m square feet of available office space and the imposing and much publicized Canary Wharf development being built (Savills 1988, 3).

Within this context, Palumbo's efforts to redevelop a central core site reflected more the practices of the 1960s, when his scheme was first conceived, than the trends of the 1980s. But even in the changed property climate of the 1980s, Palumbo could rest assured that if his development came to fruition it would provide massive returns. There remained a demand for central sites and in a 1987 Corporation Office survey, 95% of respondents said they would seek relocation within the City rather than alternatives like Docklands (Corporation of London 1987a). Around the Bank Junction, office rents ranged from £40 to £60 per square foot (Savills 1988, 10-11). In 1988, the top rent barrier of £60 per square foot was broken in the City with the Halifax Building Society paying £67.50 per square foot for a let at 62 Cornhill, only metres away from the Bank Junction (Savills 1988, 10-11). Palumbo's team were sensitive to the shifting property context. Harris (of Baker Harris Saunders) argued that:

...there have been a great deal of developments...on the edge of the inner core and the fringe where it has always been much easier to put together large sites but in the absolute centre of the City there are still very few buildings capable of housing the modern tenants' requirements and, at No. 1 Poultry, the building combined with its special location would in my mind always be outside the normal parameters of the supply and demand equation. New buildings in the very centre of the City are rare and in any market conditions there would be high demand (BHS Proof of Evidence 1988, 11).

However, at a time when the rest of the City, including the traditional financial heartland, was looking for alternative locations away from that heartland, Palumbo's efforts to redevelop the central core for financial use seemed in itself an act of the past not the present.

The spatial adjustments occurring in the City are not simply a response to changing financial practices. The conservation policies of the Corporation of London have made adjustments within the traditional spatial patterning of the City virtually impossible (Pryke 1988, Chapter 7). As a Palumbo witness noted,

There may be a new business heart to the City created on the Hackney/Islington border whilst the traditional heart is frozen as a historic monument (BHS Proof of Evidence 1988, 9).



The Corporation's assertion of the continued visual dominance of the Bank of England was set within a complex tension with this change and transformation. On the one hand, the Corporation asserted the reification of traditional practices centred on the Bank of England at a time when these practices were being transformed and the spatial fixity of the City shifting. Ironically, in protecting the visual and symbolic hierarchy in the Bank Junction through Conservation Area legislation and resistance to the No. 1 Poultry development, the Corporation was contributing to the breakdown of the very practices and spatial status it sought to reify. The conservation stand of the Corporation is one element in the multivariate pressures which are challenging and changing traditional financial practices and their traditional spatial solutions centred on the Bank Junction (King 1990; Pryke 1988, 1989). The Corporation may assert that tradition distinguishes the City of London from its competitors in Tokyo and New York or, closer to home, Docklands, but it may well be that the Corporation's tendency to reify traditional practices in the built form will separate these practices of the City from the traditional geography of the City.

As the analysis has shown, the developer's position in the No. 1 Poultry case was far from being strictly oppositional to the views of those who defend the existing built form of Bank Junction. His proposal actively engaged with ideas about the historical character of the Junction and the City more generally. The language used to defend the scheme was the language preferred by conservationists and which has been established in planning and urban design largely through the efforts of conservationists. This was the language of townscape and context, the argument of lineage and breeding. Conservationists may be keen to depict developers as enemies of the people and the past but, increasingly, development is appropriating the language and logic of historicity.

#### 5.4. Conclusion

The preceding analysis has demonstrated the pervasiveness of an ideology of urban transformation grounded in overt historicism in the City of the 1980s. This was as apparent in the conservation view of the Corporation of London as it was in the development view of Peter Palumbo. In a time of City boom and in a site long associated with expressions of British power and supremacy, it was the past that provided the rationale for contemporary statements of success (Cooke 1988, 488; 1990, 88). The Corporation and the developer shared a commitment to creating a monument to this climate of success and to the City generally. The aesthetics of the monument vary but the two parties which were ostensibly set in opposition spoke of the same City and in the same language of townscape and conservation. Both sought,



through their differing perspectives, to reify certain traditional cultural and social practices of the City in the built environment (e.g. Duncan and Duncan 1984, 1988; Schorske 1961; Woolf 1988).

While Wright (1985a), Hewison (1987) and Wiener (1981) are joined in a thesis which argues that the turn to the past is a response to 'decline', the City case suggests a more complex situation. There is certainly evidence to suggest that traditional patterns and practices are being protected, re-invented or restated in a climate of radical transformation. The changes the City faces are a result not of decline but of a new financial prosperity. But along with the new financial prosperity have come threats to traditional City practices, orders and geographies. It is in this context of transformation that certain interests in the City seek to reify threatened traditions in the built environment. The old City may not live on in practice but varying City interests are attempting to ensure it lives on in the built environment. Ironically the very efforts that seek to preserve the City of old in the built environment, such as the conservation efforts of the Corporation, are adding to the pressures which are causing its demise in the sphere of practice. As the planning policies of the Corporation become increasingly contradictory to the financial practices of the City it is likely that the impulse to assert traditional orders in the built environment will intensify.



## CHAPTER 6: MAKING MONUMENTS IN SPITALFIELDS

...when there was a shape there was a reflection, and  
when there was a light there was a shadow, and when  
there was a sound there was an echo, and who could say  
where one had ended and the other had begun?

Peter Ackroyd 1985 Hawksmoor

Immediately east of the City is the inner London area of Spitalfields and the Spitalfields Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market (Figure 6.1.). If the City can be depicted as a heartland then Spitalfields provides the antithesis: economically and socially marginal to the Britain embodied by Bank Junction. Spitalfields is the most deprived ward in one of the most deprived boroughs of London. The City may be seen as the Heart of the Empire but Spitalfields is where parts of that Empire have now settled: it has a large Bangladeshi population. They are the most recent in a succession of refugee and immigrant groups to have settled in Spitalfields, following on from the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews. In Spitalfields, wealth is not generated by trading in stocks and shares. Here livings are made from trading in fruit and vegetables or from small-scale manufacturing, most notably the garment industry.<sup>1</sup>

I now turn to this contrary setting and continue exploring the process of Making Monuments whereby social and cultural values are reified in the built environment. Using the Spitalfields Market redevelopment as a starting point, I examine this process through both the impulse to conserve the historic fabric and the impulse to create new urban forms.

The making of monuments in Spitalfields is explored firstly, through the response of the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust (and associated conservationists) to the proposal to relocate the Spitalfields Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market and redevelop the site for commercial uses. The conservation viewpoint is similar to that seen in the City case. However, in Spitalfields cultural monuments are carved not from the grand but from a more diminutive, domestic, urban fabric. I then turn to the developer's position and explore how the ideas and values of the conservation interests in the area became an important part of the development proposals for the Spitalfields Market site.

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<sup>1</sup>The social conditions in Spitalfields are further elaborated in Chapter 8.



### 6.1 The Spitalfields Market Redevelopment

In the 1980s, Spitalfields Market became a focus for regeneration efforts, with plans to convert the old market buildings into modern office and retail space. The market was a key part of the area's identity, and the redevelopment was seen as a way to revitalize the area and create new jobs. The market was a key part of the area's identity, and the redevelopment was seen as a way to revitalize the area and create new jobs.

A market has operated on the Spitalfields site since 1827 and the Market has undergone numerous changes since then. The Market was a key part of the area's identity, and the redevelopment was seen as a way to revitalize the area and create new jobs. The market was a key part of the area's identity, and the redevelopment was seen as a way to revitalize the area and create new jobs.



FIGURE 6.1. EXISTING BUILDINGS ON THE SPITALFIELDS MARKET SITE



### 6.1. The Spitalfields Market Redevelopment

In the 1980s, Spitalfields Market became the subject of redevelopment proposals which primarily sought to meet City office requirements. The Market was to be relocated and the 11 acre site given over to a mixed-use redevelopment providing large amounts of new-style office space as well as retailing, housing and community facilities.

A Market has operated on the Spitalfields site since 1682 and the Market has gone through numerous changes since then.<sup>2</sup> As with all London's wholesale markets, the feasibility of Spitalfields Market in its present location has been re-evaluated over the last two decades. A GLC report associated with the 1976 GLDP was 'not satisfied that redevelopment of London's markets on their traditional sites will result in an efficient, or profitable, pattern of distribution', adding that 'this applies particularly in the case of the Spitalfields Market' (GLC 1976, 97). The next decade saw the relocation of a number of London's inner city markets, such as Covent Garden and Billingsgate. Pressure to relocate or close Spitalfields intensified. A 1981 government Inquiry into London Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Markets found that the inner city markets were in decline: undersupplied and, in some cases, operating at less than half their optimum capacity (O'Cathain 1981, 1-3). It recommended that there be 'a planned reduction in the number of markets over the next 10 years' from six to three. Spitalfields was specified as one of the Markets to be closed.

The 1976 GLDP also identified 'Action Areas' where 'offices and industries can be located with benefit' (GLC 1976, 28). The area of Liverpool Street/Spitalfields (significantly referred to as a single area) was specified as a prime area for office development. While earmarking the area for such development, the plan also noted that the area possessed 'special quality and character' in architectural and townscape terms and that any future development should 'protect and enhance these special qualities' (GLC 1976, 102). Thus, by the late 1970s, the main strategic planning body for London accepted that Spitalfields Market should be relocated; that the area was highly suitable for office development; and that the area was of special historical interest. The scene was set for the recent Market controversy (Appendix 6.1).

The Corporation of London, Tower Hamlets and the traders have until recently resisted efforts to relocate or close the Market. Spitalfields was one of the more viable London

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<sup>2</sup>The Market buildings as they stand today were built during two main phases: the eastern section was constructed during the late nineteenth century, and the western section was built during the 1920s. Other extensions have been made since then, largely to provide improved parking facilities and to accommodate increasing volumes of trade.



Markets. By the early 1980s around 1,000 people were employed in the Market and there was a vacancy level of only 0.75% (House of Commons Select Committee Hearing 1988). A 1983 Corporation study found that relocation was neither feasible nor desirable (House of Commons Hearing 1988). Yet a 1985 government report on London Markets Overcapacity, although acknowledging that Spitalfields was operating at a satisfactory level, reiterated the view that the Market should close or move. It cited the severe traffic congestion as an insurmountable problem (Horticulture and Markets Committee 1985, 2).

Corporation resistance to change on the site abated when, in 1985, London Edinburgh Trust (LET) approached the Corporation with a redevelopment proposition which provided for the relocation of the Market. Traders too accepted that relocation would be advantageous.<sup>3</sup> Until 1985/6, Tower Hamlets had opposed the relocation of the Market. The Borough Plan (1986) made specific reference to the repeated pressures to close or relocate the Market:

Tower Hamlets Council is not aware of any current proposal to redevelop the Market, would regard its removal as an unnecessarily drastic step and would be reluctant to lose the employment offered by the Market or the contribution it makes to the variety and vitality of the Spitalfields district. However, the situation will be kept under review, and in any redevelopment the Council would seek a mixture of land uses to help meet the employment, housing and open space deficiencies of the Spitalfields area, designed on a human scale (LBTH 1986, 45).

In fact, by the time the Borough Plan was published in March 1986, London Edinburgh Trust had made its initial development overtures to the Corporation and Tower Hamlets was reviewing its position. The borough's Development Committee had already begun to organize consultation with local interests about the proposed relocation of the Market and redevelopment of the site.

The public consultation by the local authority assessed opinion on the future of Spitalfields Market but was primarily directed towards drafting a local authority brief for developers.<sup>4</sup> The report on the consultation concluded that the 'overwhelming majority of local residents and workers would not object to the relocation of the Market if the Market traders are happy to move'. The conclusion also notes that 'indeed, most would

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<sup>3</sup>Traders were initially split about relocation but after intensive consultation and guarantees of generous relocation compensation, they agreed to the move.

<sup>4</sup>I return to the details of the consultation process and local views on its shortcomings in Chapter 8.



like to see the Market encouraged to move, because of the environmental problems it causes' (BGNC 1986, 27).

Although the initial development overture came from LET, three separate consortia responded to the Corporation's development offer: The Spitalfields Development Group (SDG)<sup>5</sup>, Rosehaugh Stanhope and the Spitalfields Regeneration Project (Priest Marian). The Spitalfields Regeneration Project withdrew early in the tendering stage but the Rosehaugh Stanhope and SDG schemes were given planning permission. The Corporation of London finally selected the SDG offer which included the relocation of the Market to new premises at a site in Temple Mill. The vacated Spitalfields Market site was to be redeveloped primarily for offices but included retail, community facilities and housing (Figure 6.2. and Appendix 6.2.). The listed Horner Buildings were to be retained in the new scheme. The total value of the proposed relocation and redevelopment scheme was £94,644,500 (SDG 1987).

In accordance with the Tower Hamlets development brief, the SDG proposal offered a substantial planning gain package. The package included the provision of 118 units of social housing, the formation of a Community Trust to assist local businesses and provide for environmental improvements (£2.5m), the provision of training money (£50,000/annum for five years), the construction of a creche, fashion centre, and community centre, and guarantees about provision of and access to open spaces.

As Spitalfields Market operated under a Parliamentary Act, a Private Bill providing for the relocation of the Market to a new site had to be passed by Parliament before the redevelopment could proceed. Under Parliamentary provisions for Private Bills, interested groups may petition Parliament to send the Bill to a Select Committee Hearing. In the absence of a public inquiry, this unusual legal arrangement provided the opportunity for a number of local interests who opposed the relocation of the Market to express their views publicly. The Bill went to a House of Commons Select Committee Hearing in June 1988 and to a House of Lords Hearing in May 1989.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Spitalfields Development Group is a consortium consisting of London and Edinburgh Trust, Balfour Beatty Developments and County and District Properties Limited (a subsidiary of Costain Group).

<sup>6</sup>It is through this forum that the local umbrella group, Save Spitalfields From the Developers, opposed the relocation and redevelopment on the basis of its 'knock-on' effects on the community. I return to this case in the final empirical chapter.



There is one prime difference between the No. 1 Poultry case and the Spitalfields Market redevelopment. The conservationists, who so far have not completely opposed the redevelopment at No. 1 Poultry, did not initially oppose the redevelopment at Spitalfields. As will be shown, they became closely involved with the redevelopment process itself and it was only in later stages, when there had been numerous changes to the proposed scheme, that they publicly stated opposition. In the interim, however, the more closely the conservationist responded to the proposed redevelopment of the Spitalfields Market site.

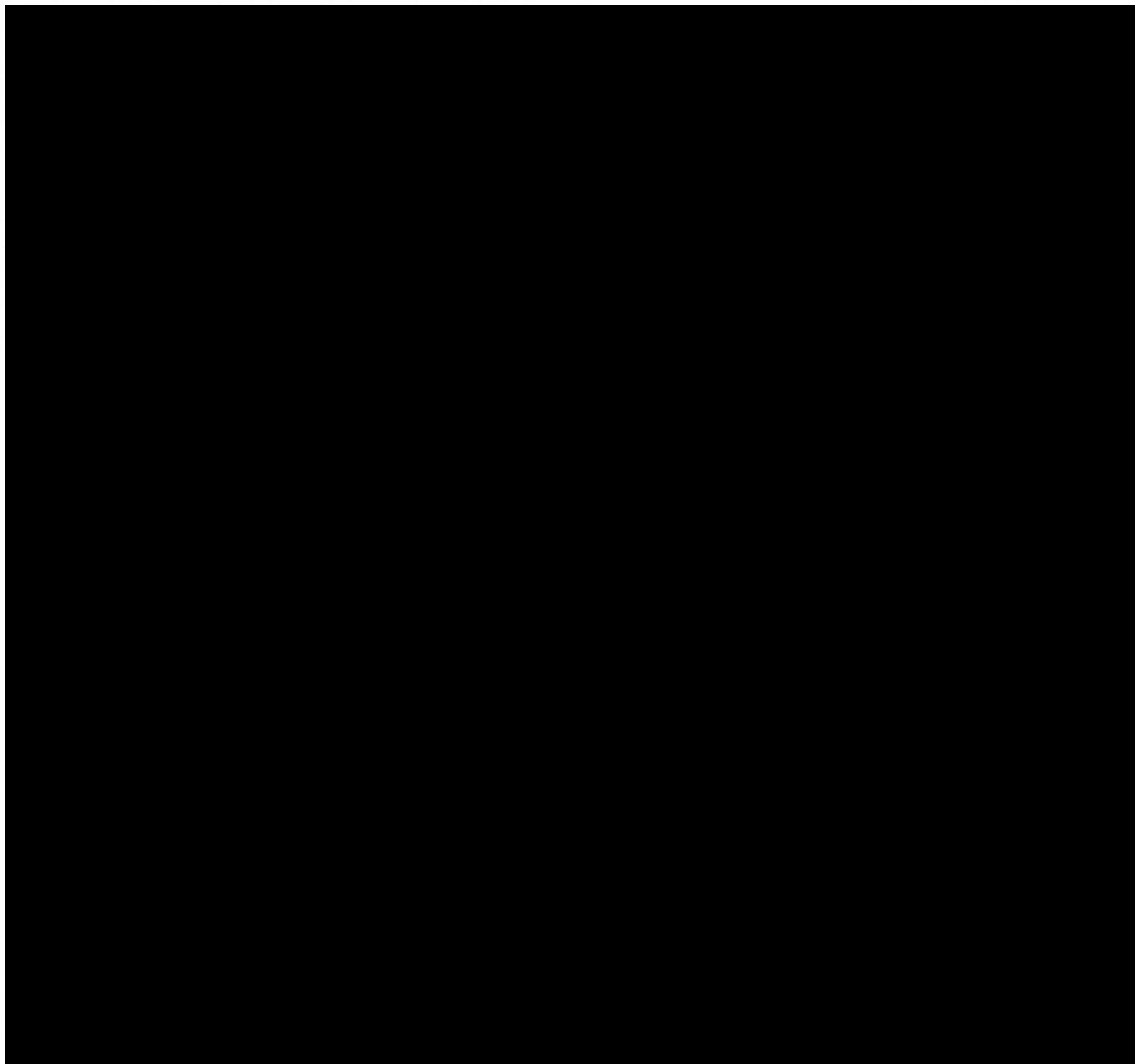


FIGURE 6.2. THE SUCCESSFUL SPITALFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

SOURCE: MacCormac, Jamieson, Prichard 1988 Spitalfields Market Promotional Brochure 1987.



There is one prime difference between the No. 1 Poultry case and the Spitalfields Market redevelopment. The conservationists, who so fiercely and consistently opposed the redevelopment at No. 1 Poultry, did not initially oppose the Spitalfields Market redevelopment. As will be shown, they became closely involved with the development process itself and it was only in later stages, when there had been numerous changes in the proposed scheme, that they publicly stated opposition.<sup>7</sup> In the following I explore more closely the conservationist response to the proposed redevelopment of the Spitalfields Market site.

## 6.2. The Conservation View: The Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust

In terms of the often vehement and seemingly predictable opposition by conservation groups to other London developments, it might be expected that the dramatic changes proposed for the Spitalfields area would engender fierce opposition from conservationists. Spitalfields has long been recognized for its special historical and architectural character and, most particularly, for its unusual domestic Georgian architecture. The Survey of London documented this architecture in detail (Survey of London 1957). Tower Hamlets designated three Conservation Areas in 1969: Artillery Lane, Elder Street and Fashion Street Conservation Areas, the latter renamed the Fournier Street Conservation Area). Many of the buildings in the area are listed (Figure 6.3.). In 1976, the Historic Buildings section of the GLC declared the conservation status of the area to be 'outstanding'. Conservation efforts in the area have received considerable financial support from the DoE, the GLC and the local authority, not only through a special Town Grant Scheme established in the area but also through grants to individual property owners who wished to restore houses. At least part of the Market, the Horner Buildings on the eastern edge, are listed Grade II (Figure 6.4.).

There are two closely-linked conservation groups with an interest in Spitalfields: the national Georgian Group and the local Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust, or Spitalfields Trust. The Spitalfields Trust, as will be shown, took action in the mid-1970s to 'save' the unique fabric of early Georgian houses in the area. The three Conservation Areas which bounded the Market were

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<sup>7</sup>Their collusion has meant that there is a qualitative difference in the way I have sought to access their views in relation to the Market relocation and redevelopment. As the Spitalfields Trust did not participate in the Select Committee forums their views are drawn from alternate public statements, many of which were produced as a result of dialogues between the Trust (and associated conservation interests), the local authority and the developers.



the area of the market and the surrounding area. The area of the market and the surrounding area is shown in the map. The area of the market and the surrounding area is shown in the map. The area of the market and the surrounding area is shown in the map.

FIGURE 6.3. LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS, SPITALFIELDS

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings in the Market were to serve the needs of the early Georgian houses in the area. The Spitalfields Trust, the Spitalfields Trust as well as other local bodies in the mid 1970s National Georgian Group and the local Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust. There are two other listed conservation groups with an interest in Spitalfields: the the Market Building and the eastern edge, one listed Grade II (Figure 6.4).

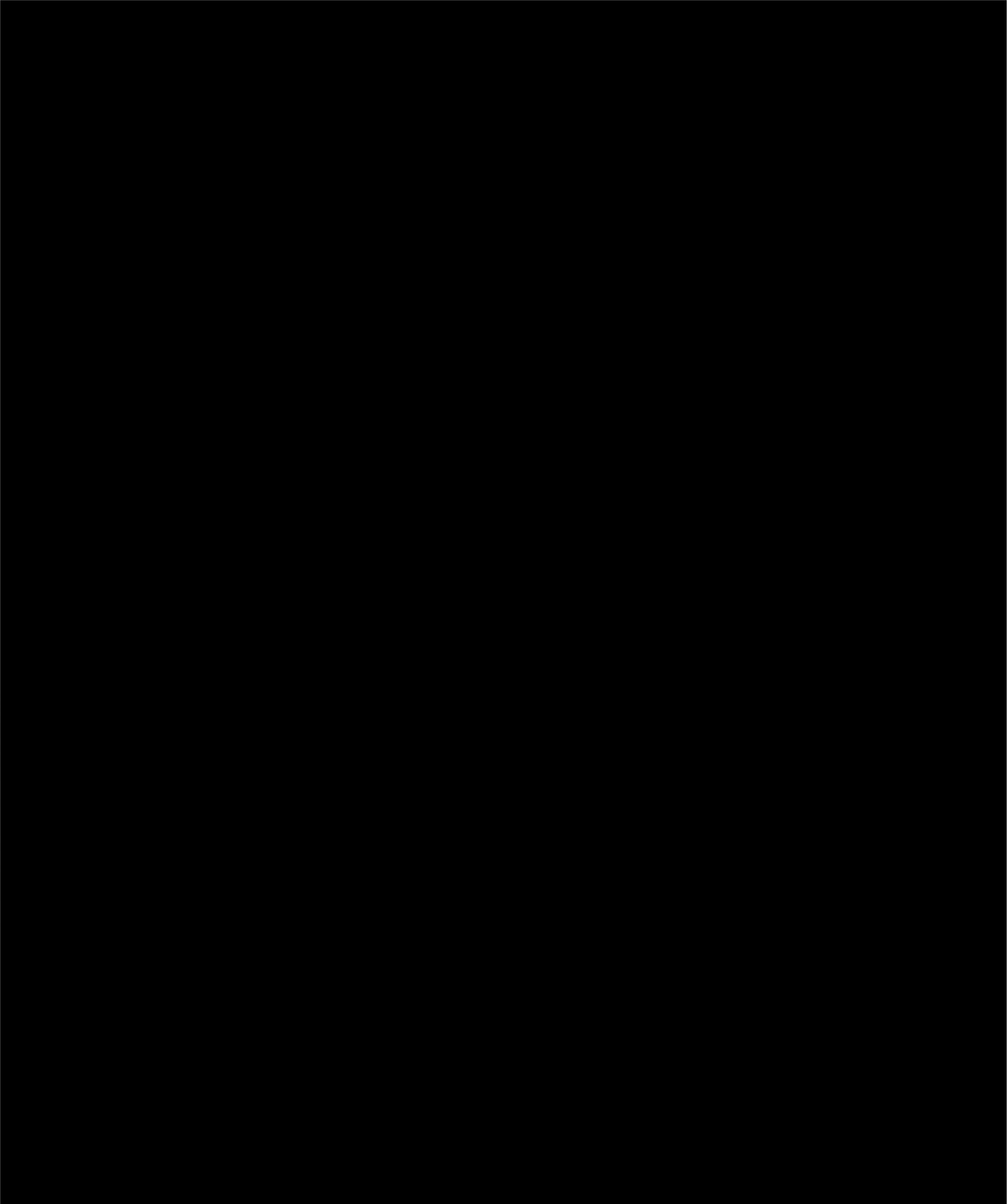
to individual groups of houses who wished to restore houses. At least part of the Market through a special Grant Scheme established in the area but also through grants considered financial support from the DOE, the GLC and the local authority, not only status of the area as 'outstanding'. Conservation efforts in the area have received 6.3.). In 1978, the Historic Buildings section of the GLC declared the conservation Former Street Conservation Area). Many of the buildings in the area are listed (Figure 6.4). Elder Street and Fashion Street Conservation Areas, the latter renamed the London 1957). The Historic designated three Conservation Areas in 1957). Another architecture. The Survey of London documented its architecture in detail (Survey of architectural character and, most particularly, for its unusual domestic Georgian conservationists. Spitalfields has long been recognized for its special historical and proposed for the Spitalfields area would engender fierce opposition from groups to other London developments. It might be expected that the dramatic changes in terms of the often vehement and seemingly predictable opposition by conservation

### 6.3 The Conservation Area: The Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust

Spitalfields Market site.

more closely the conservationist response to the proposed redevelopment of the in the proposed scheme, that they publicly stated opposition. In the following 10 years process itself and it was only in later stages, when there had been numerous changes redevelopment. As will be shown, they became closely involved with the development the redevelopment at No. 1 Poultry, did not initially oppose the Spitalfields Market Market redevelopment. The conservationists, who as already and consistently opposed There is one prime difference between the No. 1 Poultry case and the Spitalfields







recognised in acknowledgement of the historic and architectural significance of the buildings. The Georgian Group, as a conservation organisation, has a long history of working with the City of London Corporation to protect the historic built environment. The Georgian Group has been instrumental in the conservation of many historic buildings in Spitalfields. In support of the Georgian Group's efforts, the City of London Corporation has agreed to support the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields. The Georgian Group has been instrumental in the conservation of many historic buildings in Spitalfields. In support of the Georgian Group's efforts, the City of London Corporation has agreed to support the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields.

Conservationists were keen to see the historic built environment of the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields. In support of the Georgian Group's efforts, the City of London Corporation has agreed to support the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields.



The photograph shows the historic built environment of the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields. In support of the Georgian Group's efforts, the City of London Corporation has agreed to support the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields.

The photograph shows the historic built environment of the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields. In support of the Georgian Group's efforts, the City of London Corporation has agreed to support the Georgian Group's efforts to conserve the historic built environment in Spitalfields.

FIGURE 6.4. SPITALFIELDS MARKET AND THE LISTED HORNER BUILDINGS



designated in acknowledgement of the houses and it was to these areas that the Trust directed its efforts. The Georgian Group, as its name suggests, has a specific interest in the historical period represented by the built fabric of Spitalfields and moved their operations to Spitalfields 'in support of the area' (Letter GG, 14/3/86). Membership of the Trust and the Georgian Group crosses considerably and members of both groups now reside in Spitalfields. The Market has always been of particular interest to these conservationists but unlike their counterparts in the No. 1 Poultry case, they did not initially oppose the relocation of the Market or the redevelopment of the site. Rather, the Spitalfields conservationists actively supported its relocation and were closely involved in the evolution of the development proposals.

Conservationists were keen to see the Market go. When relocation of the Market and redevelopment were first proposed, local conservationists were quick to transform the Market into a memory. By the middle of 1986, only months after development became immanent, the Trust issued a special Newsletter for members and friends called 'Market Manoeuvres', in which it acknowledged the continuity of the Market's presence in the area but, setting an early nostalgic note, 'resigned' itself to the Market being a mere 'memory' (ST Newsletter 1986, 1). The conservationists, not renowned for their willingness to 'resign' in other cases of redevelopment, were able to legitimate their acceptance of the move by reference to other forces beyond their control: such as the Market Traders' agreement to move, the mounting strain of the Market on the resources of Tower Hamlets, the 'appreciation' of the City's need to expand. The development was seen as providing not a threat but an opportunity for further enhancement of the Georgian environment and the conservationists wanted to ensure they had an input in its design. The opportunity to see a particular historical vision of Spitalfields re-invented through the Market redevelopment opened the way for a relationship of collusion between the conservationists and the developers. The Market redevelopment became part of an on-going operation by the Trust to transform Spitalfields into a restored monument to early Georgian London and, in so doing, to rid the area of elements which were incongruent with this vision.

Collusion began in March 1986, just before the local authority began to consult about the development brief for the site. At a meeting of the Spitalfields Trust (ST Records, 18/3/86), the Trustees decided that 'rather than oppose the scheme at this time, the Trust should contribute to it positively'. They suggested establishing a feasibility study group (funded by the developer) which would comment on the design of the scheme and, in particular, the interface between the scheme and the largely residential Conservation Areas surrounding it.



The Georgian Group too, decided not to oppose the Market redevelopment. In an early letter to the City Architect and Planning Officer, the group said it was 'extremely anxious' about the development - not because the Market was to be relocated but because it feared that the development might be 'flashily commercial' and not 'respect the scale, texture and architectural character of Spitalfields' (Letter GG, 13/3/86). The Georgian Group wrote to the local authority suggesting that the various amenity societies and the local authority could work together 'to achieve the best possible results' (Letter GG to BGNC, 16/5/86).

Tower Hamlets and the conservation groups did indeed work very closely together. Under statutory obligations, local authorities must consult with the main conservation/amenity societies over substantial new developments. The local authority undertook this obligation early in the consultation procedure, recognizing that the Spitalfields Market site was 'of major historic significance surrounded by three Conservation Areas' and that it was necessary to establish a mechanism for communication between conservation and other interests (BGNC1986). A special committee was established involving the Ancient Monuments Society, The Civic Trust, The Friends of Christ Church Spitalfields, The Georgian Group, The Museum of London, SAVE Britain's Heritage, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Victorian Society and The Spitalfields Trust. The committee commented on the development brief being produced by the local authority and the various schemes produced. That such a committee should be set up at all demonstrates the privileged position conservation groups now have in the urban development process as enacted through statutory planning procedures. This status was later confirmed by the appointment of Dan Cruickshank, a founding Trust member and local resident, to the five member Trust established to oversee the allocation of the community gain package from the developers.

The Spitalfields conservationists saw the redevelopment not as a threat but as an opportunity:

Most of us in the Trust have eaten, drunk and slept in Spitalfields for the last ten years. We are by no means against the redevelopment of the market. We are delighted that so many of our suggestions have been met and...we are most impressed by the intelligence, sensitivity and efficiency with which the Council has addressed the issues. Our nightmare now is that, in a few years more, we might look back on this as the great missed opportunity (Letter ST to LBTH, 12/5/87).



To ensure the redevelopment was not the 'great missed opportunity', the Trust and the Georgian Group worked together to produce a list of eight special guidelines for the local authority's development brief and for the architects of the contending developers. Far from opposing development on the site, these guidelines were to assist in the production of a 'perfect scheme' by taking into account 'the local environment and the needs of the community' (ST Newsletter 1986,1). Through the guidelines, the conservationists introduced a range of design values into the development procedure which conformed with their vision of a reconstituted Georgian Spitalfields.

Specifically, the guidelines were as follows:

1. Heavy through traffic to be removed from the stretch of Commercial Road in front of Christ Church, if necessary by means of a cut-and-cover tunnel.
2. Any new constructions and planing to have strict regard, in scale and finish, to the immediate surroundings and in particular the Christ Church: no new high-rise building to be allowed such as to threaten the dominance of the church. Natural materials to be used as far as possible-i.e. brick or stone as opposed to extensive use of glazing, mirror glass, steel and concrete.
3. Planning gain to cover reinstatement of York paving stone, cobbles, bollards and traditional street lighting as appropriate, if possible throughout the conservation areas.
4. The entire group of six late nineteenth century/early twentieth century brick buildings at the east of the Market site, with their iron work and central pavilion, to be retained.
5. A significant area of open space to be provided to which Spitalfields residents will have access, possibly by key.
6. The Folgate and Bishopsgate Street alignments to be kept, and the building line of the former Spital Square re-established, infill or new building in these streets to have a domestic scale and style, either in Georgian replica or appropriate contemporary (e.g. postmodern classical) idiom.
7. The surviving buildings in the southwest arm of Spital Square to be safeguarded.
8. The amenities and outlook of the residents of the surviving period buildings on Folgate Street to be respected and where possible enhanced (GG and ST Records 1986)



This eight point list attests to the architectural agenda of the conservationists. Planning gains from the development are not devoted to housing, for example, but for the provision of street furniture and finishes which will re-instate a Spitalfields of old. Primarily the requirements are concerned with re-inventing and even elaborating the Georgianness of the Conservation Areas which surround the Market site.

To fully understand the Spitalfield Trust's position in relation to the Market redevelopment, it is necessary to trace the nature of their involvement in the area. The Market redevelopment provided an opportunity to articulate the general aims and ideology underpinning the Trust's operations. Its activities have involved the transformation of Spitalfields into a 'monument' to a particular version of its past. This process emphasized the eighteenth century and seeks to rid the area of those elements which are contradictory to or incongruent with this vision. The response of the Trust to the Market redevelopment placed an emphasis on a number of architectural and townscape features which best exemplify the favoured Georgian past. Its articulation of more general community gains was only a thinly disguised effort to reiterate its prime concern with the area's architectural inheritance.

### 6.3. Decline and Redemption: Conservationists in Spitalfields

The Trust's collusion with the Market redevelopment may seem contradictory in terms of the conventional image of conservationists pitted against developers. However, an examination of the Trust's involvement in the Spitalfields area shows that it has always operated within its own developmental mentality, albeit one that is articulated through an historical aesthetic.

#### 6.3.1. Squats and Saviours

In the 1950s, 230 eighteenth century buildings were recorded in the area (Survey of London 1957). By 1977, only 140 remained (ST Newsletter 1978,1).<sup>8</sup> This loss transformed the scholarly and administrative interest in the Georgian buildings of Spitalfields into a more passionate and 'political' interest. The transformation began in the early 1970s at a country-house weekend in Northern Ireland: a small coterie of friends of the Guinness heiress, the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, met to discuss

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<sup>8</sup>Popular accounts tend to blame wartime bombing and postwar slum clearance for the loss of this fabric (see Forman 1989). In fact little was destroyed in this way. The great majority of Georgian buildings were lost through sheer neglect: small-scale speculative developers let properties deteriorate until they were unsafe and had to be demolished.



the sad state of the Georgian housing stock in Spitalfields. A charitable organization called the Spitalfields Historic Buildings Trust was established.<sup>9</sup>

From the outset, the Trust followed a unique course for a conservation society. It was not simply interested in ensuring that existing listed buildings were protected or lobbying for changes in legislation. Rather, it was committed to direct action: the active refurbishment of the remaining Georgian houses in the area. In this programme the Trust did not draw on traditional sources of financial assistance, such as government grants and subsidies but undertook the task primarily as a private enterprise. An early Trust publication (Spitalfields Trust nd), designed to elicit financial donations, outlined four prime functions:

- 1) working as a local pressure group influencing planning policies and development control practices;
- 2) informing potential buyers about properties for sale;
- 3) advising owners on the availability of grants, other sources of finance, and appropriate architectural, engineering and building skills;
- 4) uncovering and proclaiming the architectural wealth of the area.

The Trust saw the purchase and sale of the Georgian housing stock as its prime function and established a 'rolling fund' to finance this operation. The fund was established using private donations rather than government contributions. The first donation of £10,000 came from Patrick Trevor-Roper and was used to purchase 4/6 Fournier Street (Carnwath 1989, iii). Other funds came from various Trusts and loans from sympathetic City finance institutions. The City loans were a manifestation of the close links between the Trust members and some of the more powerful City institutions and families. Douglas Blain began his London working career in the City with Baring Brothers and has been able to draw on this association to secure low or interest free loans for Trust purchases. He is married to Sophie Andrea of SAVE Britain's Heritage who is part of the Kleinwort Benson Lonsdale dynasty, again a source of interest free funds. Audrey Sacher, of the Marks and Spencer empire, was another welcome early member of the Trust who was able to contribute significant funds. The membership of the Trust was such that entrepreneurialism and good business acumen have always been characteristic of Trust strategy.

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<sup>9</sup>The Trust appointed Douglas Blain as Secretary. For many years he had nurtured his own plan for Spitalfields and had in the 1960s unsuccessfully tried to establish a historic buildings trust in the area (Blain 1989, 6; Brien 1981, 6).



The early cause célèbre of the Spitalfields Trust came only a few months after its formation. The Trust became aware of plans to demolish 5 and 7 Elder Street, two purpose-built weavers houses with integral leaded loom lights. The houses were owned by British Land but were to be developed by the Newlon Housing Association for a new-build voluntary housing scheme. The Trust proposed that 5 and 7 Elder St be excluded from the scheme and rehabilitated. An impromptu inspection of the site revealed that their 'delightful paneled interiors were virtually intact'. Demolition was immanent so the Trust decided the only option was to occupy the least damaged of the houses and 'play for time'. A small group of volunteers occupied the houses on the 10th August 1977 (ST Newsletter 1978, 2).

This was no ordinary squat. The squatters placed a banner above the door which declared 'we shall not be moved'; a sentiment more reminiscent of 1960s Paris radicalism rather than West End Londoners of the late 1970s in the 'untouched' East End. A fog horn was used to rally others whenever danger, in the form of the developers or the demolition team, were in sight. The 'squatters' began to restore the house: clearing rubbish, painting the internal sections of the building and constructing a temporary roof. Publicity was the hallmark of the Elder Street action. The Trust used the press very effectively and photographs and stories of the 'squatters' appeared in both the popular and the architectural press (Figure 6.5.).<sup>10</sup>

The Elder Street 'battle' saw much action in the street and behind the scenes. It culminated in the Trust sending a delegation of 'half a dozen of the most eminent citizens...suitably dressed for such a solemn occasion' to British Land's head office where they staged a 'sit-in' until they were able to see the Director.<sup>11</sup> In true Trust style the press were informed of the delegation. British Land finally agreed to sell the houses to the Trust provided they desist from talking to the press. The properties were purchased for £3,500 and a 'large and jolly party' held (ST Newsletter 1979, 3).<sup>12</sup> The houses were quickly restored and in 1978, 5 Elder Street was sold for £60,000. Two years later, the Trust could report that the scene of threatened destruction and fierce warring had been transformed into one of peace and

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<sup>10</sup> Trust reliance on publicity parallels the strategy of New Conservation forged at the same time by SAVE Britain's Heritage. Indeed many of the people in SAVE were also in the Trust. Publicity efforts were greatly assisted by the participation of architectural journalist, Dan Cruickshank and Colin Amery.

<sup>11</sup> The deputation included Colin Amery, then Features Editor of Architects' Review; Norman Franklin, Chair of Routledge, Kegan Paul; Mark Girouard, Chair of the Trust and well-known author on Georgian London; Robert Howard, architect; Christopher Martin, BBC TV producer; Prof Kevin P. Nowlan, Chair of the Dublin Civic Group; The Hon Thomas Pakenham, historian; and the 'slightly raffish' Raphael Samuel, historian and resident of Elder St (ST Press Release 1977).

<sup>12</sup> The Trust also had to pay Newlon Housing Association £13,000 in abortive fees.



paraphrasing, "bound to be destroyed by another two or three centuries" (27). In 1975, 74, in the case of the Elder St. John's, a dramatic effort was made to contribute to the ready in the final chapter of the story to get out of the "mouth" of the Elder St. John's. The Trust was active in the final chapter of the story to purchase and repair the Elder St. John's (27).

The Trust's own account of the Elder St. John's is in the volume used in the final chapter of the story.

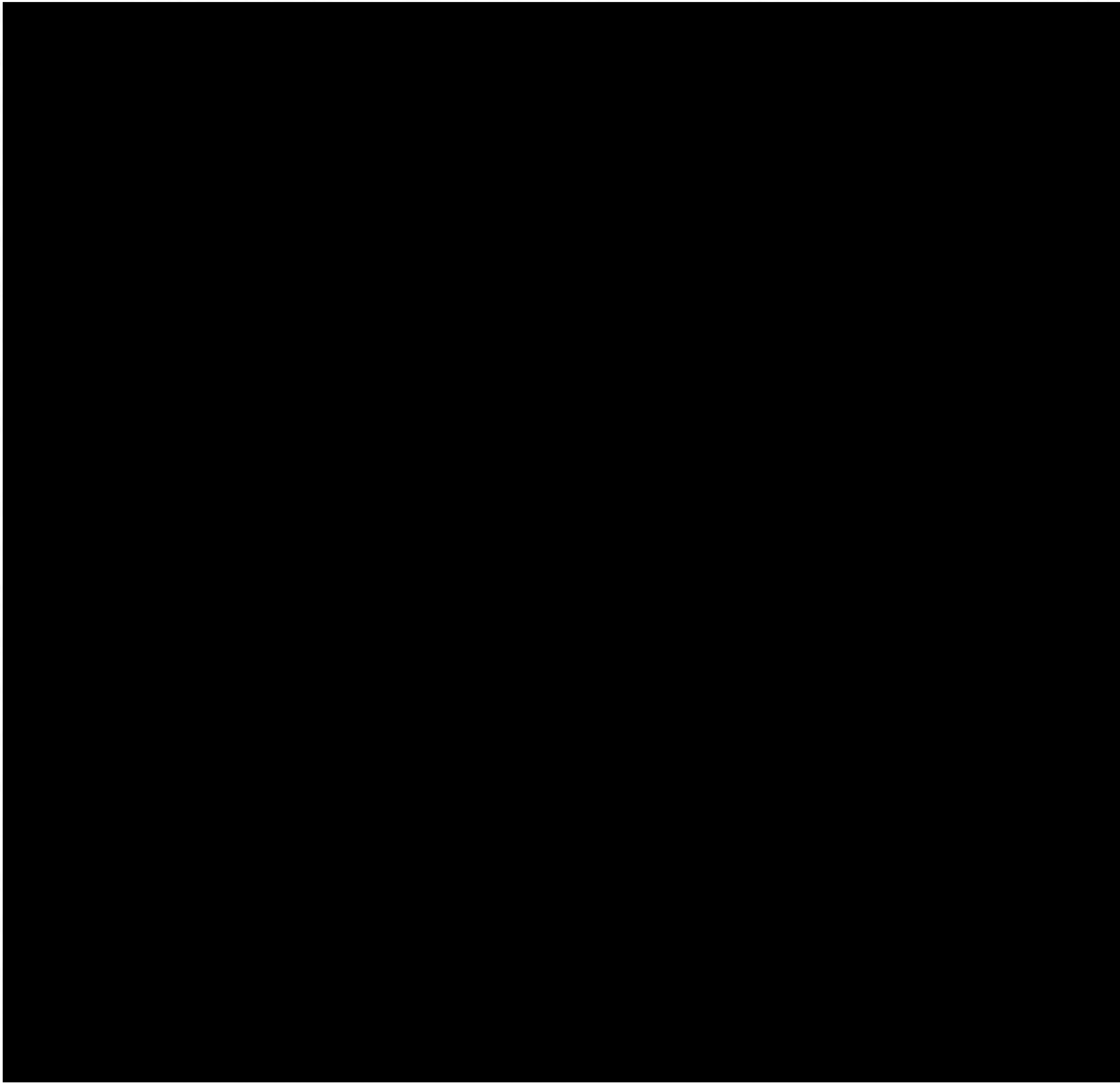


FIGURE 6.5. THE SPITALFIELDS TRUST AND THE ELDER ST SQUAT, 1975

SOURCE: Girouard, M. et al. 1989 The Saving of Spitalfields (inside cover).



tranquillity, 'bound to be cherished for another two or three centuries' (ST Newsletter 1979, 1). In the case of the Elder Street squat, dramatic direct action was backed by a commitment to be ready 'in the brutal language of money to put our money where our mouth was'. While the Elder St. battle raged, the Trust was active raising necessary funds to purchase and repair the two houses (ST Newsletter 1978, 5).

The Trust's own account of the Elder St. squat in its Newsletters used a language and narrative structure common to the conservation movement - that of a redemptive 'battle', 'the battle of Elder Street' (ST Newsletter 1978, 1). British Land and the Newlon Housing Association were the enemies of the historic fabric of Spitalfields. There were the 'heroes' who defended this fabric: the eminent citizens like Sir John Betjeman, the Trust itself, and the 'locals' of Elder Street like Raphael Samuel. There were the martyrs to the cause: those who were involved 'often at quite some risk to reputation, career, or even person' (ST Newsletter 1978, 5). The tactics of 'squatting' in the houses, sending an eminent delegation to British land and using the press were referred to as the 'choosing of weapons'. The raising of funds to purchase the Elder Street properties was referred to as 'behind the lines' activity (ST Newsletter 1978, 5).

The metaphors of a 'battle' and 'redemption' imbue almost all the Trust publications. The Tenth Anniversary volume is predictably called 'The Saving of Spitalfields' (Girouard et al. 1989). The 'battle' has been fought on a clearly depicted terrain. Just as Smith (1986) notes the use of frontier imagery in the analysis and depiction of gentrification in the United States and Raban (1988) and Wright (1985a) in the case of London, so too does the Spitalfields Trust depicts its 'battleground' (derelict and neglected) as a terrain of perils and obstacles on the edge of civilization. The Elder Street battle was fought in a manner reminiscent of guerilla warfare. The 'sleeping bag flying squad', as the squatting team came to be known, acted by stealth and surprise, occupying threatened buildings the instant the enemy bulldozer appeared on the horizon. And the 'battle' raged in the worst of conditions, often not only against the developers or unhelpful officials but unsympathetic elements:

Bad weather, to anybody concerned with old buildings, means trouble. This very wet autumn has brought more than its share of leaking roofs, collapsing gutters and flooding basements. To us, however, winter suggests something much worse, namely the prospect of a further spell of camping-out in some roofless ruin, fending off demolition contractors whilst frantically negotiating, publicizing and trying our best to keep warm (ST Newsletter 1982,1).



The reliance on the 'battle' metaphor and the heroic narrative of redemption adds an authenticity and legitimacy to the Trust's actions. The use of such frameworks is a characteristic feature of contemporary conservation rhetoric and is tied to a broad liberal impulse (Colls 1986). It is much the mark of other conservation ideology of the time and particularly SAVE Britain's Heritage which was closely connected to the Trust. The Trust had a number of members who were also involved in establishing SAVE (most notably the journalists Dan Cruickshank and Colin Amery). In developing the narrative of decline and redemption, the Trust was able to draw upon the Survey of London's earlier account of the historic fabric of Spitalfields. This laid the foundation for the transformation of Spitalfields from an area of deprivation and decay to an area of lost Georgian grandeur. The Survey began the process, later taken up by the Trust, in which decline and neglect are cast as 'benign' and where 'rotting bricks speak less of social blight than a radiant earlier age' (Wright 1987a, 12). The conservation use of this narrative framework is explored further in Chapter 7 where I examine more closely the ideology and action of SAVE Britain's Heritage, which has been instrumental in establishing this popular, populist narrative (see also Chapter 4).

In the case of the Trust, deference to this narrative works to reframe their 'expert' case (for they were largely architects and architectural historians interested in the historical significance of the buildings) into a more 'ordinary' populist struggle of the common person against the more powerful and the deadening hand of modernity. As will be shown, the conservationists and the community they later created in Spitalfields are far from ordinary and certainly not without influence.

The dramatic, assiduously publicized squats and the rhetoric of the redemptive battle were part of a more measured approach based on an on-going programme of purchasing houses or encouraging sympathetic 'restorers' to purchase them. The Trust Newsletters read like an estate agent brochure. Not only did the Trust purchase and sell many houses itself, it also passed on information about other Georgian houses on the market via conventional estate agents. Each 'advertised' property was lovingly described in terms of its particular Georgian features: the amount of original wood panelling present, the stair well, the window plates, the mansard roofs and so on. Between 1977 and 1987, the Trust purchased some 37 properties in the Spitalfields area (Figure 6.6.). By 1980, the Trust could boast a £69,000 profit on disposal of properties and assets of £160,000. For the year ending 31 March 1987, the Trust records show that proceeds from the sale of properties had soared to £455,108 and assets to the value of £229,950 (ST Financial Reports, 1981-1987). As Douglas Blain so aptly suggested in the Tenth Anniversary volume, the Trust has operated less like a



SOURCE: Compiled from data held by the Spitalfields Trust

FIGURE 6.6. PROPERTIES PURCHASED BY THE SPITALFIELDS TRUST, 1973-1987, SHOWING MARKET PROPERTIES

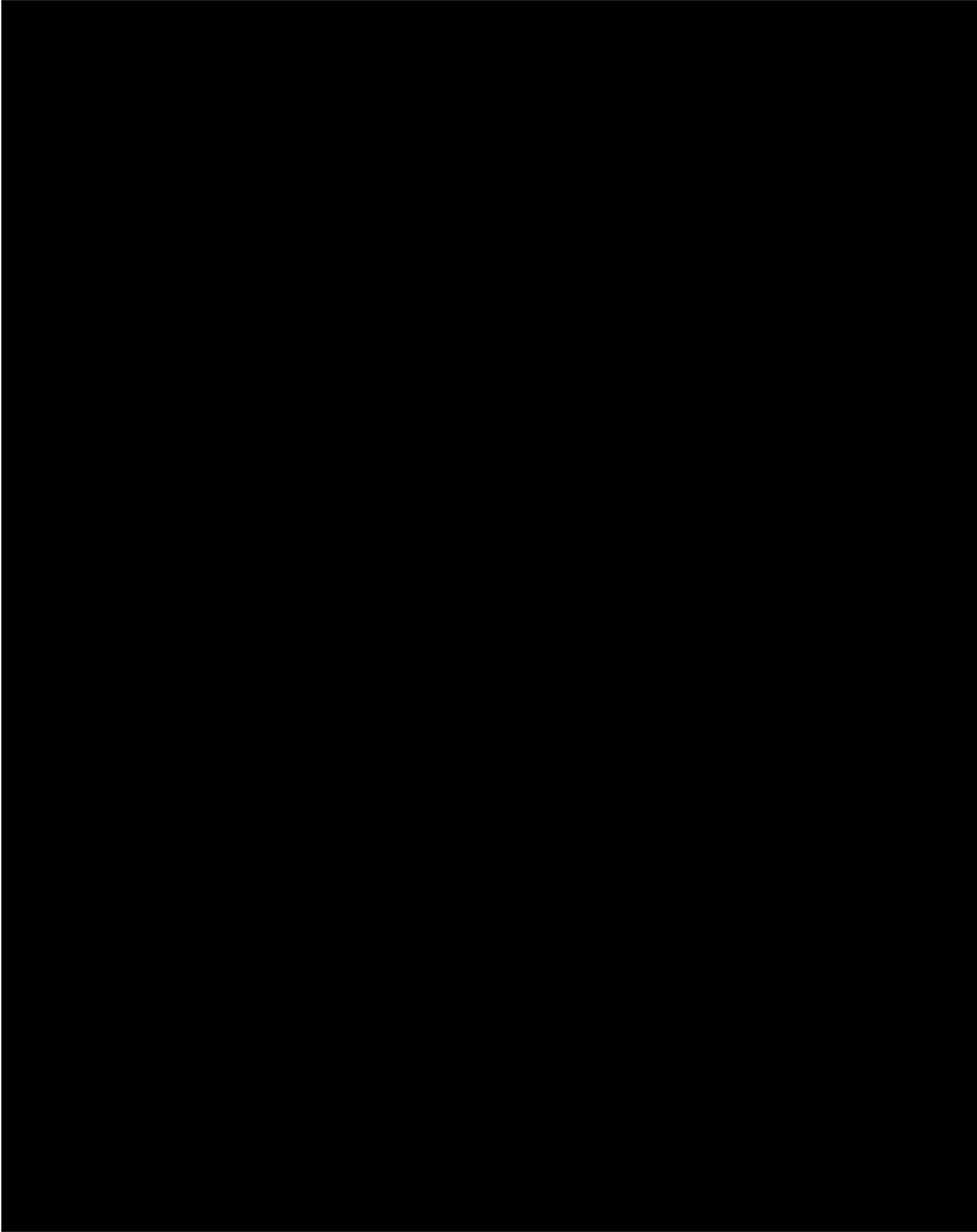
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The dramatic... from ordinary... shown, the com... person against the... significance of the... (for they were large... in the case of the T... establishing this popular, populist narrative (see also Chapter 4).

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conventional conservation group and more like an 'unofficial inner city development organization' (Blain 1989, 9).

Purchasing and then selling properties to sympathetic owner occupiers was a key element in the restoration programme. To ensure that the new owners complied with the Trusts own, well researched vision of the Georgian aesthetic, it established a strict set of repair and restoration covenants which had to be adhered to. It also built up a set of reliable architects and craftworkers 'in the William Morris mould' who could be drawn upon by the new owners (ST Newsletter 1979, 1). The Trust strove for authenticity in its restoration work and was genuinely distressed when modern-day pragmatics forced a compromise in colour scheme or, for example, the locating of kitchens. It operated on a strict aesthetic and the process of change that the area underwent at its instigation had certain visual hallmarks. This common aesthetic commitment was highly organized because the Trust had strict covenants, but it is a notable feature of gentrification of a more informal type as well (Jager 1986).

Conservation activity in Spitalfields was based around a long-term vision of regeneration tied to a particular aesthetic and which relied upon the participation of sympathetic and financially equipped purchasers. This established the basis for the revalorization of the built environment of Spitalfields. In the next section I explore how the Market was 'antagonistic' to this process of creating a new Spitalfields of old.

### 6.3.2. Vegetables and Village Squares: The Trust and the Market

The decision of the Trust not to oppose the Market redevelopment is tied to a persistent and long-standing tension between the Trust's activities in Spitalfields and the Market. In early public statements the Trust depicted the association between the Market and its interests as complimentary, almost cosy:

...many of its terraced buildings have been restored and house a new generation of industrious residents who beaver away alongside the wholesale fruit and vegetable Market that rumbles with activity from midnight to mid morning (Elle 1989, 142).

In 1980, when rumours circulated that the Market was to be relocated to Docklands, the Trust opposed the move, describing the Market as 'integral to the life and character' of Spitalfields. But this portrayal of a community united in industry denies a long-standing tension between the conservationists and the Market. While the rhetoric of the Trust at times revealed nostalgia and sympathy with the Market, the Trust had also seen the Market as dirty and noisy and as a threat to their efforts to restore the



historic fabric of the area. The Trust's lauding of the Market had less to do with an appreciation or love of its intrinsic qualities than with its role as a convenient defence against what was seen at that time to be a greater evil, an invasion from the City:

Apart from anything else, a sell-out of the Market site to City interests would make it more difficult to defend the rest of Spitalfields against the incursion of office developers, who would drive up the site values to the point where nobody could afford to live there (ST Newsletter 1980, 1).

The invasion of the City, the consequent rise in land prices and the changing aesthetic of the area were seen as a potential threat to the Georgian Spitalfields that the Trust had been systematically working to re-instate in its full glory.

Trust actions made its disdain of the Market explicit. In a number of ways, the Trust has sought to buffer its beloved Georgian residential area from the Market. For example, in early 1978 there was a proposal by the Corporation of London to construct a lorry park abutting Folgate Street. The Trust felt that such use was not suitable for a Conservation Area with residential pretensions and which 'at last shows some signs of being reinstated to its former dignity' (Letter ST to LBTH, 17/10/78). The Trust argued that 'the two principal future uses of the area are fundamentally incompatible' and that:

Market traffic is damaging the cobbled road surface, street furniture and occasionally also the wrought iron railings of the houses, as well as creating a noise nuisance (ST Newsletter 1979, 2).

Anger over the lorry park was heightened because the building to be demolished for the expanded parking space was a 'shack' that the Market Authorities had built in 1964 after demolishing a group of original Georgian buildings (Letter ST to LBTH, 17/10/78).

The Trust wanted the activities of the Market to be 'insulated as far as is practicable from Folgate and Elder Streets'. It suggested that a barrier be erected between the lorry park and Folgate street, to buffer the residential quarter from the 'anti-social' activities of the Market. It suggested either a wall, a tree barrier, or even more preferably a row of houses. It was proposed that mulberry trees be used because of their 'obvious' historical associations with silk weaving (ST Newsletter 1981, 2). The Trust was successful in having a high wall and tree barrier built.

The ambition to see Spital Square reinstated is another example the Trust's disdain towards the Market. Spital Square lies on the south west corner of the Market site. It is far from a grand Bloomsbury square, simply a point where the street widens (Figure



6.7.). The northern edge of the square was destroyed during the 1960s when the Market extended its lorry park and built two storage sheds. Douglas Blain was so distressed by this that he was reduced to tears when making an appeal to the Lord Mayor (Blain 1989, 4). It later became a prime goal of the Trust to see what it felt had become an 'urban nonentity' thoroughly 'reconstituted' (ST Newsletter 1983, 2). Spital Square was the object of Trust direct action. The threatened demolition of a Victorian hall in the square was stopped by the mobilization of the 'sleeping bag flying squad' which saw Dorothy Girouard 'huddled in an open porch for nine hours' (ST Newsletter 1982, 1). And again direct action was backed by a more measured approach. The Trust purchased a number of properties around the Square: the last remaining Georgian building (no. 37), a vacant block (no. 15), and a warehouse of 'no architectural merit' (no. 38). The Georgian Group now has its headquarters at the fully restored no. 37. The other properties were sold on to a developer with the stipulation that redevelopment had to be in facsimile of the original Georgian housing.

The Trust constantly tried to buffer the rest of Spitalfields from the Market by purchasing as many properties as possible in the immediate surrounds of the Market whether of special architectural merit or not (see Figure 6.6.). In the light of the proposed Market redevelopment, these purchases took on new importance as the Trust felt they could influence any new development scheme (ST Director's Report 1986, 1). The Trust was also sensitive to the increase in the value of the properties if redevelopment occurred on the Market site. Ownership of such properties adds a tangible financial significance to the Trust's initial enthusiasm about Market relocation and the design of the new development.

The Trust's genuine dislike of the Market was clearly expressed in response to the current Market redevelopment proposal. It supported redevelopment because

The debris that the Market generates at present exacerbates the general feeling of decay in Spitalfields. Market traffic causes an enormous amount of traffic congestion in Commercial Street and in Bishopsgate. Not only this, but the residents, living largely to the north and the east of the market, find it a constant source of disturbance (ST Newsletter 1986, 2) (Figure 6.8).

The Trust was happy to see the Market replaced with a development which it felt 'worthy of this important and historic site' and which might provide for an improved and more Georgian Spitalfields in which residents no longer had to 'fight their way to their restored front doors over piles of rotting cabbages and tangled plastic packaging' (ST Newsletter 1986, 3). Thus, as the Trust's Georgian Spitalfields became increasingly fixed in the built fabric, as more houses were restored, more streets cobbled, more



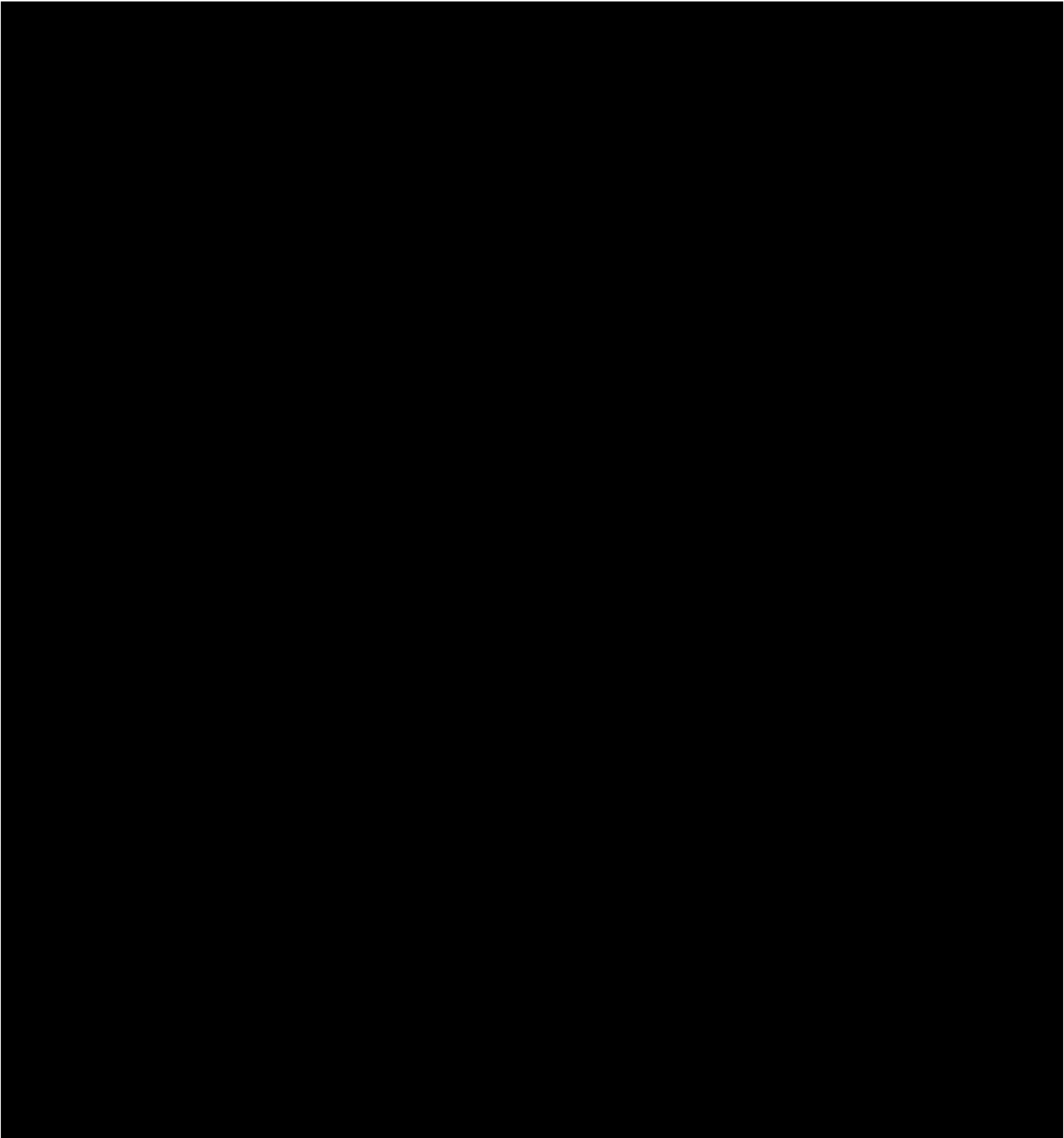


FIGURE 6.7. THE MODEST SPITAL SQUARE AS WAS

SOURCE: Girouard, M. et al. 1989 The Saving of Spitalfields.





FIGURE 6.8. MARKET RUBBISH AND BROADGATE LOOMING



(Victorian) lamp-posts installed, more property interests accumulated, its tolerance of the Market as a source of 'local colour' diminished. The Trust's rendition of the Market shifted from an emphasis on cosy costers shouting and handbarrows rumbling to threatening juggernauts, dirt and squalor.

### 6.3.3. Civility and Chaos: Christ Church

As in the case of the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment, much of the rhetoric of the Spitalfields Trust was couched in the language and logic of townscape. The reinstatement of Spital Square, for example, was part of a broader vision of seeing not just the houses of Spitalfields restored but the entire urban fabric (flagstones, bollards, lamp-posts, street pattern) enhanced according to the Trust's particular Georgian aesthetic. For the most part, the vision of the Trust focused on domestic architecture but Spitalfields does have one great Georgian monument, Hawksmoor's Christ Church (see Figure 6.14). Christ Church is described as 'a beacon of order and civility in the crowded East End' (ST Records 1981). It is the centre-piece of Georgian Spitalfields and as such has been given special attention by the Trust, both in the past and in terms of the proposed redevelopment of the Market.

The plight of the church has long been of concern to conservationists in the area. Much effort has been directed towards enhancing the dominance of Christ Church: for example, in 1982 there were plans to demolish nos 8 and 10 Brushfield Street. These houses were seen as important both intrinsically and as part of the townscape context of Christ Church, which formed 'a particularly grand focal point' at the end of Brushfield Street. The houses were defended against demolition on the basis that they 'formed part of the "frame" to the principal vista of Hawksmoor's masterpiece' (ST Newsletter 1982, 1).

A number of the early gentrifiers have constantly worked to repair and restore the Church. Residents have transformed the Church into a local cultural centre holding regular musical festivals and concerts, the proceeds of which are often contributed to the restoration process. Baroque music now eases the discomfort of the 'down and outs' who, for decades, have relied on the services of the crypt to provide a bed for the night, a feed or a place to dry out (Wright 1987a, 3-5).

A prime theme of the Trust's eight point guideline list for the Market redevelopment was the enhancement of the surrounds of Christ Church. It specified that any new buildings should not 'compete' for prominence with Hawksmoor's Christ Church, which 'crowns the Market and is the glory of Spitalfields'. The present alignment of Brushfield



Street should be retained so as to preserve the current vista of the church. Local conservation interests were not simply concerned with preserving the existing dominance of Christ Church but possibly even elaborating it. The Georgian Group suggested that traffic passing in front of the Church be redirected through a cut-and-cover tunnel, opening space for a pedestrian precinct in front of Christ Church and creating new vistas and surrounds to enhance the visual dominance of the Church. The conservationists wanted to impart to Christ Church a monumental and grand status which it never previously enjoyed: it was designed to be part of a tight urban fabric, especially before the creation of Commercial Street in the nineteenth century.

The desire to open out views and create space around the Church are not simply re-establishing the past glory of the Church, but inventing a new glorious setting which reflects the aesthetic of the contemporary conservation interests. It implies a process of enhancing and even inventing a monument for Spitalfields. The proposed redevelopment of the Market offered the conservationists an opportunity to create an urban surround which pays homage to the prime status this baroque masterpiece plays in the Spitalfields conservation aesthetic.

#### 6.3.4. Hogarth and Sag Gost: competing communities

I have stressed that the Spitalfield Trust's response to the Market redevelopment was consistent with their aspirations to recreate a Georgian Spitalfields through the conservation, restoration and re-invention of the historic built fabric. In the terms of the thematic tension of this thesis, it is a process of creating a monument to a past age, albeit through domestic rather than monumental artefacts of that age. This project has been based on a systematic programme of purchasing or facilitating the purchase of Georgian housing stock by sympathetic buyers who agree to restore their houses in accordance with strict Trust covenants. As such, the Trust's project of revalorizing the built environment of Spitalfields has relied upon the creation of a new social and cultural environment. The creation of this new 'community' has served the project of transforming the built environment. This dimension of the Trust's activities eases the analysis away from the heuristic theme of Making Monuments towards the oppositional theme of Imagining Communities.

The Trust had a 'grand vision' for Spitalfields. A critical ingredient in pursuit of their aim of accurate restoration was the 'type' of person to whom the properties were sold. Consequently, the Trust wrought a dramatic change in the social and cultural configuration of the area. In their Tenth Anniversary volume Blain suggests that there was:



...a quite deliberate decision, early in the Trust's life, to try and attract lively single people and couples who would make not only the maintenance of their homes but the revival of the area a high priority; in other words enthusiasts for whom a 1720s paneled townhouse would become more than just somewhere to live (Blain 1989, 18)

Newsletters reported on the number of remaining Georgian houses to pass into the 'right' hands. In Spring 1981, for example, the Trust reckoned that with its own sales and those of independent estate agents, some 50 of the estimated 140 Georgian buildings in the area had passed into 'repair', that is, into the hands of appropriate and approved residents. By the time the Trust celebrated its tenth anniversary in 1987, it could boast having contributed directly or indirectly to the 'successful restoration of nearly 80% of the early Georgian buildings' and the survival of 'this unique Georgian enclave' (ST Tenth Anniversary Brochure 1987) (Figure 6.9.).

There were essentially two credentials necessary to buy into the 'new' Spitalfields: one had to have at least some money, and preferably a lot of money, and one had to be committed to the idea of faithful restoration under the guidance of the Trust. This clearly narrowed the type of person suited. The incoming population often consisted of home-working professionals (artists, architects and writers) and some were able to draw on private incomes for restoration work. As with early phases of gentrification elsewhere, there was a proportion of gay residents 'equipped' with the 'asset' of childless households (Zukin 1986, 1988b). In order to ensure that they did not attract the 'wrong type' of person into Spitalfields, the Trust did not initially cast its net widely. Those who moved in during the early days did so by invitation, by hearing of a house by word of mouth or by reading about the houses in the Trust's newsletter, which limited its circulation to conservation, architectural and art circles (Interview Dan Cruickshank, ST, 22/2/89). The Trust was self-conscious about its activities and the type of person it attracted into the area. The newsletters were explicit in informing the readership of who was moving in and their 'credentials', either as committed conservationists, writers or artists. There was no shortage of people interested in the properties promoted by the Trust. Indeed by Spring 1980 (ST Newsletter 1980, 3), the Trust apologized to readers for the shortness of the properties-for-sale list, remarking that 'alas...demand at present greatly exceeds supply' and self-consciously asking 'Is this the price of fame?'

One resident and associate of the Trust is Dennis Severs. His restored house runs as a 'museum'. For a mere £25 you can enter the world of the Jervis family, french Huguenots weavers, for a night. With the assistance of taped conversations, spilt glasses of wine, half eaten fruit strewn across a table, clay pipes broken in the fireplace







and authentic urine in an authentic bed pot, a willing participant can be carried back to a past age of Spitalfields through the daily lives of the Jervis family of Folgate Street.<sup>13</sup>

Severs is openly proud not only of the architectural achievements of the Trust, but of the social achievement of creating a new and interesting community:

It is one of the most fascinating groups of people I have ever come across anywhere. Although we know that we would never get along normally we do get along really well. We get along with the Bengali neighbours, everybody gets along just because we are all so odd. And we love our houses, we have to. Our houses are like a warm bed on a cold rainy night because of the hatred outside sometimes. So no it is remarkable. And as a community it is so busy producing things and doing things that it will go down a little like Bloomsbury, if we can get more produced. Because you know painters, writers, photographers...it is very difficult to pick up a paper one day that doesn't somehow come near to one of us (Interview Dennis Severs, Spitalfields resident, 14/4/89).

Severs' fascination with the potential historicity of his own community of fellow restorers is enshrined in his house. A unique feature is a Delft tiled fireplace which forms the visual centre-piece of Mrs. Jervis' dressing room. The fire surround is festooned with Delft china and one's eyes are naturally drawn to this celebratory mantle. But it is only after careful contemplation of the tiled surround of the fire that one realizes that the Delft tiles are not circa 1727, but a rather more recent addition. For there on one tile are two people making love, legs and arms flying, in a Porsche parked in front of one of the Georgian terraces! (Figures 6.10. and 6.11.).

The Delft fire surround (circa 1981) is the creation of Severs himself. The tiles depict not Dutch folk scenes, but the local 'celebrities' of Spitalfields. This artefact of the 1980s captures the personalities, the gossip, the society and culture behind the creation of the new Georgian Spitalfields. It begins with a tile dedicated to the French Huguenots, depicted with a traditional cross and a caged bird. Little attention is given to the events of Spitalfields history after this starting point. Jewish and Bangladeshi revitalizations of the area are notably absent. Instead, only one tile depicts the historical period between the Huguenot occupation of Georgian Spitalfields and the contemporary occupation of the area: it shows a 'tramp' and a house with a broken window and worn brickwork. The fireplace self-consciously symbolizes the way in which the recent conservation efforts in Spitalfields privilege the Georgian period in its

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<sup>13</sup>In one room the entire scene mirrors the scene depicted in the Hogarth (copy) on the wall.





FIGURE 6.10. THE GENTRIFIER'S FIRE SURROUND



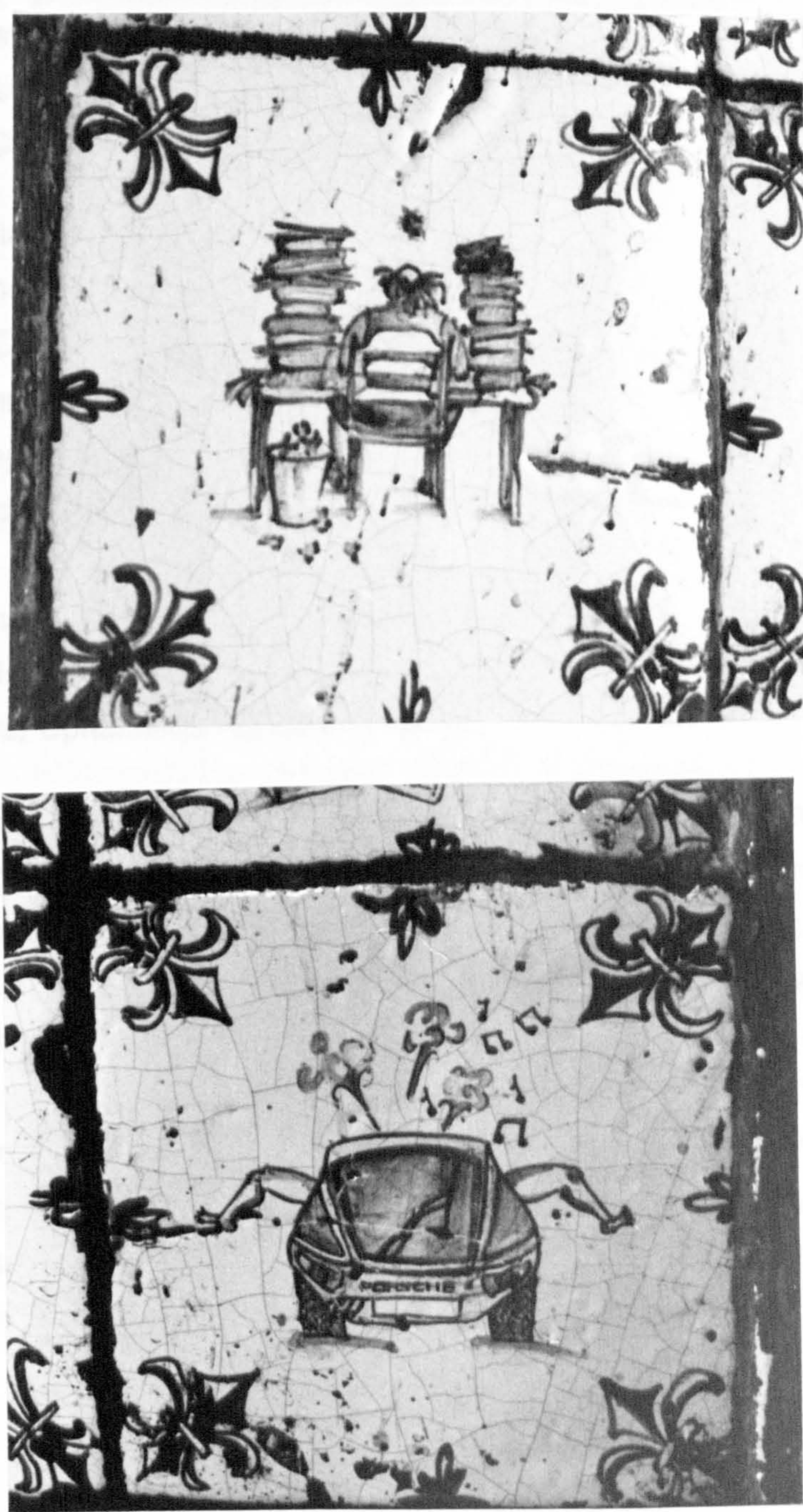


FIGURE 6.11. TWO SIDES OF THE NEW SPITALFIELDS, RAPHAEL SAMUEL, SOCIALIST HISTORIAN AND LOVEMAKING IN THE PORCHE



aesthetic and its revival culture. The history of Spitalfields through the eyes of the conservationists is rid of most historical detail save the decline that the new Georgians seek to reverse. The fireplace celebrates the contemporary conservation community as the 'Second Coming' of Georgian Spitalfields.

All the Spitalfields' conservation personalities and residents are depicted on the tiles. Raphael Samuel, the socialist historian, sits framed by piles of books at his desk; Richard MacCormac, the architect, disappears through a door into the house of his neighbour (and later lover), Jocasta Innes, who wrote her experience of restoration in the best selling 'handbook' Paint Magic; 'Saint' Anna Skrine, one-time secretary of and energetic fund-raiser for the Trust, rides her wicker-basketed and haloed bike; Gilbert and George, the artists, stand in their usual mirror pose; Dan Cruickshank, the architectural writer and 'gentle warrior' of conservation efforts, protects the ancient world from his 'cherub' daughter who symbolizes change and modernity (Interview Dennis Severs, Spitalfields resident, 14/4/89).

The Severs' fireplace celebrates Georgian Spitalfields, original and reinstated. But it also hints at the end of the magical new community, a new form of decline. One tile shows a queue of fashionable people outside the estate agents Tarn and Tarn; yet another depicts those who do not see and do not hear, the ones who do not understand this 'special community' (Interview Dennis Severs, Spitalfields resident, 14/4/89). The depiction of this more recent 'decline' emphasizes the importance to the Trust of the 'right' sort of people. The rising property values in the area, to which the Trust has itself contributed, and the publicity the Trust has encouraged and attracted new residents to this conveniently located residential area on the fringe of the City. The Trust complains:

The trouble these days would seem to be not so much lack of money as an excess of it—at least amongst certain well-heeled purchasers of some of the finer eighteenth century houses, who, having paid several hundred thousand pounds for a derelict hulk, then feel they have a right to pull it about as they think fit (ST Newsletter 1988, 3).

The creation of a social and architectural Georgian enclave has had an enormous impact on the area. Spitalfields not only looks different but property values (which were previously among the lowest in London) have increased markedly. Properties which, in 1978, could be bought for an average of £15,000 but in some cases as low as £3,500, were in the late 1980s selling for anything from £140,000 to £500,000 (ST Records; Forman 1989, 133). The Trust is not solely responsible for these rising property values,



the penetration of office development from the City has also had an impact, but the Trust's activity in 'regenerating' the area most certainly did contribute to the rise.

From its earliest days, the Trust has always faced accusations of gentrification. These challenges came mainly from the press which found it difficult to resist the temptation of reporting on the activities of some of London's better known, social figures in this most unlikely part of London. The Spitalfields residents even became one of the subjects of a 'handbook' written about 'New Georgians' who live in London's 'grandest slum' (Artley and Robinson 1985, 13-15). There were also more localized accusations of gentrification which came from the local Left and, in particular, from those groups which preceded and later became active in the Save Spitalfields Campaign (see Chapter 8). The Spitalfields Project and Local Committee, in their comments on local planning applications, consistently opposed the passing of the Georgian stock from workshop to owner occupation (Spitalfields Project/Local Committee Records).

The Trust was not insensitive to these charges and often mentions 'the taunts of gentrification' in Trust Newsletters. A 1985 BBC series on heritage in Britain was initially lauded by the Trust as providing much needed publicity of their work in the area. But after the programme appeared, some Trust members felt dissatisfied with the 'mealy-mouthed platitudes' which portrayed the Trust as 'an agency helping to entrench the gentry in the East End' (ST Newsletter 1985, 1). The Trust defended itself against accusations of gentrification by arguing that the area was previously 'bereft of life'. In its Anniversary volume Blain reminds the reader that:

...all those houses on the south side of Folgate Street, east of the square, and a great many in Elder Street itself, were empty. Some of them had pathetic notices pinned up on their front doors, informing callers that such and such a business had closed down or moved elsewhere. Others were occupied by down and outs, having been deserted by their previous occupants following compulsory acquisition (Blain 1989, 2).

The Trust also emphasized that its activities were far from insensitive to local needs. In response to an article in The Guardian (8/6/83), one Trust member and resident pointed out that:

...in the six years of its existence, the Trust has never evicted a single resident: always seen to it that occupants' rights were painstakingly protected; provided voluntarily 11,000 square feet of renovated factory accommodation for the local rag trade; saved from destruction...five listed building which are now fully occupied as public housing; sold land to local housing associations which will shortly become 210 units of accommodation for 58 Bengalis...If this is gentrification



then don't we need more of it? (Letter Anna Skrine [ST] to Editor, The Guardian 17/6/83, in ST Records).

As part of their grand design for the area, the Trust became involved in two projects which it repeatedly cited as proof of its 'non-gentrification', and its sense of understanding and responsibility towards the dire social needs of the area. One of these involved passing on some Trust properties to a housing association. The other entailed buying up a Victorian industrial building and associated properties in Heneage Street. The Heneage Street project was under way only two years after the Trust formed. The Trust explained the action in its Newsletter:

And what does a historic buildings trust want with 11,000 square feet of workshop space, however handsome?...this acquisition is intended as the first step in a far-reaching plan for the repair and re-conversion to residential use of much of the early 18th century housing stock of Spitalfields, without loss of jobs or undue disruption of the existing community. It has been clear ...that the continued use of these fine but fragile buildings as workshops for the garment industry was, through no fault of the occupants, having a disastrous effect...It is equally clear the Spitalfields, as one of the most deprived of all inner London areas, needs jobs. Clearly, then, if we are not simply to turn industrial users out in the street (an unthinkable, even if legal, expedient), it behoves to us to set up specialized workshop premises which can be offered as alternative accommodation before attempting this kind of conversion on any scale (ST Newsletter 1979, 3).

Although the Heneage Street project was part of a broad, on-going vision for the area, the tenants of only one restored Trust house, 27 Fournier St, were rehoused in the workshop space provided. The remaining property in Heneage street became home to a tapestry weaver, an architect and other professionals.

The Heneage Street project is held up by the Trust as proof of its broader concern for the pre-existing social, cultural and economic community of Spitalfields and its commitment not to drive out 'locals' but to create a 'balanced community'. But it also stands as a testament to the Trust's ambition to see the prized Georgian houses given over to residential owner occupation and inhabited by those joined in the vision of a fully restored Spitalfields. This ambition is now ratified by local planning policy which recommends the encouragement of residential as opposed to other uses in Conservation Areas. As Wright (1987a, 14) notes, the Spitalfields gentrifiers may wish to reconstruct an 'authentic historical world' but this is most definitely a 'private' world. It is also a world which has a preferred economic and social geography. Conservation and manufacturing interests in the Trust's vision should be spatially segregated. In



Spitalfields, this means encouraging or forcing Bangladeshi garment workshops to relocate and imposing a subtle expression of racial segregation.

The Market redevelopment offered an opportunity to further consolidate the spatial segregation between the white, middle and upper class conservation 'industry' and the predominantly Bangladeshi garment industry. As part of the Trust's design guidelines for the Market redevelopment, it suggested that further workshop space be provided for the Bangladeshi garment industry currently occupying Georgian houses. This request implied a sensitivity to local needs but again it served the Trust's own interests of having its conservation activity and the elite residential enclave it created spatially segregated from Bangladeshi workshop space. A planning gain deal that the Trust contemplated and even discussed with the local authority in the early stages of redevelopment proposals was the 'deployment of all remaining sweatshop workers to other premises' (ST Planning Gain: Issues for Discussion June 1986). The Trust envisaged that planning gain from the Market redevelopment could be used to provide alternate accommodation for sweatshops. This would then allow the decanting of all garment manufacturing activities from the Georgian buildings. The way would be open for the Trust to purchase the houses by using planning gain funds, and to pass the houses on to sympathetic buyers. The Trust even went so far as to identify 20 listed houses in the Fournier Street Conservation Area which were in use as garment workshops which could be incorporated in the proposed 'deployment'. The Trust argued that:

In the Trust's view, this plan safeguards the livelihoods of the clothing manufacturers in the area. They will be able to remain here, contributing to a traditionally varied community. The plan will also bring about the repair of some of the most altered and damaged Georgian Stock in Spitalfields (ST Newsletter 1986, 3).

The Trust's ambition was to retain a 'mixed' and 'balanced' community in general but to ensure that this mix was based on spatial and social segregation. It was an ambition that adds a contradictory ring to the Trust's rather more sentimental evaluations of one of the intrinsic features of the area:

In the past the rich have always lived cheek by jowl with the poor, with domestic premises adjacent to what are now called light industrial ones, if not in the same building (ST Newsletter 1986, 3, my emphasis).

The Trust's activities have actively sought to reduce the mixing of uses in the conservation areas, as did their specific requests regarding the Market redevelopment. The Trust systematically worked to transfer industrial to residential and to introduce a



wealthy resident population in the conservation areas. Its celebration of diversity in the area and its demands that this local dimension be reflected in the Market redevelopment scheme is only a sanitized version of the reality which threatens its broader visions for the area.

There is one more ironic twist to this process of spatial and social segregation which seems almost the logical culmination of the conservation mentality. As the Bangladeshi garment industry is squeezed out to more 'suitable' parts of east Spitalfields, the Trust is creating a 'monument' to their presence by turning a disused synagogue (built in the rear of one of the original Georgian houses) into a 'Centre for the Study of Ethnic Minorities' (Spitalfields Heritage Centre Records 1987).

To conclude, conservationists in Spitalfields have systematically sought to restore the historic built fabric of the area. Their commitment to this project has involved not only highly publicized direct action but also an astute and persistent development mentality of ensuring that Georgian houses pass into the 'right' hands. The conscious restoration of a material and a social world around the Georgian aesthetic has placed the Trust in conflict with a number of the existing elements of the Spitalfields area, not least the Spitalfields Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market. The conflict between the business of the Market and the ambitions of the Trust opened the way for collusion with developers. It is to the developers' position and their complicity in the reproduction of the Georgian aesthetic that I now turn.

#### 6.4. The Developers' Views

In the final part of this chapter I trace the efforts of the developers to create a new office and retail development on the Market site. Although heralding massive change for the area and responding to new City-based demands for office space, this process was consciously framed within an aesthetic that addressed the powerful local conservation interests. Of the three contenders for the Spitalfields Market redevelopment, only two produced schemes that went to full planning permission stage: Spitalfields Development Group (SDG) and Rosehaugh Stanhope. Both schemes gained planning permission from Tower Hamlets but it was the SDG scheme which the Corporation of London, owner of the site, finally accepted. In the following section I examine the Rosehaugh Stanhope and the SDG schemes for the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market. The No. 1 Poultry scheme had an overt historicism but it was an oppositional historicism to that advocated by conservation interests. In the Spitalfields Market redevelopment the overt collusion between the developers and the conservationists



meant that, in the initial stages at least, the development scheme strongly reflected the conservationists' urban aesthetic. The collusion was so intimate at the tender stage of the development process, upon which this analysis is based, that the following accounts tell as much of the conservationists as of the developer.

#### 6.4.1. City Liberty: Spitalfields on the City fringe

The pressure to relocate the Spitalfields Market and to redevelop the Market site was in direct response to the increased demand for new types of office space outlined in detail in Chapter 5. As was noted in Chapter 5, this push to outer edges of the City was partly a response to the inflexibility of the City's conservation policies. The opening up of areas on the edge of the City was seen by the Corporation to accord with its desire to preserve the historic character of its heartland. The Inspector made specific reference to the use of these hinter areas in the City's local plan inquiry:

The City of London is not an island and areas in the surrounding Boroughs and Docklands are available and afford relief from any excessive commercial development that might threaten the City's historic character (Corporation of London 1984, 9-10).

This impulse to conserve the historic built fabric of the City core rests uneasily with other commitments held by the Corporation under its Local Plan. Most notably the Corporation is also committed to encouraging the financial functions of the City and providing the office space necessary for this. The Corporation has even hardened its position in this regard. In the Draft Local Plan (Corporation of London 1984) the Corporation policy 'welcomed office development...subject to other provisions of the Plan' (Draft Plan Policy No 4). In the Final ratified Local Plan, the City policy was actively 'to encourage office development in order to maintain and expand the role of the City as an International financial centre' (ECON 1). This new development should provide specifically for the requirements of new office technology (ECON 2). It has been development opportunities on the fringe of the City, like Spitalfields, which have provided the prime opportunities for the building of new-style offices. As noted in Chapter 5, fringe sites offer larger tracts of land, are easier and quicker to assemble (often being released in a single lot), are relatively cheap and, if larger, can accommodate cheaper fast-track construction methods (Dunning and Morgan 1971; Pryke 1988).

The Corporation has an unusual role in the Spitalfields development. As owner of the Market site (and administrator of the Market as an operating unit), it is both client and property speculator. In its decision to open the Market site for development, the Corporation was responding to the pressures to make the Market's operations more



efficient while also cashing in on the burgeoning demand for new types of office space in the City. The time was ripe for releasing the Spitalfields site onto the development market. In 1983, the Spitalfields Market Committee of the Corporation of London considered relocation was not viable and had earmarked £600,000 for upgrading Market facilities. But the Corporation responded quickly to redevelopment overtures from LET because the LET proposal met the Corporation's responsibility as Market administrator (by relocating the Market) and its obligation to encourage office development, and its impulse to speculate on the office boom. The relocation of the Spitalfields Market and the redevelopment of the site, then, was a response not to local needs (House of Commons Hearing 1988 Day 2, 61). The Corporation would not only gain a more efficient Market, it would also gain substantially from the offer of the land for development. SDG offered the Corporation a premium of £60m for the leasehold interest (150 years) with a ground rent of £500,000 per annum rising to 5% of the rack rental value of the office element.<sup>14</sup> This compares to the estimated £2m the site was valued at under existing Market use (Bernard Williams Associates 1986, 7).

When the development was first considered, the prime users anticipated were the financial services sector of the City. The original SDG scheme provided for over 1m square feet of lettable office space. At the request of Tower Hamlets this was reduced by a quarter and the scheme as of 1987/8 (when this research was undertaken) had office space provision of over 700,000 square feet. The initial SDG schemes were firmly directed at the City office market although, in compliance with Tower Hamlets' requirements, there was also provision for housing, local facilities and retailing (See Chapter 8 and Appendix 6.2.).<sup>15</sup> In function the SDG scheme was serving City needs and requirements but the design aesthetic and the public image of the scheme were sensitive to the conservation interests in the area. In the following I take a closer look at the way in which both SDG and the unsuccessful Rosehaugh Stanhope scheme appropriated the conservation aesthetic as a means of presenting the Spitalfields redevelopment scheme.

#### 6.4.2. Classicism and Collusion: the Rosehaugh Stanhope Scheme

Rosehaugh Stanhope produced a comprehensive but ultimately unsuccessful scheme for the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market. Rosehaugh has long been active in redevelopment in the eastern edges of the City, most notably with their extensive

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<sup>14</sup>The new rental figure is twice that currently paid by the Market Traders.

<sup>15</sup>Subsequent to the intensive fieldwork period, SDG have further reduced the office element in the scheme in response to the decline in office demand in the City. They have increased the retail elements of the scheme substantially (adding a 7 storey retail galleria).



Broadgate redevelopment which looms over Spitalfields as a constant reminder of the encroaching City (see Figure 6.8.).

From the outset, Rosehaugh Stanhope actively sought a design which addressed the conservation needs of the area, and specifically the aspirations of those conservation groups who treasured the Georgian townscape. Overtures began early in the development process. Rosehaugh Stanhope contacted the Georgian Group to arrange a lunch date to discuss 'a better dialogue between conservation groups and developers', noting that 'at present we are always on opposing sides' (Letter GG to RS, 24/3/86). After the SDG scheme appeared, the Georgian Group wrote to Rosehaugh Stanhope asking 'if there might be other developers willing to commission better schemes' (Letter GG to RS, 30/5/86). Rosehaugh Stanhope responded by confirming that they were interested in the site and asked the Georgian Group to advise on who the architects might be (Letter RS to GG, 3/6/86; Architects' Journal 1986b).

The Georgian Group proceeded to suggest architects they felt had a 'proven track record'. These included Jeremy Dixon, Terry Farrell, John Simpson, Richard MacCormac, Rolfe Judd, Quinlan Terry and Leon Krier. These architects either work exclusively in a neo-Georgian, neo-classical style (such as Quinlan Terry, Leon Krier and John Simpson) or in a style which consciously draws on local idioms (Letter GG to RS, 2/7/86). They are architects who share a vision of architecture and urban design with the Georgian Group. Each of these architects had been involved in a symposium on neo-classicism run by the Georgian Group in Bath. The Georgian Group felt that the Spitalfields development could become 'the first tangible fruit of the Symposium...Naturally [we are] very excited about the prospect' (Letter GG to RS, 13/8/86).

By early August 1986, Rosehaugh Stanhope had in fact taken the advice of the Georgian Group and retained Leon Krier - 'the internationally acclaimed architectural planner' - to prepare a Master Plan for the site 'in the genuine Georgian vernacular'. Other noted classical architects like Robert Adams, Jeremy Dixon, Terry Farrell and Quinlan Terry were to be invited to design specific buildings within the Krier Master Plan thus 'ensur[ing] the creation of a new architecture, totally in sympathy with the surrounding conservation areas' (RS Press Release, 7/8/86). From the outset, Rosehaugh Stanhope promoted the scheme as consciously historical in its reference and inspiration. Stuart Lipton, head of RS, remarked that 'Spitalfields is not a place for glass curtain walled buildings' (Architects Journal 6/8/86b, 8). The appointment of Krier was critical. He works specifically in the classical style and is much favoured by



the Prince of Wales who commissioned Krier to act as Master Planner for the model village of Poundbury, Dorchester in the Duchy of Cornwall (Krier 1989).

The Krier master plan was never fully developed but what did emerge was uncompromisingly classical in style. It reinstated a street pattern across the Market site, replete with Georgian squares. The northern edge of Spital Square was reinstated as a residential enclave. The surrounds of Christ Church were opened out and enhanced. The plans, although vague, met with strong approval. The Georgian group wrote to Krier saying they 'had no adverse comments whatever to make' and they saw that 'the scheme as a whole has the potential...to be one of the most exciting developments in London for decades' (Letter GG to LK, 16/10/86). The Spitalfields Trust too, showed considerable interest in the classical proposition by Rosehaugh Stanhope. Dan Cruickshank and others worked closely with Krier in the production of a master plan (GG Records, 1/10/86; Interview Dan Cruickshank, ST, 22/2/89). There were walks around the area, exchanges of draft plans and discussions. Krier was invited by Dan Cruickshank to launch his Spitalfields scheme in the offices of the Architects' Press.

Krier never launched his Master Plan. He withdrew from the scheme and was replaced by Quinlan Terry, another classicist. Terry extended Krier's classical proposals in a bolder manner (Figure 6.12). His scheme was uncompromisingly classical, imposing a rigidly formal and at times grand street pattern, including wide streets and large squares (Appendix 6.3.). Terry disregarded the Grade II listed Horner Buildings on the eastern edge of the Market: these were to be demolished to make way for the comprehensive neo-classical scheme. The original Spital Square was not reinstated and a grander Spital Square, replete with classical folly, was proposed for the central focus of the site. Hawksmoor, architect of the grandest building of Georgian Spitalfields, Christ Church, was celebrated in the scheme. A new diagonal street, appropriately called Hawskmoor Street, was created to open out a grand new view of Christ Church. The site had two decorative towers based on original designs by Hawksmoor. Commenting on the Terry scheme, the Trust applauded the 'happy' addition of Hawskmoor Street, as it was called, but felt unable to agree that it justified the demolition of the listed buildings or Spital Square. The grand squares were met with similar reservations:

It has been claimed by its progenitors that the...scheme as a whole is somehow reminiscent of Bloomsbury or Canonbury and of similar scale and effect to the Inns of Court. We disagree. The idiom chosen is in fact derived from the Continental urban tradition in scale and detail. It is alien to London as a whole and to this early Georgian quarter in particular....An obvious opportunity has been missed to bring alive the many courtyards created within



the classical blocks by a system of raised and sunken passages which really could create the long unbroken lines of Carr (Letter ST to LE 14. 2. 52)

Frederic Stanhope had clearly intended to use the classical revival as a useful Spitalfields conservationist device, to provide a historical context for the Georgian architecture and to give it a new life as a design for the Georgian period. The result was a new interpretation of it.

#### 6.4.2 Friends and Neighbours: Spitalfields Development Scheme

The scheme with which the Spitalfields Development Scheme was first presented to the public and won the Market tender was a design for the Spitalfields Development Scheme and MacCormack's Design style and the Spitalfields Development Scheme was the

URE 6.12. QUINLAN TERRY'S CLASSICAL SCHEME FOR SPITALFIELDS

RCE: Jencks, C. 1988 The Prince and the Architects, 17



the classical blocks by a system of interlinked pedestrian passages which really could echo the best features of the Inns of Court (Letter ST to LBTH, 3/7/97).

Rosehaugh Stanhope had clearly attempted to address the Georgian aesthetic of the powerful Spitalfields conservationists. Ironically its final failure to win support came not from its disregard for the Georgian aesthetic but its too formal and too grand appropriation of it.

#### 6.4.3. Friends and Neighbours: Spitalfields Development Group Scheme

The scheme with which the Spitalfields Development Group gained planning permission and won the Market tender was designed by Richard MacCormac.<sup>16</sup> Richard MacCormac's design style can be described as postmodern and explicitly works with local motifs and idioms derived from historical forms and patterns (Cruickshank 1989a; MacCormac 1983; Pearce 1986). He is considered one of a growing number of architects who specifically seek to design with the surrounding environment in mind and who specialize in conservation work as well as new build. He has written specifically on office provision in mixed-use areas (MacCormac 1987). He is also an architect with a broad vision, dealing with issues of urban design and planning as much as with the detailing of building design. His general design philosophy alone makes him a prime candidate for a site such as the Market which is surrounded by three conservation areas and incorporates a small group of listed buildings. But it was not just MacCormac's design philosophy which recommended him to SDG.

MacCormac has other important credentials. Firstly, he was a founding member of the Spitalfields Trust. Secondly, since 1979 he has lived and worked in Spitalfields in a nineteenth century brewery 'rescued' by the Trust. He had long expressed his own vision for the area, one which had no loyalty to the Spitalfields Market. For MacCormac redevelopment of the Market site was an important step in the reconstitution and revitalization of the area. Sharing much with his Trust colleagues, MacCormac regarded the Market as one of the sources of the decline of Spitalfields: a 'foreign' element in the area which has worked to 'cut' Spitalfields out of the 'psychological geography' of London (Interview Richard MacCormac, ST/SDG architect, 15/6/89).

MacCormac's practice had produced a speculative design scheme for the site as early as 1980. A rumour about the redevelopment of the Market site in 1982 prompted the

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<sup>16</sup>MacCormac worked in conjunction with overseeing architects Fitzroy Robinson who were later replaced by Swanke Hayden Connell.



Trust to consider appointing MacCormac as a temporary consultant on design and conservation for a new scheme (ST Records 1982). MacCormac saw himself as eminently suited to his position as design consultant for SDG. He commented to the press that 'as a resident of the area I am imbued with a sense of what is appropriate for the site' (Architects' Journal, 6/8/86b).

The SDG development team was more than sensitive to the contribution such an architect could make to its bid to gain control of the Spitalfields development. A SDG spokesperson bluntly admitted that MacCormac was appointed to the team primarily to ensure that planning permission was obtained (Interview Roddie Sloane, SDG, 6/7/89). Securing planning permission was a necessary prerequisite for the Corporation of London's acceptance of the development offer. The Georgian Group also thought the appointment of MacCormac would make the scheme 'more palatable' (Letter GG to RS, 2/7/86). Even MacCormac saw his appointment as an astute development strategy:

Our firm has only once failed to get a planning permission...I imagine that they [SDG] came to me thinking lightly that I could get them a planning consent, which I did (Interview Richard MacCormac, ST/SDG, 15/6/89).

The relationship between SDG and MacCormac was short-lived. Once planning permission was granted the developers appointed an American firm, Swanke Hayden Connell. Although they retained MacCormac, he found working with the American firm untenable and eventually withdrew from the scheme. Although he was aware of the expediency of his appointment, MacCormac also held a strong loyalty to his vision for the area. Once compromised in this vision, he found his only option to be withdrawal from the project.

MacCormac (see Figure 6.2.) designed a diverse scheme within which a series of 'architectural conversations' take place both between the different buildings on the site and the surrounding townscape (Tower Hamlets CAAC, 14/5/87; Interview Richard MacCormac, ST/SDG, 15/6/89; Architects' Journal 1986a). The architectural style drew upon local architectural idioms but 'played' with them, creating new architectural forms. The listed Horner Buildings were kept as an important element of the scheme. In plan the scheme paid much attention to recreating a street pattern compatible with the surrounding Conservation Areas. MacCormac's scheme also reinstated the north side of Spital Square and a fine-grained network of streets, corridors, arcades and open spaces.



MacCormac designed from an aesthetic and sensibility coloured by that of his Trust associates. Despite this, the Spitalfields Trust had considerable difficulty with the SDG scheme and were particularly unhappy about the amount of office space which far exceeded the Borough brief. Once the office space had been reduced, there were other discrepancies about design details. The scheme was to include contributions from a range of architects, including Ted Cullinan. The Cullinan section of the scheme contrasted an eighteenth century facade with a modern interior but allowed the modern interior to break through on the corners and at the roof level. This playing with the past and the present did not suit the conservation mentality. The Georgian Group argued, for example, that Spitalfields was not the place for 'architectural collage' and that the Cullinan design was an 'anathema' to them. To play with a Georgian facade was 'in effect to send up the architectural idiom of the area' (Letter GG to BGNC, 28/7/87).

The appointment of MacCormac to 'soften' what the conservationists saw to be an oversized scheme caused a rift between him and the Trust. MacCormac eventually withdrew from the Trust while involved on the project in order to avoid any 'conflict of interest' (Interview Richard MacCormac, ST/SDG, 15/6/89). The Trust, although having 'the greatest respect for our friend and colleague' asked Tower Hamlets to refuse planning permission (Letter ST to LBTH, 12/5/87). When Swanke Hayden Connell were appointed and MacCormac withdrew the conservationists began to shift their position once again (see section 6.5.).

It was not only in design that SDG consciously took on the conservation aesthetic. As part of the community gain package, SDG earmarked £500,000 for the restoration of Christ Church. Further, the promotion of the scheme was strongly influenced by historical references. The logo of SDG was based on the listed Horner Buildings which, with their pitched roof and chimney stacks, provide an almost village quality (Figure 6.13.). A special promotional booklet adorned with the Horner logo presented the scheme under the heading 'Spitalfields: A Continuing Story' (SDG 1988). Beginning with quotes from John Stow's original Survey of London the booklet traced the history of Spitalfields and the Market site. Needless to say, it is the SDG Market redevelopment which is written in as the final chapter of this historical account.

In this developer's history of Spitalfields, past days and present development aspirations are inter-meshed. Like the conservationists who retrieve a Georgian Spitalfields from the complex history of the area, so the developers assert that '[t]he common thread through Spitalfield's history is commerce'. Spitalfields 'is more than bricks and mortar; it is living commerce'. The commercial Spitalfields of old is depicted



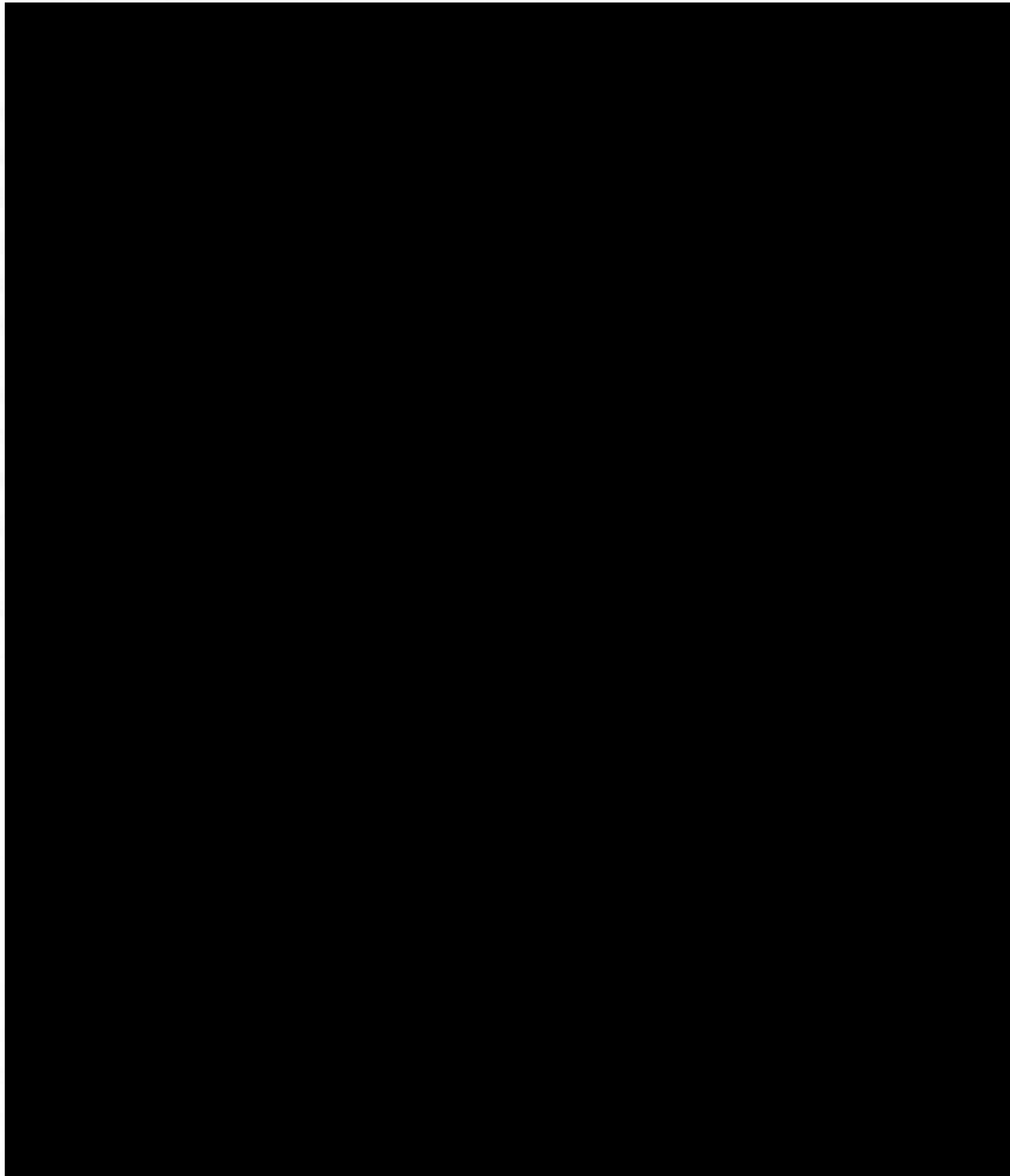


FIGURE 6.13. THE VILLAGE LOGO OF SDG

SOURCE: SDG 1987 Promotional Booklet



• as opulently prosperous (one resident owned a diamond worth £30,000 we are told) and 'culturally minded'. The next 'chapter' of the short history provides an account of 'The Profitable Strangers', the French Huguenot weavers who arrived as paupers but soon prospered; an understated hint at the potential of the area for possible tenants of their development. Christ Church has a special place in the history as a 'baroque masterpiece' (Figure 6.14.). The Spitalfields Market which the developers plan to relocate is depicted under the title of 'Market Force' as an 'historic' and 'enduring' presence in the area. The Horner buildings are referred to as 'evidence of the enterprise that Spitalfields has always generated'. The SDG proposal to relocate the Market at a new site at Temple Mill is depicted not as the destruction of the Market but as breathing new life into the historic enterprise.

Unlike the conservationists' way of seeing the area, there is no scenario of decline in which the developers act as redeemers. The theme of commerce which runs through the text implicates the new development in a continuing history of commercial success, thus presenting it as contiguous with, and complimentary to, the history of the area. Yet when the new scheme is eventually referred to, this commercial theme is cleverly joined with the motif of 'community'. The new development will be 'a community of uses'. Far from disrupting Spitalfields, the developers' history suggests that:

...the people of Spitalfields will still be doing much the same things as before. Spitalfields will be somewhere to live, relax, be entertained and shop; a place for people to work and prosper. All traditional pursuits, watched over by the weavers' houses, medieval precincts and Dickensian alleys and, above all, Hawksmoor's Christ Church (SDG 1988, 12).

Thus in rhetoric and action, development interests were quick to appropriate the conservation design aesthetic in the design and promotion of their schemes. As Chapter 8 will show, the ability of the conservationists and developers to enter into a common discourse with shared values and language works to marginalize other interests not empowered with a knowledge of architecture and aesthetics and whose ambitions are less comfortably appropriated into development visions.

#### 6.5. Postscript: A changing point of view?

From the outset the Spitalfields conservationists agreed with the relocation of the Market provided that the replacement scheme conformed to their urban aesthetics and their ambitions to preserve and enhance the historic, built fabric surrounding the Market site. However, recent changes in the design of the SDG scheme have seen a radical turn-around in conservation views (see Appendix 6.1.). The Trust was







prepared to overlook the 'the politics' of the departure of Richard MacCormac but could not the subsequent decline in design standard (Letter ST to SDG, 8/12/89). It suggested that negotiations had 'moved beyond the stage of cosy confabulations'. The SHC design was seen as having 'no sense of history or even of style': it was 'boring' and 'ugly'. The Trust presented SDG with a veiled threat of planning appeal and concluded:

...the only way you can restore the company's credibility is by sending Swanke Hayden Connell back where they came from, and appointing someone of real talent-preferably of genius-to sort out what looks like becoming one of the most expensive planning muddles of the age (Letter ST to SDG, 8/12/89).

In a letter to the RFAC (24/1/90) regarding the new SHC scheme, the Trust concluded that it failed to achieve a satisfactory interface between the new buildings and the surroundings. The massing of the office was seen as 'harsh and arbitrary' and the bulk 'unacceptable'. The brick cladding was seen as akin to 'wallpaper'. The scheme as a whole was described as having 'no clear urban design vision'; a sunken garden was 'silly'; the galleria was 'a roof flung between two offices' and one entrance was 'an overblown parody of the nearby Bishopsgate Institute' (Figure 6.15.).

SDG was much angered by the Trust response and felt it was simply a reflection of its 'architectural faddism' (Letter SDG to ST, nd). In a meeting the SDG held with a local community group (20/3/90), the developer's representative made specific mention of the Trust, defiantly stating that SDG 'never do anything at the instigation of the Trust, 'If they say we should do it in brick, we would do it in marble'. The SDG representative then dismissed the Trust by pointing out that they had 'infiltrated the area' and were 'not really locals'. As a final indication that the collusive relationship had come to an end, the SDG representative accused the Trust of 'not [having] the slightest regard for the community of Spitalfields'.

Dan Cruickshank and Mark Girouard, have recently articulated the revised Spitalfields Trust position. In an article in the Sunday Times (17/2/90) Girouard argued that London has the potential for a new golden architectural age but there is a risk of Londoners again having to tolerate an 'age of lead'. Although still advocating the redevelopment of the Market site, Girouard decried the schemes thus far produced and called for a public inquiry. Cruickshank now also decries the proposed redevelopment as a 'social and architectural tragedy in waiting' (Cruickshank 1989b, 1990). Ironical, considering the efforts made by the Trust to confine the garment industry, Cruickshank identifies the 'enterprising' Bangladeshi community as the source of Spitalfields







regeneration. Despite the community rhetoric the prime concern remains the architecture of the new scheme rather than the relocation of the Market. Indeed Cruickshank goes so far as to argue that the planning gain package (the very source of community benefit) was directing attention away from the important issue of architectural design.

Thus, it is the change of architectural style in the most recent SDG scheme which is the prime source of the conservationists' shifting position. After four years of collusion by way of a shared discourse of architecture and urban design, this design issue has finally pushed the conservationists to draw upon an alternate community rhetoric. Until then, the issue of the 'community' had been most obvious by its absence from the conservation/developer collusion. With Spitalfields facing the redevelopment not only of the Market site but also of the Truman's Brewery and Bishopsgate Goodsyards site (some 3m square feet of proposed office space) the Trust has begun to feel more than uncomfortable about the prospects for its beloved Georgian Spitalfields:<sup>17</sup>

We are increasingly concerned about the effect of this mega-development on the life of the existing community, along with the more direct impact on the Conservation Areas. In addition the adjustment of the B1 zoning classification to allow office use, is putting increased commercial pressure on traditional workshop spaces for the local rag trade (ST Newsletter 1989,1).

The workshops and community that the Spitalfields Trust has systematically tried to relocate and separate out from their re-invented Georgian Spitalfields are now mobilized in support of their urban aesthetic. As will be shown in Chapter 8, other interests in Spitalfields have opposed the Market's relocation and redevelopment from within a community discourse, and have long felt the powerlessness of speaking the wrong language.

The final twist in the Spitalfields saga is the recent decision of the Secretary of State to intervene. On the day that the Swanke Hayden Connell scheme was to go to the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee for final approval or rejection the Secretary of State called in the proposal to consider if it should go to public inquiry (June 1990). This action was a direct result of the pressure mounted by the influential conservationists. As Chapter 8 will demonstrate the Secretary of State was previously unresponsive to appeals from other sectors of the Spitalfields community to see the development stopped.

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<sup>17</sup>These other Spitalfields developments are discussed in detail in Chapter 8.



## 6.6. Conclusion

The Spitalfields case provides another example of the reification of social values in the built environment. As in the City, case this occurs not only through processes of conservation but also through development. The built environment of Spitalfields became the source of symbolic expressions of certain desirable social and cultural forms which are located in the Spitalfields of the past. Both the gentrifying efforts of the Trust and the more recent Market redevelopment proposals attest to the pervasiveness of heritage values in the contemporary processes of urban transformation. It is a historicity which is primarily grounded in the revalorization of architectural and townscape forms and the ritualistic or self-conscious adoption of practices associated with the relatively prosperous Georgian history of the area.

Certain traditional functions in the area, like the Market and the garment industry, were at one level celebrated as part of the 'local colour' and contemporary expressions of continued industriousness but were ultimately seen as contradictory to the Georgian vision. The conservationists sought to remove or contain such activities and create a social world which was more sympathetic to (and financially better-equipped to participate in) the invention of a new Spitalfields of old. As such the conservationists in Spitalfields have acted as an agent of change. Remaining elements of the less seemly side of Spitalfields are sanitized or intellectualized. In its emphasis on the creation of a 'balanced community' which provides for their presence in the area, the case of the conservationists in Spitalfields eases the analysis away from the process of conservation as simply the symbolic expression of social values in the built form towards a process which creates more fundamental and pervasive transformations not only in the built form of the city but also its social and cultural form.

The conservationists framed their efforts in Spitalfields in the familiar narrative of redemption and embellished it with the language and action of the battle. Through this framework, the interests and agenda of an influential social elite were transformed into a populist cause. This process was essential in legitimating the changes that the conservationists have brought to the area. The rhetoric of conservation activity at times may be cast in populist metaphors and narratives, yet in the collusion with the developers another language and status was relevant. Collusion was possible because the conservationists, despite their rhetoric, shared a common discursive realm with the developers; the language of architecture and townscape.

The Spitalfields case teases out a persistent tension of this study: that between the impulse to conserve the historic built fabric and the impact this has on traditional



practices and social groups. The actions of the conservationists were antagonistic towards other practices and social groups in Spitalfields who threatened or thwarted the desire to re-invent a Georgian enclave. As will be shown in the second exploration of Spitalfields in Chapter 8, there are groups within Spitalfields who imagine a different place. These alternate interests speak not in the language of architecture and townscape but in the language of 'community'. This alternate vision is fundamentally oppositional to the processes of change introduced into the area both by the conservationists and, more dramatically, by the Market project.



## CHAPTER 7: IMAGINING COMMUNITY IN THE CITY OF LONDON

But logic has its limits and the position of the City lies outside of them.

Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, 1960.

The analysis thus far has shown how certain social ideas and values are freighted with and reified through the impulse to conserve the historic built environment. I have explored two distinctive manifestations of this process thus far. The first analytical transect through the City case (Chapter 5), revealed how conservation served to protect or express traditional and threatened social orders in a complex context of change. The first analytical transect through the Spitalfields case (Chapter 6) revealed how the impulse to conserve the historic built environment has acted as an agent of change and the means by which more powerful interests can insert new and potentially antagonistic orders and values into local settings. In both cases the starting emphasis of the views explored was the impulse to conserve the built environment or to create a new built environment. In the next two chapters I shift the emphasis of the analysis to those interests who have resisted redevelopment in the City and Spitalfields through an alternate logic - one which emphasises the impact of redevelopment on local ways of life or 'communities'. Historical consciousness plays an equally important part in the emergence, elaboration and articulation of these 'community' constructs.

In this third empirical chapter I return to the City, and explore a local interest group who were primarily concerned with protecting certain use functions and practices not normally identified as being associated with the Bank Junction. CARE (the Campaign for Refurbishment) had the appearance and rhetoric of a local 'community' group, but closer examination revealed that it was a constellation of divergent interests, local and non-local, concerned not only with the preservation of local 'livelihoods' but also with the built environment. The community evoked found that its interests could be served by the those who sought the preservation of a particular historical urban form and who made claims for the regenerative power of conservation.



### 7.1. The CARE/SAVE Coalition

The CARE group opposed the Palumbo redevelopment proposal and argued for the retention and refurbishment of the existing buildings on the No. 1 Poultry site. An earlier version of CARE emerged in relation to the Mansion House Square redevelopment, although it made no formal representation at the first public inquiry (Marks 1984, 145-149). It was only in the No. 1 Poultry proposal that a configuration of interests, acting under the title of CARE, became actively involved in the discourse and action surrounding the redevelopment of the site.

The CARE opposition to the Palumbo proposal was based, firstly, on conservation and townscape issues and, secondly, on the need to protect small retailers in the City. The first press release said that CARE was composed of 'opponents to the demolition of Victorian buildings and erosion of shops' (CARE Press Release, 17/6/87). At its first press conference the group announced that the issue to be discussed was 'the threat to the views [of St. Paul's]...and...the loss forever of independent shops' (CARE Press Release, 17/6/87). The conjoining of agendas which seek to protect current but threatened ways of lives or livelihoods and the conservation of the built environment provides another elaboration of how heritage values have become embedded in urban processes.

CARE presented itself publicly as a collection of 'local' interests who would be adversely affected by the redevelopment. In essence, the group was the Rector of the St. Mary-le-Bow church and a collection of retailers who operated out of the existing buildings on the No. 1 Poultry site. In public statements, the group stressed their local membership and agenda. This public identity belied associations and affiliations between CARE and national-wide conservation interests, most notably SAVE Britain's Heritage. As was shown in Chapter 4, SAVE has increasingly expressed its conservation agenda through a more broadly-based, liberal-inspired commitment to the mutually beneficial relationship between conservation of the built environment and the 'community'. The CARE case provides an insightful expression of this stance in the most unlikely setting of the City of London. The relationship between CARE and SAVE Britain's Heritage was based on a belief in an essentially English idea of community: the idea of the City as village. The City village not only had a particular built form, as manifest in the existing buildings on the site and their relationship to the surrounds, it also had a particular social and economic character embodied in the idea of the parish and the village High Street. The following analysis pays particular attention to these two strands of the City as Village case against redevelopment.



## 7.2. Of Priests and Princes: The CARE Narrative

Most public statements were made by the Chair, Victor Stock, the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow. Under his imaginative and vibrant personality, the CARE case against the Poultry redevelopment and the promotion of a refurbishment alternative was framed within a distinctive narrative which stressed two themes: the authenticity of the 'local' point of view and the democratic right of this view to be heard. However, the elaboration of a public image based around the authentic 'local' voice belied a far more complex configuration of interests which were able to find a voice in and legitimation through the CARE campaign.

The CARE opposition was not based on a carefully developed rational argument so characteristic of the 'expert' witnesses drawn on by the developer, the Corporation and national conservation interests. CARE's public statements were characterized by a narrative structure which gave the campaign an almost mythical quality (see Silverstone 1986). Their case was filled with the characters and action of a saga: there was the hero, the enemy and the powerless victims who were being led to safety under conditions of hardship and duress.

The hero of the CARE campaign was Victor Stock, Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow. He depicted himself as the 'innocent' who, faced with the threat of redevelopment, was called into service:

I arrived as Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, whose parish includes the Mappin and Webb and Poultry sites, during the summer of 1986. Like very many members of the public I thought that the controversy over the Mansion House Circus was a thing of the past...I did, however, wonder why there was so much scaffolding all round the Victorian buildings in that most interesting corner of my parish....I began to visit the business houses and shops in the parish and...discovered that there were new plans to demolish the buildings on the site and to erect one big modern building in place of the variegated shops and medieval street plan...A couple of retailers and some people who worship in the parish church asked me to become Chairman of a local group that would campaign for the refurbishment of the site (CARE Proof of Evidence 1988,1).

Those led to safety by the Rector and the CARE campaign were local retailers. The retailers were depicted as a powerless 'small people' in the context of the proposed redevelopment. They became homely 'shopkeepers' facing the power of wealth, expert knowledge and fame:



Why should small shopkeepers be moved out in favour of those who can afford the increased rents? Why should the powerful and the wealthy, the expert, the famous, always triumph over ordinary people? (CARE Proof of Evidence 1988, 2).

The Rector's role as 'saviour' of the 'small people' was enacted in a scene of great adversity. First and foremost, there was the 'enemy' Palumbo and developers like him. CARE cast Palumbo and his team as evil and deceitful. The developer changed his plans simply to confuse and dupe 'these poor people' (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88). The developer relied on expert witnesses and, the Rector speculated, would challenge CARE's non-expert status:

And so frankly, the QC and Mr. Palumbo will fourscore on me and say 'You are just a priest, what do you know about architecture, in the face of these great experts'. And I am going to try hard to say, 'Well, I am very sorry but I think that I am an averagely educated man and I am interested in my environment and I do look after a Grade I\*\* National Monument and I feel a responsibility about it. So I think my little opinion is at least worth hearing' (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88).

Other developers were also cast as enemies. One developer warned Stock not to become involved in CARE and challenge development interests in the City:

I was taken aside by a man who said "A lot of people want this development. You are new in the City and it is rather unfortunate you should become involved in controversy. After all, a lot of the retailers on the site are small people and small people can surely go somewhere else"...And that was because this great man had huge development schemes up his sleeve and he was terrified that we might reverse the trend. And that if we stopped this development then lots of other developments would be halted (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88).

There was also the 'adversity' produced by the planning system itself, despite the fact that the Corporation also opposed the redevelopment. It was the impenetrable nature of the planning system which was the basis of CARE's complaint, most particularly its reliance on the language and procedures of the 'expert'. Such was the power of the 'expert' realm of planning that it had the capacity to reduce even the Dean of St. Paul's into yet another 'small person' of the local scene:

I asked the Dean of St. Paul's to go and see the photomontages at the Planning Office-indeed the first time he went he forgot to use the magic word 'montage' and was therefore not shown what he wanted to see and so I had to send him back...I wrote a letter to the newspapers about the difficulty ordinary people had in



getting through the procedures to be followed if they wanted to find out what was going on in their locality (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88).

The Rector's heroic status is not simply derived from him being a 'non-expert' pitted against the development discourse of the 'experts'. His was also a moral and ethical battle that spoke to the very basis of the democratic right for all to have a say. This was a cause that was defended by Stock under severe duress:

Another person took me out in the City and said, trying to stop my involvement in it, he said, ' You are the Anglican Rector aren't you?' And I said 'yes'. And he said 'A lot of the business men you are trying to help are Jews. Why should you try and help Jews?' And I was so angry, and I shall never forget this. And that was a real red rag to a bull....You know what a bloody silly thing to say to a priest. I can hardly turn round and say, ' Oh yes, I am sorry, I didn't realize they are Jews. Oh they can go into the oven if they are Jews!'. I mean for God's sake! 'I didn't realize they weren't practicing Anglicans!' (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88).

Stock's reference to this anti-Semitic incident intersects with the process of racialization of the redevelopment controversy as analysed in Chapter 5. In mentioning this incident (which Stock did frequently), Stock set the CARE campaign apart from those interests which might seek to protect a particular ethnic and religious specificity in the City. Yet, as Harris and Thane (1984, 226-7) note, this reputation of religious and racial conformity in the City is not always confirmed by City practices. The City has long had an influential and powerful Jewish presence and, although Harris and Thane do not deny the possible presence of anti-Semitism, they suggest it rarely interfered with or excluded regular business dealings between Jews and non-Jews. The repeated reference by the Chair of CARE to this instance of anti-Semitism, be it a reflection of real or reputed City behaviour, did however work to enforce CARE's image as a democratic, egalitarian and non-discriminatory voice in a setting not popularly known for these qualities. This reinforced the Rector's heroic status which saw him triumphing over both the language and structure of development process and the prejudices of the traditional social order of the City.

Stock stressed continually his own 'non-expert' status. For example, he began to understand some of the 'expert' issues like townscape and the view of St. Paul's only when they were refracted quite literally through his own 'ordinary' lens of experience. He walked down Cornhill:

...and with my very ordinary little camera...took a series of photographs which showed conclusively the dome of St. Paul's (CARE Proof of Evidence 1988, 2).



The most important strategy used by CARE to 'flesh out' the 'ordinary person' of its public rhetoric was soliciting public opinion by way of questionnaires and comments collected at exhibitions run by the group and at retail outlets on the site. Of 1718 responses received through CARE's local consultation, only 32 were in favour of demolition of the existing buildings (CARE Proof of Evidence 1988, 3). Presenting some proof of 'local' opinion was extremely important in CARE's invention of a Bank Junction 'community'. The City has a residential population of only just over 4,000, the majority living in the Barbican centre on the northern edge of the City - well away from the development site. The ward in which the redevelopment was proposed had only a handful of residents: primarily live-in caretakers, the Lord Mayor and his staff and the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow himself. The consultation provided crucial proof that the non-residential users of Bank Junction (retailers, shoppers, City workers, tourists) were concerned about the site. It provided the basis for transforming the 'national set piece' of Bank Junction into the 'cherished local scene' which is protected under Conservation Area legislation.

The role of the Rector in developing and articulating this colourful heroic saga should not be underestimated. Like many of those involved in the No. 1 Poultry case, the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow is far from ordinary. He is not the 'average' Rector serving his parish in the most rudimentary and obligatory fashion. He has initiated seasons of lunch-time classical music concerts and lunch-time 'dialogues' in which he has informal, public 'chats' with people like the the Archbishop of Durham or the journalist Simon Jenkins. He has opened a vegetarian restaurant in the crypt. Stock has transformed St. Mary-le-Bow into a cultural, intellectual and culinary centre in the City. His ministry is characterized by its broadness and his participation in the CARE campaign is consistent with this. His initial involvement was partly seen as a way to get to know his new City parish which had no local residents, no schools, none of the usual channels through which a parish priest operates outside of the confines of the church. In response to a letter congratulating Stock on his efforts in leading the CARE campaign, Stock declared:

It has been an extremely interesting exercise in relating the local community to the Church, at least in the sense of the Rector showing some interest in the people who work in his parish. It is extremely difficult to know how to go about showing any kind of local concern when you cannot visit and there are no schools, etc. (Letter Victor Stock, CARE to Eve, 21/7/87).

In the absence of a 'typical local community', CARE has actively invented one based around those who used the site and most specifically those retailers whose livelihoods



were directly associated with the site and challenged by Palumbo's proposal to redevelop.

It is one of the ironies of the CARE saga that the Rector deferred ultimately to a more colourful and influential contemporary hero of the common person, HRH the Prince of Wales. In concluding CARE's public inquiry statement Stock remarked:

In the middle of the expert architectural advice, I offer the above information because I think it does underline what the Prince of Wales said about the difficulty or the inadequacy of the procedures that face ordinary people when they wish to obtain information (CARE Proof of Evidence 1988, 4).

In a letter to The Independent a similar line was taken, reaffirming:

...the Prince of Wales' point that the big men, the rich people, the politicians, they rule the roost. And Joe Public hasn't got a hope in hell (Letter Victor Stock CARE to The Independent, 16/5/88).

There was some indirect contact between the CARE campaign and the Prince of Wales. CARE twice wrote to the Prince's Private Secretary informing him of their progress in opposing the Palumbo scheme and urging the Prince to speak out against the scheme. In writing, CARE pointed out:

We feel this is very much a David and Goliath situation. The shopkeepers, the ordinary public, the parish priest, the conservationists against the very wealthy and the very powerful (Letter Victor Stock CARE to John Riddell, Private Secretary to HRH Prince of Wales, 11/6/87).

The response of the Prince of Wales was moderate but taken as encouragement. CARE were reminded that the Prince could not intervene in such issues, but that he:

...is of course very interested in what goes on. He particularly asked me to thank you for the trouble you have taken (Letter John Riddell, Private Secretary to HRH Prince of Wales, to CARE, 12/6/87).

The Prince was seen as a natural ally by the CARE group and this moderate (possibly pro forma) response was widely cited by the Campaign thereafter as the Prince's vote of support. In a letter to The Independent which responded to the accusation that CARE was 'a ragged army of meddling priests and art historians' the group referred to the Prince's letter and asserted: 'The Prince of Wales let us know the other day he was grateful for our care' (Letter CARE to The Independent, 26/6/87). In a CARE brochure summarizing the main events of the campaign, the Prince's controversial description of



the No. 1 Poultry scheme as 'an old 1930s wireless' (BBC Television Visions of Britain, 28/10/88) was cited as yet more powerful proof of the correctness of their case.<sup>1</sup>

The Prince of Wales has consistently articulated a concern for the 'common person', asserting that his views are those of the ordinary person and appointing himself as their advocate. In the Prince's Mansion House Speech (1/12/87), where he made specific mention of the City and St. Paul's, he claimed his role as advocate for the 'common person':

...it is not just me who is complaining-countless people are appalled by what has happened to their capital city, but feel totally powerless to do anything about it (HRH the Prince of Wales in Jencks 1988, 47).

The Prince, like CARE, takes the guise of the 'non-expert':

We, poor mortals, are forced to live in the shadow of their [planners'] achievements...large number of us in this country are fed up with being talked down to and dictated to by the existing planning, architectural and development establishment (HRH the Prince of Wales in Jencks 1988, 48).

The Prince of Wales fights the same battle as CARE (Figure 7.1.). It is not just a battle about St. Paul's which was the concern of the Mansion House speech or about No. 1 Poultry, it is a battle about the democratic process. Nowhere is this more clearly articulated than in the Prince's book, Visions of Britain which accompanied his television programme and Victoria and Albert Exhibition. As in the CARE case, the Prince's architectural polemic is framed as deferentially indigenous, bowing to the natural and organic character of Britain. His ten commandments of architectural design are 'pieces of folklore' (HRH Prince of Wales 1989, 15). The Prince's views are not 'expert': they are views which are framed as having a natural wisdom, springing from the land. They are, at once, both national and local in their reverberations. The defence of local character and community acknowledges the rights of ordinary places and people but, in sum, they provide the basis for a uniquely British scene and nation.

One of the Prince's ten 'pieces of folklore' deals specifically with the 'community' (HRH Prince of Wales 1989, 96-97). It advocates community participation 'from the bottom

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<sup>1</sup>This statement by the Prince came just prior to the No. 1 Poultry public inquiry as was widely condemned by Palumbo supporters as an unconstitutional interference in the planning procedures. So controversial were the Prince's remarks that the Inspector at the Inquiry declared that what the Prince had to say bore no relevance to this case and that it was not admissible as evidence.



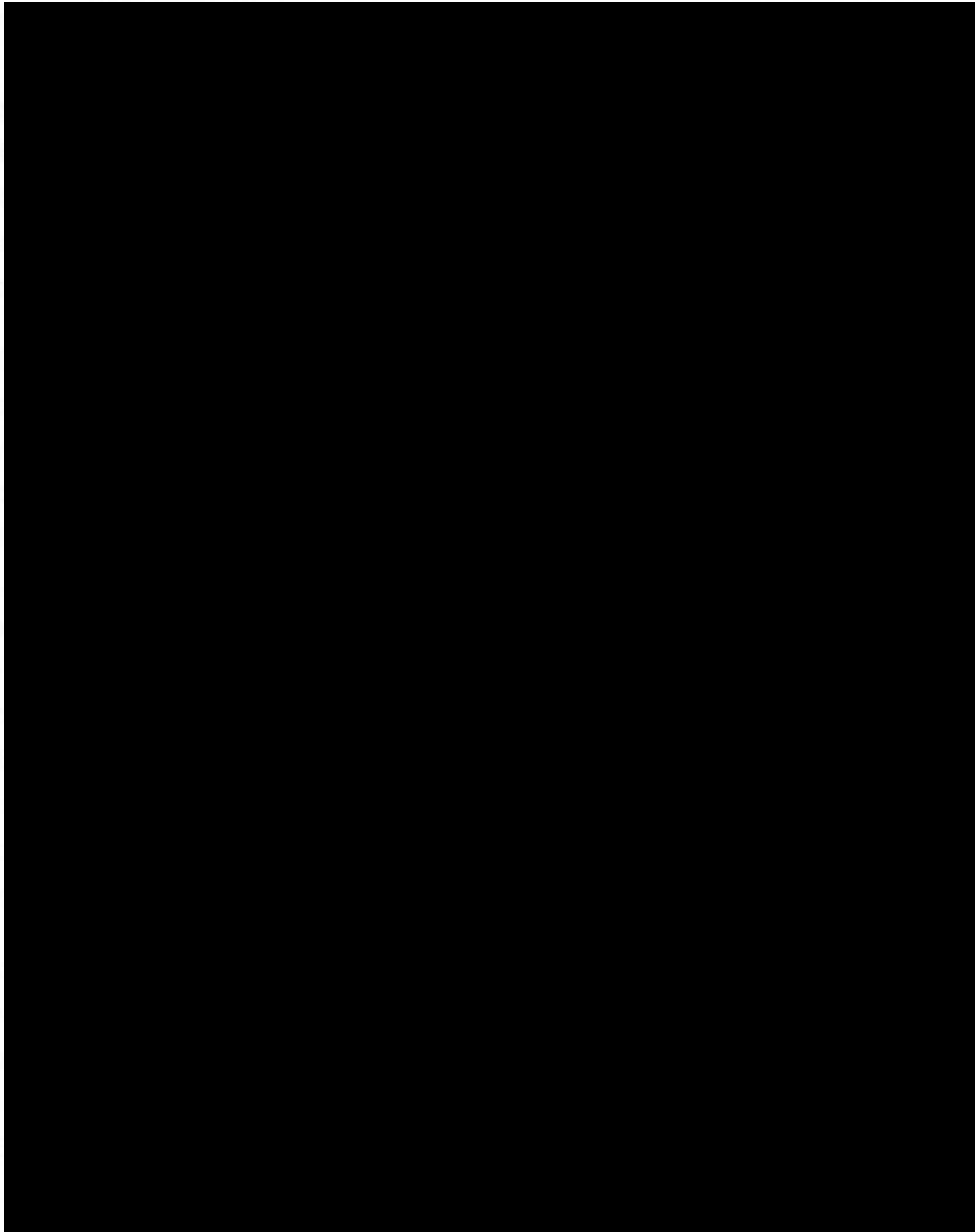


FIGURE 7.1. THE HERO OF THE HEROIC CARE CAMPAIGN.

SOURCE: Weekend Guardian 1989.



up' in planning and urban design. It recommends a movement away from zoning towards mixed uses more redolent of pre-war British communities or the village. It privileges 'local' knowledge as opposed to 'expert' knowledge and concludes that 'planning and architecture are too important to be left to the professionals'. An examination of the other nine pieces of folklore makes it clear that this empowering of local knowledge and the views of the 'common person' is encased within a rigid design aesthetic. The design aesthetic is primarily classical but also defers to other existing (non-modernist) forms. As was shown in Chapter 5, existing Indigenous architecture can, in fact, serve to represent social constructs which are contrary to the notion of democratic right. The Prince has yet to reconcile his advocacy of planning democracy with his advocacy of architectural and social hierarchy.

The CARE narrative was rooted in the depiction of powerless and marginalized local interests being led to planning salvation by priestly and princely acts of valour. But who really were the 'locals' of the CARE saga? A closer examination of CARE revealed a group in which 'local' interests joined with a number of non-local and 'expert' interests. Local interests participating in CARE and regularly attending meetings were the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, retailers who operated from the site or were affiliated with the City of London Retail Traders Association (CLRTA), and the London Heritage Society. Such interests were clearly evoked by the CARE narrative. Not so clear was the participation of the conservation lobby group SAVE Britain's Heritage.<sup>2</sup> Of the 16 CARE meetings for which attendance details were available, the most regular and well represented participants were the City retailers and SAVE. Under the leadership of the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, they constituted the prime interest groups to find a voice through the CARE campaign.

The conservationists participating in CARE could hardly be depicted as 'powerless' or 'ordinary'. They could all trace lineage to wealthy English families. Jennifer Freeman had previously worked in the City's financial sector, as had her husband. He has since moved on to become the Tory MP for Kettering. Sophie Andrea, secretary of the SAVE group, was from one of the established City financial dynastic families. A third SAVE participant was from a family of Bond Street jewellers. All had a full-time and, at one point or another, voluntary commitment to conservation and some had supported their participation by way of private incomes. Furthermore, each of the SAVE participants in the CARE group were conservation 'experts'. They have published

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<sup>2</sup>Jennifer Freeman, a force behind *Save The City* (1976) and a SAVE committee member participated in CARE, partly as a SAVE representative and partly as a representative of the London Advisory Committee.



widely (and on the City in particular through the Save The City report), they sit on a variety of advisory committees (such as English Heritage's London Advisory Committee), and have been trained in architectural history. All of these interests presented their own evidence at the inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Their cases emphasized the relationship between conservation of the built environment and protecting local livelihoods, as represented through CARE.

The interests associated with CARE could have chosen to have their case publicly represented by the 'expert guerillas' of SAVE and Freeman (Hamnett 1975). Alternatively the retailers could have engaged the services of a professional advocacy planner (Davidoff 1965; Peattie 1968). Rather CARE chose to present its interests as a complimentary but locally-based adjunct to the SAVE/Freeman cases. Although there was much consultation and co-ordination of strategy and argument, CARE always retained its autonomous, non-expert public image. The framing of their case against the Poultry redevelopment in an heroic narrative added greatly to an indigenous and authentic local image. Conservation lobbyists like SAVE and Freeman, while having the skills and resources to speak as 'experts', similarly found that the presence of a local group which advocated refurbishment provided an important source of verification for their own conservation/community case.

The CARE populist narrative of giving voice to local interests is highly compatible with the way in which SAVE has sought to reshape the conservation agenda more generally around the theme of popular rights and the common aesthetic (see Chapter 4). Apparently apolitical, this populist ideology has traces of both English Liberalism and the New Right (Colls 1986; Potts 1981). The CARE/SAVE coalition was deeply rooted in these political traditions.<sup>4</sup> The Chair of CARE, some of the more vocal retailers and the SAVE participants were politically committed to liberalism (primarily SDP) and saw the No. 1 Poultry case as a fight against 'that nasty Thatcherite world' (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88). Other influential members were very much part of that Thatcherite world, with one SAVE participant being married to a Tory MP. What might ultimately be divergent political stances found a degree of compatibility in their commitment to a seemingly 'apolitical' conservation agenda refracted through the social construct of community (Cater and Jones 1989, 182; Seabrook 1984). Conservation and community provided the basis for a deeply conservative and

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<sup>3</sup>The conservation interests affiliated with CARE and who presented separate evidence at the inquiry were Sophie Andrea and Jennifer Freeman of SAVE and the London Advisory Committee. Freeman presented evidence as a private interest, despite her obvious and acknowledged links with conservation amenity and advisory groups.

<sup>4</sup>Liberal/ Conservative politics have variously dominated the political ilk of the City more generally (Harris and Thane 1984).



aesthetically, non-modernist version of the ideal of 'freedom' (free trade, free speech) so central to Liberal/Conservative political ideology. The 'freedom' embraced by this ideology extended only so far as it remained compatible with and did not threaten, indigenous/local-based values and aesthetics. It certainly did not extend to 'freedom' for Palumbo to redevelop Bank Junction.

Despite political underpinnings and alliances, the CARE/SAVE coalition always avoided publicly articulating their case in party-political terms. The heroic narrative was crucial in rendering their case apolitical. It set their position in a 'folk' rendition which adulates and defers to the 'organic' community. Samuel (1981a, 27) refers to this as 'democratic antiquarianism' and notes that within it, the forces of 'small' capitalism, such as represented by the retailers, are seen to be fundamentally benevolent (see Knox 1982a, 198).

### 7.3. Corner Stores and Conservation: The village high street

The CARE case against the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment was based partly around issues of townscape and conservation and partly around the impact the redevelopment would have on local retailers. In this section, I explore the involvement of the retailers in the CARE and begin to unravel the basis of the association between local retailers, the parish Rector and conservation interests.

In CARE's case against redevelopment, the plight of retailing activity on the site became the plight of the 'ordinary person'. In the absence of a more usual residential population, those who used the site and the area in other ways became a substitute 'community'. In Chapter 5, Bank Junction was variously depicted as a symbolic site which was central to the traditional civic and financial City. The CARE group asserted an alternate symbolic value for the site which was not only based around the buildings but also was generated through the particular retail use of the existing buildings. CARE presented Bank Junction as a traditional retail centre of the City. The lineage of retailing on the site was stressed in public statements :

This area has a history of Shopkeepers going back 1000 years, and the need of their presence is not diminished today (CARE press release, 17/6/87).

The retail use of the area was imparted with a rooted, redemptive capacity that counteracted the dynamic and fast changing City:

...in such a frantic City small shops and catering facilities speak of the human scale and keep our feet on the ground (Letter Victor Stock CARE to ET, 9/4/87).



The Mappin and Webb building which is so central to the conservation case, is described by the CARE group as the City's 'corner shop' (CARE The Threat Remains Exhibition, St. Mary -le-Bow, April/May 1988). Certainly the type of glistening merchandise sold by the store conforms with popular images of the City gentleman's shopping list! In the same exhibition, the existing retail units were compared with the village High Street and the Market Square in their liveliness and variety. CARE argued that it was 'deeply concerned that the City should be able to continue to conduct its business in human scale buildings' (Letter Victor Stock CARE to London Evening Standard, 9/4/87).

The celebration of the smaller 'human scale' City, symbolized by retailing activity on the site, resonates with a nostalgia for past City patterns and practices which were based around familial structures and face- to-face practices. It reiterates the perception that the City has moved away from its old, more intimate social and business practices as outlined in Chapter 5. The small shops and human scale of the retailing activity were seen as an activity which kept the ever-internationalizing and outward-facing City somehow rooted in a more domestic scene. The retailing activity was seen to locate and localize the City in an image which was counter to the reality of an increasingly global City. This was not simply a generalized nostalgia for past days or a more immediate concern for the fate of retail units located on the redevelopment site (although both of these factors came into play). The City retailers and particularly the independent retailers represented through CARE, have been facing challenges which result from transformations to retailing practices more generally.

Cheapside/Poultry which borders the northern edge of the development site is one of four retailing centres in the City of London; the others are Leadenhall Market, Moorgate and Liverpool St/Bishopsgate. The existing buildings on the No. 1 Poultry site have 22 retailing units covering 66,447 square feet. Of this, just over a third (24,172 square feet) has ground floor pedestrian access, the prime retailing location. The majority of existing retail units are occupied by small independent retailers and caterers. Some have the Poultry unit as their only retail outlet while others have one or two additional City outlets. The high proportion of small independent retailers here is incongruent with the retail character of the rest of Cheapside/Poultry where retailing is dominated by High Street multiples.

The existing retailers have operated out of these premises for varying periods. Mappin and Webb, who occupy the controversial corner unit which faces into the Junction, have traded from those premises since 1872. Other retailers are operating from leases which vary between 42 years, 10 years or less. Although the retail units are in a prime



location, most have 'benefitted' from relatively low rentals caused by blight during the 20 years or so of redevelopment speculation. Since 1985, the buildings on the site have been under scaffolding which has seriously impaired their attractiveness. The number of small businesses operating from the upper levels of the buildings has slowly diminished since the development proposals began to take shape. A maintenance 'refurbishment' undertaken by Palumbo between 1972 and 1976 essentially gutted most of the upper sections of the buildings. In 1973, some 70 small businesses occupied premises on the appeal site, but by the time of the No. 1 Poultry inquiry this had been reduced to 20 (Freeman Proof of Evidence 1988, 14-17). Retail unit rentals on the site vary but one retailer on a 10 year lease pays only £22,000 p.a. or £40/square foot. The current rentals for premium retail space along other sections of Cheapside average £100/square foot (Interview Retailer, CARE/CLRTA, 27/6/89). Premium retail centres in other parts of the City can demand equally high rentals. An average sized retail unit in Leadenhall Court can fetch an annual rental of £75,000.

The Palumbo scheme proposed the provision of 8 ground floor retail units (12,497 square feet) and up to 27 small concourse units (13,871 square feet). The majority of concourse units would be taken up as multiple units and would not provide 27 separate retail outlets. In total, the Palumbo scheme would provide 26,368 square feet of retail space, less than half currently provided in the existing buildings. The high quality, well serviced units proposed in the Palumbo scheme would fetch current average rentals and beyond (£100+/ square foot p.a.)

Palumbo offered all retailers in the existing buildings the opportunity to take up premises in the new development. The majority declined the offer. Most retailers currently on the site, and particularly the independent retailers, face relocation if the Palumbo scheme proceeds. Only three existing businesses elected to take up premises in the proposed scheme: a Wm. Younger's public house (The Green Man) the confectioners, Lessiters, and the silversmiths/jewellers, Mappin and Webb. The two retailers to take up the option of relocating in the proposed development are both part of High Street chains. Mappin and Webb, despite their building being at the hub of much of the conservation case against redevelopment, have been vocal in their support of Palumbo. Mappin and Webb represent the type of retailing outlet that Palumbo seeks to attract to his 'high quality specialist shopping centre' (Hillier Parker Proof of Evidence 1988, 12).

Opposition to the No. 1 Poultry proposal came primarily from a small number of independent retailers on the site and most notably those with a close affiliation with the City of London Retail Traders Association (CLRTA). This organization has long acted



on behalf of independent retail interests in the City. It would be convenient to explain the independent retailers' objections to the proposed redevelopment solely on the grounds of the prospect of increased rents or forced relocation. This economic concern was a major factor in their opposition. However, the retailers' opposition was also tied to more general concerns relating to the plight of independent retailers. It is a concern that has seen an interdependence develop between the CLRTA and the conservation agenda.

The CLRTA was originally established in 1917 to assist City retailers with war-time retailing regulations. By the 1970s, this initial role had given way to a new function: acting as a pressure group to ensure the maintenance and promotion of independent retailing in the City. These activities have faced a number of pressures and transformations since the 1970s. According to Corporation of London figures, retailing units and areas have been on the increase in the City. In the three years preceding the No. 1 Poultry inquiry (1983-1986), retailing units in the City increased from 1,412 (321,495 square metres) to 1,691 (447,200 square metres). Much of this increase is associated with new development in and around Broadgate/Liverpool St. (Corporation of London 1986b). Although there has been an overall increase, evidence suggests that traditional retail units are on the decline. In particular, retail space is increasingly being taken up by quasi-retail and non-retail use, such as building societies, employment agencies and travel agents. As elsewhere in Britain, there has been a constant replacement of independent retailers by large High Street chains operating from multiple unit retail spaces. A CLRTA (1986) report has shown that between 1970 and 1985 independent retail units had declined from 989 to 688.

In the 1970s, the CLRTA negotiated the right to be consulted by the Corporation whenever a change of use application was considered by the Corporation Planning Committee. The CLRTA established a special Change of Use Committee to deal with this matter, although its views are only advisory and the CLRTA have had consistently to remind Corporation officials to send change of use details for its consideration (Interview Frank Rendell, Former Chair CLRTA and Corporation CAAC, 21/6/89). The CLRTA concern is rooted not only in the protection of the financial interests of the independent retailers but also in a culture of traditional retailing in the City in which the independent retailer once played an important role. The CLRTA is dominated by small family-based retailers involved in City retailing for generations. The retailers opposition to the Poultry scheme must be set within this broader context. The proposal became an arena where the retailers could voice concern over these more general trends, in which developments like Palumbo's were complicit.



The former Chair of the CLRTA recollects how his family's menswear store quite literally 'served' the cult of the gentleman of the financial City and the City as Heart of the Empire:

...we did a high class business. Service was very important in our business. With a lot of our customers we did not see them, just their valets would come in and order for them. Things are all so altered today. We had even gained business from European Royalty. They would come over here to the City on business, see a tie they liked, and become customers. It is a great pity. The firm which took my business over, they went to the States and expected everyone to flock to them but that didn't happen. We had one customer, a relative of Oliver Reid Holmes, and the only time we would see him was on a Sunday at the Savoy. Each year we would see him at the Savoy and he would order 50 garments, pyjamas and everything. Certain members of Lloyds' brokers were customers. One man from Sydney would bring over empty trunks. In those days in the colonies clothes were not what they could be and we would fill his trunks...There is a change of mood now in the City, especially for retail shops (Interview Frank Rendell, Former Chair CLRTA and Corporation CAAC, 21/6/89).

One retailer saw his family's retail service to the City in confections as akin to war-time service to the nation:

...our family had a shop in Bow Lane opposite the Watling Public House from 1911 to 1972 when it was redeveloped. Our company formed in 1964 was known as Bow Bells Confectioners Co. Ltd...My father served in the 1914-18 War, and I served for 6 years in the Army. My late brother lost an eye when badly injured when Fire Watching in Cannon Street, and in Highbury our own home was razed to the ground...So you will appreciate our family and relatives, now retired, who served the City of London, still have a deep feeling for it (Letter Retailer to Victor Stock, CARE, 4/3/87).

Other independent retailers involved in CARE reminisced about the power the independent retailers once had in the Corporation:

... at one time, twenty, thirty and forty years ago...the independent shopkeeper was meaningful, the big doyen of City businessmen. Charles Collett, Lord Mayor! You know, his father was a shirtmaker in the City of London...historically a number of the City traders went through office in the City. To me though now they are less and less important at the Corporation and totally irrelevant to the running of the place (Interview Retailer 1, CLRTA/CARE, 27/6/89).



Although one of the better known retailing families had one of its members take up the highest office of the Corporation, this was not seen as reflecting the current status of independent retailers in the City. The retailer's voice in the City's government has slowly been eroded not least because once a retailer became a Limited Company it relinquished its right to vote in Corporation elections. This loss of a voice in local government has not been helped by the increase in High Street multiples in City retailing:

The major retailers are a miserable lot. They are pleased to come to us [CLRTA] for help, but do not join us....Austin Reid was a founding member, but is not a member now. None of the big people are members or supporters, like Next....the managers they put into these shops they don't care less. Next has five shops in Cheapside alone and individual retailers are becoming fewer and fewer (Interview Frank Rendell, Former Chair CLRTA and Corporation CAAC, 21/6/89).

The retailers are nostalgic for a time when they were not only economically more secure, but also socially, culturally and politically more secure within the City: a time when they had a voice in local government, a time when they served the City gentlemen, and served them well.

Faced with diminishing power in the City the independent retailers, through the CLRTA, have sought other channels through which to have their interests recognized. One channel was opened up by the growing interest in conservation in the City and the adoption of Conservation Area policy by the Corporation of London. The CLRTA were quick to tie their interests to the emergent conservation interests during the 1970s. When the Corporation established its Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, the CLRTA was one of the many local interests invited to have a representative on the Committee. The CLRTA not only took up this offer to have representation but its Chairperson became firstly Vice Chair and then Chair of the CAAC. In the context of a diminishing retail voice in the mainstream Corporation decision-making committees, the CAAC became an important alternate channel for retailer views. Most significantly, the CAAC advised the Planning Committee on change of use applications in Conservation Areas. Through the CAAC, the CLRTA were able consistently to recommend that retail space not be lost to other uses.

The retailers in the City of London saw that the conservation of the built environment was compatible with their own interests but it would be inaccurate to imply that the retailers simply hopped onto a conservation bandwagon in pursuit of their own interests. For many, the conservation arguments were deeply felt and personally



expressed outside the context of the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment. One retailer described himself as being 'deeply involved in conservation'. He had been a member of the National Trust for over thirty years and been involved in a number of conservation 'battles' in his own neighbourhood of Hampstead. On his most recent holiday he and his wife had managed to 'do 17 National Trust properties in 18 days' (Interview Retailer 1, CLRTA/CARE, 27/6/89). When this retailer first moved into the Poultry site he was quick to acknowledge the historical importance of the building:

...my wife and I were staring up at the terra-cottas above the shop, those beautiful terra-cottas...[we] dug out the history of them, who made them and why...so to say we have got nothing but a financial interest in opposing Palumbo is wrong, it is both (Interview Retailer 1, CLRTA/CARE, 27/6/89).

While independent retailers have found a voice through conservation so too have conservation interests increasingly embraced economic activities like retailing as a complimentary adjunct to the conservation agenda. As Chapter 4 demonstrated, groups like SAVE Britain's Heritage, so closely involved with the CARE campaign and the No. 1 Poultry case, have been instrumental in recasting conservation of the historic built environment not simply as an antiquarian exercise but as a economically viable alternative to new development. SAVE's second report, Conservation and Jobs (1976) outlined in detail the mutually beneficial relationship between conservation and small businesses. Conservation was recast by SAVE: 'not as an obstacle to regeneration...but as an agent and catalyst' (Hanna and Binney 1983, 1). This approach has opened the way for a symbiotic relationship between independent retailing and conservation. Small retail units, like those run by independents, are well suited to refurbished historic buildings. They are also seen as contributing to the aesthetics of the streetscape, adding vitality and visual variety. This concept came to the City by way of the Save the City report (1976, xiv) which recommended:

The wide variety of small shops...contributes to the character and interest of the City. Everything possible should be done to encourage small shops in the parts of the City where they have traditionally been located.

This view of small retail units as a positive element of conservation in the City is reiterated in the 1986 City Plan. Environmental Policies 8 and 18 both refer to the protection of shop fronts at street level. Elsewhere, Shopping Policies 1 and 4 explicitly call for the 'protection' of existing retail space and the encouragement of new space at pedestrian level (Corporation of London 1986a). The close association between CARE and SAVE Britain's Heritage evident in the No. 1 Poultry case, is an example of the



mutually beneficial relationship between independent retailers and conservation interests.

Behind the scenes, SAVE and CARE campaigned together but SAVE's case against the Poultry redevelopment was presented independently in the public inquiry. SAVE's case reiterated the CARE position through a language and strategy of opposition which was decidedly more 'professional' in tone and accorded more with the discourse of the 'experts'. Their 'expert' case reinforced and elaborated both the narrative of the ordinary person and the case for protecting the interests of the independent retailers. The most explicit example of SAVE's role as counter 'experts' (and developers) was its commissioning of an alternate development scheme based on refurbishment. This scheme was commissioned from Terry Farrell in response to the Mansion House proposal and involved careful restoration and imaginative architectural additions to the existing Victorian buildings. Farrell called this his 'conservation plus' approach to design (Figure 7.2.). In the No. 1 Poultry inquiry, the Farrell scheme was developed further by English Heritage who presented a feasible and fully costed refurbishment scheme as an important part of their case. The economic viability of the refurbishment was primarily dependent on small-scale, specialty retailing and the cause of CARE's retailers provided a vocal and local proof of the need to promote developments which provided for such retail space in the City.

In the SAVE case, the retailers were the local manifestation of the 'ordinary people' whose views are so often disregarded in the development process. They became the 'community' to be protected. The retailers on the site added a diversity of uses in a part of London dominated by Finance. SAVE described the shops as 'friendly and informal' and with 'an intricate interest at ground level' which was a counter to the surrounding 'public buildings and banks-which are set apart from the life of the street'. The independent retail activity on the site was seen as an example of 'a survival of the traditional...mix of uses' (SAVE Proof of Evidence 1988, 6-7). The retail use on the current site captures a past way of life which is more humane, friendlier, domestic. It is the 'High Street' of the City:

The site...houses a wide variety of businesses...which contribute to the character of this part of the City...The shop units are mostly small and of a traditional character, fronting directly on to the streets and providing a varied scene at street level...giving the whole site a friendly and informal quality. It is human in scale (SAVE Proof of Evidence 1988, 6).

The architectural vitality and variety is enhanced aesthetically by the small retailing units. Thus the source of interdependence between the CARE and SAVE group was







not simply an economic sympathy but an aesthetic sympathy. The aesthetic is one which is redolent not of the grand statements of the powerful City but of the village High Street.

The association between SAVE (as a representative of conservation interests) and CARE (as a representative of retailing interests) reflects then an association which has been emergent in the changing City since the 1970s. Increasingly, the interests of small independent retailers have complemented the conservation lobby and vice versa. These two seemingly divergent interests have been able to form a relationship which allows the retailers to have their views regarding change of use couched within conservation discourse and procedure and for the conservation interests to add an economic-based legitimation to their case to preserve the historic built environment in designated conservation areas. As will be elaborated in the following sections, SAVE tied the use of the area by small retail units to a particular and complimentary urban aesthetic that stressed the City as village and which provided room for the celebration of the two prime local interests represented through CARE: the church and the shopping street.

The retailers and the conservationists joined together in the City because their immediate objectives were mutually beneficial. But they also shared other more deeply entrenched common beliefs. Among these was a commitment to 'heritage' but also a commitment to liberal/New Right notions of freedom of speech and trade. These were part of a common person populism in the CARE narrative. As will be shown in the following examination of the townscape element of the CARE/SAVE argument, this freedom of speech and right of the common person were actually tied to a urban aesthetic which at one level celebrated these liberal/New Right notions of diversity and freedom, but on another level, was rigid in its commitment to the historic, inherited urban fabric as a source of this expression.

#### 7.4. Trading in Townscape: Retailing and conservation

CARE's case for the protection of local uses, the 'community of retailers' was framed within a particular urban aesthetic much influenced by and according with the conservation views of SAVE Britain's Heritage. The similarity of CARE and SAVE's townscape/conservation views attested to a unified or shared vision and was expressed by way of the close working relationship between these interests through CARE. As shown, SAVE representatives regularly attended CARE meetings. CARE's campaign strategy, although greatly coloured by the personality of the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, held much in common with the high profile press campaigns which are a



hallmark of SAVE's conservation action (see Chapter 4). SAVE representatives advised CARE regularly on campaign strategies and the conservation issues which were pertinent to the controversy. When the Secretary of State found in favour of the Palumbo scheme proceeding after the No. 1 Poultry public inquiry, it was with the considerable financial support of the retailers on the site that SAVE made its successful appeal against this decision in the Court of Appeal (see Appendix 5.1.).

The townscape/conservation argument of CARE and SAVE used a similar language and logic to that of the Corporation of London and celebrated the same townscape qualities such as the grand character of the Bank Junction and the deference of the Victorian buildings to St. Paul's and Mansion House. But the CARE/SAVE townscape argument focused more closely on the intrinsic qualities of the existing buildings on the development site. These intrinsic qualities accorded with the broader CARE/SAVE narrative of the democratic rights of the 'ordinary person' and their desire to elaborate this by demonstrating the existence of a local-based attachment to Bank Junction grounded in a 'community' which used and appreciated the site in its existing state. It is a diminutive, domestic, diverse but democratic Bank Junction which is evoked by the CARE/SAVE defense, one that is expressed through the metaphor of the 'village' rather than the Heart of the Empire.

The close practical and ideological association between CARE and SAVE was particularly apparent in the exhibition CARE staged at St. Mary-le-Bow immediately prior to the No. 1 Poultry public inquiry (5 April to late May, 1988). The CARE exhibition was entitled 'The Threat Remains!', alerting people to the fact that, although the Mansion House Square scheme had been rejected, a second scheme was still 'threatening' the area. The exhibition relied greatly on views published by SAVE in two booklets issued to raise public awareness of the second Palumbo scheme: Give These Vigorous Victorian Buildings a Chance (1987) and Let Poultry Live Again! (1988). The exhibition also included sketches from an article by the Corporation witness (Roy Worskett) which had previously been published in the magazine Landscape (Worskett 1988).<sup>5</sup> These various sources provided the type of visual material needed for an exhibition but the reliance on this material also attests to a strong alliance in the thinking of CARE and SAVE. While CARE made much of their 'local', non-expert status, their rhetoric also became a vehicle for the dissemination of complimentary ideas advocated by the townscape experts.

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<sup>5</sup>Landscape was a new magazine established and edited by Marcus Binney, founder of SAVE. The use of this magazine by the Corporation witness further attests to the close association and collaboration between all the interests who opposed Palumbo. They may have mobilized differing imaginings of the City, but they were united in an opposition to the development.



The exhibition provided details on the history of the area and the 'unplanned evolution' of the existing townscape since medieval times. The lack of contrivance added to the rendition of the area as somehow organic and indigenous and was set as a counter to the highly planned, formal and 'foreign' Stirling proposal. The CARE exhibition did not disregard the grand character of the Bank Junction. It was acknowledged as 'classically imposing' and as the 'architectural epitome of civic importance'. As in the Corporation's townscape case, this grand scene was evoked through the visual image of Lund's 'Heart of the Empire' painting (see Figure 5.7.). Nor did the exhibition disregard the financial status of the City. It was acknowledged in the exhibition to be the 'financial and commercial centre of the world', the 'heart' of the City (The Threat Remains Exhibition, April/May 1988). This is the grand and powerful City evoked in the developer's case and by the Corporation in their opposition to the proposal.

The prime aim of the exhibition was to expose to the public who use the Bank Junction (workers and visitors alike) the alternative 'facts' to those propagated by Palumbo's team. The exhibition was based primarily on a direct, largely visual comparison of the Palumbo scheme and the existing buildings redeveloped through refurbishment. A photomontage of the Stirling building superimposed on the streetscene was matched against a photograph of the area showing the existing buildings (Figure 7.3.). The central visual panel of the exhibition was taken directly from the SAVE publication Let Poultry Live Again!. Under the rhetorical question 'What sort of creativity is that?' the panel selected particular architectural details of the existing Victorian buildings and compared them with what would replace them if the Stirling scheme was built. The Stirling scheme, shown in a smaller scale black and white line drawing, was depicted as a poor replacement for the vitality and intricacy of the existing buildings, illustrated by way of larger, full colour plate. Decorative terra-cotta panels depicting street pageants of the City were replaced by banded stonework and windows (Figure 7.4.). The hallmark Mappin and Webb corner was substituted with a keyhole shaped entry port. Quaint rows of Gothic windows atop a busy street scene crowded with shoppers, became a blank stone wall with one lone figure (Figure 7.5.). The message was clear: the living, vital scene will become lifeless.

The CARE/SAVE case against the Poultry redevelopment celebrated not only the functional variety provided by the retailers but also the visual variety and vitality of the existing buildings:

The Poultry frontages...display an attractive range of materials and colours-stone, pink brick, red brick, white brick, terra-cotta...they ...have the potential to form an exceptionally lively and colourful row of street fronts. This



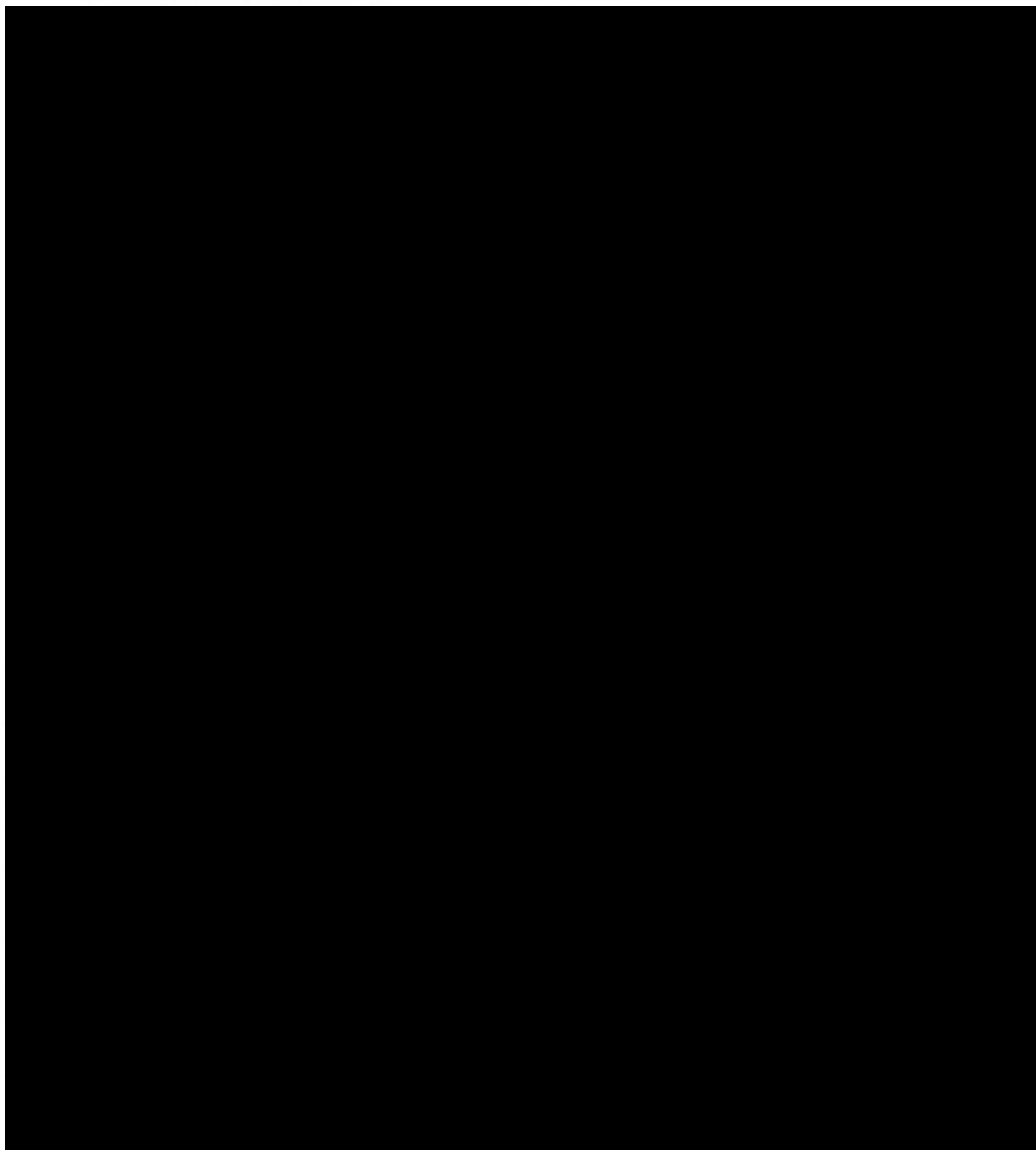


FIGURE 7.3. PHOTOMONTAGE OF NO 1 POULTRY

SOURCE: SAVE Britain's Heritage 1988 [Let Poultry Live Again!](#)



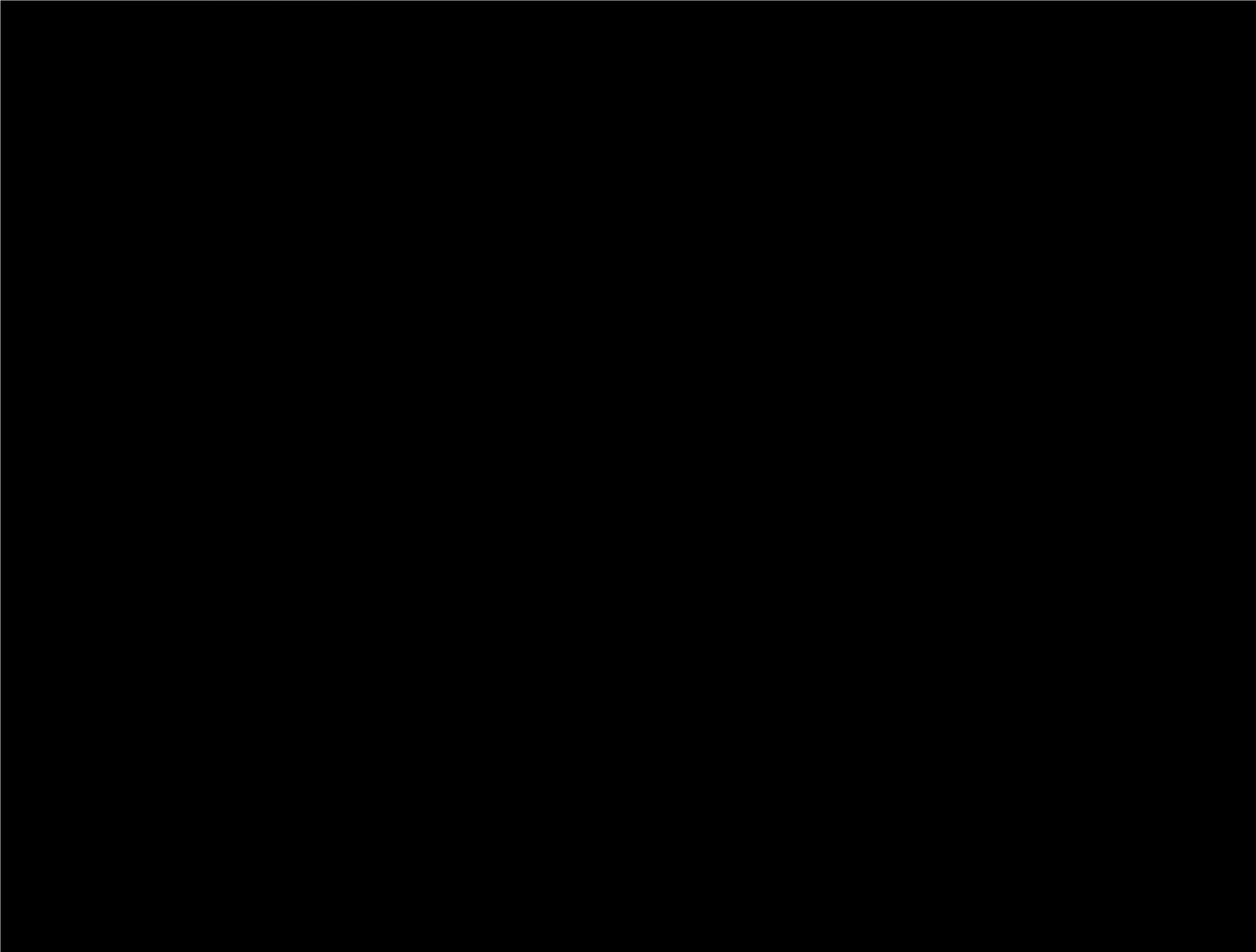


FIGURE 7.4. 'WHAT SORT OF CREATIVITY IS THAT?', SAVE/CARE PUBLICITY.

SOURCE: SAVE Britain's Heritage 1988 Let Poultry Live Again!



FIGURE 7.5. LIFE AND DEATH IN BANK JUNCTION AS DEPICTED BY CARE/SAVE PUBLICITY MATERIAL

SOURCE: SAVE Britain's Heritage 1988 Let Poultry Live Again!



variety of texture and colour is complimented by the changing widths of the street fronts from building to building (SAVE Proof of Evidence 1988, 5).

The diversity of style and variety celebrated in the existing Victorian buildings by SAVE/CARE speaks of a social order quite distinct from the one of hierarchical order underpinning the Corporation case. The buildings are celebrated by CARE and SAVE for being an example of group architecture in which a variety of styles are given expression in a cohesive unit, giving them 'Group Value' as described in established Conservation Area legislation.. This is an egalitarian and democratic group of buildings. Even the general cause of Victorian architecture became part of a battle for architectural equality and democratic right. SAVE argued that to ignore the value of the existing buildings was simply to give way to 'biases' and 'prejudices' against Victorian architecture. Thus, the CARE/SAVE struggle to have the more diminutive Victorian buildings saved in the context of more powerful architectural expressions itself became a metaphor for the narrative of the ordinary person which underpinned their entire opposition to the redevelopment.

Just as the Prince of Wales acts as advocate for an indigenous architectural aesthetic which seems to spring forth from the British soil, so too does SAVE emphasize the way in which the buildings on the site reflect an essential, peculiarly indigenous British aesthetic. In the public inquiry SAVE argued:

Unusual incidents of townscape such as these are the very essence of London's character. The beauty of our capital...lies not in the great set piece vistas along boulevards and avenues with great public buildings to close the views. It lies in the unexpected, in relatively modest clusters of buildings that often have a village quality about them (SAVE Proof of Evidence 1988, 5).

The CARE/SAVE case asserted that the indigenous architectural form of Britain (and England more particularly) is the village: with its diversity of styles and livelihoods, its smallness of scale, its High Street and its church.

In part, CARE/SAVE's celebration of the visual diversity of the buildings and the sidewalk draws upon the urban aesthetic of the North American writer Jane Jacobs. Early SAVE publications are explicit about the relationship between their approach to conservation and the urban prescription of Jacobs (1964) outlined in Death and Life of Great American Cities (SAVE 1976). Berman (1982, 316) notes the persistence of the modern 'romance' with urban vitality and variety as it is commonly expressed in the street and describes the street as the 'primary symbol of modern life'. He notes that Jacobs' invests the street with the capacity to redeem urban life from the worst



manifestations of rampant modernism such as the expressway or the pedestrian walkway in the sky. CARE/SAVE similarly invest the street with this redemptive capacity, a means by which 'life' can be protected and enhanced. But CARE/SAVE's celebration of Jacobs' famous 'dance of the street' has a decidedly indigenous choreography based around the bustle of shoppers in a far more economically viable, re-invented village of retailers.

The visual and functional variety and smaller scale of the existing Victorian buildings provides the basis for the symbolic transformation of the Heart of the Empire into the village scene. It is the village aesthetic which becomes the 'natural' home of the British community, both in its local manifestations and national imagination. But no village is complete, not even the City village, without its church spire. A second prime strand of the CARE/ SAVE townscape case was based around the protection of the view of St. Paul's dome and its visual relationship with the more local spire of St. Mary-le-Bow.

### 7.5. Bow Bells

CARE was the prime vehicle for church interests to voice their opposition to redevelopment. Not only was CARE chaired by the Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow but both the Dean of St. Paul's and the Surveyor of the Fabric of St. Paul's were active in the CARE campaign: speaking at press conferences and writing letters to the press and to the Corporation.

The arguments around the townscape issue of the view of St. Paul's paralleled closely those put forward by other conservation interests, including the Corporation of London. The focus was the glimpsed view from Cornhill and the interplay of the Mappin and Webb turret, the spire of St. Mary-le-Bow and the dome of St. Paul's. It was the way in which the CARE group framed this townscape position that distinguished it from other, more expert townscape arguments. In part, the CARE case called on the legitimacy of the expert evaluation of the view and the architectural merits of the ecclesiastical architecture:

Architectural historians believe that the spire of St. Mary-le-Bow is one of Christopher Wren's greatest achievements and since the Great Fire it has dominated the view from the Mansion House Circus looking up Cheapside to St. Paul's. (Letter Victor Stock, CARE to Daily Telegraph, 29/1/87).

Yet, the evaluation and the language of architecture was set alongside a more typical CARE rendition of the view which drew upon the perceptions of the 'ordinary person':



Every cockney will know how important Bow Bells are and how beautiful the spire from which those bells hang. We are deeply concerned that if Mr. Palumbo's plan to demolish the Mappin and Webb site should be accepted, this glorious view will be obscured. (Letter Victor Stock, CARE to Daily Telegraph, 29/1/87).

By drawing on the popular folk definition of a Cockney (see Samuel and Stedman Jones 1989) as someone born within earshot of the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow, CARE once again celebrated the local and non-expert importance of the Bank Junction area. Further, in this particular example, it was a traditionally more deprived and marginalized 'ordinary person' than could ever be generated by the City's indigenous population. The CARE group could claim neither Cockney lineage nor participation. Furthermore the East End evoked by CARE's rhetoric has more immediate concerns than the loss of a glimpsed view of a folk symbol which speaks of an East End culture of old rather than of the increasingly Bangladeshi East End of today.

The active participation of the Church added enormous legitimacy to the townscape case of the conservationists to retain and protect the visual dominance of the church buildings in the Cityscape. The church's townscape case was elaborated through a particular religious morality which emphasized the desirability of having a visual expression of the Church within the financial heartland of Britain. The Church case drew upon the City of Canaletto where the skyline was dominated, not by the NatWest tower or other statements of financial and commercial success, but by religion (Figure 7.6.):

When Canaletto painted London the distant view of St. Paul's rising over City buildings spiked with Wren's many spires gave the image of the capital at once coherent and memorable. Today the great image is lost and we have left a few protected views of the dome and chance sightings between buildings (Letter Surveyor of the Fabric of St. Paul's to The Times, 19/6/87).

In another letter to the Corporation the Dean of St. Paul's argued that the Poultry scheme would destroy the view of St. Paul's which:



...is central to the history and life of the City and that it has  
used since its earliest preservation in the time of Henry  
symbolize the City itself (John Deane to Sir Henry to Robert  
Rass, Planning Department - Corporation of London,  
5/8/87).

Perhaps it is not the continuing reinforcement of the Church in City life that demands the  
preservation of the glimpsed view, but the increasing loss of the church's authority  
both in functional and architectural terms.

But again these grander gestures and statements were supported by more humble  
practical expressions. A key element in C&G's development at that time was a  
renewal of the City's infrastructure. The City's infrastructure  
in the early 1980s was in a state of decay. The City's infrastructure  
was in a state of decay. The City's infrastructure was in a state of decay.

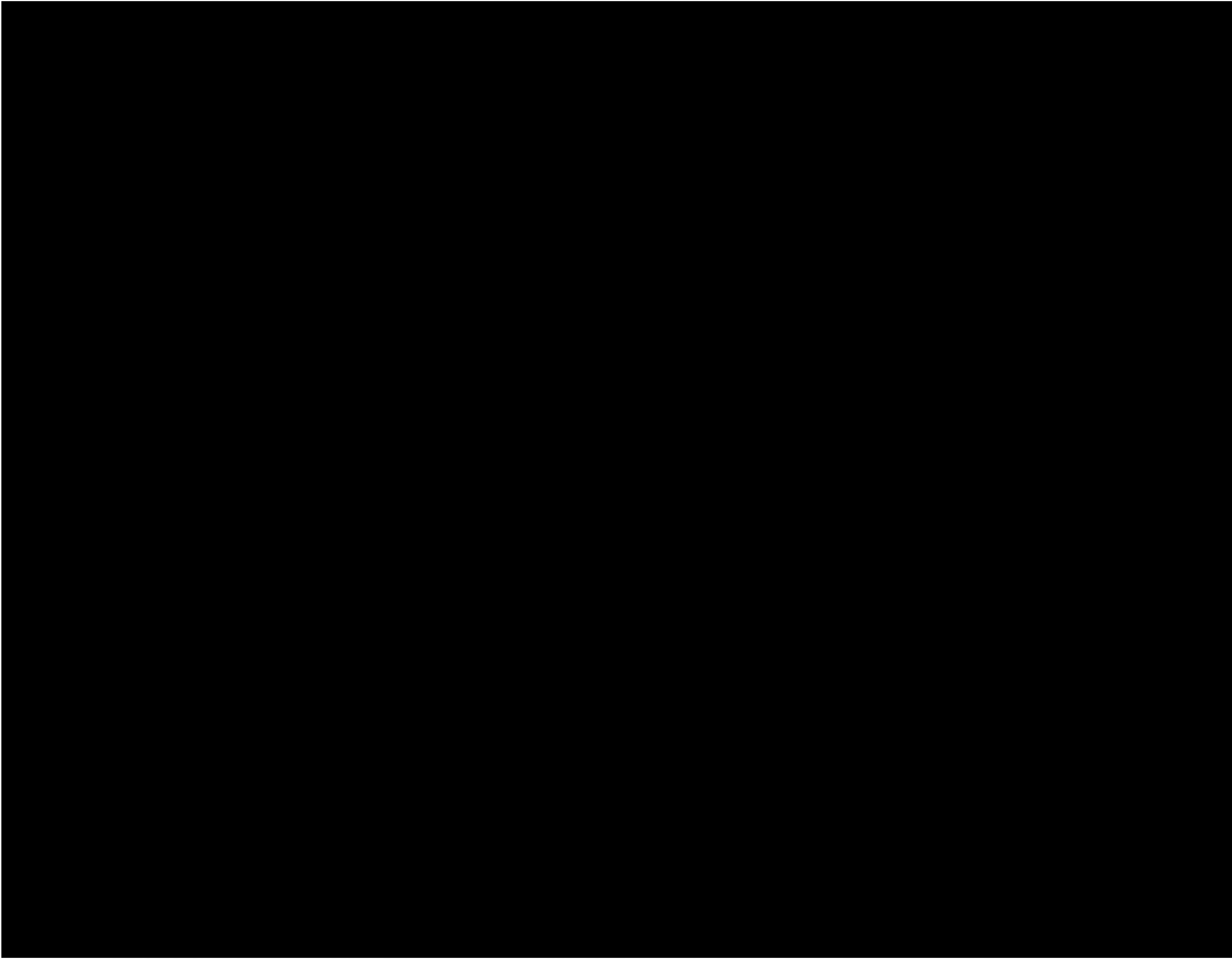


FIGURE 7.6. CANALETO'S RELIGIOUS CITY.  
SOURCE: HRH the Prince of Wales 1989 A Vision of Britain.



..is central to the history and life of the City and frequently used since its heroic preservation in the time of war to symbolize the City itself (Letter Dean of St. Paul's to Peter Rees, Planning Department Corporation of London, 5/6/87).

Perhaps it is not the continuing centralness of the church to City life that demands the preservation of the glimpsed view, but the increasing loss of the church's centrality both in functional and architectural terms.

But again these grander gestures and statements were supported by more humble, localized expressions. A key element in CARE's presentation of itself as an authentic indigenous voice of the City was to stress its localness. The CARE case sought legitimacy from the fact that it represented interests that were directly connected to the redevelopment site. The Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow is not simply any churchman, he is the Rector of the local parish church:

My other qualification for giving evidence in this Inquiry is that unlike the developer or any of the architectural witnesses I live in Cheapside. I wish more of the people in this argument were able to share my privilege for if they lived and worked here they would know something of the feeling of...its beauties (CARE Proof of Evidence 1988, 3).

Stock and the other ecclesiastics did not have an expert opinion about the churches: they lived and worked in these churches, they were truly 'local'. Stock's active involvement in CARE came directly out of his role as parish priest and his responsibility not just to the people of his parish but to the geographical unit:

And you see there is a very old, old deep thing here about the Anglican parish priest. The Anglican parish priest is a priest of a geographical area. It is not a congregation, it is an area. Some of the people in that area may come to his church, most of them won't. But he has some responsibility in law for the area, for the well being of the place. And that is my justification for being involved (Interview Victor Stock, CARE, 16/5/88).

The idea of the parish priest and the parish unit resonates with other meanings which evoke not the centre of the City financial and International capital but a different social and geographical world entirely, that of the rural, village scene with its church spire. This evocation of the parish played an important part in the conservation strand of the CARE case as it provided the foundation for the transformation of the Heart of the Empire into a village and established the village aesthetic as the 'natural' setting of the



English 'community'. The village transformation provided a more relevant and located counter to the new off-shore City. Through the village aesthetic 'local' interests could be expressed and preserved in the context of a City which is increasingly responding to global imperatives.

### 7.6. Conclusion

Through the case of CARE/SAVE the very same environment that was heralded as central to the traditional civic and financial City is re-imagined as an alternative and possibly more pervasive leitmotif of English identity, the village. The City village is evoked by way of a particular community of social and cultural practices: independent retailers, the street life of a shopping precinct, the parish. The associated urban forms of the street-facing shopfronts and the church spire (or dome in this case) reiterate this social world in the urban landscape. As such, this case represents a counter manifestation of reifying social and cultural values through conservation to that evidenced by the views of the Corporation and the developer.

The City village is defended through a narrative and rhetoric which reverberates with liberal rustic populism. The townscape concept of the experts is passed through the lens of the 'ordinary person' to carve from the grand Bank Junction the 'cherished local scene' which is enshrined in Conservation Area legislation. The townscape case of the experts gained legitimacy through its endorsement by local interests. Local interests benefited from engaging, domesticating, and claiming for their own the dominant language of the development discourse.

The village is presented as a symbol of vitality and variety, with an egalitarian pluralism in which all religions (Jewish and Anglican), all historic buildings styles (including the neglected Victorian commercial buildings) and all local interests (people of religion and of money and even the Cockney) co-exist in harmony. The 'Group Value' of the diverse buildings, as recognized in their Conservation Area designation, becomes a symbol of a harmonious but diverse social order. The CARE/SAVE case presents conservation as an apolitical concern of the 'ordinary person'. But this is underpinned by its own particular liberal/New Right politics. The village metaphor is critical in divesting the 'local' agenda of any traces of a radical or Left politics which is more readily associated with the 'community' politics of much of Inner London and which will be encountered in the final Chapter.



Wright (1986, 182) notes how in the popular imagination the village 'symbolizes a natural community which has sprung from the very soil of its landscape' with an 'unselfconsciously traditional way of life'. As this case has shown, the 'natural community' of the village is more often a construction of divergent, and possibly not even local, interests. Nairn (1981, 291) touches upon this process of invention when he observes that much of English national history is the creation of 'urban intellectuals invoking peasant virtues' in defence of the 'folk'. The mobilization of the 'village' metaphor in the particular context of urban transformation and renewal has been noted elsewhere (e.g. Bagguley et al. 1990; Choay 1986a, 1986b; Duncan and Duncan 1984). The distinctive feature of the evocation in this case is the very character of Bank Junction as a central City location. Here the village concept overlaps with alternate interpretations of the same urban landscape. Evoking the village produces a rural sub-text in this centrally urban scene, an example of the continuing persistence of the rural/urban convergence that Williams (1973) sees to be so distinctive a feature of twentieth century England.

The village metaphor may rest as an oppositional image to the City as the Heart of Empire or global Finance, but in the CARE/SAVE evocation it does not seek to subvert the functional status of the financial City. The shops that are a part of the village scene will serve the financial City, as they always have. The street scene will add life to and enhance the financial City. The village to be invented here in the heart of the City will assert an indigenous quality to help domesticate the international City. This is not a classic urban conflict of capital against community but 'big capital' against 'small capital' (Knox 1982a, 198), a battle between different sectors of the service class (Bagguley et al. 1990, 160).

The democratic pluralism embodied by the City village invented through the CARE/SAVE rhetoric is underscored by a number of contradictory currents. The populist liberalism through which the contemporary village is re-invented allows for the melting away of the rigid and far from democratic social and political structure of the feudal village (Wiener 1981, 51). Yet even the more democratic village of contemporary invention is underpinned by a certain nostalgia for, and deference to, old social orders. The retailers, for example, speak of democratic rights but hanker for the days when they were economically and socially secure in their service of the City gents. The conservationists may also speak of the rights of the ordinary person but most of them are hardly ordinary, being of the middle and upper classes and some



even tracing a lineage to the very City families once served by the retailers. These are contradictions which have added irony when the rhetoric of this conservation case, as with many others, rests on the 'ordinary people'. The village metaphor evoked in the City at once dismantles old feudal orders and reinstates residual elements of it. Thus in the City the idea of community, although encased in democratic rhetoric, actually works both ideologically and materially to reinforce traditional social patterns of hierarchy and to reproduce processes of capital accumulation. This is an entirely different idea of community to that mobilized in Spitalfields where, as the next chapter shows, hierarchy is replaced by solidarity and community acts in conflict with capital.

The CARE/SAVE opposition to the Palumbo scheme provides another nuance to the complex pervasiveness of conservation and heritage values in contemporary urban transformation. The coming together of retailers and conservationists by way of CARE highlights how conservation of the built environment has moved out of the sphere of antiquarian interest and become a dimension of urban discourse and action which can unify seemingly disparate interest groups. The basis of such unions may well be framed within, and legitimated by, the conservation ideology of community but it is increasingly tied to material concerns: be they the survival of independent retailers or ensuring the economic viability of a refurbishment scheme. Conservation is not simply an 'idea' which, at times, manifests itself in some form of political action, it is becoming deeply embedded in the fundamental material processes of urban transformation, primarily through the service sector (Thrift 1988).



## CHAPTER 8: IMAGINING COMMUNITY IN SPITALFIELDS<sup>1</sup>

The zone was gradually defined, the labyrinth penetrated...Circling and doubling back, seeing the same sites from different angles, ferns breaking the stones, horses tethered on wastelots, convolvulus swallowing the walls, shadowed by tall tenements, chickens' feet in damp cardboard boxes, entrails of radio sets, slogans on the radio bridge, decayed synagogues, the flash and flutter, cardomon seeding, of the coming bazaar culture, the first whispers of a new Messiah.

Iain Sinclair, 1988, White Chappell: Scarlet Tracings.

In this final empirical chapter, I continue the exploration of the theme of Imagining Communities by returning to the Spitalfields case study. I examine the actions, ideology and rhetoric of a local group called the Campaign to Save Spitalfields From the Developer (hereafter the Campaign or CSSD). The Campaign opposed the relocation of the Spitalfields Market and the redevelopment of the site on the grounds of its impact, not on the built environment, but on the community.

The exploration of the theme of Imagining Communities in the case of the City (Chapter 7) revealed that 'community' is an ideological construct. The City case saw the construction of a community and its expression through the village metaphor in a context which in many ways defies conventional perceptions of community. In that example, the conservation agenda gained legitimacy by being refracted through the idea of a depoliticized community tracing links to liberal populism. In the City case, 'locals' and conservationists joined in a mutually beneficial coalition. In the following example of imagining the community in Spitalfields, the agenda of conservation of the built environment and the community agenda are set in tension.

As Chapter 6 revealed, the conservationists in Spitalfields colluded with developers in pursuit of a grand vision for the area. They sought to edify the historic built environment and, in so doing, enshrine a prosperous and 'cultured' aspect of Spitalfields' history. The actions of the Spitalfields Trust resulted in the creation of a new Spitalfields 'community' of artists, writers and educated professionals who revered (and at times re-

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<sup>1</sup>This analysis is based on my own field research and analysis. However, it shares much with the work of Woodward (in preparation) who conducted field research at the same time in Spitalfields. She also adopted the idea of 'imagined communities' in her study of local politics and housing. This caused numerous but not unarticulated difficulties in terms of maintaining and protecting the originality of our work. Once realizing the conceptual convergence of our approach to Spitalfields, in early 1989, we immediately discontinued discussing the details of our impressions and analytical approach (Jacobs and Woodward 1989).



enacted) the Georgian Spitalfields. This re-invented and re-enacted community is contrary to the idea of community which is mobilized by the Campaign in opposition to the Market redevelopment. The Campaign traces a different political lineage and evokes a vastly different Spitalfields to that retrieved by the Trust. This community is far more radical than thus far encountered and draws on different dimensions of Spitalfields' history. It is a radical community which is not only deeply oppositional to the processes of redevelopment but also in tension with conservation efforts in the area.

The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developer did not frame its views in the shared language of development and conservation: the language of urban design. Further, it mobilized a deeply challenging historicity to the processes of urban transformation encapsulated in the Market redevelopment and which drew on, or were legitimated by, reference to an architectural heritage aesthetic. As such this case also provides an insight into the negative consequences of the current hegemony of a particular configuration of 'heritage' values in urban discourse.

### 8.1. The Campaign to Save Spitalfields From the Developer

By November 1987, Tower Hamlets had completed its community consultation and produced a development brief for the Market redevelopment. The Market Traders had agreed to move. Planning permission had been granted to the SDG scheme and a Private Bill providing for the relocation of the existing Market to Temple Mill had been lodged by the Corporation of London in the House of Commons (see Appendix 6.1.). Over two years had elapsed since the first speculative offers to redevelop the site had been made. Tower Hamlets and the developers alike thought they had undertaken one of the most thorough consultation procedures ever associated with a major redevelopment in London. All was set for the Market to be relocated and the development to commence. In that same month (November 1987), a local group emerged which called itself the Campaign to Save Spitalfields From the Developer. The Campaign sought to stop the relocation of the Market and redevelopment of the site. It became the prime and most sustained source of opposition to redevelopment, until the more recent change of heart by local conservation interests.

The Campaign emerged from a public meeting held in Spitalfields. It described itself as an umbrella organization which draws together a variety of community-based groups, local residents and businesses (CSSD Petition to House of Commons, May 1988). It has opposed the relocation of the Market and the redevelopment of the site outright (Figure 8.1.). The basis of this opposition has been the anticipated 'knock-on' effects of the redevelopment: the predicted rise in property values in the area, the impact on the







local garment manufacturing industry, employment and housing provision. In terms of the severe deprivation suffered in Spitalfields, these are logical and expected concerns.

These issues of social amenity were articulated through the idea of community. The deprived material conditions in Spitalfields provided for the ideological construction of a radicalized community. It was not the Market buildings or even the surrounding Georgian architecture which the Campaign sought to protect from redevelopment, it was the community of Spitalfields. In developing their case against the Market relocation and redevelopment, the Campaign stressed their community status and provided detailed descriptions of the character of the Spitalfields community. In its struggle to defend the community, a particular set of interconnected historicities were 'imagined' and articulated which attest to the complex interlinking of areas of deprivation like Spitalfields, and Left intellectual and political thought.

As noted previously (Chapter 6), the Spitalfields Market redevelopment did not, during the research period, go to public inquiry. The 'public' forum used by the Campaign was the Parliamentary Select Committee Hearing procedure which was associated with the passage of a Bill required to provide for the relocation of the Spitalfields Market (The Private Bill, The City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill 1988).<sup>2</sup> After having twice unsuccessfully called for a public planning inquiry, the passage of a Bill through Parliament provided a focus and a quasi-public forum for the Campaign's efforts and views.<sup>3</sup> Most of the Campaign's energy went into petitioning against the Bill, lobbying parliamentarians to force the Bill to second and third readings, and presenting evidence at the Hearings. The prime objective was to stop the redevelopment but, should the Bill be passed and the redevelopment proceed, the Campaign was keen to cause as much delay and cost to the developer. Further, they wanted to force improvements in Planning Gain under Section 52 of the Town and Country Planning Act.<sup>4</sup>

The procedures and limits of this forum helped shape the Campaign's position. The Bill simply provided for the transfer of the Corporation's existing powers and duties in

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<sup>2</sup>The Bill was promoted by the Corporation of London which owns the Market site and is responsible for its administration. Two Select Committee hearings were held; the House of Commons Hearing ran from 6/6/88 to 30/6/88. The House of Lords Hearing ran from 15/5/89 to 26/5/89.

<sup>3</sup>Under Parliamentary procedure for Private Bills interested parties directly affected by the Bill can petition, sending it to a quasi-judicial hearing of a Parliamentary Select Committee. This procedure has been under Review because of recent cases in which the procedure was used as an alternative to a planning inquiry.

<sup>4</sup>It was estimated by the developers that delays cost them an extra £20m.



relation to the Market on its present site to the proposed relocation site at Temple Mill. The Bill did not deal with the proposed redevelopment of the Spitalfields site. Both Committees stressed to petitioners that the Hearings were not planning inquiries and could not concern themselves with issues relating to the granting of planning permission or the effects of the redevelopment on the area. Evidence presented had to focus on the legitimacy of the relocation of the Market rather than the effects or merits of the replacement development. Despite this, the Campaign treated the Parliamentary Hearings as a substitute planning forum and brought to them evidence and views which were clearly concerned with the planning implications of the Market relocation and redevelopment.<sup>5</sup> The Campaign's petitions against the passage of the Spitalfields Bill proved ultimately unsuccessful and the Bill was passed in 1990. However, their efforts did secure a substantial improvement in the Planning Gain agreement reached between Tower Hamlets and the developers.

#### 8.1.1. Mandates and Membership: The Campaign as voice of the community.

All public statements by the Campaign stressed its status as a legitimate, non party-political voice of the community; a broker for local feeling against the redevelopment. In its petition against the passage of the Spitalfields Market Bill through the House of Commons, the Campaign emphasized the wide community support for its views. It collected the signatures of over 500 separate local interests, including 400 residents and local organizations and businesses (CSSD Petition House of Commons, May 1988). It collected even more signatures for the House of Lords Hearing: 700 resident signatures and 20 local businesses (CSSD Petition House of Lords, March 1989). The community petition became an important source of verifying local support for the Campaign's case. The petitions also served to challenge local authority claims to have consulted widely with the community. In one Newsletter (July 1989), the Campaign compared its 700 signatures with the 63 written replies received by the local authority planners in their consultation (BGNC 1986).

The Campaign stressed that the November public meeting gave it the 'mandate' of the community (CSSD Meeting, 20/2/90; Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89). At a later stage, when the Campaign felt it should consider commenting on other developments occurring in Spitalfields, it hesitated on the grounds that it had only been given a mandate to deal with the Market redevelopment (CSSD Meeting, 12/2/90). The

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<sup>5</sup>The Committees were reasonably tolerant and refrained from challenging the 'locus standi' (right to stand in petition) of the Campaign. However, they did repeatedly warn the Campaign that the type of evidence they were presenting did not relate to the specific concern of the Bill.



Campaign remained 'accountable' to the community by keeping meetings open to the public and by issuing Newsletters and broadsheets in Bengali and English. The emphasis on the petition, the mandate and accountability attests to the Campaign's commitment to community participation and representation and provided a counter to what were seen to be the undemocratic circumstances in which the Market redevelopment gained planning permission.<sup>6</sup>

The Campaign emphasis on representativeness gained added importance as initial enthusiasm waned and it was less easy to claim legitimately to be a community voice. The inaugural public meeting attracted 60 people according to the Campaign Chair (Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89). But attendance dropped quickly to an average of 9 people per meeting. The long-term participation in the group was based on a small core of less than a dozen regular Campaigners (CSSD Records; Personal Field Records). At one point the Campaign Chair remarked:

...at the end of the day we are a small group saying we represent the community...I am worried because we have no base constituent...we complain [other groups] are not democratic and accountable but where is our grass roots support? (CSSD Meeting, 20/2/90).

But diminishing participation was only one element of the Campaign's difficulty in claiming to be a broad-based community voice. A greater challenge came from the Campaign's party-political connections. The first public meeting which gave rise to the Campaign was initiated and organized by the ward branch of the local Labour Party.<sup>7</sup> This first meeting may have attracted a large number of local interests but most were either directly affiliated with the ward branch of the Labour Party, had broader Labour loyalties or participated in local community services initiated by the GLC or the local authority when it had a Labour administration. Of the 32 recorded attendances at the inaugural public meeting, almost half were members of the ward branch of the Labour Party. Almost a third were involved with local community service groups or tenants' associations. Only 5 people in attendance referred to themselves simply as 'residents' with no official capacity. This attendance profile set the pattern for longer-term participation in the Campaign. The most influential Campaigners were associated

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<sup>6</sup>Not only was consultation seen to be inadequate but planning permission was granted in the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee on the casting vote of the Chair after much debate. It did not go to a Borough-wide vote which might have been more sympathetic to the Campaign's views.

<sup>7</sup>At an October meeting of the Spitalfields Ward branch of the Bethnal Green and Stepney Labour Party a decision was made to hold a special campaign around the market redevelopment (Spitalfields Ward meeting of the Bethnal Green and Stepney Labour Party, Minutes, 8/10/87).



either with the local Labour Party or with voluntary or public sector community service organizations operating in Spitalfields. A closer examination of some of the core members reveals how deeply embedded the Campaign was in local Labour/Left politics.

The Chair of the Campaign, Jil Cove, has been actively involved in Labour politics since the 1960s and in local Spitalfields politics since the late 1970s, when she moved to the area. She was Chair of the Ward branch between 1982 and 1984. She chaired the General Management Committee of the Bethnal Green and Stepney Constituency Labour Party, and in 1985 unsuccessfully challenged Peter Shore, the local M.P., in pre-selection for the general election. Along with her partner, she played a key role in a systematic attempt to rid the ward branch of the Labour Party of the 'Old Guard', successfully inserting a new younger coterie of white, white-collar activists (Eade 1989, 85; Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89). Two of the other key participants in the Campaign, Phil Maxwell and Robbie MacDuff, were part of this New Guard and Phil Maxwell became a ward councillor in the 1986 elections.

A second group of core participants in the Campaign were associated with local voluntary and public sector community service organizations. The first meeting was attended by representatives of the Spitalfields Small Businesses Association (SSBA), the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service (SHAPRS) and the Spitalfields Project (previously the Spitalfields Local Committee). Of these three local organizations, only the SSBA was from the voluntary sector. The other two organizations were publicly funded: with the abolition of the GLC and the election of a Liberal council, they were both facing closure at the time the Campaign began. Despite the fact that the Spitalfields Project had been officially disbanded, its former head (who had returned to an official post within the local authority) remained a stalwart supporter of the Campaign.

One final participant in the Campaign of particular relevance to this study is Raphael Samuel. As noted in Chapter 4, Raphael Samuel has been the leading force behind the emergence of History Workshop and its continuing efforts to retrieve and empower marginalized histories. His participation in the Campaign was partly tied to this political and intellectual commitment. But Samuel is also a local resident. He has lived in Elder Street, less than a minute's walk from the Market, for almost 30 years and the area is much a part of his personal and political ancestry. His family were Hebrew publishers in Wentworth Street; his mother lived in the 'Dickensian' Industrial Dwellings in Flower and Dean Street; he was in Spitalfields the day London faced its first air raid warning of World War II; as a child, he canvassed the streets of Spitalfields for the Communist

Party (Samuel 1989b, 144). He 'returned' to Spitalfields in 1962 in pursuit of his intellectual and personal roots (Raphael Samuel House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 41). Local action was not new to Samuel. He was one of the key participants in the Spitalfields Trust's Elder Street squat, and has remained loosely associated with the Trust since then (see Chapter 6).

The Labour/Left lineage directly shaped the Campaign's strategy of opposition to the Market redevelopment. Through its Parliamentary connections, the Campaign was informed of the possibility of petitioning against the Market Bill and forcing the issue to a Select Committee Hearing. This set the Campaign on a particular course of action which increasingly embedded it in the Parliamentary procedure. This was familiar ground for the core members. A good luck message was received from Tony Benn (CSSD Records); Tony Banks (M.P. Newham, North-West) intervened on behalf of the Campaign when it was billed for copies of Hearing transcripts; Peter Shore (M.P. Bethnal Green and Stepney) presented evidence on behalf of the Campaign in the House of Lords Hearing. Much of the Campaign's efforts went into preparing briefing documents for sympathetic Members who were asked to call the Bill for debate and to slow its passage through the Houses.

The Campaign's effective use of complex Parliamentary procedures was facilitated by its Labour connections and the Party-political experience of the core participants. Yet in its public presentations to the Parliamentary Hearings, the Campaign was careful to emphasize its non-party, community status. There was no mention of the political affiliation of the Campaign and the witnesses called, with the exception of Labour Councillors Abbas Uddin and Phil Maxwell, and the local M.P., Peter Shore. Witnesses called were presented as 'community representatives' or 'local residents'. In these Hearings, the Campaign did not engage the services of a barrister to present its case but relied on its Chair, Jil Cove, who emphasized her inexperience at such proceedings. This emphasis on the 'local non-expert' parallels that seen in the CARE/SAVE coalition in the City case (Chapter 7) and, as then, added legitimacy to the Campaign's status as a 'community' voice. Ironically, the Campaign's pursuit of opposition to the redevelopment through this forum embroiled it in a lengthy and complex Parliamentary procedure which confused and ostracized those participants who were unfamiliar with party-politics.

Although suppressing its Labour lineage in public forums, the alliance was clear, not least in the Campaign's reliance on Labour politicians (local and Parliamentary) as witnesses. This left the Campaign open to challenges from those who sought to discredit it. Both the Corporation of London and the Liberal local authority accused the



Campaign of being unrepresentative. The Campaign responded to the Corporation charge by referring to its petition:

Over the months this Campaign has visited many homes in Spitalfields, collecting your signatures, so we could tell the House of Lords how wide the opposition to the developer's plans was....We collected over 700 signatures...Despite that amount of support the CITY OF LONDON ACCUSED US OF NOT REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY!!!...The City needs to be reminded that in ONE OF THEIR OWN WARDS there are only 4 VOTERS and in another of their Wards there are NO VOTERS: WHO DO THEY REPRESENT? (CSSD Newsletter July 1989).

The most sustained and direct challenge to the Campaign's representativeness came from the Liberal local authority. The Chair of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee wrote and asked the Campaign for its constitution and accounts (Letter BGNC Chair to CSSD, 26/3/88). In public statements, the Liberal Councillor charged that the Campaign was nothing more than a 'Labour Party front'. After Campaign action had successfully slowed the redevelopment, the Liberal Chair of the BGNC wrote accusing the Campaign of being an:

unrepresentative, narrowly-based, undemocratic, secretive and doctrinaire clique of malcontents...a Flat Earth Society (Letter BGNC Chair to CSSD, 10/1/89).

In terms of the lineage and active participation of the Campaign, it was difficult to counter these accusations and reclaim a legitimate status as a community voice. In the following I explore more closely how the Campaign's was a manifestation of the local Left.

#### 8.1.2. Working the Market: The New Left and the Campaign

The deprivation in Spitalfields was a core theme of the Campaign's case. This was clearly expressed in the Select Committee Hearings when the Campaign called upon its coterie of affiliated local organizations to present evidence on a range of relatively predictable issues: housing needs, health conditions, unemployment and training, education, open space, property values, the special needs of the Bangladeshi population. All witnesses reiterated from their own particular area of 'community expertise' the dire social and environmental conditions in the area and how these conditions would be exacerbated by the Market redevelopment. These are not imaginary conditions, the deprivation in Spitalfields is only too real.

The Borough's population remains predominantly working class. In 1981, in Tower Hamlets only 36.5% of the employed population was in managerial, professional and non-manual work, compared with 57.0% for Greater London (LBTH 1981a, 1981b). There was a higher than average rate of unemployment and the borough has the highest level of male unemployment in London at 19.2% and the second highest level of female unemployment at 11.0% (LBTH 1981a, 1981b). In Spitalfields unemployment at the 1981 census was 22%. There was a high dependence of public housing in the Tower Hamlets Borough, with over 80% of the population occupying housing controlled by the GLC or, as now, the borough council. A large proportion of the population in Tower Hamlets, and especially in Spitalfields, are Bangladeshi. Recent official estimates of the number of Bangladeshi people in the Borough have varied from 14,000 (10% of the total population) to 18,000 (13% of the total population) (LBTH 1984). But unofficial estimates for Spitalfields have been as high as 46.9% (SHAPRS 1981). As a result of the number of large Bangladeshi families moving in to substandard housing, there is severe overcrowding in much of the Borough. In Spitalfields, 15.5% of households are overcrowded compared with 2.1% for Inner London and 1.3% for Greater London. Over 75% of Bangladeshi households have been designated as overcrowded. More than 1,000 families were registered as homeless in Tower Hamlets in 1986, a problem which is escalating due to the Borough's policy of identifying new arrivals from Bangladesh as having made themselves voluntarily homeless (Forman 1989, 231). The Bangladeshi community has revived the garment industry in the area, and two thirds of the the Bangladeshi population in Spitalfields are employed in this sector (Forman 1989, 170). The Campaign worked from a genuine and deep-felt concern for the area and the impact the development would have. These conditions formed the basis for the construction of a radical 'community of deprivation and resistance' which clearly reflected the political affiliations of the Campaign.

The local Left's instigation of the Market Campaign should be set within a more general context of shifting Labour Party strategy and policy, and more specific changes to the local political scene in Tower Hamlets. Establishing local campaigns around issues like the Market redevelopment had been marked by the ward Labour Party as the future direction for political action. Cove, MacDuff and Maxwell all worked from within a loose Labour alliance called the London Labour Briefing which met regularly at County Hall. Largely directed by the strategies and policies advocated by the Briefing, they actively pursued a campaign of politicizing local people and particularly the Bangladeshi population, through public meetings, 'political education days' and



printed propaganda. Their activities were part of a new vision for the local Labour Party:

Labour must become a campaigning party engaged in political action designed to challenge the entrenched interests of capital and big business. Locally the party must fight around the issues of housing, unemployment, racism and the pervading poverty which underpins life in Spitalfields. We need to take our socialist message to the people and develop a broad programme of political education (Maxwell, Spitalfields Ward Party Leaflet 1983. Quoted in Eade 1989, 75).

This strategy of 'extra-parliamentary' campaigning around a constellation of local issues is the hallmark of the 'syndrome of associated practices and ideas' characteristic of the New Urban Left (Gyford 1985, ix; see also Boddy and Fudge 1984; Gyford 1983; Hain 1980). The New Urban Left is typified by an approach to socialism which works 'from the bottom up' through local and borough politics (Gyford 1985, ix). The pursuit of the socialist project through local, single-issue campaigns like the Market redevelopment is a typical manifestation of the New Urban Left. The stark challenge of 'capital and big business' embodied in the Market redevelopment was an irresistible terrain upon which the local Labour Party could establish a campaign. Further, the Market redevelopment came at a time when the local Labour party was, for the first time in many decades, suffering a genuine challenge to their political supremacy in the East End.

Tower Hamlets had been a Labour stronghold for over forty years. In the local elections of 1986 the Labour 'hold' on the area was successfully challenged by the Liberals.<sup>8</sup> In the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood area, which encompasses the three wards of Spitalfields, St Peters and Weavers, the only ward to remain in full Labour control was Spitalfields. The changed political configuration of Tower Hamlets had an immediate impact on Spitalfields. The Liberals decentralized borough administration, policy and decision making.<sup>9</sup> Under decentralization all decisions concerning

<sup>8</sup> The May 1986 elections saw 3 of the 7 Borough Neighbourhoods transfer from Labour to Liberal control. In terms of the entire Borough, of the 50 elected Councillors, 26 were Liberal/SLD with the casting vote of the chair residing with a Liberal member, giving the Liberals a slim but secure majority of one. A Poplar bi-election in 1988 saw a Liberal seat lost to a Labour candidate changing the borough-wide balance of power to 25 Labour/ 25 Liberal/SDP. But the most recent local elections further consolidated Labour's loss of support in the area.

<sup>9</sup> The decentralization process in Tower Hamlets has entailed establishing seven Neighbourhood administrative areas and systems. Each of these provides a full range of services previously the responsibility of centralized borough government, including planning, health and housing. Each neighbourhood unit is run by a Neighbourhood Committee of elected Councillors which makes policy decisions. The Neighbourhood Committee functions as the old Borough Council and each one is supported by its own bureaucracy of Council Officers. It is the Liberal strategy of returning local government to 'the people' (Tower Hamlets Liberal Party Manifesto nd, 7).



Spitalfields are made by the Liberal controlled Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee (BGNC). Never before have the Labour representatives of the Spitalfields ward been in such a minority position within local government.

Decentralization has also resulted in, or at least has been used to justify, the dismantling of a number of local organizations, most notably, the Spitalfields Housing And Planning Rights Service (SHAPRS), the Spitalfields Local Committee (SLC) and a follow-on organization, the Spitalfields Project. Both organizations had been publicly funded (GLC and local authority) and had been established to serve what were seen to be the very particular and exceptional housing and planning needs of Spitalfields. The Spitalfields Project/Local Committee had been a GLC initiative which (like decentralization) sought to build a partnership between statutory bodies and the community, and to ensure that the community had a greater say in the direction of service provision and other plans in the area. Their concerns included housing, women, youth services and training and employment. SHAPRS and the Spitalfields Local Committee/Project had both established a range of projects, lobbied for improved services and undertaken research into local conditions. They had consistently opposed office development in the area, sharing a vision of keeping Spitalfields as a residential/work enclave, based around the restaurant trade and particularly the clothing manufacturing industry. The Spitalfields Project/Local Committee had consistently advised against any planning applications for office development in the area and presented evidence against such development at various local planning inquiries. SHAPRS (1980) produced its own survey report on office incursion into the area. These were all concerns which, once these organizations were dismantled, continued to be voiced through the Campaign against the Market redevelopment.

The final demise of SHAPRS and the Spitalfields Local Committee came after the Market redevelopment was first mooted. Both organizations vehemently opposed the redevelopment on the grounds that it would be detrimental to the local community. They argued that although Planning Gains, which the community needed, were possible, the impact of a development of this scale and nature would not be offset by such gains (BGNC 1986). In the final meeting of the Spitalfields Local Committee (8/5/87) a resolution was passed in relation to the Market redevelopment:

..the Spitalfields Local Committee rejects both schemes for the redevelopment of the Spitalfields Market Site because they represent a further incursion of the City into Tower Hamlets which in no way benefits Spitalfields or

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the Borough in terms of housing, jobs or services. We believe that the proposals threaten the local community and businesses through the inevitable increase in land values. Support for the development will ultimately mean that local people and businesses are driven out from the surrounding area. We finally resolve to defend our community from the further incursion of the City Developers (Spitalfields Local Committee Minutes, 8/5/87).

This resolution was one of the last made by the Spitalfields Local Committee. Their funding from the local authority stopped soon after. Indeed the Campaign often implied that the closure of the Spitalfields Local Committee/Project and SHAPRS were a result of the new Liberal authority seeking to rid Spitalfields of opposition to the Market redevelopment (Forman 1989: Interview Campaigner 1, CSSD, 8/5/89; Robbie McDuff House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 9).

The dismantling of these services under Liberal decentralization added fuel to the Labour resolve to establish alternative local campaigns around specific issues. In membership, ideology and action the Campaign carried on many of the issues and concerns that had been paramount to these local predecessors. As one member of the Campaign said, the issues it pursued were 'well rehearsed', and it was in the arenas of the Spitalfields Local Committee, SHAPRS and the local Labour Party that this 'rehearsal' had been done. The Campaign against the Market redevelopment served as a new forum for the voicing of old and persistent concerns in Spitalfields.

### 8.1.3. Market Bargaining: The Campaign and Planning Gain

In responding to the Market redevelopment, the Campaign had two possible strategies: to oppose the redevelopment outright, or to accept it and pressure for improved Planning Gain. At the first meeting of the Campaign, there was some confusion over which would be the best approach. Initially, it was assumed the redevelopment was a 'foregone conclusion'. But ultimately the Campaign decided to 'publically say we don't want the Market to go' and to retain a 'fall back position' based on Planning Gain bargaining (Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89).

The opportunity to petition against the passage of the Spitalfields Market Bill was crucial in hardening the Campaign's publicly stated aim of outright opposition to relocation. Although its appearance in the Select Committee Hearings focused around objecting to the Market being relocated, much of its evidence highlighted the critical housing, training, open space and employment needs of the area. On the basis of this evidence the House of Commons Select Committee demanded that substantial



changes be made to the Section 52 Agreement that had already been agreed upon by Tower Hamlets, the Corporation of London and the Spitalfields Development Group.

The Initial Section 52 Agreement provided for a Community Trust of £2,500,000, training funding of £50,000 per year for five years, 118 social housing units, guaranteed public access to the open spaces provided in the redevelopment, the provision of a community centre, a Law Centre Citizens Advice Bureau or social casework office, a fashion centre and creche, and the guarantee that some retail space be earmarked for 'local shopping' units. After hearing the Campaign's evidence, the House of Commons Select Committee asked that the amount to be paid to the Community Trust be doubled to £5m, that the amount to be paid to the training scheme for the five year period be increased from £50,000 per year to £150,000 per year, and that there be a strengthening of the guarantee that the open spaces in the development remain open for public access. In addition to this, the Committee requested that the Section 52 Agreement include a covenant guaranteeing the maintenance of the one large open space in Spitalfields, Allen Gardens.<sup>10</sup>

The Campaign was quick to use the Planning Gain success as proof of its commitment to the community and its adeptness in meeting community needs. A Newsletter circulated after the Commons Hearing was triumphant in its account of the gain improvements. Yet it also revealed the covert Labour agenda of the Campaign, pointing out how the 'Liberal controlled Tower Hamlets Council...failed to support our campaign' (CSSD Newsletter November 1988). Later in the Newsletter the Campaign asked rhetorically through the voice of the 'community':

What we want to know is why, if the community can SQUEEZE these gains out of the Developers, Liberal controlled Bethnal Green Neighbourhood couldn't? (CSSD Newsletter November 1988).

The capacity of the Campaign to work within the bargaining framework provided ammunition for the Liberals to further discredit the Campaign's efforts. In one Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Meeting, the Liberal Chair picked up on the contradiction of the Campaign: on the one hand, vehemently opposing the removal of the Market but, on the other hand, accepting and triumphing in the Gains that could only accrue if the Market was relocated and the development proceeded.

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<sup>10</sup>In fact there was some resistance to this from the local authority and while the other recommended changes were made, the proposed guarantees regarding Allen Gardens were not included in the redrafted Section 52 Agreement.



The Campaign's case against the Market redevelopment emphasized the 'knock-on' effects in an already deprived community. The material conditions provided the foundations for a particular construction of Spitalfields as a community of deprivation, resistance and marginality. The imagined community of the Campaign was far more radical and oppositional to the processes of redevelopment than that imagined and invented by the Spitalfields conservationists and drew heavily on the socialist lineage of the Campaigners.

## 8.2. Trading in Community: The Campaign's Construction of Community

The social amenity case of the Campaign was refracted through the lens of community. The community evoked drew on past and present features of the area which reflected the ideological position of the group and specifically, its connection with a local Labour agenda. There is an intellectual and political tradition of community in the East End upon which the Campaign was able to build. Spitalfields and the East End generally were already brimming with the idea of community. When community studies forged an empirical base during the 1950s, the East End became a favoured study area. The seminal work was Young and Wilmott's (1957) Family and Kinship in East London, but many others in pursuit of the same intellectual project turned to the East End for empirical verification of the continued existence of communities in the modern urban scene (see Glass and Frenkel 1946; M. Rose 1951; Sinclair 1950; Townsend 1957). Similarly, those tracing an intellectual lineage to radical history have found the East End a fruitful terrain for rewriting history from below (e.g. Fishman 1975, 1979, 1988; Samuel 1981a; Stedman Jones 1971). As Chapter 4 documents, both radical history and community studies have sought to rediscover and empower the working class and other marginalized groups, such as women and racialized minorities. They have challenged the perception and experience of urban modernity in which it seemed the working class and other groups were either 'withering away' under pluralistic ideologies or surviving but becoming increasingly marginalized (Brook and Finn 1977, 36; see also Bell and Newby 1976).

Turning to the East End to recover lost pasts and empower marginalized groups is not simply an act of imagination or intellectual construction. The area has long been poor, a home for minority groups, a strong-hold of the working class, a site of radical politics. Its status as one of the most deprived areas of London has been repeatedly documented by social scientists (Booth 1902; Mayhew 1851; Rowntree 1941). The Battle of Cable Street and Poplarism have become enshrined as local acts of political resistance to racism and centralist state intervention respectively (see Bush 1984; G. Rose 1988). It was home to Huguenot refugees in the seventeenth century, Irish



peasants in the 1840s, Polish and Russian Jews in the late nineteenth century, Maltese and Cypriot migrants after World War II (Bermant 1975; Leach 1976). Deprivation, a large immigrant population and a reliance on the clothing manufacturing have long been features of Spitalfields. They are as potent and real characteristics of the area as privilege and wealth are of the City. These characteristics are now deeply entwined with the idea of Spitalfields as a 'community'.

In seeking the persistence of 'community' in such areas as the East End, radical community and history studies have inextricably linked the negative reality of deprivation with a positive imagining of 'community'. Deprivation and marginalization are decried and the political project seeks to redress this. The 'community' spirit which, on the one hand, is generated from the constraints and needs associated with deprivation is, on the other hand, cast as the source of redemption for urban life. 'Community' is seen to be the product of deprivation and the salvation of the deprived. The deprivation of the East End communities is linked to an alternate image of:

...a lost Golden Age of settled working class communities undisturbed for generations until the postwar onslaught of suburbanization and mass culture (Cater and Jones 1989, 174).

The local emphasis of the New Left parallels the shifts in intellectual thought which gave rise to community studies and radical history. Here the world of intellectual ideology and political practice are overtly linked. The 1968 May Day Manifesto of Williams, Thompson and Hall symbolized the convergence of the intellectual and the practical political project of reform in its call for community-based action as opposed to Parliamentary reform (Gyford 1983, 5).

The New Urban Left has sought to forge an 'authentic socialism rooted in people' (Gyford 1985, 73) to which the idea of community is germane. Gyford and others have carefully depicted the strategic and ideological manifestations of the New Urban Left. Their analysis to date has failed to address what might be identified as the cultural context and expression of the New Urban Left, although this has been tackled for earlier periods of local Left political action in the East End (G. Rose 1988). Brook and Finn (1977, 129) suggest that within New Left community and history studies, a 'smuggling' process occurred, in which radical reappraisals of the working class and other marginalized groups became inextricably rooted in the 'idea of community'. Community, they suggest, is now vested with 'overtones of tradition and oppositional culture'. In the radical imagination, community stands as a deeply rooted, oppositional force to urban modernity and capitalism, an artefact of resistance and a source of hope for the future (Williams 1977b). In the ideology of the New Left, 'indigenous' local



qualities are to be defended for they hold the key to urban socialist reform. Through the idea of community, the socialist project of radical change is as deeply rooted in the past as is the more overtly expressed historicism of the conservation movement.

It is this radical community of resistance and redemption that was mobilized by the Campaign in opposing the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market. This idea of community provides for the elaboration and articulation of a range of local characteristics, values and practices which serve to authenticate and legitimate the claim of the Campaign to speak out against the Market redevelopment. The radical, imagined community of Spitalfields was grounded in the reality of deprivation and marginalization, but at times the Campaign romanticized these features to elaborate the depiction of Spitalfields as a 'natural' and 'organic' site of resistance to modernity and capitalism. As has already been indicated by the first traverse through the Spitalfields case (Chapter 6), this radical, Left community is only one of a number of differing Spitalfields, real and imagined. Not all the communities of Spitalfields hold such an antagonistic and resistant stand towards the processes of urban transformation exemplified by the Market redevelopment. Indeed, this stand sets the imagined community of the Campaign in tension with alternative and, at times, more powerful Spitalfields imaginings and responses to the Market redevelopment.

In the various public statements made by the Campaign and its supporters, special attention was given to the cohesive nature of the Spitalfields community. However, it was through the evidence of Raphael Samuel that the special character of the Spitalfields community was most clearly elaborated and his contribution is given special, but not sole, consideration in the following analysis. The relationship between Raphael Samuel and the Campaign was at times strained. His participation in the Campaign was sporadic and some members of the Campaign saw him as a political 'maverick' because he was not a member of the local Labour Party (Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89). However, the Campaign was aware of his academic standing and his ability to have access to the mainstream press and so it 'wheeled him out' for the Parliamentary Hearings (CSSD Meeting, 17/5/88). Despite these internal tensions surrounding Raphael Samuel's participation, the Campaign shared his views about the character of the community. They were united in seeing Spitalfields as:

...that unique and historic area...a community of working class and industrious people: a multi-ethnic community...a historic place which for over 3 centuries has harboured both refugees and immigrants...that has given the area a distinctive working character (CSSD Briefing for Labour MPs, May 1988, in CSSD Records).

Spitalfields as depicted by the Campaign had all the hallmarks of the East End communities rediscovered in the post-war community studies. It was based on the 'family', an area where children play on the street, where (contrary to popular images based on Jack the Ripper) women can walk the streets in safety (CSSD Spitalfields Defender 1987). In a direct evocation of the East End of Young and Wilmott (1957), it was described as 'a hospitable place where doors [are] open and people neighbour' (Raphael Samuel House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 47). In a publicity broadsheet it was described as having a 'high degree of social cohesion' and as a 'strong local community where living, working, schooling, shopping and cultural and religious needs are contained and sustained within the area' (CSSD Spitalfields Defender 1987).

This was not a new Spitalfields. The potency of the Spitalfields community arises out of its lineage. In the Campaign rhetoric, the area was vested with an 'organic' essence: the prime dynamic of the area had not been sudden transformation, such as would occur with the Market redevelopment, but an evolution in which the area had 'reproduced itself over very long periods of time' (Bishopsgate Exhibition 1988). The 'miracle' of Spitalfields was its retention of these characteristics in the face of 'the white heat of the technological revolution' (Raphael Samuel (quoting Harold Wilson) House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 47).

In Samuel's often romantic evocations, Spitalfields was represented as being almost untouched by the forces of modern life. The Spitalfields he found in 1962 when he moved to the area was decidedly rustic:

There were old-fashioned public lavatories ... one room pubs, where beer only was served. Stone drinking troughs outside Christ Church, Spitalfields...The warehouses in Commercial Street were piled high with rolls of achingly unfashionable cloths...The local shops, too, were mysterious...Grocers doubled in the function of oil merchants, selling paraffin, kindling and half hundredweight bags of coal. Barbers' shops, with their striped poles, abounded. So did bakeries: at the all-night bagel shop in Hanbury Street, customers could see their orders plunged in the steamy vats. At least two Welsh dairies survived (Samuel 1989b, 138-139).

The bucolic Spitalfields was reiterated in other publications from Campaign associates. Forman (1989, 8) described the area as being like a 'small farm'. And this rural rhetoric was translated into action when the Campaign invited the Lords Select Committee to a tour of the area in a horse drawn cart (CSSD Meeting, 9/1/89).



In an exhibition staged by Samuel to assist in the 'battle' against the redevelopment, Brick Lane was celebrated as an alternative village High Street (Figure 8.2.). Here there is all the diversity of use and style celebrated in the City village but it is a diversity of hope and horror drawing on the grand socialist metaphor of community as the product of deprivation and the site of redemption (see Williams' concept of 'community of oppression', 1977):

The Lane itself runs from Bethnal Green to Whitechapel, starting with a modern housing estate full of shouting kids with BMXs and footballs and ending three quarters of a mile further south alongside the Art Deco facade of the Whitechapel art gallery. Walking down it you pass a brewery, a mosque, a brothel, an ultra-modern health centre, numerous restaurants, food shops, sari centres and surplus stores, a cinema and several shipping agents, the room where the first ever Jewish socialist manifesto was drawn up and the place where Jack the Ripper's last victim was found in 1888. It is a long, thin street which often has an edgy air, as if something just happened (Bishopsgate Exhibition 1988).

Brick Lane is evoked as a thriving juxtaposition of contradictions: the past and the present, popular and high culture, morality and immorality, places to gain weight and places to lose weight, sites of collective political will and sites of murderous independent will.

The community of Spitalfields resonated, as did the City, with the village metaphor. But this was a far more radical village than that evoked in the City. It conformed with the type of village redeemed by Raphael Samuel in his Village Life and Labour (1975). The Bishopsgate Exhibition provided an impressionistic rendition of this radical Spitalfields village:

So the heavy sweetness of hops and the whirr of sewing machines ... bagels, and Sylvia Pankhurst, the socialist suffragette, sprinting for the no 8 bus to take her to a Worker's Dreadnaught editorial meeting in Bow. And then you will look again and it is the contemporary heart-rending poverty you see and even the graffiti is misspelt 'Fuk off Wogs' (Bishopsgate Exhibition 1988).

The Market played a critical role in maintaining the 'harmony' of this community of cohesion, diversity and radicalism (Jil Cove, House of Lords 1989, Day 8, 27). In part this was a result of some of the intrinsic qualities of the Market, an issue I return to in the next Section. More importantly, the Market acted as a 'buffer' between the City and Spitalfields (Various witnesses, Houses of Commons/Lords 1988, 1989). The Market had a symbolic (and real) function of keeping the forces of capitalism and modernity, as







embodied by the City, away from this community of resistant, rural, radicalism - a function clearly depicted in the Campaign logo (Figure 8.3.).

The Market battle reiterated the traditional battle of socialism. The enemy of the Campaign was not the wrong architectural aesthetic (the main basis of complaint from conservationists in the City and Spitalfields alike), but capitalism itself. The enemy was seen as 'big money', and the agent of capital was the redevelopment.<sup>11</sup> More potently, in this battle capitalism was manifest through the grand site of British capitalism, the City. In a Campaign broadsheet the City's traditional symbol of the griffin is brought to life and threateningly circles above the Market breathing flames (Figure 8.4.). Spitalfields would be transformed by the 'enemy' into the home of 'millionaire corporations' and 'international banking'. The unique, organic community would become:

...just one more line on the computer screen linking Wall Street and Tokyo (CSSD Spitalfields Defender 1987).

In every way the City, as a symbolic manifestation of rampant capitalism and the darker soulless side of modernity, was seen as the root enemy in the Campaign's battle. Such a depiction differs dramatically from the more personalized depictions of 'Mr. Palumbo' in the City case. The enemy the Campaign depicts reflects its socialist underpinnings.

The construction of Spitalfields as the radical village is identified by Wiener (1981, 42) as part of the 'Left wing myth'. Although grounded in material conditions, it re-invests deprivation with a cohesive but resistant charm and is as much an ideological construction of Spitalfields as is the conservationists mobilization of grander Georgian days. While it diverges from much of the politics underpinning the City village, it perpetuates the village as the metaphorical home of redemption and celebrates the same rustic diversity as the City village. It is a theme which runs through radical literature from William Morris to the present day. The radicalism of the Campaign's cohesive and organic Spitalfields community was elaborated through two prime themes: working class Spitalfields and Bangladeshi Spitalfields. Both themes tie directly to Labour agendas, old and new.

#### 8.2.1. Work and Enterprise: Working Class Spitalfields

The Campaign's depiction of Spitalfields drew heavily upon its working class character, past and present. The working character of Spitalfields resides both with its industry, as exemplified in garment manufacturing, and its trade, as exemplified in

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<sup>11</sup> 'Big Money' is also the enemy in the Docklands community poster campaign.



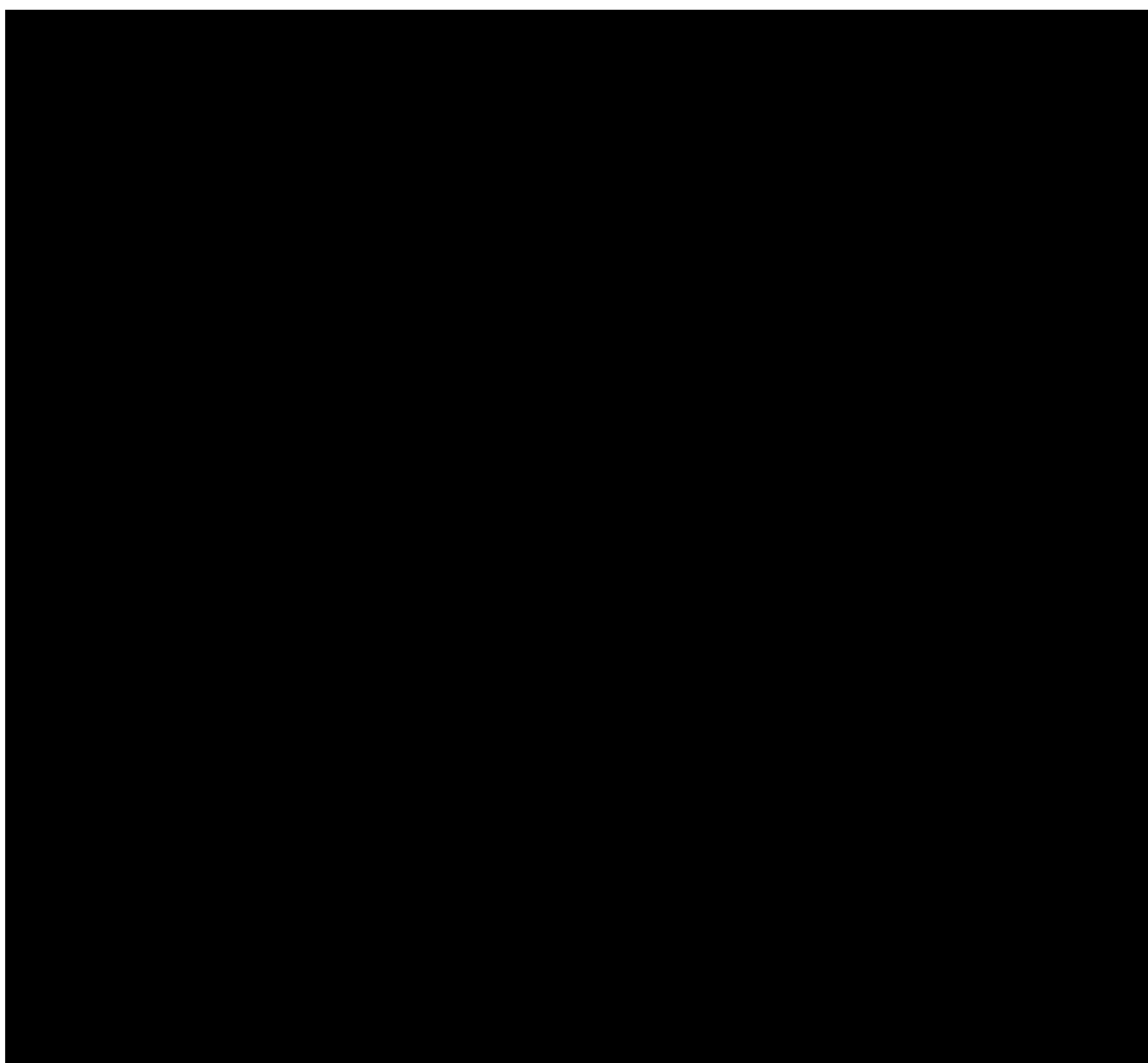


FIGURE 8.3. THE CAMPAIGN LOGO



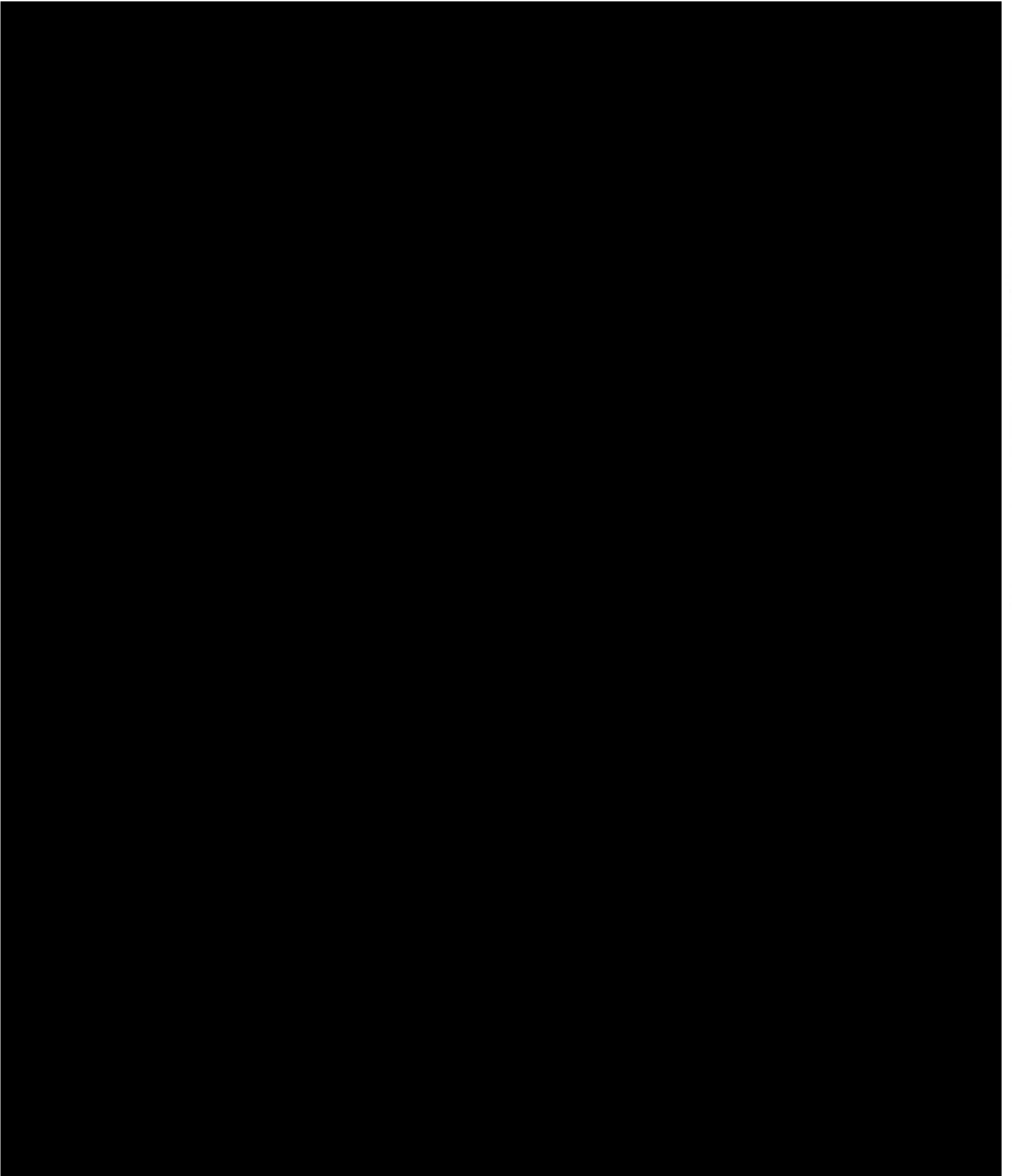


FIGURE 8.4. THE AGGRESSIVE CITY OF CAPITAL

SOURCE: CSSD 1987 Campaign Broadsheet



marketing. The long lineage of interdependence of both activities in the area adds to the depiction of an essential Spitalfields character:

You could not have had it as a Flemish textile industry if there were not cheap rents. You could not have cheap rents if the Market had not provided an historic barrier over many centuries to the City of London. The Market place coincides with an historic boundary of the walled City. Spitalfields was the first industrial support in our City. It developed illegally outside the City as well as when there were Elizabethan building regulations (Raphael Samuel House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 42).

The garment industry in Spitalfields has recently undergone revival and expansion through Bangladeshi participation, both as workers and as manufacturers. Much of the Campaign's case for protecting the Bangladeshi community rested on the protection and improvement of the garment industry, as indicated by its concern for training and workshop space. The garment industry is the prime economic base of the area. It is an economic base which, in many ways, defies the image of modern industry. Many businesses run on a family basis and are small-scale. People still walk to work in Spitalfields. The Campaign did not deny the poor conditions still suffered by many of those employed in the garment industry. It consistently argued that conditions should be improved and at times lamented the resistance of the garment workers to unionization (Bishopsgate Exhibition 1988). Yet the Campaign also praised the informality, the anti-modern feel of the garment industry.

The working character of Spitalfields is also embodied in the market tradition of the area. Spitalfields not only has the large Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market but also a complex of weekend street markets including Petticoat Lane, Brick Lane and Club Row. Samuel described Spitalfields as 'perhaps the best open air market in the world' (House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 42). Marketing does not fit so readily into the traditional concerns of the Left. This is the arena of private enterprise. But the market tradition of Spitalfields is, for the most part, small-scale and informal, at times vaguely criminal. It pre-figures and counters the High Street retailing of the contemporary urban scene. It is redolent of the village market:

Brick Lane market, with its little tributaries and subsections that trickle down the unmade side streets is the most anarchic of London street markets. It was there that Malcolm McLaren, the manager-to-be of the Sex Pistols, used as a lad to sell 78 rpm records from a push chair. Where else can you buy off adjacent barrows, ballet tutus, second hand teeth...Korean twist drills, rare Max Miller live records and a doll's house crammed with furniture? (Bishopsgate Exhibition 1988).



This, the Campaign argued, was the 'natural home of the working class' shopper.

The Spitalfields Wholesale Market is hardly of this calibre. Its 11 acre site is served by giant lorries bringing produce from around the world. The noise, traffic congestion and litter created by the Market are problems acknowledged even by the Campaign and part of the Campaign's case was to propose ways of solving these problems. Yet even this larger-scale, Corporation of London run enterprise was held to have an intrinsic charm which reiterated the broader character of the area. Photographs used in publicity material depict an industrious, vital and pre-technological Market (Figure 8.5.). In 1962, when Samuel first moved into the area, their practices were decidedly pre-industrial:

Spitalfields Market, although prosperous and expanding, still belonged, technologically speaking, to a pre-industrial age... a vast amount of fetching and carrying was done by barrow. Goods were loaded by hand rather than by fork-lift trolleys ...and one of the commonest sights in the Market was to see loads of produce carried on the head. There were still some ponies and carts...and...hand-drawn barrows. Notionally governed by the Corporation of London, the Market was nevertheless a kind of anarchy, a free open space spilling over to the nearby roads...and supporting a small army of irregulars (Samuel 1989b, 135-6).

The Wholesale Market was seen as intrinsic to the retention of both the garment industry and the more informal street market tradition. They were seen to be in 'harmony', to have an 'elective affinity':

The trades have...a mutuality in as much as they...sit in a similar position in land usage terms...they are both nuisances nobody wants to be near them and once you take one away from the other you immediately threaten one or the other (Kay Jordan House of Commons 1988, Day 7, 29).

Through its complementary land use and in its capacity to keep more antagonistic or less tolerant land uses at bay the Market was seen to be critically important to the maintenance of the industrial/trading basis of Spitalfields. It was the protector of a working class informality. This is the Spitalfields of the Old Left but one which is still deeply entrenched in the imagination and ideology of the New Left.

This traditional, socialist Spitalfields is under threat of transformation of which the Market is only one manifestation. There are more immediate and deeply entrenched threats to the working-class socialist Spitalfields: political threats from the loss of Labour power in local government and the withdrawal of funds for community-



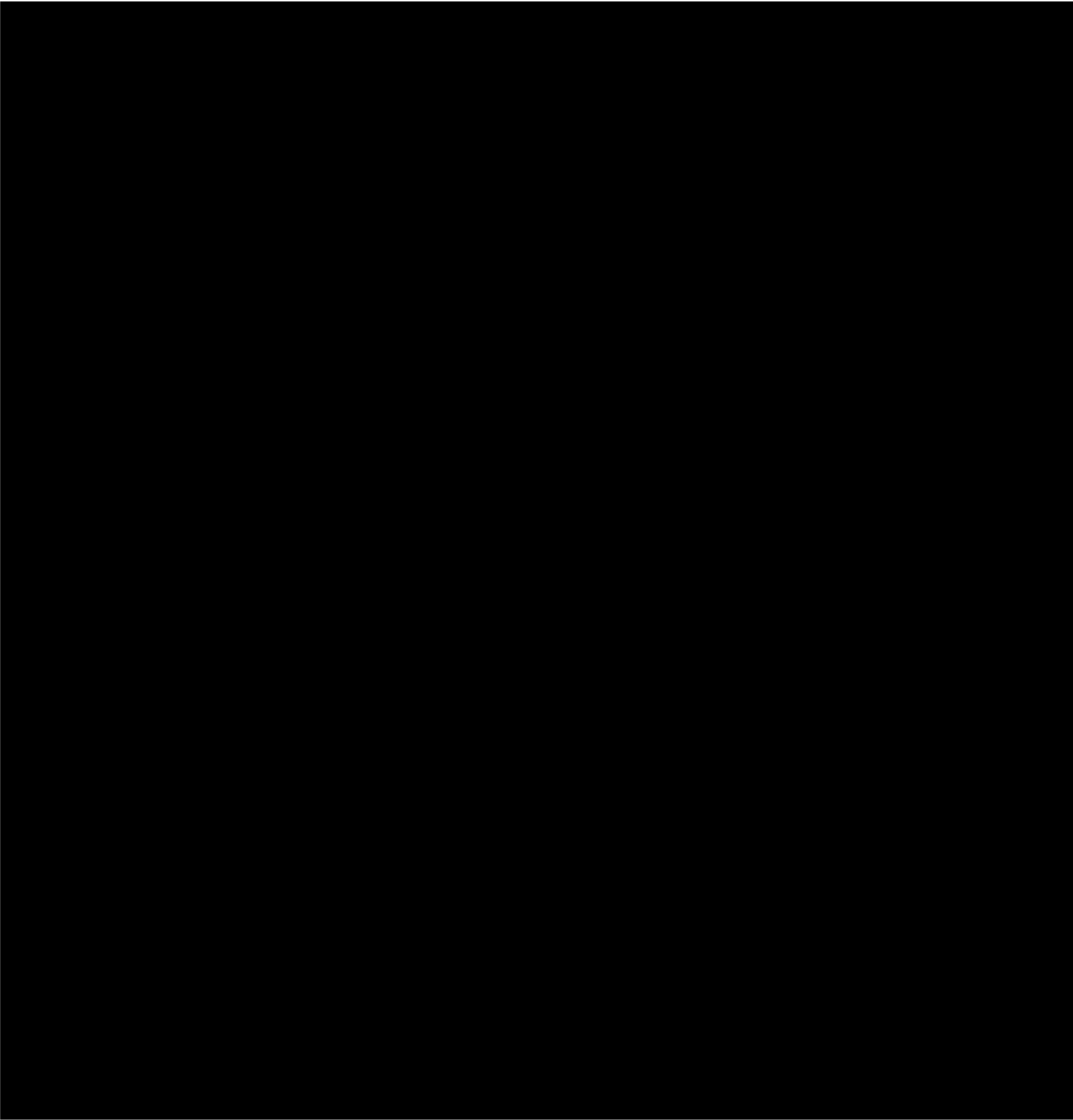


FIGURE 8.5. THE RUSTIC WORKING MARKET

SOURCE: CSSD 1987 Spitalfields Defender.

based services. Social and cultural threats have also arisen from the movement into Spitalfields of new communities with new imaginings and visions. It is to these alternative Spitalfields communities that I now turn.

### 8.2.2. Race and Place: Race and the Construction of Community

When the Prince of Wales made his clandestine visit to Spitalfields in 1987 in his capacity as patron and instigator of the Business in Community Initiative, he remarked that it was 'like a third world country'. Brick Lane may well be redolent of another world: the smell of curry, Bengali as the first language of the street, the chants from the mosque, saris and prayer mats.

The large Bangladeshi population in Spitalfields and its special needs were a prime concern of the Campaign's case. The Bangladeshi presence in Spitalfields worked to enhance the Campaign's construction of the unique Spitalfields community. It added to the continuity of Spitalfields' history:

For 300 years people have come to Spitalfields. Some stayed, some passed through. Despite that flux, the Market, the brewery and, above all, the textile industry survived those same 300 years. It is an extra-ordinary paradox - an area in constant change and yet unchanging. Spitalfields has been the haven for each new migration. It has been a place to settle, to rebuild broken lives...Migrants haven't chosen Spitalfields...There was nowhere else to go. And because there was nowhere else, they have defended it, cherished it...(Forman 1989, 4-5).

The presence of the Bangladeshi population, like the minority groups to precede them, added authenticity to the evocation of Spitalfields as pre-capitalist, pre-industrial. Forman, previously of SHAPRS and a Campaign witness, recounts the process in his book Spitalfields A Battle For Land:

With each migration Spitalfields has been charged by the struggle of village people in the vast metropolis - coming from small communities to one of the largest masses of humanity on earth. The village was self-sufficient. Spitalfields has been expected to provide the same self-sufficiency. Home, work, food, clothing, friends, relatives, doctors, schools, places of worship, markets must all be within that walking distance which was the pattern back in the village. The demands of the village being stitched into the complex design of metropolitan life make Spitalfields a place of unique richness and variety (Forman 1989, 5).



The Bangladeshi community has 're-enacted' a deep historical pattern of Spitalfields (Figure 8.6.). Samuel treated its presence as part of a 'natural' succession in which certain intrinsic patterns and practices indigenous to Spitalfields are reproduced by:

...the way in which the Bengalis when they came to Spitalfields seemed to re-enact the original pattern of Jewish settlement. They settled, most heavily, in the self-same streets. They took up the same trades. They practiced, it seems, the same kind of family economy, in which self-exploitation was a very condition of survival. Like the Jews they formed, within their own precinct, an ethnic majority, treating the streets and pavements as communal spaces, and the shops and restaurants as meeting places. The poultry yards on Cobb Street, where live chickens were trussed, served the Halal butchers in very much the same manner as the schechita-licensed slaughters had their Khosher predecessors; the great synagogue of Fournier Street became a mosque; Artillery Passage, the ancient haunt of the Dutch Jews, was turned into an emporium for Asian cloths; Ramadan replaced Passover (Samuel 1989b, 148).

In the Campaign's view, the Bangladeshi community has been the source of a 'natural' and 'spontaneous' regeneration of the area which could be an inspiration for the cities of the future.

... the revival of Spitalfields has taken place ..spontaneously and irrevocably through the settlement of Bengalis who have transformed what was a derelict street - Brick Lane - into a commercial and cultural centre. Both centres, as it were, of an enterprise culture but also a religious and social centre. So that something that was derelict is now...the model of a city that works (Raphael Samuel House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 41-42).

The Campaign's case constructed a particular Bangladeshi community which compliments its socialist agenda (see Brown 1981; Jackson 1987, 1989; Said 1978). Its construction inextricably tied the Bangladeshi community to an specific Spitalfields tradition; the area's role as a settling place for immigrant groups. The process and the pattern were seen as deeply indigenous and allowed for the construction of the Bangladeshi community as similarly indigenous. In this construction, the Bangladeshi people are not foreign to Spitalfields, but typical of Spitalfields. One Campaigner even referred to the Bangladeshis as the 'traditional' and 'indigenous' population of the area





FIGURE 8.6. THE BRICK LANE MOSQUE, FORMERLY A SYNAGOGUE AND BEFORE THAT A CALVANIST CHURCH.



(Phil Maxwell House of Lords 1989, Day 9, 18). In a sense, the Bangladeshi population is appropriated by the locality of Spitalfields. And the Campaign has appointed itself as protector of that locality (see K. Anderson, 1987, 1988 on a parallel process of racialization and place construction in the case of Vancouver's Chinatown). The Campaign sought to protect the capacity of Spitalfields to act as 'an historic receptor for immigrants' (Jil Cove House of Lords 1989, Day 8, 25).

The Market is central to the 'protection' of this Spitalfields and the Bangladeshi community it currently hosts. If the Market was moved the Campaign argued, Bangladeshi people would be forced 'away from the protective environs of Spitalfields', forced:

..to go outside the immediate area where they live and work, where language is a difficulty, and the possible threat of racist attack is heightened (Jil Cove House of Commons 1988, Day 9, 50).

The place-specific construction of the Bangladeshi community allows for the appropriation of this minority into a broader Labour imaging of the area which is rooted in the historical lineage of the area as a stronghold of Left politics and resistance (G. Rose 1988).

This process of 'appropriation' has been underway in Spitalfields at a more pragmatic level for some time. 'Protecting' the Bangladeshi community remains central to the local Labour Party's agenda under the New Guard. The Campaign's core members, in their capacity as Labour Party members, were instrumental in maintaining the 'haven' of Spitalfields by ridding Brick Lane of the National Front presence and campaigning against racist attacks which have been prevalent in the area (Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council 1978; Eade 1989; LBTH 1984). Labour has also actively sought to secure the Bangladeshi community as part of its local support base. Cove, MacDuff and Maxwell have worked to transform the practice, policy and participation of the Party at ward level from its white, working class base to a Bangladeshi base. They were instrumental in securing the pre-selection of Bangladeshi candidates for the 1986 local election (Eade 1989: Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89). Despite such efforts to empower the Bangladeshi community in terms of local politics, the Campaign's advocacy reverberated with paternalism. At times it edged into uncomfortable forms of racism, with one Campaigner suggesting that the Bangladeshi community could not benefit from job opportunities created by the redevelopment scheme because they have the wrong 'physique for the building industry' (Kay Jordan House of Commons 1988, Day 7, 33).



If the Campaign struggled to convince others that it had the broad mandate of the community, then their credibility, on the basis of active Bangladeshi participation, was even more difficult to defend. During two years of campaigning, only a handful of Bangladeshis attended meetings. Most attended only the inaugural meetings and only two attended more than one meeting. The most regular Bangladeshi participant was Abbas Uddin, Spitalfields Labour councillor (Field Records, CSSD Meetings, 1987-1989). While the rhetoric of the Campaign was solidly Bangladeshi the participation was solidly white. In the Select Committee Hearings, Councillor Uddin was the only Bangladeshi witness called. Ironically, while other Campaign witness talked repeatedly of protecting the Bangladeshi community, Uddin not once talked in these terms.

The relationship between the Bangladeshi community (which is itself a constellation of divergent interests) and the community of Spitalfields advocated by the Campaign, was deeply problematic. At the core of this was the unwillingness of some of the more powerful sections of the Bangladeshi community to comply with Labour's socialist vision for the area. This tension became manifest when, in 1989, a Bangladeshi-led community planning group was established in response to general development pressures in the area. The Market redevelopment is just one of a number of large-scale redevelopments proposed or underway. In addition to the 10 acre Spitalfields Market development, the immediate area of West Spitalfields faces 27 acres of additional redevelopment at Bishopsgate Goodsyards and Truman's Brewery. Already underway or complete are office schemes at Liverpool Street/Broad Street and Middlesex Street. At one point, an 800' tower was proposed for a small development site on Whitechapel, but this was withdrawn. To the east four additional sites are earmarked for redevelopment. This massive development boom is accompanied by two proposed new rail links into the area: an East-West cross rail tunnel with a new station and an east London Line extension (Figure 8.7)

Specifically in response to the Bishopsgate and Truman's redevelopments, a Community Planning Forum was established, with which the Campaign was initially involved along with various Bangladeshi interests. However, the Community Planning Forum was quickly usurped by the Bangladeshi-led Community Development Group (CDG).<sup>12</sup> The CDG engaged a community planner and produced its own community plan based around the utilization of Section 52 Planning Gains expected from the new

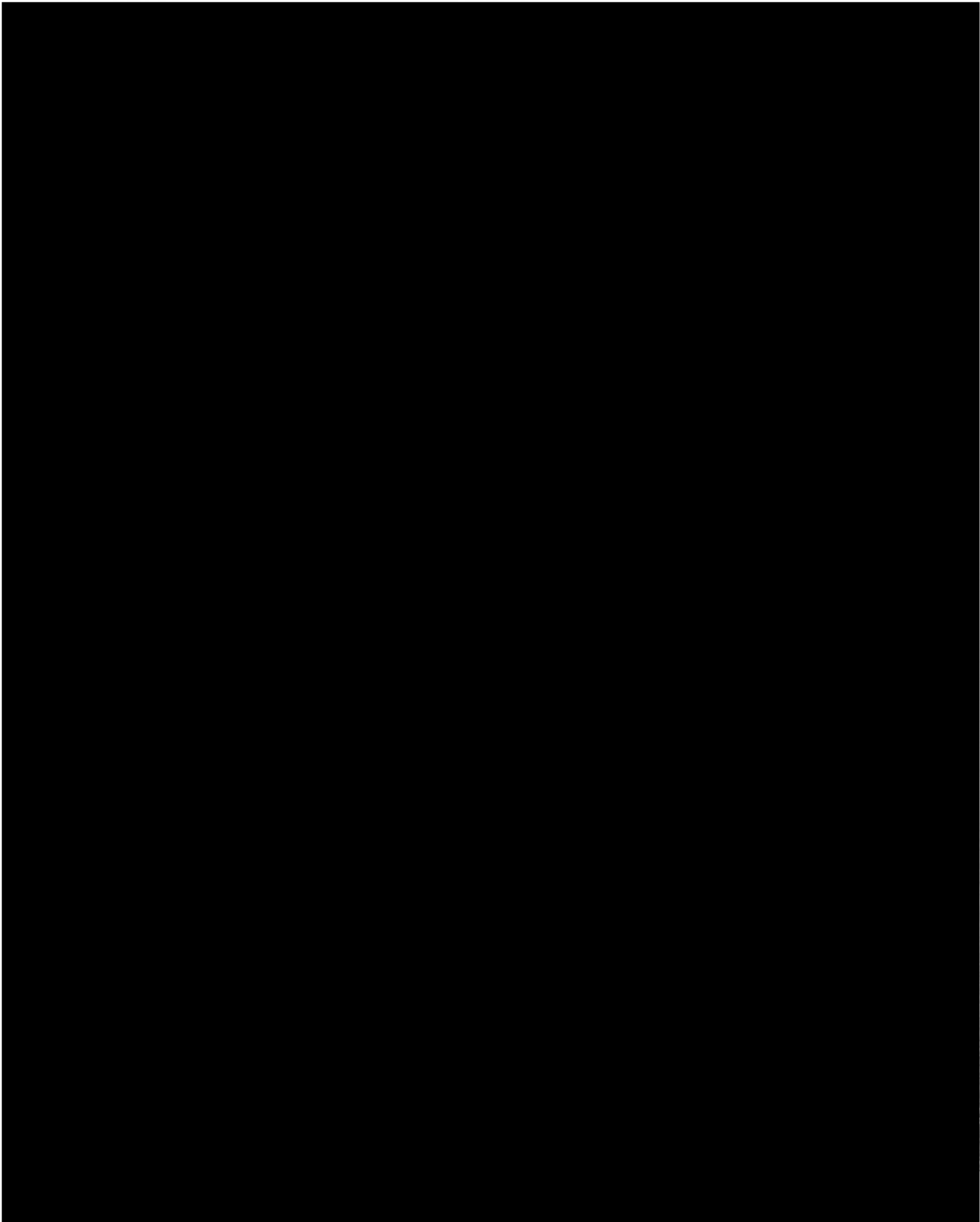
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<sup>12</sup>This process involved a complex local struggle (see Woodward, in preparation).



**FIGURE 8.7 PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT IN SPITALFIELDS AREA**

**SOURCE:: Spitalfields Community Development Group 1990**





developments. The key aim of the plan was the transformation of Brick Lane into 'Banglatown', 'a vivid mix of housing, bazaar and workshops' which would create:

...new opportunities for people in craft, retailing and the food industry as well as capitalizing on the area's obvious tourist potential (Spitalfields CDG 1990, 6).

The Bangladeshi-led initiative was viewed with suspicion and disparagement by the Campaign. It participated cautiously at first and then decided to distance itself from the initiative. The Campaign viewed the Bangladeshi initiative as collusion with the enemy, a calculated attempt by sections of the Bangladeshi community to commandeer Community Gain funds. The Campaign's judgement of the Bangladeshi initiative was partly based on party-political concerns and it made much of the links between the Bangladeshis on the CDG and the fundamentalist Bangladeshi Welfare Association. But it was the failure of these sections of the Bangladeshi community to fit the Left's construction of the socialist Spitalfields which was the prime source of tension:

Those people are into power and money and they can't understand us because we do care about the community and they don't understand that...they were never part of this campaign because there was not a deal in it for them (CSSD Meeting, 5/6/89).

Not only does this sector of the Bangladeshi community err because of its capitalist tendencies, the very traditional practices that the Campaign espouses constitute the source of tension:

The community is still new and still the power resides with the money lenders. They are not sophisticated...although that is the wrong word..they are not in to people power (CSSD Meeting, 5/6/89).

Similarly, the Campaign at one point 'crashed' a CDG meeting and, ironically, charged it with being unrepresentative because of the lack of female (and white) representation (CSSD Meeting, 5/6/89).

The Campaign's construction of the Bangladeshi community was clearly in tension with some Bangladeshi practices and ideologies. The Campaign spoke on behalf of the Bangladeshi community only in so far as it complied with the socialist underpinnings of the Campaign. Most particularly, the Campaign found it hard to reconcile some of the entrepreneurial practices based around private control of capital with its imagined Spitalfields working class solidarity and marginalized resistance. As the Chair of the Campaign reflected:

The new immigrants that come here need to have some sort of sense of identity and need to know the history of the area that they are living in and not just that they have come in and taken over that area and it becomes like another part of Bangladesh...people who come to live here have to have sympathy, empathy for what's gone on before and therefore the Bengalis that live here need to know that this has got a tradition and a history in Spitalfields. And we want them to sort of take that in as part of their development and their culture so that they feel that they can protect the community for what it has been in the past and want to become part of the community for what it has been in the past (Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89).

The Campaign celebrated the regeneration of Spitalfields through the Bangladeshi presence: the revitalization of the garment industry, the 'local colour' added to Brick Lane, the rich cohesive community and the family life which spilled on the the streets. The Bangladeshi presence also worked to revitalize and add new cogency to the particular concerns of the Left (both Old and New): housing, homelessness, racism, women's rights, working conditions. The Bangladeshi community mobilized in the Campaign's opposition to the Market redevelopment was that which conformed to this ideology. Divergent or contradictory impulses within the Bangladeshi community, such as the courting of development, the active pursuit of Planning Gain or entrepreneurialism, were distanced or discredited. These impulses challenged the Left's traditional role as advocate for, and protector of, the marginalized and the oppressed. More immediately, they were also beginning to challenge the power-base of the Left in an area which had until recently been a traditional site of socialism. Sectors of the Bangladeshi community, by ignoring the socialist agenda, challenge the basic cultural fabric of the Left and its lineage in areas like Spitalfields. It is a challenge that the local Left is also facing as a result of interests more familiar to the prime concern of this thesis, the conservationists; and it is to the interface between the imagined Spitalfields of the Left, the imagined Spitalfields of the conservationists and the redevelopment of the Spitalfields Market that the analysis now turns.

### 8.3. Community, Conservation and Capital.

The outright opposition of the Campaign to the Market redevelopment was in stark contrast to the initial collusion of the conservationists as explored in Chapter 6. The differing responses to the Market redevelopment attest to the ideological divergence of these interests and to the differing communities imagined. The conservationists accepted the transformation in Spitalfields as long as it complied with their aesthetic and social vision for the area. As Chapter 6 shows, they actively participated in the



creation of a successful development scheme in pursuit of their vision for the area. As in the City case, the conservationists in Spitalfields were willing and, more especially, able to engage in discussions about the redevelopment. Their vision was antagonistic to the Spitalfields lauded and guarded by the Campaign. The latter could not accept the proposed transformation, for ultimately the redevelopment placed profit above community need, opposing the Campaign's socialist agenda and further threatening the weakening cultural and political basis of its ideology.

The relationship between the local Left and the conservationists has not always been so starkly oppositional. The early Trust activities, and especially the Elder Street squat, were seen initially as congruent with the Left's local agenda of halting the incursion of offices and reversing the process of dereliction in the area. Raphael Samuel became the active local resident in the Trust's campaign to save the houses. Similarly, the Spitalfields Local Committee (SLC), which later became an important presence in the Campaign, initially supported Trust activities in the area. The Former head of the SLC, and a Campaign member, recollected how the Trust was initially viewed as fitting with the Left agenda for Spitalfields:

...it was another limited argument against office development and against Tarn and Tarn's [property agents] clamp on the area...It was another way of having a smack at that...a whole crowd of cronies were trying to put things back into...as they saw it the community...So there was tacit support but at a pretty naive level on our part (Interview Campaigner 1, CSSD/SLC, 8/5/89)

But early alliances between the Spitalfields Left and the Spitalfields Trust gave way to tacit and ultimately, quite vocal criticism when the scale and gentrifying consequences of the Trust's activities became more apparent:

I don't think that we quite realized the threat that they would become. It wasn't until later that it began to change and become a very select band and branched out into a whole lot of other things like the Georgian thing and that whole sort of life-style which is very alienating to local people (Interview Campaigner 1, CSSD/SLC, 8/5/89).

A member of the local Tower Hamlets (history) Society and another Campaigner described how at least one section of the local community began to feel alienated from the Trust's vision from the outset:

The people from the Tower Hamlets Society who had got involved were working class East Enders and many of them were very shocked at what happened in Elder Street...when they [the Trust] had a party to celebrate having saved it they did not even get asked to come. So already it was becoming their own private affair...two

years ago I saw a book on the neo-Georgians..I couldn't even stand to look at it (Interview Campaigner 2, CSSD/Tower Hamlets Society, 26/4/89).

The Left in Spitalfields became increasingly concerned about the social and economic consequences of Trust activity: the creation of a new elite group of wealthy residents with limited input to the broader community, the rise in property values, and the displacement of garment workshops (Figure 8.8.). Signs of limited opposition began to emerge: for example, in its advisory capacity to the local authority, the SLC consistently advised against all light industrial to residential change-of-use applications in the conservation areas (SLC Records).

The local Left (in its present form as the Campaign and in its previous incarnations) clearly imagined a different Spitalfields community from that imagined by the Trust. And it spoke of this imagined community in an entirely different language. The Trust's ideology was one of reverence for the past, expressed primarily in architectural and urban design terms. The Left revered a different past and expressed it through the idea and language of community. Driven by its vision for the area and equipped with a language which has become integral to urban transformation, the Trust was able to take part in on-going consultation and to contribute directly to the design of the first SDG scheme. Even in the face of a changed design, the Trust's compliance both with the process of redevelopment and with the language in which it is articulated enabled it to be influential in bringing the development to public inquiry. The Campaign's case against the Market was as deeply imbued with a heritage impulse. However, its political agenda and the language of community through which it was articulated, was totally oppositional to the process of capital accumulation manifest in the Market redevelopment.

The Campaign's community case was couched in the 'well rehearsed' issues of housing, unemployment and other social amenity arguments. Its efforts to engage in architectural and urban design assessments of the proposed scheme were debilitated firstly, by its inadequate understanding of these issues and secondly, by its view that these issues were 'superficial' and should ultimately defer to the material needs of the community (Interview Jil Cove, Chair CSSD, 17/3/89). The Campaign spoke of the aesthetics of the proposed development in broad sweep stereotypes of modernity: 'glass boxes', 'high rise canyons', 'lumpen offices' (Select Committee Hearings 1988, 1989; CSSD Spitalfields



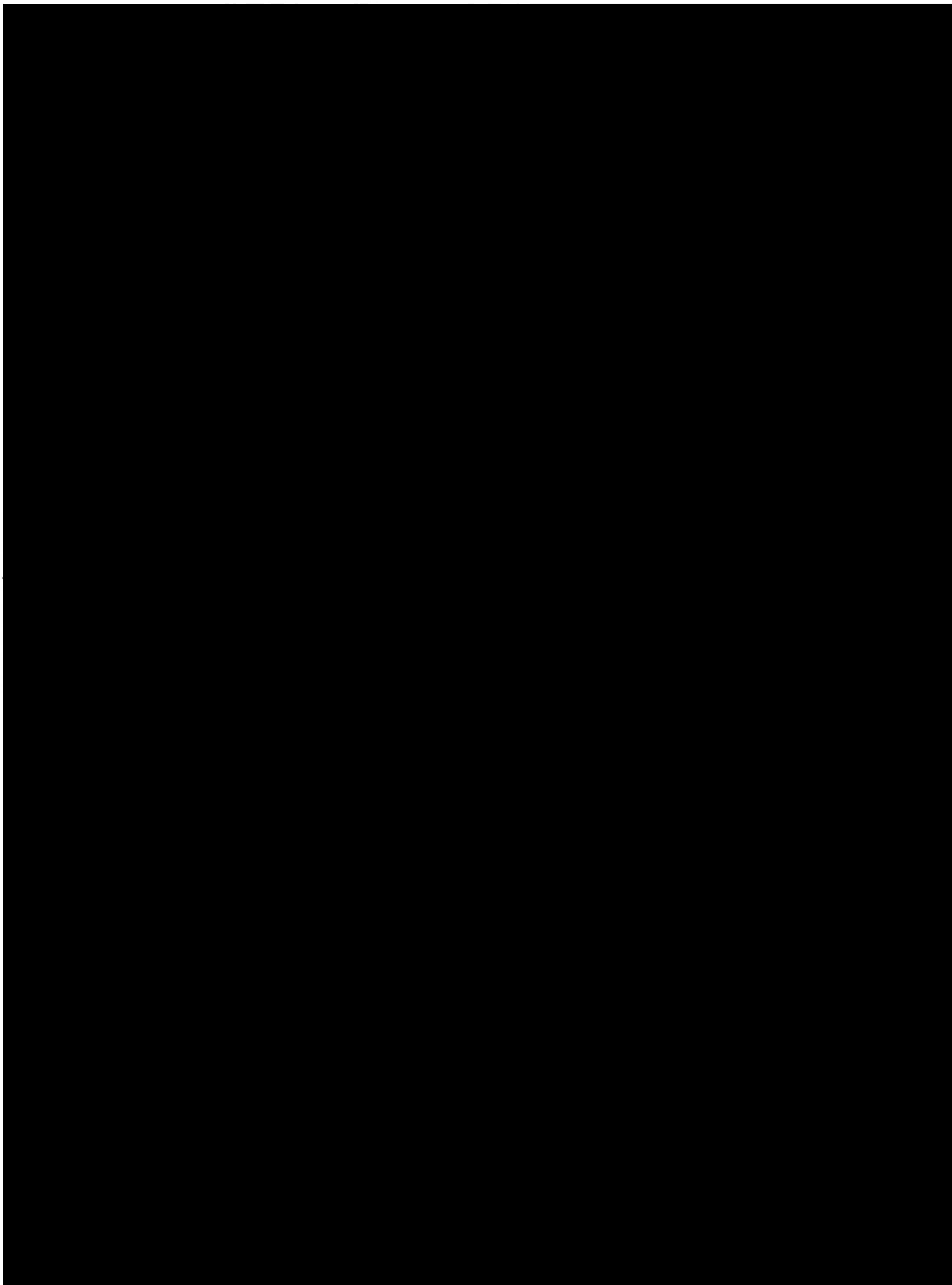


FIGURE 8.8. CHANGE OF USE IN SPITALFIELDS CONSERVATION AREAS 1970'S

SOURCE: Spitalfields Local Committee Records

Defender 1987). In one Campaign meeting, while deciding what issues should be raised in the Select Committee Hearing, it was asked:

CM: do we comment on the buildings?

KJ: it is an opportunity to say all these things so perhaps we should.

JC: the glass structures on the street are not very attractive (CSSD Meeting, 7/6/88).

The issue went no further than these bland comments on style. In the House of Commons Hearing a faint-hearted attempt was made by the Chair of the Campaign to elicit the views of the one witness they felt could deal with these issues, Raphaël Samuel. He evaded the invitation to comment on whether the proposed redevelopment drew not on local motifs but attempted to look 'like a hill-top in Italy' (Raphael Samuel House of Commons 1988, Day 8, 41). Such exchanges are far removed from the lengthy townscape arguments of the conservationists. Faced in the Lords with the request to reduce the amount of evidence presented, the Campaign elected to drop from its case the evidence of Raphael Samuel (which most directly connected with urban design/conservation issues) and emphasize the more familiar arguments about housing, employment and health.

The articulation of an explicit case for the protection of the community's unique social and industrial heritage depended almost entirely on the participation of Raphael Samuel, although as the preceding analysis has shown these ideas underpinned the entire Campaign. Only one other regular Campaigner had a special interest in conservation/history issues. Despite it being peripheral to its core agenda and despite the Campaign lacking in the language needed to engage with such issues, it was acutely aware of the political potential of heritage arguments. At the time, the Rose Theatre controversy was raging and the Campaign lamented that it had plenty of history but the wrong type of history. Members joked that they would be having better luck if the area was associated with Shakespeare and not Jack the Ripper. In another meeting, when doubt was cast about the lack of regular participation by Raphael Samuel, it was agreed to keep him involved because he 'speaks their language and we might just get someone who gives a damn about Hawksmoor' (CSSD Meeting, 9/4/90).

Indeed Raphael Samuel did speak in the language of the conservation/developer discourse. He could, for example, translate his community conservation case into a townscape case:



Architecturally, what I think is sad is that the beauty of Spitalfields is its actual position. There is a medieval sense of enclosure. There is a lovely church steeple and the whole point is that it is a mean street. There are fine churches in other parts of London, but it is in a very industrial district with very beautiful domestic streets, and it is a rather sensational church. The hickledy pickledy character of the district has given it its particular charm (Samuel 1990, 167).

He spoke in 'their language', both personally and on behalf of the Campaign, and did so in a way which drew the Spitalfields Market redevelopment into the more general 'heritage debate'. Samuel's views provide not only a closing moment for the empirical narrative of this thesis but also draw the empirical material towards theoretical closure. Here theory and practice are in a very real sense mixed.

Samuel's critique of the conservation/development collusion came from his position in part as a socialist historian and social commentator, in part as a local resident, in part as a Campaigner and in part as a conservationist. It was most clearly articulated in his oppositional contribution to the Spitalfields Trust's Tenth Anniversary volume (1990) but is also reiterated in his Select Committee appearances for the Campaign and in other published commentaries (Samuel 1987, 1988a, 1989b, 1990). In engaging critically with the conservation view generally and more particularly as manifest in Spitalfields, he depicts himself as authentically local, pre-conservation and architecturally innocent:

The word 'conservationist' enjoyed no currency when I bought my house in Spitalfields, and I would scarcely have known what it meant. My knowledge of architecture did not extend beyond Sir John Summerson's *Georgian London* (which I read about this time) and J.M. Richards' *Penguin on modern architecture* (Samuel 1989b, 143).

For Samuel it is the lack of authenticity in the Trust's vision of Spitalfields and the way in which it usurps the more radical imagined community of the Left which is the source of complaint:

Yet for all the insistence on authenticity, there is an inescapable element of artifice. The houses are designed not as living and working environments, nor yet as family houses, but first and foremost as period residences... as showcases of the restorer's art (Samuel 1989b, 162-163).

The pristine and inauthentic Spitalfields created by the conservationists is seen by Samuel and other Campaigners as indirectly heralding and actively facilitating the office development which they now struggle to keep at bay. For Samuel:

Spitalfields painfully illustrates the paradoxes and contradictions of inner-city regeneration. The protection of ancient buildings, instead of leading to the conservation of historic districts, is a licence for the bulldozer...conservation and clearance far from being opposites are two sides of the same coin (Samuel 1987, 21).

Samuel points to the complicity of heritage in urban transformation, a process that this thesis has documented in two differing economic, political and cultural terrains. Yet his view, and that of the Campaign, hint at a deeply resistant Left impulse which may have the consequences of protecting, or even museuming, deprivation.

#### 8.4. Conclusion

The Campaign's struggle against redevelopment of the Market and other areas of Spitalfields continues. In the most recent developments the Spitalfields Trust's attitude towards the Market redevelopment has shifted and, supported by the entire conservation lobby, it has successfully pressured for the development to be called in for public inquiry. For over three years, the Campaign has been unsuccessfully calling for the redevelopment to stop or at least to be taken to public inquiry. Such is the power of the conservationists. Or perhaps, such is the ability of conservation values to be incorporated into, and accommodated by, processes of urban capital accumulation. The Campaign's resistance is not simply a resistance to style but to the very process of capital accumulation. It is a position which leaves little room for a shared discourse apart from planning gain deals. It is a position which has further marginalized a political project which at once celebrates and reproduces aspects of its marginality in an effort to verify its political authenticity, whilst also seeking to liberate those marginalized groups. In Spitalfields the traditional political voice of the marginalized has become disempowered in the very cultural and geographical site of its roots. The Campaign's Left allegiances, and its loyalty to a cultural terrain which remains embedded in the industrial working class image of the Left, works to disempower it in an urban scene in which urban transformation is increasingly mediated through a dominant discourse of aesthetics and representation based on an apparently unchallenging, heritage mentality.



## CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The prime empirical concern of this thesis has been the role of heritage values in the process of urban transformation. I sought to extend and expand existing critiques by exploring the heritage impulse in the complex and power-laden setting of urban redevelopment. The thesis focused upon two cases of proposed urban redevelopment in London: the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment in the City of London and the Market redevelopment in Spitalfields. In these distinctive but inter-related cases, ideas associated with a valued past operated to legitimate both redevelopment and opposition to redevelopment. The discourses and actions associated with these controversial cases of London redevelopment provided the basic raw material of analysis.

The two cases have been reconstituted around a thematic tension of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities. The first of these themes referred to the various processes by which certain social and ideological orders are reified through the impulse to express or conserve the historic built environment. The second theme opened the way to explore an alternative heritage impulse which celebrated and sought to protect ways of life. Such an impulse was not necessarily expressed through the built form and at times it was deeply oppositional. Before drawing more general conclusions, I shall summarize the major elements of the argument.

### 9.1. Summary

In Chapter 1 I argued that the heritage critique has focused on overtly commodified realms such as museums or arenas where heritage values associated with powerful interests are clearly manifest. At best, the heritage critique has engaged with oppositional pasts by exposing processes through which these alternate pasts are appropriated and sanitized in the commodification process. I also noted that much of the heritage critique assumes that a turn to the past is a result of, or will result in, broader economic and cultural decline.

One aim of this thesis has been to challenge these empirical biases and analytical assumptions: firstly, by explaining how heritage values operate in and are a constituent part of urban transformation; secondly, by focusing on both dominant constructions of the past and consciously resistant and oppositional pasts; thirdly, by exploring expressions of heritage which are manifest in artefacts (the historic built environment) and in ways of life (the community). My aim has been to establish a more

complex depiction of the hegemony of heritage values in contemporary society. The two case approach was critical to this aim and Chapter 1 introduced the two cases which form the empirical core of the thesis.

Chapter 2 outlined the theoretical terrain of the thesis by focusing on culture, ideology and power; culture and the city; and heritage and the city. The concept of culture adopted in the study is an intersection of ideology, meaning and practices to which the concept of hegemony is critical, situating an understanding of culture within the context of differential power relations. However, the thesis has attempted to work away from the 'dominant ideology thesis' by examining variable expressions of dominant heritage values and variable expressions of resistant or oppositional heritage values. I argued for an approach to culture which retains an awareness of the mutually constitutive relationship between culture and material processes. Discursive and representational realms are critical to the understanding of cultural processes, but these 'texts' are part of a broader sphere of cultural practice in which attention should be given to authorship, settings, inter-textuality, ideological lineage, action and material imperatives.

In the second section of Chapter 2, I discussed the ways in which culture has been incorporated into explanations of the city and urban processes and showed how the dominance of a political economy perspective in urban analysis has led to a neglect of culture in urban explanations. New developments in social theory generally, and in geography specifically have seen culture reinstated as an important factor in explaining urban processes. I distanced myself studies which attempt to read the urban landscape as text, preferring an approach which gives attention not just to the built forms but to discursive and representational practices associated with or generated by the urban environment, both as a material and social realm.

Finally in I reviewed studies concerned with heritage and conservation values in the urban context. Some research on processes of gentrification have helped in the understanding of how cultural values intersect with and play a constitutive role in processes of urban transformation - processes which were previously explained only in terms of economics and capital accumulation. I argued that the recent heritage critique has assisted in the development of a more critical approach to the manifestation of heritage values in the urban scene: moving away from the mere documentation of historic environments or the description of conservation efforts towards an understanding based on the political and material implications of the heritage impulse in the urban scene.



Chapter 3 detailed the methodology of the thesis. Three key methodological elements were outlined: the two case approach, the reliance on contextualized discourses, and the adoption of a thematic writing strategy. The two cases were selected in part because of their clear distinctiveness (one the site of power and wealth, the other the site of marginalization and deprivation), and in part because of their spatial proximity and interconnectedness. As such I consciously and openly constructed a specific ontological terrain in which I could explore the variable manifestations and expressions of heritage values in urban transformation. My decision to concentrate on contextualized discursive practices accords with the growing emphasis on language and discourse in social science methodology. Chapter 3 described the approach to contextualized discursive practices taken in the thesis: the attention to the lineage of ideas, the biography of authors, the intertextuality of discourses, the action of participants, and material imperatives and consequences. The techniques used in the field and the special role of public discourses in the study were explained. The chapter then turned to the interpretive techniques used to deal with the vast body of qualitative material collected.

The final aspect of method dealt with in Chapter 3 was the 'textual strategy' adopted in the writing of the material. The process through which the two case studies were reconstituted around thematic tensions of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities was explained and justified. I argued that the thematic tension allowed for an analysis of how heritage values encapsulate and legitimate dominant historicities expressed in the built form (Making Monuments) but also how the heritage impulse can also connect with alternative and at times oppositional historicities not necessarily expressed through a concern with the built environment (Imagining Communities). The final section of Chapter 3 outlined the new narrative structure which was imposed on the case material by way of the thematic tension. I stressed that while this work has sought out diversity and tension, it has not sought completely to divest the case material of an explanatory potential based around a narrative style. The new narrative framework developed through the thematic tension of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities took the reader from an exploration of a clear example of dominant values being reified in the built environment through to a clearly oppositional heritage impulse based around community.

Chapter 4 set the various ideological and practical strands manifest in the cases in an historical context as a more general introduction to the case studies. The basic thematic tension of Making Monuments and Imagining Communities was present in the thinking of William Morris who is claimed as hero by both conservationists and the Left.



The Chapter then traced a number of ideas and practices which are critical to heritage impulses as evidenced in the two case studies. Within the impulse of Making Monuments, I explored the Survey of London, the Townscape Movement, conservation legislation and the New Conservation of SAVE Britain's Heritage. Through the theme of Imagining Communities I explored the antecedents to alternative heritage impulses more clearly grounded in the idea of community and with an oppositional potential, most notably radical community studies and the History Workshop. These variously expressed antecedents demonstrated that the heritage impulse is deeply and complexly embedded in contemporary ideology and practice and hold both reactionary and revolutionary potentials

Chapter 5 explored the theme of Making Monuments in relation to the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment and in terms of the views of the Corporation of London and the development team of Peter Palumbo. This chapter presented the clearest example of heritage serving the reification of dominant and powerful values in the built environment. The evidence showed that the Corporation of London relied heavily on the concept of townscape to oppose the redevelopment scheme. The townscape principle naturalized and reified in the built form a range of social structures which were seen as essential elements of the City, as a unique locality, a national capital, a global financial centre and as one-time centre of Empire. Three specific meaning constellations were explored in relation to the Corporation and the No. 1 Poultry site: Hierarchy and Democracy, Morality and Money, and Englishness, Empire and Europe. The existing built environment was lauded by the Corporation for its hierarchy and the deference of the buildings on the proposed development site to monumental buildings which house prime City functions such as the Mansion House, the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange and St Paul's. The Corporation's emphasis on historicism has placed it in tension with financial interests in the City who saw the need for the City to expand and renew its existing built fabric in order to maintain its role as a global financial centre. In contrast, the Corporation argued that it is the unique historic character and ambience of the City which allowed it to continue to compete effectively as a global financial centre. This tension was seen as part an expression of two types of international City: one based on the old City as Heart of the Empire and one based on the new global city.

Chapter 5 then examined the views of the developer, Peter Palumbo, and his team of experts. The shift from an uncompromisingly modernist building by Mies van der Rohe to the contextual and classically inspired style of James Stirling was interpreted an important manifestation of the growing hegemony of historicism in urban design. Although the developer had an entirely different vision for the site which entailed



demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a monumental new building, I showed how he legitimated this vision through the same language and ideology of townscape as the Corporation. The developer replaced Corporation notions of hierarchy with his own townscape argument of equity and monumentality. The vision of Palumbo was analysed in the context of the transforming financial and spatial practices of the global financial City and I suggested that the most clearly 'historical' aspect of Palumbo's scheme was his pursuit of a vision to redevelop a central City site at a time when the remainder of City has been turning to fringe areas. Chapter 5 concluded by noting that both the Corporation and the developer demonstrated the hegemony of heritage in urban transformation.

Chapter 6 continued the exploration of the case material in the context of Spitalfields. Here a more diminutive, domestic built form was the prime focus of conservation efforts. The theme of Making Monuments was explored in terms of the proposed Market redevelopment and in particular the views of the local conservationists and the developer. It was found that local conservationists actively colluded with early development proposals. This collusion stood in contrast to popular images of conservationists as unfailingly opposed to large-scale, new development. To understand this contradiction, a close examination was made of the conservationists' activities in the area. I argued that the Spitalfields Trust saw themselves as an alternative, inner-city development force and pursued their aim of restoring the unique Georgian houses in the area through a grand redevelopment vision. A critical part of this redevelopment vision was ridding the area of the Market which was seen to be incompatible with the residential Georgian enclave the Trust sought to reinstate. The Trust's conservation efforts and grand vision for the area provided a second example of the reification of certain social and cultural orders in the built environment.

But the Spitalfields Trust case was also of interest because it provided the first major shift in the empirical material towards the alternate theme of Imagining Community. The Trust's activities were centred on the built environment but had implications for the existing social structure and economic practices of the area. Like many gentrification processes, it directly or indirectly resulted in the displacement or containment of a range of local practices (such as the Market and the Bangladeshi garment industry) thought incompatible with the conservation impulse. Furthermore the Trust was self-conscious in its promotion of a particular new community of gentrifiers who had the social and aesthetic credentials and the financial resources to ensure that the houses were appropriately restored.



Chapter 6 also explored the views of the two developers who competed to redevelop the Market site. In their collusion with the conservationists, there was a recognition of the importance and influential status of the conservation lobby in London planning. In both of the early design schemes there were various historical references in design style and in promotional rhetoric (often in direct response to the conservationists). As in the City, heritage was critical in the legitimation of major urban change.

Chapter 7 developed the alternative theme of Imagining Communities. Returning to the City and the No. 1 Poultry redevelopment, the response of a local group called CARE, in coalition with the national pressure group SAVE Britain's Heritage, was examined. The case of the CARE/SAVE coalition was based on the protection of the existing historic built environment but was articulated through the rhetoric and idea of community. The urban imagery mobilized and defended in the CARE/SAVE case against the No. 1 Poultry scheme sought to preserve the very same environment that the Corporation revered but it did so through a range of values emphasizing not the power of the City but its village quality. It was noted that the CARE/SAVE coalition was based around a mutually beneficial relationship - conservationists were able to add economic legitimacy and viability to their programme of refurbishment through the small retailer, while the retailers were able to use conservation as part of a broader strategy of protecting their retailing interests. The SAVE/CARE coalition saw the coming together of conservation and small capital and its presentation through the ideology of community. In this case the village metaphor provided the symbolic articulation of a community interest which had only a tenuous ontological status. The village metaphor may be contradictory to the Heart of the Empire metaphor but did not subvert the prime financial functioning of the City. Indeed I argued that it was presented as a means of ensuring that the transforming global city remained 'domesticated'.

Chapter 8 explored the theme of Imagining Communities in the Spitalfields case. The Campaign to Save Spitalfields From the Developer provided a radical example of the themes and tensions already encountered in the thesis. The Campaign's case was equally bound in historical references and imaginings but these were primarily tied to the impulse to preserve and enhance certain existing ways of life seen to be of critical importance in terms of the Left alliance of the group. In defending the Market, the Campaign did not identify the built form as being important. Rather, the Market was valued as a real and symbolic blockade against the movement east of the City, which so potently encapsulated the traditional enemy of the Left. The Left in Spitalfields constructed a specific notion of community which clearly built upon certain historical features of the area: the immigrant history, the working class history and the market



tradition. The Spitalfields case was in tension with conservation impulses and interests in the area. The changes resulting from conservation were part of a range of forces working to transform existing social groupings and economic practices which have previously been the traditional support base of the Left. Thus, the initial collusion of conservationists with the redevelopment scheme confirmed the status of conservation as deeply oppositional to Left concerns.

## 9.2. Conclusions

In this section I deal with some of the methodological issues raised in the thesis, specifically, the two case approach and the attention to discourses. I then examine the value of the research in understanding a the 'heritage critique' and the role of heritage values in urban transformation. I also discuss some of the practical planning implications of the study. Finally, I conclude by addressing the implications of the study for geographical understanding of meaning and the environment.

### 9.2.1. Methodological implications

The methodology of the thesis had two distinctive features: the two case approach and the attention to discourses. The two case approach was adopted to help highlight the variably manifest expression of heritage interests. However, my cases do not simply depict distinct but homogeneous heritage impulses or ideologies as expressed in different places. The attention to differentially empowered points of view or opinions in each of the two study areas provides a more complex depiction of variations through space. There is variable expression of a range of differently empowered heritage values which, at times, are specific to the locality and, at other times, local variations of more general impulses.

The potential of multiple case studies is being recognized not only in geography through the locality studies school, but also in other disciplines, such as the multi-locale approach advocated by some anthropologists (Marcus 1986). The emphasis within locality studies on place-specific variations in broader processes of economic restructuring attests to the potential not only of single area locality studies, but also the need to build a comparative project based around a multiple locale approach. I would argue that the careful and overt orchestration of interconnected, multiple case studies is a crucial methodological device in developing an understanding of how local conditions (including local cultures) intersect with, and play a constitutive role in, the (re)production of more general processes. In this project 'typicality' is of less significance than the presence of some known interconnectedness or shared experience. In my study, the shared experience of City expansion was caught by the

spatial proximity of the two cases. Other studies have suggested that spatial proximity is not a prerequisite for the existence of shared experiences or processes (e.g. Massey 1984).

Further, I would argue that the full potential of the multiple case approach is best realized when it is liberated from a rigid comparative framework. This is not to suggest that comparisons cannot or should not be made. However, to view case studies simply as a testing ground for more general processes confines their explanatory potential to a debilitating nomothetic/idiographic tension. In this sense, my writing strategy based around thematic tensions common to both cases rather than a simple chorological presentation was an attempt to explore ways of dealing with multiple cases outside a strictly comparative model.

The second distinctive characteristic of my methodology is the attention to discourse. Discursive realms are seen as critical elements in understanding both meaning and ideology, and in particular their production, circulation and hegemonic status. Language plays an important role in naturalizing ideas and meanings, and giving them broader credence and legitimacy. While the attention to discourse acknowledges the importance of language, I reject methods which seek understanding only through the characteristics of language itself. Language is part of a broader realm of discursive practice based around the spoken and written word, symbolic action, visual representations and other discursive forms and practices. It is essential to develop an understanding of this broad discursive realm through reference to both its content and its context. In contextualizing the discursive realms of planning conflicts, I adopted a range of strategies: attention to authorship, the circumstances of the production and circulation, the ideological lineage and the material imperatives and consequences. This entailed the use of a range of methods: biographic, ethnographic, historic and economic analysis.

In all studies dealing with discourse, there remains a persistent problematic associated with claims of validity, intentionality and truth. These are only partly overcome by attention to contextual details which can work to validate the interpreter's understanding and explore the intent of those originally producing the object discourses. Although the discourse analysis in this thesis has uncovered what may appear to be 'hidden' meanings, it is not suggested that I or my interpretation stands 'above' or closer to the 'truth'. I do not suggest that I know better what was being said than those who were producing the discourses which form the basis of my interpretation. I interpret texts which were consciously and knowingly produced by their authors and, in so doing, set them in broader contexts, in relation to other theoretical



discourses, and in relation to my own authorial characteristics. From this a new text is produced, the discourse extended. I believe that attention to discursive realms is a valuable element in understanding social processes and in particular, in highlighting the political nature of values and meanings. Discourse analysis points to an important new area of research within geography and is particularly compatible with the revised and radicalized cultural geography.

### 9.2.2. The Hegemony of Heritage

I now turn to the implications of the empirical emphasis of the thesis, that is, the role of heritage values in urban change. At the broadest level the research suggests that there is a 'hegemony of heritage' in current processes of urban transformation in London. Urban redevelopments are legitimated through references to heritage and opposition is expressed in similar terms. The thesis has extended the understanding of the pervasiveness of the contemporary interest in heritage and the critique of this phenomenon in a number of ways: firstly, in terms of the dominant ideology thesis and the nature of hegemony; secondly, in terms of the thesis of decline and, relatedly, in terms of the links between heritage and capital processes; finally, in terms of power in the city and the way the urban environment meets or fails to meet the needs of those who live there. This section deals with these varying implications of the hegemony of heritage.

#### 9.2.2.1. Heritage as dominant ideology

Much of the political weight of the heritage critique has come from exposing the links between conservation efforts and dominant ideologies: my case material substantiates this critique by demonstrating that, in certain situations, heritage does indeed serve to reproduce powerful and privileged orders and ideas. This was most apparent in the case of the conservation efforts of the Corporation in the City of London and the Spitalfields Trust in Spitalfields and was reiterated in the case of developers using the heritage aesthetic. However, the case material at once extends and dismantles the dominant ideology thesis by suggesting that it is too rigid a depiction of the heritage phenomenon. A narrow, dominant ideology thesis overlooks much of the complexity and shifting basis of the broad popularity and legitimacy of heritage, and in particular some of its revolutionary potentials.

Through attention to multiply-expressed heritage impulses, the case material has demonstrated the inadequacy of depicting the hegemonic potential of heritage by exploring only those cases in which it serves dominant interests and reifies dominant historical narratives. By concentrating on the diverse interests of developers, liberal-



mind conservationists and the urban Left, I have elaborated the pervasiveness and variability of the heritage impulse. Further, in my attention to differentially empowered interests and the mobilization of different historicities, I have highlighted the shifting and contested nature of the contemporary interest in the past.

It is necessary to go beyond an account of powerful interests asserting dominant heritage values or the appropriation and recycling of these values in the processes of capital accumulation. This thesis has done so by focusing on two neglected strands of the heritage phenomenon: the populist New Conservation of groups like SAVE Britain's Heritage, and the oppositional heritage impulses of the Left. These two manifestations of the heritage ideology are critical for our understanding of the complexity and the pervasiveness of the phenomenon and, consequently, to our understanding of how powerful interests can successfully assert heritage values more widely. The broader hegemony of heritage is best understood when it is explored in its many forms which include the alternative and potentially oppositional or resistant forms, such as the 'community' heritage of the Left in Spitalfields.

Part of the hegemony of heritage resides in the way in which certain ideas associated with the urban past have become naturalized and gained legitimacy in planning policy. The various conservation interests encountered in the case studies, and particularly the manifestations of the New Conservation (SAVE Britain's Heritage and the Spitalfields Trust), have consciously worked to popularize the cause of preserving historic buildings of all kinds. In popularizing heritage, the conscious conflation of this concern with two key elements of the contemporary urban scene has been critical. Links have been made between the project of conserving the historic built environment, the interests of capital and the idea of community. The conservation lobby has been successful firstly, in producing a heritage ideology based on ideas of democracy and populism and secondly, in establishing conservation of the built form as an economically viable, development alternative. Conservation has a unique capacity to encapsulate both a community potential and a capital potential in its ideology, and for that reason it has become broadly acceptable as the dominant aesthetic of urban transformation.

Not all aspects of this process have been negative. Conservation efforts have expanded to include artefacts and buildings which at one time were seen as unimportant or marginal to dominant historical narratives. Buildings of lesser age, which reflect less grand aspects of history or which are only of local importance, are now all seen as valued elements of the inherited built environment. The townscape principle has allowed for elements of the urban environment which may not have



intrinsic historic or architectural value to be revalorized in terms of their contribution to the local scene. These developments have been an important part in the 'democratization' of conservation and the shift away from conservation simply serving to reify dominant interests or national pasts.

Yet this new 'democratic' conservation harbours a more complex hegemony. For example, the ethnographic accounts of the conservation movement demonstrate that this democratizing ideology and practice is still the product of an elite of often privileged experts. Indeed, the emphasis within heritage on built forms rather than ways of life or social practices consolidates the dichotomy between a democratic ideology and an elitist practice. The heritage agenda and heritage practice still rests in the hands of experts with often specific class interests: architects, architectural historians and townscape consultants. Heritage has become a pervasive and powerful force in planning and conservation of the historic built environment, accepted as 'common sense' in planning and as a reflection of the popular will of the people. It is this very credibility and populism which leaves the heritage aesthetic and ideology open to appropriation by a range of interests seeking to legitimate their actions and ambitions - be they profit seeking developers or an ailing or reforming Left. For example, the developer's use of a heritage aesthetic could be cited as the clearest example of powerful interests, the interests of capital, asserting a heritage aesthetic. But the decision by developers to present their schemes within a heritage aesthetic is, in part, an expedient response to the pre-existing dominance of conservation values in urban planning policy and is often simply a measure to placate possible opposition. The developers' engagement with the heritage aesthetic and mentality has been in terms of appropriating and recycling a past which has been popularized and depoliticized at the hands of its main proponents and guardians, the conservationists. Developers have adopted the heritage aesthetic in the interest of and to legitimate capital accumulation but their capacity to do so must be set within a broader and more complex process associated with the conservation movement itself and which has seen the heritage impulse variably manifest.

#### 9.2.2.2. Heritage and decline

The heritage impulse has been interpreted by some as a response to economic decline. The upsurge of the heritage industry is partly associated with decline in other sectors of the economy, for example, the revalorization of redundant industrial buildings as museums. The case material in my study points to a more complex relationship between economic restructuring and the heritage impulse. The two redevelopment proposals which form the focus of the study are not products of



economic decline but rather of development speculation based upon the recent expansion of the City's status in global financial practices. Thus the hegemony of heritage is also associated with economic expansion.

Further a decline thesis fails to accommodate the radical potential of oppositional heritage impulses which find their political force in the the protection and revalorization of ways of life associated with the declining industrial and manufacturing sectors, as in the case of the Left in Spitalfields. It might be argued that the focus of the heritage critique on 'decline' in part conflates ontology and ideology. The narrative decline and heroic redemption from decline by a turn to the past is a key theme in conservation ideology and rhetoric (and contemporary discourse more generally, see Cooke 1990). The perception of decline is better conceived as one of the sustaining mythologies of conservation ideology and rhetoric than a critical point of entry into its explanation.

A more appropriate explanation of the heritage impulse can see it associated with a range of uneven transformations and restructurings which impact on local and national practices and imaginings and on the built environment itself. Questioning the economic decline thesis does not invalidate the important role that transformation and change (in terms of economic expansion or contraction) plays in generating, securing and amplifying a turn to the past. Throughout the case material it is apparent that historicities are regularly associated with the re-assertion, reification or invention of orders and practices facing transformation or even wholesale destruction. In this sense, the case material suggests that the turn to heritage is more appropriately an expression of shifting power relations, in part associated with economic transformation.

A thesis which associates the heritage impulse with restructuring and transformation can accommodate the more recent recession in which the two case areas are now set. While the two study areas were experiencing the various manifestations of City expansion during the period of research, this trend has now turned. The building and property booms are at an end. Already the Spitalfields Market redevelopment has undergone numerous redesigns in an attempt to adjust to changing economic circumstances. The current economic situation may see the demise of such large-scale, City fringe redevelopment - they may become heritage items themselves, artefacts of the eighties. In this changing economic climate of recession it may become more apparent that the heritage impulse does not simply reside in commodification associated with service sector expansion. This is an important but not singular expression of a more deeply and complexly embedded ideology and practice.



### 9.2.3. Culture and Capital

The extension of our understanding of the heritage critique through the case of urban regeneration and redevelopment has implications for the way in which we understand the city and urban processes. Urban restructuring and transformation cannot simply be explained in terms of economics, not even more complex theses of uneven development. Change is a process of capital and does have material implications both in terms of the form of built environment and the conditions under which people must live. But these process are clearly mediated through and constituted by culture. It has been noted by those approaching the city from traditional political economy perspectives, such as Harvey and Zukin, that culture plays a part in urban transformation. But my research extends our understanding of the role of culture in urban transformation beyond the assertion that capital uses culture or that culture is an expression of capital. This is part of the process certainly, and the appropriation by developers of a heritage aesthetic in design and promotional rhetoric attests to this. Nor would the case material sustain a view that representations or cultural products somehow lie outside of capital processes and can act as an isolated variable of agency or determination. Throughout my study I have attempted to dismantle such persistent polemics of the culture/capital relationship.

For example, the New Conservation, as manifest in the Spitalfields Trust and the SAVE/CARE coalition, provides an example of the complex, mutually constitutive relationship between capital and culture. The New Conservation has actively sought to provide conservation of the historic built environment with new legitimacy by recasting conservation in economic terms, by developing economic strategies based on cultural agendas. The New Conservationists have played an important role in connecting conservation/heritage interests to broader urban processes, such as linking the restoration and recycling of redundant buildings to new uses, most notably associated with the expanding service sector. New Conservationism has practiced conservation strategies which dismantle the old capital versus conservation dichotomy, by promoting conservation as a viable economic alternative to new build. In consequence, the growing closeness of conservation strategy and capital reinvestment means that conservation is increasingly complicit with, rather than oppositional to, capital processes. Thus, the narrative of the 'battle' often shrouds a more complex process of collusion and compatibility between the capital agenda, especially as manifest in flexible capital processes associated with the service sector, and conservation. Conservation is now part of the processes of capital accumulation in the city - not just because the developers are appropriating the conservation aesthetic - but because

conservationists have actively translated their agenda into economic terms. The New Conservation of SAVE and the Spitalfields Trust speak of alternative strategies of capital accumulation and reinvestment in which conservation is set as a sympathetic and even positive attribute. In these examples, the interests of capital come to serve cultural objectives. In both the Spitalfields Trust and the CARE/SAVE coalition, this was more often in terms of 'small capital': retailing and private house ownership. But it clearly has the capacity to be tied to 'big capital' as the Spitalfields Trust's open collusion with the developers of the Market schemes demonstrates. In this sense it is highly significant that the Trust's ultimate withdrawal came not because it disagreed with the capital project being proposed but because the aesthetics of that transformation were incompatible with its own.

On the other hand, the Spitalfields Left present a deeply contradictory version of the relationship between culture and capital. Here a Left heritage is forged from the culture of deprivation and oppression which was itself a product of the conditions of old capitalism. This culture is revered and represented as deeply oppositional to the new forms of capital accumulation, either as more overtly manifest in the developer's proposals for Spitalfields or as more subtly manifest in the gentrifying efforts of the Trust.

#### 9.2.4. Conservation and community

Thus far, the conclusion has focused on the relationship between conservation and capital but there is another fundamental tension which exists between historicities associated with and expressed through conservation of the built environment and less tangible historicities of community. The thesis has established that populist conservation ideology has engaged directly with the ideology of community, connecting its redemptive capacity to the celebration, protection and at times invention of urban communities. This was evident in the various manifestations of the New Conservation: the SAVE Britain's Heritage/CARE coalition in the No. 1 Poultry case and in the Historic Buildings Trust in Spitalfields. In these cases the community idea was mobilized in association with the conservation agenda.

In New Conservation discourse a depoliticized community is forged and represented. This is evident in associating 'community' with the Leitmotif of the village. In the City case, a 'community' of retailers was forged in a locality which lacks a feeling of community based upon a local, residential population. The City case shows how the conservation agenda gains legitimacy by being refracted through the idea of a depoliticized community tracing a lineage to liberal populism. The relationship between the conservation agenda and local communities is not, however,



unproblematic. Within the City case, for example, a tension existed between the conservation impulse and local 'ways of life' associated with the financial City. The latter, although not articulated in terms of the idea of community, did represent local interests and practices. In Corporation ideology, as manifest in the Local Plan, this tension was uncomfortably resolved by a link being made between the City's unique historic character and its capacity to maintain and enhance its role as a leading financial centre.

The Spitalfields Trust case shows that a community rhetoric can be used to legitimate conservation practices which reify values, social orders and aesthetics of a privileged sector. These can have real impacts on the existing communities. In Spitalfields, a new community of gentrifiers, who were ideologically and financially capable of pursuing the conservation agenda, self-consciously produced and promoted such a 'community'. The conservation actions of the Spitalfields Trust were, at times, deeply contradictory to two specific strands of local culture: the Bangladeshi people and the local Left. The conservationists forge and mobilize a depoliticized idea of community which works to divest the Left of one of their traditional ideological roots and to marginalize more radical and deeply oppositional ideas of community.

In noting the hegemony of heritage, and particularly heritage impulses associated with the built form or a depoliticized idea of community, I do not wish to imply that the Left's version of the past is somehow more authentic. The case material on the Left in Spitalfields reveals that its construction of the past and its refraction through the idea of community are equally ideological and tension-filled. Its significance to the study is not to point to a more authentic past but to highlight both the pervasiveness of heritage impulses and the ability of the past to serve a range of interests, including those with radical potential.

#### 9.2.5. Modernity, postmodernity and power

Part of the hegemony of heritage is the widespread condemnation of modernism and particularly the modernist architectural aesthetic. This is clearly evident in the rhetoric of New Conservation. Even some of the more self-conscious postmodern developments, like Stirling's No. 1 Poultry scheme, are translated by the conservationists into contemporary versions of the dreaded modernist style. Within the Left, too, the modernist architectural aesthetic is held up as a dark moment of British socialism. Conservationists and local socialists are joined in their condemnation of that powerful symbol of modernism in Britain, the Tower Block.



This anti-modernist tendency holds the potential to be deeply reactionary. Indeed some critiques of the heritage phenomenon (most notably Hewison, 1987) suggest that the turn to the past is entropic, stultifying creative potential. This logic neglects the persistent links between the heritage impulse and forward-looking, reforming visions, of various political colourings. My case material testifies to the long association between future visions and what we might more comfortably attribute to modernist impulses. Berman (1982) notes the pervasiveness of such imaginative encounters with the past in (post)modernity and Daniels and Matless (1989) reiterate the link I have noted between heritage and an ideology of renewal. In the case of developers, heritage is part of a language and aesthetic associated with new, more flexible cycles of capital accumulation. In the Left, to take the other extreme, heritage is part of a new local-based socialism. And in the case of the liberal inspired conservationism, heritage is part of an liberalist 'small capital' solution. A view of the heritage impulse as entropic denies all of these variably expressed future visions to which contemporary heritage is associated.

One characteristic of the hegemony of heritage is that modernist urban ideals associated with urban welfare and urban reform have been recast in an historically inspired rhetoric and imagery. However, it remains that those joined in the condemnation of the modernist architectural aesthetic at times also condemn the reforming spirit which led to these forms. Does the outright condemnation of the tower block and any associated architectural style, help to divest the urban scene of some of the more positive impulses of modernism, and particularly its concern with improved conditions of living? Is the turn to heritage in urban discourse shifting the emphasis away from issues of provision of fundamental needs?

My study suggests that, in many instances, the dominance of the heritage aesthetic has worked to exacerbate inequitable power relations in the city. Heritage is shaping the city, not only in terms of the built form but also in terms of the way in which the city is conceived and talked about. This has important implications in terms of power and the city. The conservation aesthetic has become the legitimate and acceptable means by which anti-development impulses can be articulated. It is supported by planning policy and legislation and the established conservation societies are quickly absorbed into the consultation processes associated with urban redevelopment. As the case studies showed, even in conflict (and most certainly in collusion), there is an exert discourse of urban design and townscape which is the shared domain of developers and conservationists: they speak the same language. Often the populist narratives of conservation rhetoric also works to veil the expertise of the participants. Specialist



concerns and interests and what are, at times, class specific concerns and interests reappear as populist concerns. The narrative frameworks of conservation ideology, based around ideas of heroic redemption from decline and the common person, work to provide a democratized aura to discourse which in its practice is partisan, serving particular interests and privileging the experts.

#### 9.2.5.1. Planning implications

The hegemony of heritage has a number of planning implications. As the case material shows, contemporary urban conflicts can be seen in terms of competing historicities. The dominance of heritage concerns in relation to urban transformation has the capacity to sidestep debates, to buy off opposition, to acquiesce certain interests and to marginalize others. The Spitalfields Left was equally embedded in their own version of heritage but it was deeply oppositional to the types of heritage that had become part of the common currency of cultural exchange in the conservation/capital engagement. The Left's heritage was not based on buildings and revered cultural practices less easily accommodated by the new modes of capital accumulation. Coupled with the Left's loyalty to issues, such as housing, employment and training, which were not easily translated into a discourse of historicity, its concerns became marginal to the redevelopment process. It was effectively disempowered by urban processes increasingly mediated through a dominant discourse of aesthetics and representation based on depoliticized heritage and the built form.

Although the Spitalfields case did enter a public forum and did increase the planning gains associated with the redevelopment, this was essentially fortuitous. The Left's 'community' case was not thought to warrant a public inquiry. It was only when the conservationists began seriously to doubt the aesthetics of the new design and to agitate publicly about it (often using the rhetoric of community) that the Secretary of State viewed there to be a legitimate reason for calling in the redevelopment for public planning inquiry. This situation raises questions about the value of the public inquiry. If the inquiry procedure is responding primarily to certain interests and to certain historicities, then is it an adequate forum for the battling out of divergent interests. Similarly, if the language and discourses of urban transformation are increasingly tied to conservation and aesthetic manifestations of heritage, then what of those who speak in terms of housing or other dimensions of social amenity and need, or speak of pasts which are not enshrined in the built environment? Are these issues becoming marginalized in an urban discourse which is based increasingly on a particular heritage aesthetic, which is the domain of a particular, already powerful elite of 'cultural experts'? Are issues other than urban aesthetics being relegated to a sphere which is

currently played out in terms of community gain packages formulated at the discretion of the developer and through discourses which are based around the established urban 'experts': the local authorities, the conservationists, the developer's teams?

The marginalization of interests unable or unwilling to talk or trade in the language of depoliticized heritage and urban aesthetics, in which these cycles of capital accumulation are now encased, is the darker side of heritage facadism in urbanism. It is not, as much of the heritage critique suggests, simply an issue of inauthentic histories or even the dominance of certain already powerful pasts. It is, more significantly, an issue of shifting urban discourses and practices which ultimately work to exclude certain groups: groups who do not speak in the right language or who seek to preserve aspects of society which are more deeply oppositional to new modes of capital accumulation than the historical facade of a building. The way people talk, and do not talk, about the urban environment and the way they may feel able, or unable, to participate in urban discussion is of critical concern in terms of power in the city. And I would argue that the current emphasis on heritage in a range of urban discourses is critical in shaping this.

The implications of this shift in the emphasis of urban discourse may be even more severe in London where the demise of the Greater London Council as a strategic planning authority has added weight to localized planning transactions between developers, local authorities and other local interests. Indeed, it is noteworthy that one of the few remaining strategic, London-wide groups to advise on new development (the London Advisory Committee) is affiliated with English Heritage and peopled by conservationists and other heritage professionals. The rhetoric of democracy attached to much conservation ideology obscures important inequities which are emerging and which reside not simply in capital but in the politics of differently empowered control of certain privileged arenas of cultural capital.

#### 9.2.5.2. Political implications

My study has shown that the revalorization of certain built forms as heritage items at the hands of conservationists or capital can result in their sanitization and depoliticization: for example, working class landscapes can be divested of their political implications and potentials (as in Spitalfields through the action of the Trust) or sites of capital can be domesticated into the gentler 'small capital' village (as in the City through the CARE/SAVE coalition). Similarly, certain local practices or ways of life associated with redundant or transforming modes of production can be divested of political weight through processes of restructuring and reinvestment. These consequences of the hegemony of heritage have important political implications.



The often overlooked political consequences of these manifestations of postmodernity, particularly for the Left and other oppositional interests, is now gaining attention (e.g. Harvey 1990 and Lash 1990). A crisis in the Left has been identified and linked to the fracturing of capital accumulation into more flexible modes and the increasing emphasis on representational and semiotic realms. While Harvey (1990) argues that the Left is 'drifting' into a semiotic world, Lash (1990) argues that the rise of a semiotic society which trades in cultural goods is marginalizing the traditional Left. Between these two interpretations the Left is effectively disempowered: either for betraying old causes and shifting to the 'enemy' terrain of representation, or by remaining outside of the new terrain of representation. My study contributes to an understanding of these transformations and their political implications for the Left and other oppositional strands in society. While the emphasis on surfaces, may well be a characteristic of the condition of postmodernity, our understanding of how these surfaces 'work' and their implications requires attention to the complex constitution of meaning associated with them. The ability of new and more flexible cycles of capital accumulation to 'play' with surfaces is dependent upon more complex and deeply entrenched processes of cultural production, circulation and consumption. My study shows that processes associated with postmodernity, including the turn to the past, have political implications. The various versions of heritage encountered in the thesis are differentially empowered: there are histories which 'win' and histories which 'lose'. The Left's production of an oppositional 'heritage' based on the resurrection of lost and previously disempowered pasts sought to provide a new cultural power base. But this oppositional heritage is in a deeply contradictory relationship with the new flexible processes of capital accumulation for it sanctifies a range of cultural practices associated with old capitalism and the inequities it produced. Regardless of its revolutionary potential, an oppositional heritage impulse retains an element of museuming deprivation. Furthermore, this oppositional history is being colonized by interests complicit with the new modes of flexible accumulation. Finally, there remains in the Left a loyalty to traditional concerns of inequity, of the provision of essential needs and welfare. This thesis suggests that ultimately it was this loyalty and the Left's failure or inability to translate this agenda into the dominant urban discourse of a depoliticized heritage which saw them marginalized. The crisis in the Left is but one manifestation of the shifting power relations associated with postmodernity. This complex intersection of processes generally described as postmodern and issues of power and politics requires further detailed empirical examination in local contexts.



### 9.2.6. Meaning and the urban environment

Finally I turn to the implications of this study for the general project of geography. At the broadest level my study has dealt with the traditional geographical concern of meaning and the environment. It has demonstrated that there is room for a more interactive consideration of two traditional but generally separate concerns of the discipline: the landscape emphasis (expressed in this thesis in terms of meaning and the built environment) and studies which deal with place and locality (expressed in this thesis in terms of constructions of local cultures and ways of life). Traditional cultural geography has tended to privilege the material environment. This is most clearly expressed in landscape studies and is also evident in the way geographers have tended to tackle the issue of heritage and the city by way of analysis of conservation of the built form. My study points to the need to break away from this traditional emphasis within cultural geography in two ways: firstly, by greater emphasis on the ideas that are associated with the built form, and secondly, by greater attention to aspects of society which are not so patently 'geographical'. The empirical material has demonstrated that ideas and practices which are not overtly associated with the landscape still have geographical implications: they shape the way places look, the way places are constructed ideologically and ultimately the quality of life of those living in them.

Within the confines of the geographical concern with meaning and environment, the study has pointed to new methods for understanding how meanings associated with the environment are constituted, circulate and have material and social consequences. It has shown that the environment holds different meanings for different interests and social formations. Thus the Bank Junction can at once be Heart of the Empire, centre of new global capital and the quintessential English village. Spitalfields too can at once be the seat of a Georgian Golden Age and the organic home of the Left. In this sense, my study conforms with the postmodern attention to plurality.

The complexity of overlapping and at times contradictory meanings attributed to the environment attests to the need to avoid singular readings of the urban landscape. Explanations of meaning based around national cleavages and ideologies of nationhood (a common form of analysis in the heritage critique) are simply part of a more complex configuration of meanings. Different classes, racial groups, genders, local 'communities', political interests, to name but a few of the social cleavages which matter, attribute different meanings to the world and people around them. This is not to suggest the need to return to accounts of individual perception, for the study has also demonstrated that there are shared meanings based on wider social formations.



Yet my concern with the politics of plurality moves away from the mire of multiplicity evident in some postmodern accounts, towards a geography which regards pluralism as part of a struggle between differently empowered interests. Meanings held about the environment, landscapes or localities, are not all equal. They have differing legitimacy and influence and are part of a differentially empowered realm of 'cultural capital'. My study has clearly shown some groups or interests are more successful at having their views about the environment acknowledged, or their values reified in the landscape. Their success will depend on the power of individuals holding the ideas, the wider acceptability or legitimacy of the ideas, and the language in which these ideas are framed or expressed, and their compatibility with dominant processes, such as cycles of capital accumulation. This is always a shifting and contingent process. Social groups change, interests within social groupings shift, political and material imperatives and ambitions alter. With each of these transformations, the meaning of the environment is re-evaluated, articulated in new ways, and has new consequences. Thus the environment, as landscape or place, must be seen as a site of contest between differentially empowered groups in which certain values and views win and other lose or become marginalized. This shifting terrain of contested meaning has material consequences, both in terms of the way the landscape comes to look and in terms of the material and social conditions of those who live in a particular place. This study has pointed to a geography which is alert to the plurality a postmodern perspective generates but which does not deny the political and material implications of this plurality. In its attention to power and to the social constitution of meaning, the study has demonstrated the perils of privileging the landscape in geographical analysis, most sharply demonstrated by studies that treat the landscape as text and attempt to read meanings from that text. This study has also, given the recent shift towards postmodern geographies which celebrate the poetics and self consciously dismantle conventional explanatory narratives, provided a geography that is alert to plurality and poetics but holds on to the imperatives of politics and the material.

### APPENDIX 3.1.

#### SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with a selection of participants and certain key official figures. In most cases I was able to tape the interviews and then work from detailed transcripts. If, however, the interviewee felt uncomfortable with taping then copious notes were taken. Transcripts or summaries of the interviews were returned to the interviewees.

Interviews were unstructured but were designed to address a checklist of points: personal details about how the individual became involved in the case, comments on the public statements and in particular the content and language used, other interests in conservation or heritage, views on the 'heritage debate' and recent critiques of conservation. As many of those interviewed were involved in the cases on a professional level, I was able to use the interviews to clarify points of fact about the cases. The interviews were conducted after I had observed the public forums. By this stage I was known to the interviewees and I knew a considerable amount about them. This helped me to design interviews which quite specifically related to the interviewees involvement. Some interviews were of officials and were not intended to relate directly to the public discourse but simply to provide background details on the organizations and the planning battle.



SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS FOR CITY CASE

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION
Victor Stock	CARE/ St Mary-le-Bow
Retailer 1.	CARE/ CLRTA
Retailer 2.	CARE/CLTRTA
Retailer 3.	CLRTA
Jennifer Freeman	SAVEBritain'sHeritage/Vic Soc.
Marcus Binney	SAVE Britain's Heritage
Sophie Andrea	SAVE Britain's Heritage
Roy Worskett	Corporation/townscape
Tony Tugnett	Corporation planner*
Robert Thorne	English Heritage*
Victor Belcher/Harry Duckett	English Heritage*
Douglas Woodward	City Heritage Society*

TOTAL INTERVIEWS: 12

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS FOR SPITALFIEDLS CASE

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION
Jil Cove	Save Spitalfields Campaign
Member 1	Save Spitalfields Campaign
Member 2	Save Spitalfields Campaign
Member 3	Save Spitalfields Campaign
Richard MacCormac	Spitalfields Trust/ Architect,SDG Scheme 1.
Dan Cruickshank	Spitalfields Trust
Ian Lumley	Spitalfields Trust
Dennis Severs	Spitalfields gentrifier
Roddie Sloane	SDG, official
Anne Docherty	Bethnal Green NC, planner
Peter Studdert	Bethnal Green NC, planner
Roger White	Georgian Group
Felicity Premru	Spitalfields Heritage Centre
Helen Carpenter	THET/Spitalfields Heritage*
Jon Aldenton	THET*

TOTAL INTERVIEWS: 15

\* Background interviews only

APPENDIX 3.2.ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT

AB	Anthony Blee
BGNC	Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee
BHS	Baker Harris Saunders
CAAC	Conservation Area Advisory Committee
CARE	Campaign for Refurbishment
CDG	Community Development Group
CJ	Charles Jencks
CLRTA	City of London Retail Traders Association
CM	Carolyn Merrion
CoL	Corporation of London
CSSD	Campaign to Save Spitalfields From the Developers
DoE	Department of Environment.
EAHY	European Architectural Year
GG	Georgian Group
GLC	Greater London Council
GLDP	Greater London Development Plan
JC	Jil Cove
JS	James Stirling
KJ	Kay Jordan
LBC	Listed Building Consent
LBTH	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
LCC	London County Council
LET	London Edinburgh Trust
LK	Leon Krier
PM	Phil Maxwell
RFAC	Royal Fine Arts Commission
RMcD	Robbie MacDuff
RS	Rosehaugh Stanhope
RSI	Raphael Samuel
RT	Robert Thorne
RW	Roy Worskett
SDG	Spitalfields Development Group
SLC	Spitalfields Local Committee
SoL	Survey of London
SoS	Secretary of State
SPAB	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
ST	Spitalfields Trust
StJW	St John Wilson
THCAAC	Tower Hamlets Conservation Area Advisory Committee
VicSoc	Victorian Society
VS	Victor Stock



## APPENDIX 4.1.

### CHRONOLOGY OF CONSERVATION LEGISLATION/EVENTS

**1873:** Introduction of Ancient Monuments Bill into Parliament.

**1877:** Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

**1882 :**Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1882.

**1908:** Royal Commission on Historical Monuments

-'inventory of the Ancient and Historical monuments and constructions connected with or illustrative of the contemporary culture, civilization and conditions of the life of the people of England'.

**1913:** Ancient Monuments (Consolidation) Act 1913.

**1931:**Ancient Monuments Act 1931.

-introduced 'preservation schemes' which incorporated areas around scheduled monuments.

**1937:** Georgian Group

**1944:** 1. Town and Country Planning Act

-stronger compulsory acquisition powers to local authorities.  
-introduction of statutory listing of buildings of architectural and historical interest.

2. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments covering eight counties.

**1947:** Town and Country Planning Act

-improved 1944 listing provisions.  
-required local authority or (on appeal) Ministerial consent for demolition or alterations.  
-empowered local authorities or Minister of Housing and Local Government to issue building preservation orders covering threatened inhabited buildings.

**1953:**Historic Buildings and Monuments Act 1953

-established the quasi-independent Historic Buildings Council for England, Scotland and Wales- advised Minister of Works on grants and loans to assist the repair of historic buildings.  
-Historic Building Council established selection principles for listed buildings.

**1957:** Civic Trust

**1958 :**Victorian Society

**1962:** Town and Country Planning Act 1962

**1965:** Compulsory Purchase Act 1965.

**1966:** Preservation Policy Group set up by Duncan Sandys and Civic Trust within the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

-co-ordinated pilot studies of how conservation policy ensure survival of historic owns.

**1967:**Civic Amenities Act 1967

-introduced by Duncan Sandys (Civic Trust)

-local authorities compelled to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest (conservation areas) and obliged to enhance.

**1968: Town and Country Planning Act 1968**

- strengthened protection listed buildings.
- introduce punishment for unauthorized neglect/demolition.
- procedure of acquiring listed building consent introduced-i.e. local authority required to give specific consent for demolition/alteration of listed building, and only after informing the Secretary of State and the statutory National Amenity Societies.
- identification of five 'statutory bodies' involved in the planning process which must be notified of all listed building applications involving demolition.

**1968: Town and Country (Amendment) Act**

- consolidated 1968 Act.

**1969: Redundant Churches and Other Religious Buildings Act 1969.**

**1970:** DoE became principal government. agency for scheduling monuments etc., making grants, dealing LBC.

- Preservation Policy Group published recommendations (based on 1968 town studies).

**1971: Town and Country Planning Act, 55, 1.**

- present basis for legislation re listed buildings and conservation areas.

**1972: Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act**

- incorporated ideas of the Preservation Policy Group.

**1974: Town and Country Amenities Act**

- extension of statutory controls concerning historic buildings.
- extension of local authority powers.
- required local authorities to prepare and publicize schemes for designation of conservation areas.
- Conservation Area Advisory Committees be established (local interest groups to advice re planning applications).
- strengthened Secretary of State powers to designate conservation areas.
- demolition or radical alteration of any building (listed/unlisted) within a conservation area requires specific planning sanction.
- increasing advertising control in conservation areas.
- local authority required to publicize proposals affecting listed building setting.

**1974-75: anti-wealth tax campaign (see Hewison)**

**1975: European Architectural Heritage year**

- Parliamentary Committee on wealth tax reported.
- agreement not reached -five different reports.

**-SAVE Britain's Heritage formed.**

- draw attention to fact statutory listing not enough.
- catalyst was Destruction of the Country House exhibition V&A.

**1977: Department of Environment Circular 23/77 (16 March 1977)**

- Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas-Policy and Procedures.

**1979: Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979**

**1979: 30ies Society.**



**1980: National Heritage Act 1980**

- Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

- resulted in changes in Historic buildings and Conservation area legislation.

**1981: DoE Circular 12/81 (24 March 1981)**

- Historic buildings and Conservation Areas.

**1983: National Heritage Act 1983**

- amended earlier legislation (Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953/ Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972.

- included new financial provisions to assist with repairs historic sites and works in conservation areas.

- created English Heritage-quango under supervision of DoE - Historic Monuments and Buildings Commission. (replaced Historic Buildings Council for England and the Ancient Monuments Board for England).

**1984: English Heritage**

- listing, promotion of conservation and public appreciation of heritage, enhancement of Conservation Areas, advising through London Advisory Committee on new schemes in London.

**1987: House of Commons. Environment Committee. First Report. no 146. Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments. HMSO London.. v 2****1987: Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas) Regulations 1987.****1987: Circular 8/87: current policy document re conservation legislation.****SOURCE: THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE GUIDE TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS LAW 1988**

## APPENDIX 5.1.

### NO. 1 POULTRY CHRONOLOGY

**1962:** City Acre Property Investment Trust commission redevelopment scheme for site from Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe

**6 June 1968:** scheme submitted for planning permission. No applications for listed building consent submitted as none of buildings listed and no conservation area in being.

**22 May 1969:** proposal recommended by the Corporation's Planning and Communications Committee to the Court of Common Council. Proposal agreed in principle but as developer not control sufficient amount of site planning permission not given.

**1969-1984:** Palumbo acquires remainder of site.

**1 January 1982:** application for full planning consent and listed building consent submitted to Corporation.

**23 September 1982:** Court of Common Council unanimously refuse application.

**1 May - 6 July 1984:** Mansion House Square Public Inquiry

**22 May 1985:** Secretary of State decision letter for Mansion House Inquiry. Upholds Inspector's findings that scheme inappropriate. Not disregard future development if appropriate scheme.

**June 1985:** following SoS decision appellants commissioned team of consultants (Stirling Wilford Architects) to advise upon the redevelopment of the present appeal site.

**November 1985-April 1986:** Meetings between Palumbo team and City Architect and Planning Officer. Concern expressed over the height of the original proposals (Scheme A). Consequently produced scheme B (forerunner to Scheme under inquiry).

**9 April 1986:** Stirling meets with the Royal Fine Arts Commission re proposal.

**22 April 1986:** RFAC supported both schemes but expressed a preference for the scheme A (retaining Mappin and Webb building).

**14 May 1986:** Montagu Evans (on behalf of Appellants) submitted 2 planning applications to City for alternative schemes (A & B)

**2 -6 June 1986:** Public Exhibition of 2 schemes at Guildhall Library. (600 people plus visit)

-Applications generated much discussion and correspondence with the City Corporation re visual impact especially Dome of St Paul's. City request that photos taken from agreed viewpoints by Stirling Wilford together with accurate overlays to indicate visual impact of schemes.



**11 December 1986:** two applications revised and submission of fresh drawings to Corporation.

**January 1987:** James Stirling presented revised Scheme B to the Royal Fine Arts Commission for comment (scheme A having been abandoned due to City objection to excessive height and Stirling's inability to reduce height)

**February 1987:** Corporation requests removal one floor from the Scheme B proposal to reduce plot ratio and to improve view of St Paul's. Request complied with.

**13 May 1987:** Royal Fine Arts Commission meeting. Considered the revised plan for No 1 Poultry.

**26 May 1987:** Royal Fine Arts Commission welcoming the reduction in height by one storey. Commission reiterated warm support of Stirling scheme and belief that building be one of distinction and a valued 20th C contribution to the City of London.

**5 June 1987:** Report of the City Architect and Planning Officer to the Planning and Communications Committee. Includes representations made to the City re development: 136 objections and 126 supporters. Of the 126 in support, 76% support scheme B.

**23 June 1987:** Planning and Communications Committee Meeting. Corporation Planning Officer presented report recommending approval for Scheme B. After much debate 17 voted against and 14 in favour.

**3 July 1987:** Special meeting of the Planning and Communications Committee re reasons for refusal of listed building and planning consent. Proposed development not seen as "acceptable [as the] replacement of the existing buildings in this important location"

**16 July 1987:** Refusal of planning permission and listed building consent issued by the Court of Common Council, City of London. Subsequently formal appeals lodged by the appellants to the SoS.

**20 January 1988:** Secretary of State letter relating to the Mansion House Inquiry and the pertinent issues relating to the No 1 Poultry Inquiry. Thus, SoS recommends that the main matters to be pursued at the inquiry are the design, height and bulk of the proposed development in relation to its surroundings and the scale and character of neighbouring buildings'

**17 May -17 June 1988:** Public Inquiry into the refusal of planning permission and listed building consent in respect of applications submitted on behalf of No 1 Poultry Limited. For the redevelopment of Nos 1/19 Poultry, 2/38 Queen Victoria Street, 3/9 and 35/40 Bucklersbury, part of the highway of Bucklersbury, Pancras Lane and Sise Lane and adjoining land along the eastern flank of Bolsa House. And arising also from the non-determination by the Corporation of London within the statutory period of an application for planning permission and listed building consent for a revised scheme of the No 1 Poultry site.

**12 October 1988:** Inspector reports to Secretary of State and recommends that planning permission, Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent be granted for the No. 1 Poultry scheme.

**8 June 1989:** Secretary of State Nicholas Ridley finds in favour of granting planning permission, Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent for no. 1 Poultry Proposal.

**November 1989:** SAVE Britain's heritage takes Secretary of State decision to High Court on grounds breeches conservation and listed building legislation. High Court finds against SAVE.

**March 1990:** SAVE Appeals against the High Court decision in Court of Appeals. Appeal found in favour of SAVE and decision returned to Secretary of State.

**April 1990:** Palumbo applies to the House of Lords for leave to have decisions of High Court/Appeal to be reconsidered by Lords. Granted Leave. Supported by RFAC.

**January 1991:** High Court decision to be considered by House of Lords.



APPENDIX 5.2.

THE NO.1 POULTRY PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS.

Site boundary: Queen Victoria St, Poultry, Bucklersbury, Sise Lane.

Net site area: 3324m<sup>2</sup>.

Height: 5 storeys above ground plus sub-basement and concourse (max height 29.95m).

Shopping provision: Concourse-27 units, public house.  
Ground- 8 units, public house.

Gross Floor Area:

Shops	3,477.7m <sup>2</sup>
Restaurant	594.4m <sup>2</sup>
Public House	375.3m <sup>2</sup>
Offices	13,346.9m <sup>2</sup>
Plant/servicing	4,152.5m <sup>2</sup>
TOTAL	21,946.8m <sup>2</sup>

Plot ratio: 4.81:1

Materials: Stone clad, with alternate light beige and red/brown coursing. Grey Granite above forth floor.

### APPENDIX 5.3.

#### PARTICIPANTS IN NO. 1 POULTRY INQUIRY.

**Inspector: B.D. Bagot:** Chartered Architect and Town Planner with the Department of Environment.

#### For the Appellants (Peter Palumbo)

**Sir Frank Layfield QC:** barrister for the Appellant, Peter Palumbo.

**Derek Taylor BSc, FRICS:** Montagu Evans, Chartered Surveyors, Town Planning Consultants and Valuers. Evidence relating to planning history and policy for Appellants.

**James Stirling Dip. Arch., RIBA:** James Stirling Michael Wilford and Associates. Architect of No. 1 Poultry.

**Anthony Blee FRIBA, FRSA:** Sir Basil Spence Partnership. Historical architecture and conservation for Palumbo.

**Professor Colin St John Wilson MA. Dip Lond. FRIBA:** Architectural appreciation for Appellant.

**David James MICE:** R.T. James and Partners Consulting Engineers. Structural matters relating to existing buildings and the refurbishment potential for Appellants.

**Harold E Couch, TD FRICS:** Hillier Parker May and Rowden, Chartered Surveyor. Retail trading for Appellants.

**Simon Harris:** Baker Harris Saunders. Commerce and office demand in the City for Appellants.

**Richard Caws, CBE FRICS:** Independent property consultant for Appellants.

**Charles Jencks:** historian and critic of architecture, evidence on Stirling proposal and conservation issues for Appellants.

#### Others Supporting Scheme

**Roger Bulworthy:** Titmuss Stainer and Webb, Solicitors, statement on behalf of Mappin and Webb.

#### Opposing the Scheme

#### For the Corporation of London

**Jeremy Sullivan QC:** for the Corporation of London.

**Roy Worskett RIBA, RTPI:** Architect and Town Planner. Previously City Architect and Planning Officer to Bath City Council. Currently private practice.



For English Heritage

**Christopher Lockart-Mummery QC:** for English Heritage.

**Robert Thorne, MA.:** Historian, London Division, English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission).

**Ashley Barker OBE, FSA, FRIBA, AA Dipl (Hons):** Head of the London Division of English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission).

**Brian Morton, Chartered Civil Engineer:** Brian Morton and Partners, structural engineers.

**T.J.L. Robertson, MA, FRICS, Chartered Surveyor:** Richard Ellis. Evidence regarding the office needs of area and the potential of the refurbishment scheme.

For SAVE Britain's Heritage

**Daly Cooper :** solicitor.

**Sophle Andrea:** Chair of SAVE Britain's Heritage.

For the Victorian Society

**Peter Howell:** Chairman of the Victorian Society.

**David Lloyd:** the Victorian Society.

**Dr. Gavin Stamp MA PhD:** journalist and historian, Victorian Society.

For CARE/CLRTA and Affiliates

**Rev Victor Stock:** Parish priest St Mary le Bow, Cheapside. Chairman of CARE.

**Roy Green and Stuart Goring:** retailers on site at Present Perfect/Jennifer/City Girl (associated CARE)

**Jennifer Freeman:** independent consultant re conservation (Closely associated with SAVE, CARE and VicSoc).

Others Opposing Scheme

**Brian Dadd:** City of London Retail Traders Association

**Anthony Hemy Dip Arch, RIBA:** The City Heritage Society.

**Gayne Wells:** The London Society.

**Deputy Anne Pembroke:** senior member Court of Common Council, Ward of Cheap.

**George Allan:** The City of London Environment and Amenity Trust ('CLEAN').

**Matthew Saunders:** Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies.

**Derrick Oxley:** architect and founding member of the 2000 Group.

**The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Buchan:** 'peer in the street'

**Anthony Service:** interested person.



APPENDIX 5.4.

THE ENGLISH HERITAGE REFURBISHMENT SCHEME SPECIFICATIONS

Site boundary: Three blocks based existing street pattern: Queen Victoria St, Poultry, Bucklesbury, Sise Lane, Pancras Lane.

Net site area: 3324m<sup>2</sup>.

Height: As existing.

Gross Floor Area:

Shops	2,420.0m <sup>2</sup>
Catering	1,994.0m <sup>2</sup>
Offices	11,266.9m <sup>2</sup>
Plant/servicing	3,150.5m <sup>2</sup>
TOTAL	18,830.9m <sup>2</sup>

Plot ratio: 4.60:1

Materials: As existing.

APPENDIX 6.1.CHRONOLOGY OF THE SPITALFIELDS MARKET REDEVELOPMENT**1976 Greater London Development Plan:**

-Spitalfields identified as area 'where offices and industries can be located with benefit.'(p28) and suggested London inner city Markets relocate (p97).

**20 October 1981:** Detta O'Cathain Inquiry into London Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Markets. Suggest planned reduction in nos of markets over next 10 years from 6 to 3.

**1983:** Corporation considers relocation Market not viable.

**February 1985:** report on the London Markets Overcapacity from the Conservative back Bench Horticulture and Markets Committee. Recommends relocation of Spitalfields.

**August 1985:** Spitalfields Market Tenants ask Corporation to conduct study into feasibility of relocation of market

**early 1985:** LET first overtures to Corporation

**8 October 1985:** Meeting between CoL and Market Traders re design of new market

**25 February 1986:** Market Traders Association circulate questionnaire to members seeking information on requirements for new market

**19 April 1986:** Tower Hamlets decides to consult re Development Brief

**June/July 1986:** Tower Hamlets consultation on future of market. Newspapers in English and Bangladeshi circulated by Council. Advertisements in libraries and publicity in media. Series of meetings with 60 local and national organizations.

**18-24 June 1986:** Exhibition organized by Tower Hamlets in London Fruit Exchange attended by 393 members of public

**24 June -21 July 1986:** Public exhibition Monte Centre Spitalfields

**16 July 1986:** Interim report on consultation to BGNC:

- 4000 letters distributed in English and Bengali,
- 18-24 June public exhibition at Fruit Exchange (393 visitors),
- 24 June -2 July Public exhibition Monte,
- Large nos of comment sheets distributed for return.

**21 July 1986:** public meeting called by Tower Hamlets

**30 July 1986:** Extra BGNC Meeting- SPITALFIELDS MARKET-REPORT ON CONSULTATION PRESENTED.

- SHAW moved that council regard the proposals 'sympathetically but that the developer need to adhere to the Council's development brief.
- MAXWELL (Lab) moved that the entire site be purchased by the local authority (£25-30m) VOTE was 3 for and 5 against.

**22 August 1986:** SDG apply for planning permission and LBC

**9-12 September 1986:** SDG show model and plans at Tenants Association offices.



- 1 October 1986:** BGNC consider Development Brief.
- 30 October 1986:** Tower Hamlets adopt Development Brief
- November 1986:** City put Spitalfields on offer
- 13 November 1986:** SDG proposal presented to Ct of Com Cl CoL (£60m offer)
- 3 February 1987:** City publication of Offer Document
- 31 March 1987:** Hackney grant planning permission for Temple Mills Development
- April 1987:** SDG scheme for Spitalfields substantially revised to reduce office content and refine detail and architectural treatment
- April 1987:** Tower Hamlets arrange public exhibition of SDG and Rosehaugh Stanhope proposals.
- 6 April 1987:** Waltham Forest grant planning permission for Temple Mills site
- Spring/Summer 1987:** Tower Hamlets consult about planning applications for Spitalfields and consider applications
- 5 June 1987:** Market Traders circulated with questionnaire and explanatory material
- July 1987:** Acting Director of Development designates redevelopment of Spitalfields Market site as Borough-wide issue-as a result the planning decisions are the responsibility of the Policy Sub-Committee
- July 1987:** Tower Hamlets reports on consultation with recommendation that planning permission be given to SDG.
- 15 July 1987:** BGNC express reservations re architecture of the SDG scheme.
- 16 July 1987:** Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Policy Sub-Committee re Spitalfields Market Planning Applications (PS59/87)
- 31 July 1987:** Closing date for offers to be received by City
- 2 & 3 September 1987:** presentation by City of schemes to all Market Tenants  
-66 in favour of move to Temple Mills/6 in favour of move to Temple Mills or Stratford/2 in favour of move to Stratford/10 in favour of moving to Temple Mills or staying put/20 in favour of staying put.
- 4 September 1987:** BGNC Extraordinary Meeting. SPITALFIELDS MARKET-PLANNING APPLICATIONS. CHAIR MOVED that recommend Policy Sub Committee to approve recommendations SDG with some changes. CARRIED 4 TO 0  
CHAIR MOVED that recommend Policy Sub Committee to approve recommendations Rosehaugh Stanhope with more substantial changes. CARRIED 5 to 3  
-subject to Section 52 Agreement
- 7 September 1987:** Policy Committee of LBTH accept BGNC decision
- 8 October 1987:** Spitalfields Ward BG and Stepney Labour party decide to run special campaign on this issue
- 22 October 1987:** City select SDG as developers for Spitalfields

**9 November 1987:** first public meeting to begin the CSSD

**9 November 1987- 22 December 1987:** Public consultations re changes to borough plan

**19 November 1987:** Extra-ordinary Meeting of Bethnal Green Standing Neighbourhood Committee -Section 52 Agreement ratified  
-DEPUTATION by CSSD.

**24 November 1987:** Market Tenants Association EGM support relocation on terms offered (65-13)

**27 November 1987:** Bill to provide for removal of Market lodged by CoL and SDG

**January 1988:** Petitioning time for Spitalfields Market Bill

**28 March 1988:** Section 52 agreement for the Spitalfields site.

**24 March 1988:** legal agreement between Council, SDG and CoL signed, and planning permission issued same day.

**7 April 1988:** Letter CSSD to SoS requesting Public Inquiry

**6-30 June 1988:** House of Commons Select Committee Hearing.  
CSSD not block Bill but gain substantial Planning Gain Improvements.

**15-26 May 1989:** House of Lords Committee Hearing.  
Bill proceeds, no changes to planning gain.

**May 1989:** Swanke Hayden Connell appointed as 'administrative' architects

**June 1989 :** Richard MacCormac quits the design team of SDG

**October 1989:** Swanke Hayden Connell Scheme released.

**December 1989:** Conservationists begin to oppose Market on basis of SHC design.  
Call for public Inquiry. Spitalfields Trust calls public meeting opposing scheme.

**April 1990:** Revised SHC scheme released.

**July 1990:** SDG scheme designed by SHC goes to BGNC for planning approval.  
-Scheme called in by Secretary of State before BGNC can make decision.

**January 1991:** proposed public inquiry date.



APPENDIX 6.2.

SPITALFIELDS DEVELOPMENT GROUP REDEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

<u>Floorspace Figures:</u>	<u>sq. m</u>	<u>sq. ft</u>
Offices	82,260	885,468
Storage/plant/pkg	15,740	169,450
Small business units	5,985	64,424
Internal circulation	4,265	45,910
Retail	11,090	119,376
Residential	6,600	71,044
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>144,440</b>	<b>1,554,811</b>

NET SITE AREA: 4.60ha (11.36 acres)

PLOT RATIO: 2.80:1

<u>Housing Accommodation</u>	<u>Nos. Units</u>
For rent	64
Sheltered	30
Low cost sale	16
<b>TOTAL LOCAL NEEDS</b>	<b>118 (522 bed spaces)</b>
Horner Buildings (Corporation tenants)	22 (103 bed spaces)
For sale	98
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238</b>

MAIN DESIGN ELEMENTS:

Artillery Circus: commercial centre, four linked offices of seven storeys.

Brushfield St Arcade: glazed shopping arcade of four storeys.

Horner Buildings and Horner Square: Grade II listed residential upper/retail ground.

Small Business arcade: services and small businesses.

Elders Gardens

Spital Mews: flats business unit and creche, designed reflect Folgate St.

Folgate Mews: flats small business units

Flower Court: local need shops, restaurant/fashion/community centre.

SOURCE: BGNC 1987 Spitalfields Market Planning Applications

APPENDIX 6.3.ROSEHAUGH STANHOPE SPECIFICATIONS

<u>Floorspace Figures</u>	<u>sq m</u>	<u>sq ft</u>
Offices	75,847	816,440
Plant/parking	22,602	243,294
Service areas	2,846	30,640
Industrial	892	9,607
Retail	3,788	40,773
Fashion centre/Community		
Centre/Creche	1,177	12,665
Residential	42,057	452,710
Public building	3,382	36,410
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152,591</b>	<b>1,642,539</b>

NET SITE AREA: 4.41.ha (10,90 acres)

PLOT RATIO: 2.95:1

<u>Housing Accommodation</u>	<u>Units</u>
For rent	73
Sheltered	38
Shared owner	13
<b>TOTAL LOCAL NEED</b>	<b>124</b>

MAIN DESIGN ELEMENTS

Spital Square: green garden in centre of site with fountain and tower, classical folly with restaurant, commercial use, shops arcade,

Hawksmoor St: new diagonal street through scheme-five to six storeys with attic along length. Two gothic towers built to the design of Hawksmoor.

SOURCE: BGNC 1987 Spitalfields Market Planning Applications



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