**The New Urban Social History? urban development and governance in post-war Britain**

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The efforts to ‘reconstruct’ and later ‘renew’[[1]](#footnote-1) British cities in the decades that followed the Second World War remain, despite a considerable body of existing scholarship, a popular subject of investigation amongst urban and architectural historians, town planners and geographers.[[2]](#footnote-2) A well-established historiography has, over the last forty years, narrated the emergence and eventual collapse of attempts to both remake decrepit Victorian cities and create new towns from scratch.[[3]](#footnote-3) These histories have traced the progress of a movement that sought to holistically redevelop cities that began in the 1920s, reached a crescendo in a moment of high-modernist optimism in the1960s, before grinding to a halt in the 1970s as both the efficacy and principles of urban planning were questioned by politicians and the public alike. This is a familiar, often clichéd and frequently misunderstood story of how British towns and cities came to look the way they did and, in many instances, still do. Urban historians have, as part of these narratives, situated the objectives, achievements and failings of this period of redevelopment within the wider socio-economic frameworks of British history, particularly seeing the post-war planning movement and architectural modernism tied-up with the wax and wane of the fortunes of a supposed social-democratic consensus.[[4]](#footnote-4) At the same time, tracking other central themes like decline and decolonisation, affluence and consumerism, gender and sexual identity through the fabric and governance of the built environment has shown that understanding modern Britain is an inescapably spatial and urban endeavour. Indeed, such observations have not been limited to Britain. As Chris Klemek has shown, the trajectory of urban change was part of a wider set of practices that rose and fell in similar ways in both Europe and North America.[[5]](#footnote-5) Historians like Erika Hanna, Natasha Vall and Stefan Couperus have evidenced transnational similarities alongside local peculiarities in approaches to urban environments in a range of European contexts.[[6]](#footnote-6) The theses examined here, which all deal with aspects of British urban development and policy between 1945 and the 1980s, thus form part of a long lineage of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic who have examined the development of post-war urban Britain. Yet what they also demonstrate are the ways that a generation of new scholars are using studies of cities and space to shed light on wider socio-economic and cultural processes, an approach Simon Gunn recently dubbed the ‘new urban social history’.[[7]](#footnote-7) What each of the theses covered here represents is the variety of methodological and disciplinary approaches to the examination of post-war urban Britain, but also the manner in which attention to urban space, its governance and experience, can intervene in the competing narratives present in recent social histories of Britain.

The contributions of Alistair Kefford and Otto Saumarez Smith to this survey are perhaps at the more traditional end of the field’s spectrum in terms of their disciplinary backgrounds, if not their own particular approaches.[[8]](#footnote-8) Kefford’s work is firmly rooted in town planning and spatial histories, whilst Saumarez Smith tackles planning during the 1960s from the broad perspective of architectural history. Yet, both theses still have much about them that is decidedly fresh. Kefford’s work, beginning the earlier of the two pieces in 1945, uses Leeds and Manchester to track post-war redevelopment from the perspective of state actors’ attempts to use space to shape the lives and behaviours of citizens. Methodologically rooted in Foucauldian understandings of governmentality that owe much to the likes of James C. Scott and Patrick Joyce, Kefford shows how governments, particularly local corporations and councils, attempted to imagine and produce citizen-subjects in line with their understandings of emerging affluence and consumerism.[[9]](#footnote-9) This strategy was, he shows, expressed in the arrangement of new shopping centres, the reorganisation of transport infrastructures, the regulation of domestic environments and the management of industry and employment. What emerges from the thesis is a picture of national and local governments endorsing specific models of urban consumption from the late 1950s, which they attempted to reproduce amongst citizens through the planning of the built environment. This encoding of mass consumerism in urban policy represented an attempt to ensure an effective spatio-economic foundation in the face of anxieties over deindustrialisation. In doing so Kefford demonstrates the salience of consumerism and a set of assumptions about affluence and affluent citizens to policies that saw space and the economy as inseparable, echoing narratives that have placed the affluent society at the heart of post-war British policy.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In comparison to Kefford, Saumarez Smith’s work – which has now formed the core of his first monograph – focuses much of its study on just a few years from the early 1960s onwards.[[11]](#footnote-11) Nevertheless, he comes to conclusions that have similar weight for our understandings of consumerism, affluence, deindustrialization and the importance of private capital in shaping urban space. Indeed, despite a rather different approach, Saumarez Smith’s second-chapter case study of Blackburn Council’s development of a startling modernist shopping centre, echoes Kefford’s view of central area redevelopment as a bulwark against deindustrialisation, not least in its reliance on partnerships with private developers. Deindustrialisation in both these accounts appears as a presiding anxiety in national and local government. Just as Jim Tomlinson has suggested that reactions to deindustrialisation reshaped the social security system and patterns of public employment, here Kefford and Saumarez Smith show its instrumental role in shaping urban space.[[12]](#footnote-12) The central role of private developers as partners to local government is also crucial in both these accounts, yet Kefford in particular shows what a double-edged sword this really was for local government. What persistently emerges from this study of public and private investment is just how difficult it was for the state to rapidly adapt to changing economic demands from the 1960s onwards and the profoundly negative effect this lack of agility had on populations reliant on newly constructed facilities. Indeed, both theses point to the importance of forthcoming work on the role of commercial development, in understanding how private capital shaped the built environment and fuelled the development of the neo-liberal state.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Saumarez Smith’s study is, nevertheless, very different in its approach to Kefford’s. Centred on an examination of the work of individuals he labels ‘architect-planners’, the thesis emphasises the way these figures’ designs and ambitions were enmeshed within and shaped by local and national political cultures alongside the varied, often pragmatic concerns of different branches of the state. Despite this familiar disciplinary approach though, this is not an architectural history that falls into the trap of simply endorsing or repudiating the clichéd notion of the modernist planner as a megalomaniac despoiler of British towns and cities. Nor is it satisfied with merely investigating these fascinating figures – of whom Saumarez Smith seems to have assembled an encyclopaedic knowledge – for the sake of biography. Instead, it shows how architectural modernism and its advocates fitted into a constellation of competing political concerns in the early-to-mid 1960s. That modernism, at least in popular memory, seemed to triumph, appears here to be less about the dominance of an architectural ideology *per se* and more about the way a selection of modernist principles suited the motives of certain influential groups at different levels of both the state and private sector. In showing that those advocates of modernism were a ‘motley cast of architects and planners, one-nation Tories, Labourite expansionists’, councillors, developers and civil servants, the thesis complicates explanations that have too readily assigned city centre redevelopment to an all-powerful, yet nebulous culture of modernism.[[14]](#footnote-14) Both Saumarez Smith and Kefford show us that though there were a multiplicity of differing local circumstances, when it came to redevelopment, the guiding principle was perhaps not modernism *per se*, but more a general faith that large-scale, holistic spatial intervention was both effective and simply needed to be ‘got right’ to tackle the socio-economic issues of the period. As these two studies show, the overweening pressures that local councils and corporations faced were how to mitigate the worst excesses of deindustrialisation. This was a process local authorities primarily understood as achievable through the revitalisation of retail and the broader service sector, which might be achieved through the programming of the built environment to account for the perceived emergence of increasingly affluent consumers.

The fragility of the types of socio-economic assumptions that Kefford and Saumarez Smith show underpinned post-war planning schemes has perhaps been no-more visible than in the study of the New Towns project.[[15]](#footnote-15) Helena Rivera’s 2015 thesis, though chiefly concerned with the lessons contemporary town planners can learn from case studies of the new towns of Hemel Hempstead and Harlow, neatly shows the difficulties planners encountered when trying to produce functioning communities from scratch.[[16]](#footnote-16) Studying the assumptions central to the provision of housing in the New Towns, Rivera shows that, as a consequence of deindustrialisation and changing demands for skilled workers, new forms of employment destabilized the socio-spatial dynamics of identity formation and place attachment that planners had predicted would form the bedrock of the New Towns’ community life. In Harlow and Hemel Hempstead planners had assumed that employment, based on local industry would be self-contained within the new towns themselves, recognising that residents’ attachment to their new home town would be constructed through their employers as much as through the towns themselves.[[17]](#footnote-17) Indeed, in the early years this dynamic seems to have functioned adequately; New Towns were subject to complex byelaws and incentives as part of a manged local economy that encouraged industry to base plants around these areas.[[18]](#footnote-18) Yet, in a changing economic climate, neither town could sustain a sufficient level of local industry to provide self-contained employment opportunities for residents. Thus when the inhabitants were forced to look outside of the local town for work, they faced the decision to either relocate or commute. With most of the residents choosing the latter option alongside the concomitant loss of local employers as an overarching host or ‘father figure’, Rivera argues, any chance of community spirit died.[[19]](#footnote-19) There is no sense here that New Towns ‘failed’ – failure, as a serious narrative, never spread beyond the media – and Rivera rightly sees little value in examining such an empty concept. Instead, the value of Rivera’s study is in highlighting the quite specific details and rigid assumptions about identity, sociability and movement that underpinned planners’ models of society and community, before showing the vulnerability of these constructions to the changing economic structures of the post-war world.

The problems of this type of planning rigidity, this time exemplified in planning patterns of consumption, retail and the spaces in which they might occur – is also the subject of Sarah Mass’ thesis, which deals with how small-scale retail, particularly town and city markets, adapted to both periods of economic hardship and modernist urban renewal.[[20]](#footnote-20) This is a process Mass views over a broadly conceived ‘mid-century’ stretching from 1925 until 1979, but here it is chapters three and four concerning the post-war period that are of most interest. The local market, Mass shows, was a space that seemed somewhat antagonistic to the developing large-scale, increasingly chain-store-oriented definitions of retail at the centre of the types of modernist redevelopment illustrated by Kefford and Saumarez Smith. Market halls, outdoor and street markets were, in contrast, anachronistic, undifferentiated and chaotic, causing congestion and restricting flows of people and traffic. Yet markets also represented a site of what Jane Jacobs termed ‘organised complexity’: cultural and civic spaces infused with tradition and local identity. This was something many modernist planners struggled to understand within their rigid logics of form, flow and function, but which was culturally important and a real economic necessity for those who did not enjoy the benefits of increasing affluence.[[21]](#footnote-21) Mass’ examination of the way Fredrick Gibberd in 1950s Harlow and later Konrad Smigielski in Leicester retained open markets in their ‘townscape’ type development plans, tells the story of a strand within modernism that questioned the strictly functional notion of the social that dominated the types of large-scale modernist town plans in the immediate post-war period. For planners like Hibberd and Smigielski the very messiness and complexity of the market was what made it intrinsic to producing functioning towns and cities. Markets’ traditions, heritage and culture stimulated legibility and civic value in the urban landscape. In this sense, this study is a welcome tonic to depictions of modernism as monolithic, dogmatic and unchanging. Like many other theses here, Mass departs from overly formal understandings of the forces that shaped British towns and cities, moving them from the architectural and economic into the social and the cultural.

This attention to civic value in Gibberd’s designs for Harlow, this time from the perspective of visual planning, is also picked up in Christine Manley’s 2014 thesis that reminds us that the aesthetics of town planning are themselves infused with judgements about the qualities of ordinary lives.[[22]](#footnote-22) Manley’s work shows how Gibberd understood the experiential elements of what made an English town, via a visual language of ‘urbanity’ – literally a visual, town-like quality. Gibberd’s designs were, she argues, focused wholly on aesthetics and did not consider the functional needs of inhabitants in the ways that the dominant modernist design philosophies of the period – emanating from organisations CIAM and the MARS – did.[[23]](#footnote-23) However, this did not mean that the designs were not centred on the experience of inhabitants, indeed the aesthetic appearance of the town was intrinsic to the ability of the space to produce a beneficial civic response. Instead of organisation and basic function, Gibberd’s designs were instead an attempt to fulfil the ‘psychological needs of the people in the aftermath of war, striving for an English version of modern architecture…[to] promote cultural continuity and cultural development’.[[24]](#footnote-24) This emphasis on the notion that there was a distinctly English aesthetic, has recently been echoed in Lauren Pikó’s work on Milton Keynes. In this, Pikó shows that North Buckinghamshire’s most famous new town was, in part, derided because its version of modernism was so antagonistic to the ideas of English vernacular styles and thus the very notion of Englishness during a period inflected with anxieties concerning imperial British decline.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Mass, nevertheless, sees the incorporation of the market within designs for redevelopment and renewal as a ‘buckling of top-down planning ideas’ against a bulwark formed from the ‘intransigence of small-scale and informal shopping practices’. It is clear from Mass’ work that overly rigid forms of modernism did indeed flounder on just these types of challenges. Yet, the study also evidences the increasingly sophisticated ways urban modernism and those who shaped planning policy saw the complexities of existing patterns of life, not as a challenge, but as something to be understood and shaped as a technique of urban governance.[[26]](#footnote-26) A comparison of Mass and Manley’s work shows us that encoding tradition in the built environment – either aesthetically or through the more prosaic spatial arrangement of the market place – was not antagonistic to the practice of urban modernism, but one more tool in a rather sophisticated tool box. What makes Mass’ conclusions important for wider histories of post-war Britain is the way that her case-studies of the interactions between ordinary citizens’ practices, planning and state regulation, and localised retail traditions also bring practices inscribed in space to the fore in discussions of consumerism and affluence. Just as Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has demonstrated in relation to post-war rationing, ordinary people’s retail preferences were detailed, idiosyncratic and, here, were a potentially destabilising element in planned environments.[[27]](#footnote-27) Mass’ exploration of how planners sought to shape sites of consumption, whilst simultaneously understanding them as sites of identity, family and tradition here reminds us of Frank Trentmann’s challenge to understand consumerism as it is woven into social structures, and points to the value of understanding consumer agency as it is bound up with ideas of space, citizenship and governmentality in any examination of post-war affluence.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Mass’ attention to how ordinary lives and local habits confounded and reshaped planning schemes that focused on too formalised an understanding of function, movement and the everyday is not an uncommon theme in the work on urban modernism and this process is echoed in a number of other recent theses. In the first instance it is central to the work of another US-based scholar of post-war Britain, Jesse Meredith.[[29]](#footnote-29) Meredith’s thesis concerns urban renewal between 1960 and 1985 , taking as its case studies Liverpool and Newcastle, cities that ‘perched themselves on the cutting edge of modernist urban planning’.[[30]](#footnote-30) Meredith is unflinchingly critical of what he sees as a post-war planning system that was enthralled with the master planner as both expert and father figure in what he neatly terms ‘the family romance of the modern British city.’[[31]](#footnote-31) On the one hand, echoing historians who have criticised urban modernism’s reliance on rigid statistical modelling over understanding ‘societal complexity’, Meredith paints the familiar picture of community design that was ill-suited to the ever-evolving diversity of ordinary lives.[[32]](#footnote-32) On the other hand, he demonstrates that planners also laid claim to a moral authority rooted in a much longer tradition of paternalism, a position that grew increasingly unsustainable during the 1970s. These positions of power were, we are shown, eroded by popular individualism, a collapse in deference, but most importantly, by the simple fact that planners’ visions of a humane and ordered city did not align with those for whom they planned. What is most pleasing about this work are two elements: first, that British planning is shown here in an international, post-colonial context, emphasising the links between planning in Britain with the experience of planners in the former colonies. The second is that Meredith’s cultural approach allows us to see the romanticism, idealism and emotion that often infused planners’ ideas. How citizens’ experience was understood as a tool of urban governance at a more emotional level is sadly absent from much of the scholarship on urban modernism and here Meredith points to the importance of this fundamental, yet overlooked element of planning. Energetic examinations of the adoption of community architecture approaches in Newcastle demonstrate that even when planners tried to move away from monolithic, top down design solutions, they often succumbed to the impulse to impose ideas upon rather than merely advise local inhabitants. What Meredith shows us, through illuminating cultural histories of places like Killingworth and Byker, is that the planned-for exerted an influence over the planning process in a multiplicity of ways that more top-down studies have ignored.

In a rather different way, it was the inability to account for the reality of ordinary lives that Matthew Parker’s study of the development of Birmingham argues was fundamental in the failure to create a city of ‘mass automobility’.[[33]](#footnote-33) Echoing recent studies that have shown how fundamental the car was to the development of British urban space, Parker tells us that between 1945 and 1973 Birmingham’s leaders embarked on a distinctly ideological attempt to plan the city as a motor city.[[34]](#footnote-34) This obsession, particularly from famed city engineer Herbert Manzoni, with a future that defined Birmingham as a motor city meant not just road building, but the subordination of slum clearance, suburban development, industry and retail space to the needs of road transport development. Manzoni exemplified Meredith’s description of the expert, paternalist planner, although even amongst this cohort his virtually ‘unchecked power’ was unusual.[[35]](#footnote-35) Indeed, in viewing the flow and organisation of traffic as the central feature of urban life, Manzoni’s views of urban function sit diametrically opposite to the preservation of legibility of Gibberd and Smigielski described by Mass. Manzoni’s plans were not a response to increased car ownership, but an attempt to shape the future prosperity of the city around cultures of leisure, work and consumption that did not yet exist but were inextricably bound to automobility. In chapter three, particularly in discussions of shopping frontage, Parker hints at the importance of retail and consumerism to the future of the motor city. The motor city was, we can see, not merely founded on a nebulous, fantastical commitment to a future of personal mobility, but underpinned by understandings of cities as sites of automobile consumerism. This position is explicitly approached in Kefford’s thesis, which argues that the central figure in the development of transport infrastructure was not merely the motorist, but the ‘shopping motorist’, something he partly illustrates with an inventive study of car park provision.[[36]](#footnote-36) The transport needs of ‘shoppers and shopping centres became the primary consideration in local officials’ regulation of mobility in the city’ in an attempt to reinvent the city as an economic hub fuelled by consumers in their cars.[[37]](#footnote-37) Yet, Parker also shows that creating a motor city also enforced systems of inequality, with women, the poor and the elderly often excluded from the cultures of automobility, pedestrians became a secondary consideration, and public transport provision was neglected. In addition, the reliance on cars had other dramatic impacts upon the quality of life of Birmingham’s residents who feared for their health and grew increasingly unhappy with planning policy that, by 1971, still offered so little to the 55% of people who did not own a car.[[38]](#footnote-38) That so many ordinary lives were subordinated to an expensive, remarkably rigid and homogenous system of transport was, Parker concludes, unsustainable in the face of opposition from people for whom it provided so few benefits and whose daily lives, in many cases, it actively hampered.

Parker, Meredith and Mass, in different ways, demonstrate the reasons that the preferences and habits of the planned-for gradually reshaped the decision making process central to urban development. As historians like John Davis and Peter Shapley have shown government policy, particularly urban policy, was increasingly characterised by sporadic attempts to foster, understand and engage with local communities from the 1960s and 1970s onwards, albeit often in ways that were often still top-down, remote and frequently unsuccessful.[[39]](#footnote-39) David Ellis’ 2015 thesis, concerned with community action, local government and urban policy in Leeds between 1960 and 1990, thus provides another important piece in the puzzle of post-war municipal decision making by highlighting the role of politics at a neighbourhood, non-state level.[[40]](#footnote-40) Ellis demonstrates that community action groups, through pragmatic, politically and intellectually heterogeneous forms of activism, successfully contested plans for the built environment, particularly housing provision and services. In doing so, Ellis shows that community action groups were instrumental throughout the 1970s in shaping policies around their own understandings of ‘how cities should function and what urban life should look like’.[[41]](#footnote-41) Where Ellis’ analysis differs from a number of the more recent analyses of political activism of this type, however, is in stressing that citizens did not simply see themselves as consumers of welfare or housing; rather they wished to participate in the policy-making process and in the shaping of public services.[[42]](#footnote-42) Ellis’ contribution thus stresses how the planned-for organised themselves to have a profound impact on the built environment and the policies which governed it. Indeed, although he shows how these forms of community activism struggled to truly translate into a coherent national movement, especially in the face of Margret Thatcher’s policies, they *were* successful in embedding the notion of community consultation in approaches to urban governance.

Another theme in Ellis work is the challenges of community action against a persistent narrative and perception of inner city decline both in the media and amongst central government. Community action groups enjoyed a great deal of success in defeating attempts to clear areas of housing in city centres during the 1970s, illustrating, as Meredith also does, the receding – at least in the arena of housing and community construction – of the belief that all solutions to urban issues were merely a question of finding the correct design or layout. This moment of transition, played out in the interactions of voluntary organisations with the state in efforts to ameliorate the effects of urban decline, is also a central feature of Aaron Andrews’ study of urban crisis in Liverpool between 1968 and 1986.[[43]](#footnote-43) In this thesis, completed in 2018, Andrews examines how decline was studied, understood and experienced through the built environment in Merseyside, showing how the notions of an inner-city crisis were constructed culturally and politically. In Andrews’ work the deteriorating urban environment of Liverpool’s inner-city takes on an agency of its own, not merely reflecting patterns of unemployment, crime and indexes of ‘multiple deprivation’, but becoming the major obstacle to economic regeneration and a barrier to population recovery. As Saumarez Smith has also shown in recent work, the problems of the inner cities were held up as evidence that the modernist project to clear and remake the built environment had not merely failed, but had somehow caused the urban crisis in breaking with traditions and through the fetishization of newness.[[44]](#footnote-44) In effect, what Andrews’ work does is demonstrate the final nail in the coffin of the general faith in large-scale, holistic spatial intervention as a determinant of socio-economic outcomes that had characterised the preceding four decades. Though ‘decline’ as a narrative of twentieth-century Britain has been much challenged by recent scholarship, what Andrews shows is how important it is to understand the way decline as a narrative was spatialized and formulated into a coherent set of policies and approaches that had serious consequences for the lives and experience of Liverpool’s citizens.[[45]](#footnote-45)

**Conclusion**

The theses surveyed here all tell different parts of the story of urban change in post-war Britain, a story that revolves around the rise and fall of urban modernism as the dominant philosophy shaping approaches to remaking and governing the built environment. That these theses have added another layer of nuance to a view of modernism that all-to-often appears to have been a monolithic, homogenous process illustrates the continuing importance of the study of this period of history for specialists in the field. Indeed, as Rivera’s study of housing provision in the New Towns explicitly shows, the continuing relevance of understanding this period lies not merely in historical curiosity, but in the still-relevant lessons planners and politicians of today can learn from the detailed examination of the successes and failures of this ambitious period. In an era of ongoing housing crisis, environmental challenges – harshly exposed by the fragility of urban life during recent heatwaves, flooding and global pandemics – and persistent questions over inequality, the work produced here seems remarkably current. Yet these theses illustrate the value of their respective fields beyond their immediate disciplines. Taken together, they track the story of a belief that the central issues of twentieth-century British life – issues like forming stable communities, dealing with employment and deindustrialisation, catering to emerging patterns of consumerism, and balancing the demands of society with increasing individualism – could be solved through the production of the right types of spaces. In doing so these histories of architecture and town planning speak to the central concerns of British history in unique ways. Indeed, although in this review I have focused largely on metanarratives of deindustrialisation, consumerism and decline there is much in these theses that might contribute to many of the other ‘big questions’ that preoccupy British historians. There is, for example, much that might engage with David Edgerton’s formulation of the post-war British nation as a ‘developmental state’, or respond to Guy Ortolano’s call to rethink the standard narrative of social democratic collapse.[[46]](#footnote-46) It might, nevertheless, still be a little unfair to saddle this mixed group of early-career researchers with the label a ‘new urban social history’. Indeed, doing so risks underestimating the variety of approaches and unique qualities of each of these theses, which come from a range of different disciplinary backgrounds. However, here the label seems apposite, because each goes beyond considerations of mere design or urban form for their own sake. In doing so each makes a genuine intervention in narratives of twentieth-century Britain that does not merely augment social and cultural histories, but illustrates the centrality of the examination of urban space and those who inhabit it to understanding the past.

1. It is common to label the immediate post-war period?, running until anything from the early 1950s to 1960, as ‘reconstruction’ or ‘rebuilding’, the subsequent period until the late 1970s is then seen distinctly as ‘renewal’, although these are not uniform usages. As John Gold has observed, the post-war was a period when the ‘re’ prefix (adding regeneration, redevelopment, replanning, remaking etc.) flourished. John Gold ‘British Urban Renewal,1951-1970’, paper given at *The Transformations of Urban Britain Since 1945* conference, University of Leicester, 9 Jul. 2013. Here I have generally favoured ‘redevelopment’ as a catch-all term for the collection of town planning and infrastructural development projects that broadly took place after the Second World War. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Recent publications illustrating the still-vibrant interest in this subject include: J. Clark and V. Wright, ‘Urban regeneration in Glasgow: looking to the past to build the future? The case of the “New Gorbals”’, in J. Clark and N. Wise (eds.), *Urban* *Renewal, Community and Participation* (London, 2018), 45–70; C. Flinn, *Rebuilding Britain’s Blitzed Cities: Hopeful Dreams, Stark Realities* (London, 2018); James Greenhalgh, *Reconstructing Modernity: Space, Power and Governance in Mid-Twentieth Century British Cities* (Manchester, 2018); Otto Saumarez Smith,‘Central government and town centre redevelopment, 1959–1966’*, Historical Journal,* 58:1 (2015), 217–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. N. Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (London, 2002); G. Cherry, *Cities and Plans: The Shaping of Urban Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1988); J. Gold, *The Experience of Modernism: Modern Architects and the Future City, 1928–1953* (London, 1997); J. Gold, *The Practice of Modernism: Modern Architects and Urban Transformation, 1954–1972* (London, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. On this point see: G. Ortolano, *Thatcher’s Progress: From Social Democracy to Market Liberalism Through an English New Town* (Cambridge, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. C. Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal* (Chicago, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. S. Couperus, ‘Building democracy anew: neighborhood planning and political reform in post-blitz Rotterdam', *Journal of Urban History,* 42:6 (2015), 992–1008; E. Hanna, *Modern Dublin: Urban Change and the Irish Past, 1957-1973* (Oxford, 2013); N. Vall, ‘Two Swedish modernisms on English housing estates: cultural transfer and visions of urban living 1945–1969’, *Contemporary European History,* 24:2 (2015), 517–36. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. S. Gunn, review of O. Saumarez Smith, *Boom Cities: Architect Planners and the Politics of Radical Urban Renewal in 1960s Britain*, (review no. 2361), Dec 2019, available online: <https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/2361> accessed 20 Mar 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A. Kefford, ‘Constructing the affluent citizen: state, space the individual in post-war Britian: 1945–79’, University of Manchester Ph.D. thesis, 2015; O. Saumarez Smith, ‘Planning, politics and central area redevelopment, circa 1963’, University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. J.C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (London, 1998); P. Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. L. Black and H. Pemberton (eds.), *An Affluent Society? Britain’s Post-war ‘Golden Age’ Revisited* (Aldershot, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. O. Saumarez Smith, *Boom Cities: Architect Planners and the Politics of Radical Urban Renewal in 1960s* *Britain* (Oxford, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. J. Tomlinson, ‘De-industrialization not decline: a new meta-narrative for post-war British history’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 27:1 (2016), 76–99. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For the future direction of this type of study see Alistair Kefford’s British Academy Fellowship project ‘Commercial property development and the remaking of British cities, 1954-1998’, available online: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Postdoctoral%20_Fellows_2017_cohort.pdf> accessed 20 Mar 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Saumarez Smith, ‘Planning, politics and central area redevelopment’, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. A. Alexander, *Britain's New Towns: Garden Cities to Sustainable Communities* (London, 2009), 149–56; M. Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Postwar England* (Manchester, 1998), 121–95; A. Forsyth and R. Peiser, ‘The British new towns: lessons for the world from the new-town experiment’, *Town Planning Review*, 90:3 (2019), 239–46. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. H. Rivera, ‘Political ideology and housing supply: rethinking New Towns and the building of new communities in England’, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London Ph.D. thesis, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Rivera, ‘Political ideology and housing supply’, 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Rivera, ‘Political ideology and housing supply’, 179–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Rivera, ‘Political ideology and housing supply’, 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. S. Mass, ‘At the heart of the city: the battle for British marketplaces, c.1925–1979’, University of Michigan Ph.D. thesis, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1998 [1961]), 434–5, 440; Mass, ‘At the heart of the city’, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. C. Manley, ‘New town urbanity: theory and practice in housing design at Harlow’, Mackintosh School of Architecture Ph.D. thesis, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. CIAM (*Congrès Internationaux d'architecture Moderne)*, was formed in June 1928 by 28 European architects to promote modern architecture as a social art. CIAM was highly influential in the formulation of post-war planning doctrines, especially through the 1933 Athens Charter in which they outlined the principles of zoning, rehousing and traffic flow as central to creating a functional city. The MARS (Modern Architectural Research) group was founded in 1933 becoming an influential British architectural think tank. It is best remembered for its series of plans for London. See: J. Gold, ‘The MARS plans for London, 1933-1942’, *Town Planning Review,* 66:3 (1995), 243–67; E. Mumford*, The CIAM Discourse on Urbanisms, 1929-1960* (Cambridge, MA, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Manley, ‘New town urbanity’, 309. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. L. Pikó, *Milton Keynes in British Culture: Imagining England* (Abingdon, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Mass, ‘At the heart of the city’,124. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Rationing austerity and the Conservative Party recovery after 1945’, *Historical Journal,* 37:1 (1994), 173–97. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
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30. Meredith, ‘Cities of the plan’, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Meredith, ‘Cities of the plan’, 314. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
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33. M. Parker, ‘Making the city mobile: the place of the motor car in the planning of post-war Birmingham, c.1945–1973’, University of Leicester Ph.D. thesis, 2015, i. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
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35. Parker, ‘Making the city mobile, 227’. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Kefford, ‘Constructing the affluent citizen’, 112-18 and ch.2 more generally. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Kefford, ‘Constructing the affluent citizen’, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Parker, ‘Making the city mobile’, 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. J. Davis ‘Reshaping the welfare state? Voluntary action and community in London 1960–1975’, in L. Goldman (ed.), *Welfare and Social Policy in Britain since 1870. Essays in Honour of Jose Harris* (Oxford, 2019) 197–212; J. Davis, ‘Community and the Labour left in 1970s London’, in C. Williams and A. Edwards (eds.), *The Art of the Possible: Politics and Governance in Modern British History, 1985–1997: Essays in memory of Duncan Tanner* (Manchester, 2015): 207–23; P. Shapely, *Deprivation, State Interventions and Urban Communities in Britain, 1968–79* (Abingdon, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. D. Ellis, ‘Pavement politics: community action in Leeds, c.1960–1990’, University of York Ph.D. thesis, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ellis, ‘Pavement politics’, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. On the reformulation of the British working classes as consumers see: A. Offer, ‘British manual workers: from producers to consumers, c.1950–2000’, *Contemporary British History*, 22:4 (2008), 537–71. On citizens as consumers of welfare etc, see: M. Hilton, ‘The Birmingham Consumer’s Group and affluent Britain’, in Black and Pemberton (eds.), *An Affluent Society?,* 167–84; P. Shapely, *The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers and Urban Culture* (Manchester, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
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