

# Preface

This book has its origins in a Ph.D. thesis, entitled *Central London under Reconstruction Policy and Planning, 1940–1959*, completed in 1993 and submitted at the University of Leicester, under the supervision of the recently deceased Professor Anthony R. Sutcliffe (1945–2011). The thesis contains more reference material and a longer bibliography than the present work. I have made substantial changes in the main text also, and added much new narrative.

London planning during and just after the Second World War was an enormous task. In spite of the war disasters, new ideas and aspects were tested, legislation and public administration were introduced to match the work evolved. In this context, the foundation of the British Planning System was established, dominated and influenced the world scene for the coming decades. The participation and mobilisation of local authorities, planners, architects and other professional groups and the public enthusiasm followed the exhibitions and debates of London reconstruction plans. One could argue that here lay the origins of the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of planning and the inclusion of more actors in a pluralist procedure.

The aim of the book is to recreate the atmosphere following step by step the arguments and the events at various political, socio-economic and technical levels. It also endeavours to contribute in the understanding of the succeeding developments in terms of planning theory and practice. It deals with the formation of the post-Second World War reconstruction and planning machinery in Great Britain as well as, with the re-planning efforts undertaken in post-war London and in particular the redevelopment programme regarding its central area in the form of the comprehensive development projects.

Planning London For The Post-War Era is structured into four Parts. Part I, titled ‘The Reconstruction Question’, deals with the main problems raised in the big British urban agglomerations before the Second World War and because of the Second World War destructions. Part II, on ‘The Preparation of Planning Machinery’ explores the administrative and statutory developments in town planning matters during the period 1940–1959; the contradiction between private interests and public sector emerges here. Part III is named ‘Re-planning London’ and presents the plans proposed for London as a whole from independent and

official organisations during the 1940s and the 1950s. Finally, Part IV of 'Redeveloping Central London', examines the suggested comprehensive projects for the rebuilding of the City of London and for specific areas of Central London that suffered from bombing. Although these projects introduced innovations concerning the control of urban densities, and the hygiene of residence and office accommodation in the city centre, they failed to achieve one of their main targets, which were the practical unification of both districts of Central London located at the north and the south banks of the Thames.

In addition, the approach in this book brings new material from original sources and sheds light on hidden sides of this era, which influenced international planning developments. It also introduces a document representing events and decisions as a part of the Second World War reality. Such material is essential for any future historiography of that period.

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