

*'Views Grim But Splendid' - The Urban Image of
North-West English Industrial Towns*

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North-West English Industrial Towns*

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Abstract

The thesis explores the urban images of north-western industrial towns and their relationship to the built environment. Currently the towns seek to reposition themselves in relation to their persistent cultural images through urban regeneration. The thesis analyses this development through three types of urban image focusing on graphic depictions, visual urban planning and the built environment. The research question asks **'What is the urban image of the north-western post-industrial town?'** followed by the secondary questions 'How has the urban image shifted throughout time?' And 'How has urban image influenced the urban development of the towns?'. The research first compares and evaluates the current condition and historic urban development of eight similar towns in the region, Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Stockport, Warrington and Wigan to evaluate their homogeneity in reference to the Northern cultural image. The study then moves on to interrogate the specific development of the urban image of Stockport as an exemplary case study. The study examines tensions apparent in the repositioning of the towns in relation to their pasts, highlighting issues of history and heritage, identity, scale and ambition. The results of the study show the complex relationship between image and environment, identifying the ways in which the urban images have been constructed, problematised and disseminated. The thesis argues for a more comprehensive and informed approach linking image and urban regeneration in the towns in order to limit the impact of current reactionary practices of urban design.

00 Introduction

This research focuses on the urban image of North West English industrial towns. The image of the towns has become a particular site of contestation in recent years due to an increasing tension between historic cultural images, the built environment and the growing pressures of urban competition. After a century of decline and urban restructuring the image of the towns has changed significantly since the height of industrialisation. The local authorities react in various ways to reposition the industrial image of the towns to attract investment, yet this occurs without a critical understanding of the current urban images, their historic transition and the ways they are deployed. This thesis critiques the development of the urban image of the towns in art, urban planning and the built environment throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to create an informed basis for future decision making. The study begins with a comparative study of the towns of the region before focusing on the representative case of Stockport.

Eight towns in the North West are in a state of transition from industry, these are Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Stockport, Warrington, Wigan. These towns surround the cities of Manchester and Liverpool forming the Mersey - Irwell urban belt (Freeman et al. 1966). The towns' historic cultural images are distinctly tied to industrialism and urbanity due to the intense development of manufacturing and transportation in the region, during the Industrial Revolution, supported by the explosive growth of an urban revolution (Walton 2000:131). The towns' form of urbanism was the focus of impassioned debates throughout the eighteenth to twentieth centuries and triggered the creation of legislative town planning in England. The Northern cultural image was constructed as a reaction to the growth of industry (and urbanity) as the region was depicted as fundamentally different to the agrarian English ideal (Wiener 1981, Kirk 2000, Ehland 2007). This cultural association with industrialism persists despite the decline of industry in the region and wider country.

The loss of primary economic function in the region's towns and cities caused a series of social, spatial and conceptual issues regarding their

future, which Peter Hall has termed the 'North's existential dilemma' (Hall, 2006a). Now the towns have lost the hegemonic urban structure and identity of industrialism they face key decisions about how they want to develop in the future. The towns are currently in state of anxious change as they attempt to reposition themselves in relation to their industrial pasts in order to attract investment for the future. This is exemplified in a statement taken from the Future Stockport Development Plan which states 'central to this vision is creating a safe and lively centre with an increased range of shops, home, leisure and entertainment facilities...However, for any of these projects to be truly successful we also need to transform the image of Stockport' (BDP 2005:iv). This highlights the distinct relationship between image and urban development that has become a central concern in the towns.

The cities of Liverpool and Manchester are a key precedent for the towns in the repositioning of the industrial image through urban design. The recent large scale regeneration programme of the region's cities successfully redefined them as prosperous post-industrial cities. The image of the cities was deliberately manipulated in order to reposition them in relation to both their industrial pasts and their provincial status re-presenting them as global cities. This was achieved through the regeneration of public space and urban form using the built environment to construct a new urban image (Crinson 2007, Madgin 2010, Crompton 2012). The success and speed of this regeneration is brought into focus by the Shrinking Cities study (Oswalt 2005) which discussed the fate of Liverpool and Manchester as declining urban centres yet within a decade of publication both Liverpool and Manchester have reversed their population losses (Office for National Statistics 2012).

While the core cities of Liverpool and Manchester have recently redefined themselves, the wider region continues to be affected by the negative image of Northern industrialism typified by George Orwell's 'The Road to Wigan Pier' (1937). The industrial towns have been greatly influenced by the recent success of the cities' rebranding which has been further compounded through the need to attract economic investment in an increasingly globalised competition for financial investment. In contrast the context of the cities' regeneration is somewhat different to that of the industrial towns in scale, scope and reach (Bell and Jayne 2006). The towns do not have the resources or the ability to attract the investment levels needed to effect change on the scale of the cities. As such their current bid for change is based on myopic agendas and inappropriate models.

This thesis focuses on three distinct types of image that portray the ways in which the towns are changing and redefining themselves

through urban planning, the built environment and graphic depiction. Firstly the thesis is concerned with urban plans as an image making process, this covers the local authority and consultant master plans drawn up for the towns. Urban plans explicitly engage with an imagined future for the towns, portraying ambition and ideology within their stylistic replanning of the central urban areas. As a result the plans also engage with the past through their strategies towards demolition and reconstruction. This exploration of urban plans will allow a historical study of the shifting attitudes to towards the towns, their ambitions and their preferred image. Secondly the thesis is concerned with the material reality of the built environment. The interest in urban image has led to a visual approach that interrogates the way the towns have presented themselves through architectural and infrastructural works. Finally the third image type interrogates the specific cultural image of the towns through an analysis of the towns' representation in art, literature, cartography, photography and film. This allows a more nuanced understanding of the wider disseminated image of the towns. This focuses on the represented image of the towns. These three types of image each hold distinct relationships to the urban development of the towns, explicitly linking image to place.

A key theme that runs through this interrogation of the industrial town is the condition of indeterminacy. The towns are between identities having begun the process of deindustrialisation yet without having constructed wholly new identities, in this sense they are in the transition between their pasts and futures. The towns occupy a level of the urban hierarchy that borders the city and the town. They have not achieved city status (although this is a consistent aim within the towns) and they differ from the cities in distinct ways, yet they continue to support vast numbers of the region's population. Similarly the towns mediate the landscapes between the high urban density of the cities and the wider rural areas of the Lancashire Plain and the Pennines. The towns are complexly positioned between the pure functionalism and utopian ideas (seen primarily in the industrial philanthropy in the towns) of the Victorian era. As such the towns occupy temporal, conceptual and spatial transitional zones that evade easy definition. The research interrogates how the towns define themselves within these mixed circumstances and begins to question how they decide what is culturally valuable as they redefine themselves.

Stockport exemplifies these themes through its complicated location historically on the edge of two distinct and visually different counties of Lancashire and Cheshire that have influenced the town's current image. The town borders the Cheshire Plain, Peak District and Lancashire Plain and urban Mersey - Irwell Belt, each of which again have influenced the town's development. Further to this Stockport

holds an ambiguous relationship to the city of Manchester as the town forms part of the continuous urban fabric of the city yet seeks to define itself as distinct. The town is also currently undergoing an extensive regeneration programme outlined in the Future Stockport Plan (2005) restructuring the town in successive phases and reimagining its future and history in the process.

Thesis Questions

Traditionally the towns have presented themselves (and have been represented) in relation to their industrial functions, which prompts the question of how they choose to represent themselves now that industry has gone. The research question seeks to understand the development of urban image now that the towns have lost their underpinning identity, by asking:

- **'What is the urban image of the north west post-industrial town?'**

This leads on to the sub questions of:

- **'How has the urban image shifted throughout time?'**
- **'How has urban image influenced urban development in the towns?'**

The towns are anxious to change, yet they have no clear vision for their future identities and lack a distinct strategy to follow, so far they mimic the models of regeneration of the region's cities- Liverpool and Manchester, which are based on transition from production to consumption.

The study first aims to define the particular level of the urban hierarchy of the industrial towns, how far they are comparable to each other and how they differ from the region's cities. This addresses both cultural imagery and the built environment to understand how far the Northern cultural image portrays the reality of the towns (or how far a homogenous urban identity exists in the region) and analyses the historic pattern of urban development in the towns.

The second overarching aim of the thesis regards the specific development of urban image that utilises a single town as a representative case. This aim is to understand the ways in which urban image has been constructed, presented and problematised. This covers three types of urban image to understand the constructed urban image through pictorial depictions that represented the towns, the urban images preferred in the planning of the town (and the images that are problematised through this process) and the image of the town presented by the built environment.

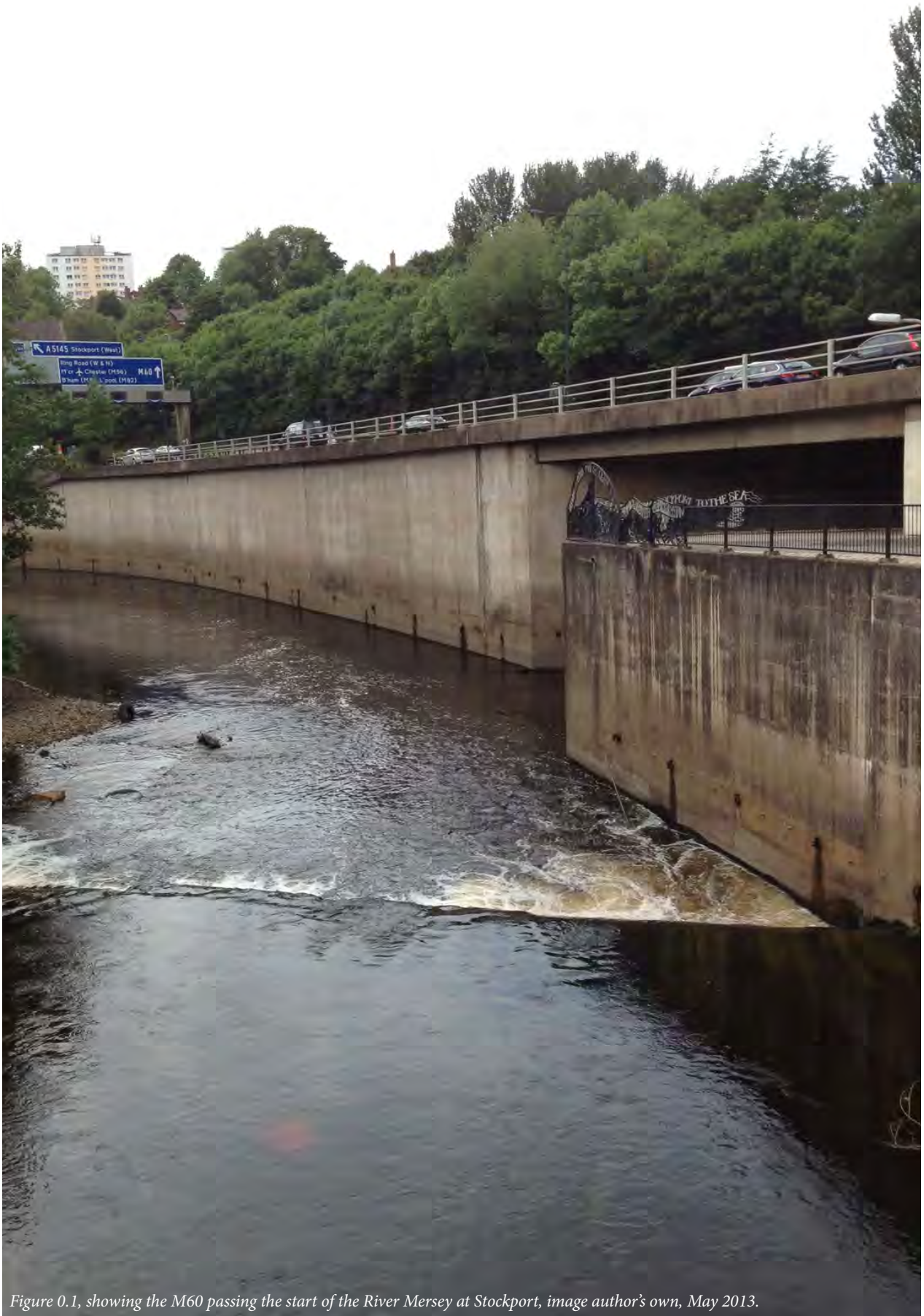


Figure 0.1, showing the M60 passing the start of the River Mersey at Stockport, image author's own, May 2013.

The Scope of the Study

The study stems from the particular issues present in a number of towns in the North West. These towns have been in a state of transition throughout the past two hundred and fifty years through periods of intense growth and decline making them the subject of diverse and paradoxical depiction. The study interrogates the urban issue of transition as the towns navigate themselves between identities. This focuses on the messy reality of most urban areas that exist between the two hegemonic identities of functionalism and utopianism.

Throughout the twentieth century the towns, along with the nearby cities, have sought to redefine their economic roles in order to attract new investment and replace the loss of industry. While this process in the region has been defined by de-industrialisation, an issue prevalent in developed countries, the experience of the towns relates to wider processes of urban transition and obsolete identity.

The focus of the study is confined to the eight towns of the region in order to understand the unique characteristics of their transition, but the study deals generally with contested urban images that exists beyond urban industrialism. Further to this the study also relates to a precise level of the urban hierarchy that touches on ideas of provincialism, status and urban potentiality. The study focuses explicitly on urban image, a factor that weaves between key debates on identity, heritage and continuity that pervade current urban thought. As such, the context of the study addresses wider themes beyond the urban experience of the region.

Significance and Originality of the Study

The urban image of industrial towns is worthy of attention for several reasons. Firstly, from the towns' perspective, image is becoming increasingly important within the highly competitive undercurrent of globalisation. Image, while approached as a branding exercise in the towns, holds distinct implications for the built environment and its historical continuity. This process is exaggerated due to the persistent cultural images of the North which the towns seek to redefine. This addresses the processes of how places define and represent themselves through built fabric through phases of transition. The connection between the built environment and urban image is also something which is missing from the growing literature on place marketing. The burgeoning academic subject focuses heavily on the construction of an image with little connection or exploration of its relationship to the built environment. This overlooks the

complex processes of the industrial towns as they attempt to rebrand themselves through urban design. These factors have been continually overlooked by several strands of academic debate.

Past studies have interrogated the Northern image and its construction in the national imagination. This has included exploration of key images and their dissemination, the studies largely focus on quantitative data to disprove the stereotypes ingrained in the northern image. The studies repeatedly argue that the Northern cultural image simplifies the complexity of the region overlooking its diversity. Despite this, little focus has been put on the relationship between the image and the material reality of the North. While these studies argue against the simplification of the North, they reinforce the idea of regional homogeneity in their wide focus that shifts across the North of England. Further to this little focus has been given to particular sites or locations in relation to the Northern cultural image. This study seeks to compare the homogenous cultural image to the built environment of the towns in order to understand the particular ways in which the image simplifies the reality.

Secondly, the towns continue to function and support vast populations making their continuity important. Therefore their shifts of identity and visions for the future hold implications for thousands of residents and workers. No sustained critical attention has been paid to their past transitions and urban strategies and they continue to lack appropriate models to follow.

More generally, towns have been overlooked by urban academic debate in England, which has been largely focused on the study of cities. Yet towns differ from cities, in their urbanities (Hall 2008), ambitions and reach (Bell and Jayne 2006). This is clear in the experience of transition in the region, which Peter Hall explains as an economic archipelago (2006a), whereby the successful core cities are surrounded by seas of declining towns. While similar global processes affect the towns and cities of the region, the lack of diverse economic resources and significant loss of skilled workers through migration has impeded the transition of the towns. They struggle to change their identities and experience great difficulties in mediating their past and present urban forms with their future aspirations. The thesis focuses intently on the urban scale of the town highlighting them as a distinct urban scale worthy of attention. As such the study begins to address the complex issues of provincial urban competition.

Despite their cultural status as the trigger for legislative town planning, the industrial towns have received very little sustained attention to survey or evaluate their shifting urban strategies. The urban

development of the towns has been largely discussed in terms of socio-economic change with little focus on the spatial and visual shift of the towns. While this has been an ample research focus in the cities of Manchester and Liverpool it has been disregarded in the towns.

Thirdly, while the towns have experienced transition from industry over the past century the added pressure of globalisation, the urban renaissance in Britain, and the successful regeneration of the region's core cities, has brought the towns to a critical point. They are each anxious to adapt and to replicate the city's success but this comes at the expense of long term informed decisions about how and what to change.

In previous studies landscape architecture has focused on post-urban remediation in the context of industrial decline. This has focused primarily on sites with complex ecological issues but with relatively simple identity issues, as their lack of population has made historical continuity a design decision. In contrast this study focuses on obsolete urban identity as opposed to urban obsolescence. The towns of the north west continue to act as urban centres but have lost the overriding logic that dictated their form, shape, function and visual identity.

Key Terms

Urban images - while urban images are a complex subject with many different variations, the thesis approaches urban image from three specific perspectives. The thesis interrogates urban plans, graphic depictions and the material landscape as three distinct forms of urban image. As such urban image in this sense relates to the way (real and imagined) visual ideas about the towns have been constructed, problematised and disseminated. This approach is influenced by iconographic landscape research methods of Cosgrove and Daniels (1988).

Urban plans - this relates to the official master plans published by local authorities in response to national planning guidance. The plans included in the study are chiefly spatial and visual, therefore non spatial urban strategies are excluded as are smaller urban design plans which do not address the image of the town as a whole. The urban plans exhibit the specific ways in which the towns have been imagined, they demonstrate values towards the existing condition and present the future of the town primarily through visual means of plans/maps, diagrams and illustrations. The plans implicitly display the aspects of the current image the towns (or master planners) want to alter and those they want to construct. While the plans often went unbuilt they are uniquely tied to the ambition and values of the towns in discrete time periods. This focuses on the problematisation of the existing urban image. The urban plan as an image is a particularly understudied area despite the visual nature of the plans and the ideas they present (Söderström 1996).

Graphic Depictions - This focuses on the ways in which the reality of the town has been represented through art, literature, cartography and photography. The term graphic depiction refers to the way visual knowledge about the towns has been presented therefore covering both pictorial and literary description (Cosgrove 2008:3). This links closely to the debates on the northern cultural image, as graphic depiction was key way that ideas about the towns were circulated and disseminated. This covers chiefly visual media paintings, photography, sketches, postcards, films, but also written materials such as literary description and documentary. The focus was put on published materials that allowed the wide circulation of visual knowledge about the towns. These materials focus on the relationship between urban form and the way it is conceived and disseminated into the public domain.

Material Landscape - The material landscape is approached as an image, as the form and visual experience of the town has become a

key way again of how others have perceived the towns. The majority of urban change experienced in the industrial towns happened outside the realm of the urban plans, instead they were the result of separate clearance plans, infrastructural works, individual developers, and large scale private investment (see chapter five and seven). These continual urban changes perpetually constructed new visual identities or reinforced the existing through the choice of siting, spatial layout, architectural style, scale and materiality. The thesis will discuss those that had the greatest impact on the visual experience of the town through both explicit intention and accident. This focuses on the process of construction and deconstruction of the town's material urban form and its impact on its visual conception.

Industrial towns - The thesis refers to the towns primarily as industrial towns. Further to this 'post-industrial' is occasionally used to reference their continued transition to reposition themselves, yet towns cannot be termed fully post-industrial as they have not yet wholly redefined themselves. More accurately the towns can be termed de-industrialised as they sustain low levels of industrial employment in comparison to their historical levels, yet this becomes a weighty term within the thesis. As such, 'industrial towns' is used to refer to the eight transitional de-industrialised towns of the region to ease sentence structure and reading. The thesis defines the particular rank of the towns within the urban hierarchy of Britain as large third tier towns (using Hall's hierarchy 2001). This focuses on a list of eight towns which are comparable in terms of population size, spatial area, and density namely, Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, St Helens, Warrington and Wigan. The general condition of these towns and their level of comparability is addressed before the study shifts to a focus on the case study of Stockport. The town is defined as a normative exemplar of the industrial town condition to explore the peculiarities of the three aspects of urban image. Stockport presents distinctly middling results in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative factors of the towns while presenting some anomalous factors that are further interrogated in the latter half of the thesis. This initial focus on the industrial town condition before a singular case study allows a breadth and depth of analysis of the urban image of industrial towns.

Chapter Overview

The Literature Review covers four themes pertinent to the study, the context of industry in the north, urban image, urban debate and heritage debates. These themes help to create a network of previous studies that frame and direct the current research. The work on the industrial north is largely contextual and reviews previous work on the historical urban development of the region. This covers socio-economic studies through to cultural image studies which begin to highlight the significance of the relationship between image and place in the North Western industrial town.

The review of urban image presents previous studies that approach urban images from a variety of perspectives. Using this review of approaches, the study positions itself in regard to urban image presenting the types of urban images of interest in the study and the methodologies used to interrogate them. The section on urban debates outlines the current gap in research on the urban hierarchy below the city level. This is contextualised within the broader debates of globalisation that pervade current urban thought. The final section of the review discusses the shifting approach to history and heritage in the context of industrialism, further highlighting the dearth of studies which focus on this level and typology of the urban hierarchy.

The Methods Chapter positions the approach of the thesis in the discipline of landscape architecture, the background of the researcher, but highlights key ways this overlaps with neighbouring disciplines of architecture, art history and geography. The chapter discusses the case study approach beginning with eight towns before focusing on one case study of Stockport. The study primarily uses archival materials from historic maps, urban plans, photographs and artworks to understand how the urban image of Stockport has shifted throughout time. This moves on to the tactical aspects of sourcing materials and the particular procedures of the research. The archival research necessitated specific strategies to review the material of multiple and somewhat divergent archives of the region's towns. Following on from this the methods discuss the implications of the approaches and specific methods utilised.

The first chapter 'A Comparative Review of the Industrial Towns of the Region' introduces the region and the reasons for its study before outlining the eight towns for further discussion. This chapter compares the towns using qualitative and quantitative materials to understand to what extent and industrial town condition can be defined. The chapter highlights specific ways the towns differ from the region's cities, how far the towns are comparable and how far they differ from each other.

This sets up the argument for the usefulness of Stockport as a key case study.

The second chapter 'Trends in the Urban Development of the Industrial Towns 1840-2015' charts the trends of urban change in the eight industrial towns of the region focusing on the similar experiences of urban change and planning throughout their histories. The chapter also highlights the specific built environment traditions that affected the town's development types in different ways. This builds on the argument of chapter four and begins to illustrate the level of nuance that exists between the towns.

The third chapter 'A Historical Survey of the Representation of Stockport' introduces the case of Stockport and explores the urban image of the town through published graphic depictions. This includes art, literature, cartography and photography that takes its inspiration from the town. This survey of published works allows an interrogation of the specifics of the northern image, the geographical realities of the images and their relationship to the built environment in Stockport. The chapter highlights the shifting image of Stockport through three key time periods.

The fourth chapter 'A Historical Review of Town Planning in Stockport' discusses the visual history of urban planning in Stockport. The chapter discusses the idiosyncrasies of Stockport's plans in relation to the standard development of UK planning. The planning of the town was of particular note through the commission of Thomas Sharp in the post-war period and Charles Reilly at the beginning of the twentieth century. Besides this the town developed in-house plans and commissioned BDP in 2005, all of which strove to create a new image for the town aligning it away from industrialism in different ways.

The final analytical chapter 'A Narrative of Urban Change in Stockport' explores the material reality of Stockport through three transport infrastructures that have influenced the urban development of the town. The chapter argues that, rather than the result of urban plans, the spatial, aesthetic and functional development of Stockport has been the result of road, rail and motorway infrastructures. The chapter explores the landscapes of each infrastructure through their approach to topography, function development, aesthetic experience and the spatial qualities of each route. The thesis argues that the three infrastructures have created and presented specific images of the town and have fundamentally influenced how the town has been seen and therefore represented. The chapter identifies specific links between the built environment and image.

The conclusion of the study draws each of these strands together on the urban image of north western industrial towns. The towns are seen to be indeterminate since the loss of hegemonic functional identity of industry and are undergoing a period of anxious change. The study questions processes of redefinition in the towns' transition from their industrial pasts. The research builds on key existing works from multiple disciplines that extend from cultural image research, to socio-economic histories and urban debates. The first chapter of the Literature Review frames these debates and their relation to the current study.

01 Literature Review

The literature review frames the study within four broad urban discourses regarding the specific context of Northern England, debates regarding urban image, urban status and competition and finally contemporary debates about industrial heritage. These previous studies help to outline the context surrounding the research questions, the reasons for the particular approach of the study and help to outline key methods and sources of particular use for the research.

Contextual History of Industry in North West England

A vast amount of literature exists on North West English industrial towns with many researchers being drawn to the turbulent history of the towns through periods of unprecedented growth and terminal decline. The range of the studies extends from social history to cultural identity studies and economic geography. This section of the literature review begins with an overview of the accepted historical narrative of the region through key social historians such as Barrie Trinder and John K Walton. This provides a basic historical context to underpin the following discussions. The second section discusses the particular issues of the industrial towns through the work of Sir Peter Hall and the copious information produced by the local authorities. This discussion highlights the divergent trajectories of the cities and towns in the region and the towns' general anxieties to change both economically and culturally. The third section builds on this discussion through cultural studies of the region, beginning to draw on existing studies on the cultural image of North Western industrial towns. The alternative perspectives of these studies have provided a broad understanding of the region's complexities and helped to define key areas for further research.

The industrial revolution began around 1750 (Stobart 2004) in the region as a result of a critical combination of factors such as the



Figure 1.1, Typical Victorian era industrial landscape of the north-western industrial towns, detail of Oldham Panorama, 1876 from Gallery Oldham

presence of streams and the development of water power and the presence of coal fields and the development of coal powered technologies. The industrial towns mainly grew around or within small existing settlements (Hunt, 2004, Barker & Harris, 1959, Stobart 2004, Trinder 1982, Walton 1987). The unprecedented growth of industry in the region caused a significant migration of people from the surrounding countryside, Scotland and Ireland looking for work (Stobart 2004, Trinder 1982, Walton 1987). As a result large urban areas developed to support the workers and a network of interdependent towns and cities specialising in textile manufacture, coal extraction, chemical manufacture and global transportation developed in the region (Counce 2000). Many of the region's towns specialised in one singular industry and later developed other dependent industries (Counce 2003, Tippett 1969, Stobart 2004, Trinder 1982, Walton 1987). The pattern of growth was unstable and caused a series of micro and macro economic recessions (Barker & Harris 1959, Arrowsmith 1997, Tippett 1969, Stobart 2004, Trinder 1982, Walton 1987), but the general trajectory of industrial growth continued until the 1920's (Barker & Harris, 1959, Walton 1987, Tippett 1969, Trinder 1982). The decline of industry in England began after the First World War but rapidly declined in the period between 1960-1980 (Walton 1987, Tippett 1969, Trinder 1982), this had a major effect on the mono-industry towns of the North West, along-with the larger and more diverse cities (Hall, 2006 & 2008). The decline of the North

West industrial towns has been attributed to a number of factors from a heightened international competition, heavy dependence on single industrial sector and national political ideologies. Since the decline of the industrial economy in England the region has experienced a somewhat difficult transition through deindustrialisation towards a post-industrial economy.

Sir Peter Hall has highlighted the contemporary issues faced by North Western towns in a series of studies on the region's economic geography (Hall 2006a, 2006b, 2008) he described the North West as an 'archipelago economy' (2006a:229), where the core cities of Manchester and Liverpool are surrounded by seas of declining towns. Throughout the last twenty years the core cities of have transformed their economy's away from industry towards retail and culture. Yet this regeneration has not successfully filtered out to the surrounding industrial towns as they lack the diverse economic resources needed to affect a similar transition to the region's cities.

The socio-economic problems of the towns are addressed in government and local authority policy documents (Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport 2011, St Helens, Wigan, Warrington), these indicate that most towns in the region are suffering similar effects of deindustrialisation having not yet moved beyond the confines of their historical development into a new era. As such the towns cannot yet be seen as truly post industrial. The towns continue to face a number of problems such as high levels of deprivation, unemployment, ageing populations and industrial wastelands (ibid). In a study that discusses the regeneration of de-industrialised cities Lovatt and O'Connor (1995) state 'whole cities and regions which had grown up around an industrial production rooted in place and central to the formation of the working and living patterns of the local population now found themselves radically undermined. This was to do not only with the devastating effects of long-term structural unemployment, but with a wider sense of loss of purpose; of identity' (ibid:127). As a result the economic issues and practicalities of deindustrialisation directly link to cultural issues relating to wider experiences of transition and change.

This link between the economic identity and the cultural identity of the towns can be seen in recent regeneration attempts. In the wider region of the North Will Alsop's master plan for Barnsley re-envisioned the town as an Umbrian hill town (Porter 2011). Alsop devised a strong new visual character to replace the loss of the historic identity of industry (see fig. 1.2). Barnsley's council leader Steve Houghton explained: 'I think we stand on the threshold of a tremendous future for the town and the borough, but we have to grasp it. We're very

Figure 1.2, Will Alsop model for Barnsley Regeneration Masterplan at Gateway Plaza 2010, unknown photographer (Barnsley Town Talk, 2010)



proud of the mining heritage and indeed the other history of the town, but we can't be held prisoner by that, and we can't keep hankering back to it. We've got to move forward for all our futures, and the master plan is just the beginning. It isn't just about rethinking what the town centre looks like. It is about rethinking the whole culture of the place.' (BBC, 2003). This quote reveals a general anxiety that is prevalent in de-industrialised towns to achieve not just an economic shift but also a cultural shift to become something entirely different. This anxiety to change has spatial, aesthetic and conceptual implications that are often overlooked. This period of self-conscious transformation in the North Western industrial towns remains largely uncritiqued, with all attention instead focused on the experience of transition within the core cities. This is a key gap in existing literature that this study intends to contribute to.

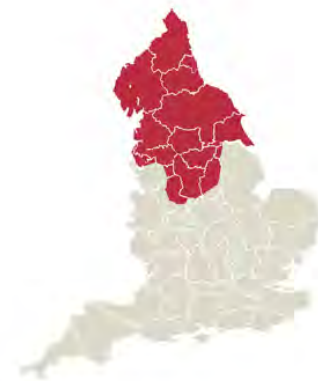
The anxiety for cultural change is a result of the dogmatic Northern image strongly associated with industrialism and decline. The Northern image has a long history in English culture from the medieval cartographic depictions of the dark North (Kirk 2000) to literature, art, discourse and contemporary media representations (Russell 2004). The Northern image was constructed in opposition to the idyllic ruralism of the English cultural image, developing into the concept of the North-South divide. Although the term is attributed to Elizabeth Gaskell in the early years of the industrial revolution the North had historically been characterised as different (Kirk 2000, Russell 2004, Ehland 2007).

In a study on landscape and identity Catherine Brace (2003) stated that 'the appearance of a homogenous national identity is achieved by a process of inclusion of ideas or images that give credence to a particular version of national identity and omission of ideas or images

that challenge it' (2003:121). As such the development of the Northern cultural image both opposed and strengthened the uniformity of Englishness. The use of landscape imagery to represent cultural values has pervaded English history through the inclusion (and exclusion) of landscape images within cultural identities.

The hegemonic structure and dominance of industry in the 19th century brought with it a drastic shift in attitudes towards the natural and built environment (see Wiener 1981, Urry & Macnaghten 1998, and for particular reference to this debate in the context of landscape architecture see Corner 1990, 1991, 2006). The image of industry and the town typified by the North West landscape came to represent power and progress and the rural image of the South East came to represent a Romantic ideal of an authentic England widely disseminated and reinforced by Romantic literature and art (Matless 1998, Wiener 1981, Urry & Macnaghten 1998, Williams 2013). Town and countryside stood for different ideals, embodied different socio-economic and spatial practices and were conceptualised as opposites (Williams 2013, Corner 2006, Cosgrove 1998, Hall 2006a, Urry & Macnaghten 1998). This positioned the human separate from the natural world and masked similarities between urban and rural systems (such as the mechanization and production practices that came to form the visual characteristics of the rural landscape). It also reduced Northern and English landscapes to stereotypical images, which excluded anything from the cultural imagination that did not conform to the standard. The opposition of the urban and rural was culturally constructed and instrumental in the development of Englishness (Urry & Macnaghten 1998), and therefore Northern-ness. The image of the rural and urban was imbued with different characteristics and moral qualities. These concepts have continued to affect the production and consumption of land throughout the 20th Century.

The images associated with the North and England or the South are strongly embedded with these particular landscape types and characteristics. Yet despite the different physical environments that are associated with both the North and South most commentators find it difficult to locate a boundary that divides the two (see figure 1.3 based on Russell's diagram of the North 2004). Martin Wiener (1981), in his study on the culture of industrialism, described the North-South divide as a metaphor rather than being grounded in geography. He described the construction of Englishness as heavily influenced by the landscapes of the South and in turn a set of idealised images of rural archaic lifestyles. He explained the North's landscapes of industry have come to represent the English 'other' exaggerated and simplified into the Northern metaphor. Hall (2006a) continued this idea with his description of a simplified concept of the North that is part of a wider



Figures 1.3, Opposite Page: Different conceptions of the North-South dividing line, taken from Russell 2004

set of dualisms that categorise the British economy (such as urban-rural distinctions). He argued that these binaries are deepening and succeed in masking complexities and gradations that exist between them.

To understand the North and South as a metaphor or image starts to highlight the myths that shape our conceptions of landscape and place. The North-South as a metaphor dissociates the image from geographical locations, the Northern metaphor isn't a particular area of land to the north of Birmingham but is instead a constructed cultural image, a set of ideals and lifestyles that are positioned as opposite to the Southern metaphor of Englishness. This helps to explain a number of anomalies that occur in Northern landscapes (for example Russell 2004 describes the landscape of the Lake district, Cumbria as more typical of the English image of idyllic rurality, fig 1.4). Wiener and Hall's understanding of the Northern cultural image is useful as it highlights its origination as a constructed concept that simplifies the reality.

Figure 1.4, The landscape of the Lake District is anomalous to the Northern cultural image. Bessyboot Fell, Cumbria, author's own image



In contrast to the simplified Northern image, the landscape of the North is composed of a variety of landscape systems and urban types creating a significant level of diversity (Counce 2000, Russell 2004, Smout 2004). In a study on the regional complexity of the North Stephen Counce (2003) identified a direct correlation between landscape types and the historic identity of the region's towns. This built on Patrick Geddes' (1915) much earlier study of 'Lancaster' (ibid), which focused on the conurbation of Liverpool and Manchester. Geddes saw the system as self-sustaining and illustrated this through Liverpool's role as a seaport, Manchester's role as a marketplace and the role of the industrial towns as 'Workshops'. The towns in these descriptions developed through a system of collaborative urban relationships underpinned by geographic diversities.

Waterways were fundamental to Counce's regional typology (2003), he described a distinct mirrored pattern across the Pennines in

the North. He argued the geography of the region determined the economic function of the towns from textile towns along the foothills and waterways of the valleys, coal towns across the flats, chemical towns further downstream and port cities positioned at the coast (ibid). Similarly Neville Kirk (2000) related the region's complex geology to different industries, lifestyles and identities. These nuanced geo-economic identities were intrinsically linked to different manufacturing processes leading to different architectural scales, styles and relationships to open space (Mitchell 1977, Walton 1987) creating visual diversities between the towns. While Counce and Geddes' descriptions of the region are diagrammatically simple, in a further study on urban complexity Counce (2000) highlighted a level of intricacy between the identity of the towns.

Counce proposed that the region can be seen as an 'urban kaleidoscope' (2000) whereby intricate variations exist between the towns stemming from the complex landscape variations that gave rise to the different industries, materialities, spatialities and identities. Building on this idea of a subtlety varied identity in the North, Cristoph Ehland's (2007) study on identity in the region again described a textured and diverse identity. He stated that the dominant discourses of identity in the North are 'continuously redeployed, replayed and recontained images' (ibid:20) yet in reality much more complexity exists, this view is shared by multiple theorists from varied perspectives (Hall 2006a, Russell 2004, Marvin & Graham 2001, Kirk 2000). Each of these studies identify that an intertwined history in the region led to shared complex (economic, spatial and visual) identities that hold significant relationships to the underlying landscape.

These studies position the Northern towns as unique yet simultaneously part of a wider cultural identity. They identify a pluralistic identity that diverges from the constructed image of Northern-ness. This consistent reassertion of a difference between the real and a constructed image (or an imagined North) has been continuously identified, yet the relationship between the real and the imagined has not been explored. As such no studies explore the relationship between the material reality of the towns and their corresponding cultural image. This relationship is of particular interest in the current context of anxious transition in the region as the towns proactively seek to redefine themselves in relation to their dogmatic image.

The Royal Institute of British Architects paper on 'The Future of Identity in Architecture and Urbanism' (RIBA 2009) stated 'there is a lack of research to date that tackles new forms of cultural identity and looks at how these changes are transforming the shape of British

towns and cities through specific examples'. Yet, research is lacking on the transformation of traditional forms of cultural identity and no critical appraisal exists of the impact of new identities. Ehland has stated 'changing economic patterns are changing the face of Northern England. They will alter the relationship between urban and rural areas. They will transform the social make-up of communities. Will they also change the texture of their identities? And if so, what is identity in the new global cultural economy?' (2009:19). This study will begin to evaluate how far these intricate identities remain despite the loss of the distinct economic functions. This will focus on the visual diversity of the region's towns identifying the differences between the material reality of the north west and the northern cultural image, a comparison that has so far been lacking in Northern image discourse.

This discussion of the conceptual context of the North Western industrial town identified a number of quantitative and qualitative approaches to the Northern industrial town. In the initial discussion Peter Hall approached the North as a geographic economic system, Stephen Caunce also adopted an economic approach whilst further exploring the relationship to topography. The discussion then moved on to the cultural studies of Ehland (2007), Kirk (2000), Russell (2004), and Wiener (1981), each of which explored the Northern cultural image. Kirk (2000) and Caunce (2000) identified cultural relationships to the physical environment identifying points of overlap between both the social construction of the landscape and its corresponding image. It is this connection between both the construction of the real landscape and the way it is imagined that forms the basis of this study. While this section has begun to identify an image discourse in the region the next section goes on to discuss wider literatures on urban image in order to identify an appropriate approach.

Urban Images

Any discussion of urban image must begin with Kevin Lynch's seminal text 'The Image of the City' (1960). The book was the result of a research project to understand the perception of city images using a cognitive approach. The study developed a theory of the way we perceive urban environments based on a survey of cognitive maps of residents in two American cities.

Lynch described urban images as tools to aid navigation and movement through the environment which directly linked the material reality of the urban environment with our images of place. The theory outlined elements that structured the residents understanding of place in cognitive maps based on; Paths (channels for movement), Edges (linear elements), Districts (sections of the city), Nodes (strategic points of the city) and Landmarks (reference points). Lynch's theory intended to understand the elements we use to remember and move through space and as a result was heavily influenced by the idea of images as navigational aids. Lynch's focus on image perception and navigation does not address the complex motives behind the construction of place images within the built environment and within its representational fields. In this way the focus of this thesis differs from Lynch's approach to the perception of urban images by focusing on the constructed urban image.

This emphasis on urban images as navigational tools also influenced Lynch's idea of 'urban legibility' (1960:3), he described this as the ease or difficulty with which the spatial pattern of urban areas can be recognised by residents. He described legibility as crucial in an urban setting, stating 'complete chaos without a hint of connection is never pleasurable' (1960:6). In contrast, in a more contemporary study on urban representation, Balshaw and Kennedy (1999:1) argue that a rising interest in contested urban identities questions this conception of the city as a legible totality. These contrasting opinions on urban legibility are of particular interest in the study of industrial towns that have been repeatedly portrayed as chaotic. Despite an apparent lack of legibility the towns have produced and sustained strong images of their urban environment which is evident in the discourse of the Northern cultural image. At the same time, the depiction of the towns has ranged from excited scenes of progress to images of decay and decline encompassing multiple and contested characters through different temporal and spatial territories. This existence of divergent images questions the importance of legibility as an essential aspect of urban space and image.

Outside the cognitive discussion of urban images Lynch described

identity, structure and meaning in the built environment as fundamental concepts to the formation of environmental images (1960). He described these as the distinction of the place from other places, the spatial arrangement and pattern relationships and the practical or emotional meaning of the place (ibid:8). In his discussion of how urban images are formed (rather than perceived) Lynch's identification of the importance of identity, structure and meaning are useful concepts for the development of the thesis exploring the construction of place image.

The meaning of an image was fundamental to the landscape iconography studies of Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, an alternative approach to the exploration of image and place. Cosgrove's symbolic landscape (1998) and Daniels' iconographic landscape (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988) methods stemmed directly from the art history methods of Erwin Panofsky (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988) and Aby M. Warburg (Müller 2011:283). Panofsky's system of art analysis developed a 'theoretically driven interpretation of [a sign's] broader social and cultural meanings and significance' (Deming and Swaffield 2011:164). This saw images as a product and representation of societal and cultural influences contrasting the practical or emotional associations of the individual discussed by Lynch. This influenced Cosgrove and Daniels to investigate the meaning of images as symbolic of wider cultural ideas about the landscape, creating a reflexive method that moved between theoretical concepts, cultural context, image and landscape.

In 'The Iconography of Landscape' (1988) Cosgrove and Daniels used iconography as a synonym for the symbolic, they stated 'a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings' (1988:1). Cosgrove's work in particular argued that the representation of the landscape has fundamentally influenced and resulted from societal concepts of the land, highlighting an iterative relationship between place and image. He stated the 'landscape constitutes a discourse through which identifiable social groups historically have framed themselves and their relations with both the land and with other human groups, and that this discourse is closely related epistemologically and technically to ways of seeing...' (Cosgrove 1998:xiv).

Initially developed as a Marxist reading of the European development of landscape ideas and practices, Cosgrove's approach interrogated the meaning of landscape images through the socio-cultural politics of the landscape represented in pictorial imagery, fusing practices from cultural geography and art history. While not exclusively interested in urban images, the symbolic or iconographic landscape approach

transcended urban and rural distinctions highlighting the constructed nature of both landscape types.

Cosgrove's symbolic landscape approach differed greatly from Lynch's somewhat apolitical description of cognitive environmental images and instead read the social, political and cultural complexities of the landscape through its image. Rather than the perception of images, Cosgrove's approach focused on the cultural construction of a 'way of seeing' (Cosgrove 1985) that affected both the appropriation of the landscape and the way it was represented. This understanding of landscape and image implied the possibility of change in landscape concepts and practices dependent on changing cultural conditions. This resulted in an approach that accounts for contested and transitional images and landscapes rather than static or essentialist notions of the urban image. This is a useful approach in the context of industrial towns which are the subject of contested images portrayed in literature and art.

The major difficulty in using the symbolic landscape approach is that the term 'symbolic landscape' was never defined within Cosgrove's initial study (Cosgrove 1998, Backhaus 2009), while attempts to trace the theory back through semiotics has presented a bewildering array of contrasting theories of the symbolic (Backhaus 2009). Further to this the specific methodology of the symbolic or iconographic landscape was not explicitly described, instead use of the approach has relied on translating Panofsky's methods to landscape imagery. The interpretation of artworks in this way held no particular methods or conventions and instead were thought of as a 'detective synthesis' (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988:2). This lack of established conventions has continued in the application of iconography to the landscapes (Balshaw and Kennedy 1999). As a result of this theoretical gap a plethora of symbolic or iconographic landscape studies have emerged utilising divergent research sources and techniques. The aligning factor to these studies is the emphasis on the the representation of the landscape and the particular interpretation of the researcher.

In this case it is useful to discuss the methods and sources of studies that have utilised landscape iconography (explicitly and implicitly) in order to distinguish the methodological boundaries of the approach. Three key studies will be discussed of particular relevance to the current study to present their methods and conceptual frameworks. The studies are related to the thesis topic through their association with transitional contexts and disputed cultural images. An aligning factor of the three studies is their location based case study approach in order to discuss the specific manifestations of real and imagined landscape relationships. The first is Stephen Daniel's study on the



Figure 1.5, 'Leeds From Beeston Hill'
JMW Turner, 1816, Yale Center for
British Art.

industrial city of Leeds (1986), the second example discussed is Yvonne Whelan's (2003) study of the nationalist construction of modern Ireland in a case study of Dublin, and the third example is Paul Newland's (2008) study on the cultural construction of London's East End in the context of Olympic regeneration.

Daniels' study of Leeds discussed the socio-cultural processes of the city evident in JMW Turner's 'Leeds from Beeston Hill' 1816. This mixed a complex reading of the landscape represented in the painting with a critical history of the city resulting in a nuanced description of Leeds in 1816 (see fig. 1.5). The focus on one particular artwork, place and period of time allowed Daniels to develop a deep reading of the symbolism of the painting. Daniels' methods for this study appear to directly follow a Panofskian model of a three stage interpretation. This process involved a stage of collation, objective description, and 'deep' interpretation (Müller 2011).

Turner's depiction of Leeds is fundamental to Daniels' description of the city as he used the singular artwork as the central theme aligning diverse types of information ranging from economic, social and political points creating a nuanced narrative of the city. Daniels' reading of the city is complex and multilayered but is dependent on his access to relevant materials and personal critique. Daniels' approach within this study focused on a singular time period of the city, defined by the artwork, and therefore presented only a limited and largely stable view of Leeds. In addition Daniel's research methods worked closely with image and archival sources with very little evidence taken

from the built environment. In this case his approach focused on the imagined landscape and is reliant on archival sources to discuss the material.

Daniels' approach of linking place with artwork is one which will be replicated within this study to understand the specifics of how the towns have been represented. Yet rather than focus on a singular exemplary painting the study will create a longitudinal survey to understand the shifting representation of the towns - this is somewhat unusual within art historical methods which traditionally group together content or style themes as opposed to place based. Further to this, the study will focus more specifically on the relationship between the real and imagined landscape through methods which take evidence from the built environment along with pictorial representations.

Throughout their various studies Cosgrove and Daniels stated the equality of material landscapes and their pictorial representations, yet their particular style of interpretation weighted the analysis of representation above that of the material landscape. They stated 'to understand a built landscape... it is usually necessary to understand written and verbal representations of it, not as 'illustrations', images standing outside it, but as constituent images of its meaning or meanings' (1988:1). Further to this the converse is also relevant, in that in order to understand representations of the built landscape it is necessary to understand the material reality. In an effort to critique traditional geographical methods Cosgrove and Daniels inverted, rather than rebalanced, the emphases between landscape and representation despite their argument that both material and pictorial landscapes can be seen equally as real and imagined landscapes simultaneously. Balshaw and Kennedy in their study on 'Urban Space and Representation' made this dichotomy clearer, they stated 'the city is inseparable from its representations, but it is neither identical nor reducible to them' (1999:3). They highlighted the illusory role of representation in rendering space legible which instead provides only a partial 'framing of the city' (1999:3) creating an interesting counterpoint to Lynch's ideas of legibility.

Whelan's (2003) iconographical approach to modern Dublin focused almost exclusively on the material landscape. Whelan focused on a largely transitional context of Irish independence and the ways in which the new republic inscribed its national identity on the streets of Dublin. In her study Whelan presented a textual approach to the built environment valuing public statuary and place naming above architectural expressions of Irish nationalism. Whelan's study addressed diverse sources as separate expressions of nationalism that were discussed in discrete chapters which presented a clear illustration

of the research methods and sources. This approach will be used in the current study in order to overcome the methodological transparency issues of the deep description models of Cosgrove and Daniels.

Newland's iconographical approach to the cultural construction of London's East End interrogated the mutual relationship between the material and imagined space of East London and the ways in which they have informed each other. The recent creation of the Olympic Village provided a transitional context within which the various conceptions of the East End are explored. Newland focused on satirical imagery, literature, songs, film and urban plans to create a narrative of the 'degeneration and regeneration' (Newland 2008:15) of the East End. The study presented the findings as an interpretive discourse of interwoven sources and methods echoing the symbolic landscape approach of Cosgrove and Daniels. While this discourse approach will not be used for the current study in order to increase transparency, the particular sources utilised in Newland's study are of particular interest. The analysis of urban plans as a representation of place is an aspect which can be seen to be strongly linked to urban image studies.

The focus of this thesis on urban representation approaches landscape as symbol focusing 'more on practices and material representations than text' (Söderström 1996:254). The above studies have focused on a visual approach to urban space through artworks yet the constructed urban image can be discerned in other realms of visual practice. Building on Newland's study on the regeneration of London's East End the next section will focus specifically on the visual analysis of urban plans, a key area in the construction of urban image. Söderström's (1996) article on the visualisation of urban plans outlined both the scarcity of studies on the subject before 2000 and the crucial role visualisation has played in urban planning. Söderström stated 'consulting the theoretical works devoted to urban planning, however, one notices how little work has been done that analyses the relations between urban planning and the visual, or that, more particularly, takes seriously in its full complexity the question of the ways urban development and the modalities of representation of the city mutually structure each other ... it is nevertheless astonishing to discover that this phenomenon - perhaps because of its very conspicuousness - has not inspired either theoretical critique or practical analysis of the efficacy of urban representations.' (1996:250). His work directly extended Cosgrove's exploration of the relationship between image and place from a focus on fine art towards the imagery of urban planning. While the role of imagery in architectural practice has been widely explored in works such as Giddings and Horne's 'Artists Impressions in Architectural Design' (2002) and imagery in landscape architecture through studies such as Treib's 'Representing Landscape

Architecture' (2008), a sustained study of the imagery of urban planning in England is yet to be undertaken. In contrast an example can be found in the context of the Netherlands in Rooijendijk 2005 and a very recent wider study on the historic representation of the future city can be seen in Dunn et al. 2014.

The burgeoning study of the visual representation of urban plans has so far been dominated by a post-war focus in England. The bold ideology and iconography of modernist planning has inspired several studies on the post-war urban planning imagery, notably Larkham and Lilley's 'Plans, Planners and City Images' (2003) and Perkins and Dodge's 'Mapping the Imagined Future: The Roles of Visual Representation in the 1945 City of Manchester Plan' (2012).

Perkins and Dodge (2012) apply Söderström's approach to the particular case of Manchester's 1945 plan, of direct relevance to the context of this study. Their approach focused primarily on the copious visual materials of the 1945 plan through an analysis of the photography, aerial perspectives, plans, maps, diagrams and statistical charts published in the final document. They stated 'the paper landscape of the City of Manchester Plan imagines a tremendously bold vision that bears little relation to what emerged during the lengthy and stuttering recovery from post-war austerity...but the Plan stands as a fascinating monument to counterfactual imagination, a utopian aspiration for what might have been' (2012:249-250). Therefore they present the urban plan as an important source for the study of urban ideas regardless of the plan's material impact on the city.

They argue the visual representation of an imagined future in the plan presents an ideal urban image uncovering the ideology of the specific period within which they were created. These ideologies hold implications for the wider creative and destructive practices of the city and inform the way in which it was understood and represented by others. This calls attention to a further gap in current literature which regards the shifting attitudes and ideologies of subsequent plans beyond the powerful imagery of the modernist period. This study will complement Perkins and Dodge's article through a sustained analysis of shifting urban planning imagery across the twentieth century within the regional context of Greater Manchester. This will explore the way in which the urbanity of the industrial town was problematised and uncover the ideal urban images proposed for the towns throughout the twentieth century.

Larkham and Lilley's approach to the representation of urban plans differed from Perkins and Dodge in both its approach and focus. Rather

than a concern for the ideology of particular representation types, Larkham and Lilley discussed the subtle place promotion features of post-war urban plans. They suggested that rather than just imagining an ideal urban future, the urban plans uncovered 'evidence of implicit civic boosterism, rivalry and competition' (2003:183). This factor was discussed in reference to plans produced between 1942 - 1952, including Manchester's 1945 plan of Perkins and Dodge's study. Larkham and Lilley highlighted the 'subverse' (ibid:183) aspects of place promotion within the plans, from the 'claims of centrality' (ibid:183) depicted cartographically and pictorially, the circulation of the plans and their end audience found in public reactions published in local newspapers.

Stephen Ward's analysis of urban promotion (1998) aligns well with Larkham and Lilley's approach to urban plans as a form of civic boosterism. He stated that the focus of industrial promotional materials in Britain was the result of 'a potentially vulnerable or actively declining industrial base' (Ward 1998:182). As such, while not chiefly focused on visual materials Ward's account of advertising the industrial town is of particular relevance to this study. His use of industrial promotional pamphlets provided a precedent for the analysis of visual materials contained in official town guides that aimed to promote industry throughout the twentieth century. The complementary approaches of Perkins and Dodge (2012), Larkham and Lilley (2003) and Ward (1998) will be utilised within this study to understand the ideological visions of the imagined town within the context of urban competition, a particular issue of the region highlighted in the previous section.

In addition to visual approaches to urban studies, a distinct discourse has arisen relating to the visual culture of industrialism. Although not explicitly defined as symbolic or iconographic landscape approaches a body of work exists on the imagined landscapes of industrialism in England. These are exemplified in Freeman's thematic study of 'Railways and the Victorian Imagination' (1999) and Wolff and Dyos' edited volume 'The Victorian City: Images and Realities' (1973). These two studies integrate artworks, poetry, literature and other published works to explore the visual culture of Victorian industrialism in England. The industrial theming of the studies makes them of direct relevance to the study of the North West, in addition they both include significant sections on the towns and cities of the region. Yet the studies' specificity to the Victorian period presents the gap in the contemporary study of the post-industrial imagination.

Freeman's (1999) study is of particular interest through his examination of the role of transport infrastructures in shifting the

way the landscape was constructed, represented and seen. As such Freeman interrogated the influence of the railway on both the material reality of the landscape through urbanisation processes and the imagined landscape through its representation in art and wider cultural works. Freeman argued the railways fundamentally shifted the spatial concentration and reordering of urban space, building on John Kellet's (1969) seminal work on the urban impact of railways in the Victorian period. Yet Freeman contributes to Kellet's socio-spatial examination through a sustained reference to the cultural discourse of the railways. Freeman's work focuses on the debates and prevalent discourses of urbanisation during the period with a lesser focus on the empirical study of urbanisation.

The reciprocal relationship between railways and urbanisation has also been studied in more contemporary contexts seen primarily in Russell Haywood's 'Urban Development and Town Planning in Britain 1948-2008' (2009). Haywood's study interrogated the changing function and influence of the railways through the decline of industry in the twentieth century. The study focused on the politics of the railways through transport policies and town planning ideology. As such, the top-down study was primarily interested in the development of urban planning in conjunction with transport infrastructures and as such has much less focus on the cultural currency and imagery of the railways.

The influence of transport infrastructure on urbanisation and the configuration of urban space is acutely relevant to the study of industrial towns whose primary function has relied on the distribution of goods. The approaches of these studies, through the relationship between artworks, material landscapes and urban planning will each be integrated into the study of the industrial towns throughout this thesis.

Wolff and Dyos' compilation of studies on the Victorian city discusses the cultural currency of particular city images. Vicinus's 'Literary Voices of an Industrial Town' (in Wolff and Dyos 1973) presented a study of the literary construction of the city of Manchester through key writers of the industrial period such as Friedrich Engels and Charles Dickens. While Johnson's study 'Victorian Artists and the Urban Milieu' (in Wolff and Dyos 1973) discusses the Victorian imagery of the city. In both cases the relationship between image and reality is analysed through Victorian socio-historical writings and artistic representations of the city highlighting discrepancies and crossovers. These studies of image and reality explored the contested narrative of the city integrating competing and complementary descriptions to evaluate a perceived reality of Manchester. A further smaller study on the representation of the City as a Victorian concept can be found in Arscott's 'The

Representation of the City in the Visual Arts' (2011). Arscott created a narrative account of Victorian and Edwardian urban discourse through the discussion of symbolic elements of artworks on the city. These covered the categories of urban fabric, the river, urban population and leisure to understand how these images represented contested urban debates. The focus on discourse and image, much like the studies discussed above, neglected the empirical study of the city and did not explore the spatial and material development of Manchester (in Vicinus and Johnson 1973), London and Wigan (in Arscott 2001) providing only a narrow version of the city's 'reality'.

The chief focus of previous studies on the imagery of Victorian industrialism significantly outweighs contemporary studies of the postindustrial imagination, despite its strong presence in the Northern cultural image. On this subject Ehland (2007) argued that the North is particularly suited to post modern concepts which discuss the transitional, provisional and fragmented nature of identities but as yet few studies focus on this theme. Robert Beauregard's 'Voices of Decline: The Post-War Fate of US Cities' (1993) is one study that grapples with the representation of urban industrial decline. Beauregard's study focused on the public debate of decline in America, constructing a historical discourse of the representation of urban decline. While the contextual focus on the American experience of decline is not directly relevant to the experience of the English context, the approach of the study and its thematic focus are pertinent to the development of the current study. Beauregard's study of urban representation focused primarily on text and discourse representations, discussing the various opinions of decline published in national journals and newspapers throughout the post-war period (with some inclusion of satirical imagery).

Beauregard's textual focus highlights a point of divergence between text and image evident in each of the studies above. In the interrogation of representation and imagination each study foregrounds either text or visual based information. The two approaches stem from the discipline of cultural geography but hold distinct implications for the study of place. The landscape as a text or symbol have become powerful metaphors for the study of cultural landscapes (Robertson and Richards 2003), Whelan explains 'the metaphor of landscape as text highlights the authored nature of the world and the fact that cities are "written" by many agents of power... The cultural landscape may be read interpretively as a text which expresses a distinctive culture of ideas and practices, of often oppositional social groups and political relationships, in order to reveal the ideas, interests and contexts of the society that produced it' (2003:13). This metaphor links directly to the issue of

legibility raised earlier in the discussion of Lynch's work, as the term holds a distinct connection to text through its root in the Latin word *Legere* - to read (Waite, 2012). While this metaphor offers a useful way of understanding the development of urban space, particularly through the idea of multiple authors writing space, the translation of the landscape from a material and visual experience into text presents a somewhat difficult conceptual conversion. It is in this sense that Cosgrove and Daniels iconographical, and symbolic approach to landscape presents a conceptually more consistent metaphor in the study of urban representation.

This section of the literature review has focused on previous studies of urban image in reference largely to iconographic studies. The discussion has discussed various approaches to urban image and the methodologies and sources that characterise previous studies on various aspects of urban representation. The approach of this thesis is positioned within this discourse with a heavy influence taken from iconographic approaches but addressing the key limitations identified. The thesis will take a systematic and discrete approach to different forms of urban image from pictorial representations, urban plans and the built environment to increase the transparency of the research findings and interpretation.

Urban Debate

The two previous sections have highlighted the omission of the material landscape from cultural image studies on the North and iconographic landscape studies. As a distinct approach many studies focus on the material landscape of industrialism and urban transition. Studies such as Richard Williams' 'Anxious City' (2004) have begun to discuss the intricate relationship between urban regeneration and image. This section discusses the relevance of the industrial towns of the North West within wider urban discourses and debates from the British urban planning experience to the affects of globalisation and urban competition.

Richard William's 'Anxious City: English Urbanism in the Late Twentieth Century' (2004) focused on the post-war urban experience of English cities. Williams approaches the urban form and architecture of the city as an image, he stated 'the definition of 'city' that [the study] employs is precisely focused on aesthetic questions. It is essentially an art historical definition of the city, in that it is primarily concerned with the city at the level of aesthetic representation...In my argument, the subject is the aesthetic representation embodied in the city's forms themselves: how is an actual, or desired for, change in the social city represented in architecture?' (2004:20). Through this approach Williams extends the iconographic approach of Cosgrove and Daniels from images of the landscape, to the landscape as a representation of power. Williams drew examples from six cities - London, Liverpool, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Poundbury and the imaginary Civilia, examples he argued that have experienced material urban identity shifts specifically evident in the architecture of the cities. The key narrative focused the cities' particular attempts to redefine themselves within a new global urban order through architecture.

This issue of globalisation is dominant in contemporary urban discourse. It is a vast subject that covers the complexities of a revolutionary increase in the mobility of people, production and economies across the world, affecting all urban systems. The decline of the manufacturing industries in the North West has been (partly) attributed to European and global competition of better products and more efficient processes, which is just one aspect of globalisation. Global processes are often conceptualised as abstract and opposite to processes deemed as local (Urry 2002). In contrast Williams stated 'what England does in terms of the way it (re-)imagines its cities is not done in isolation but relates to international practice, principally in the US and continental Europe. It acts as both a local interpretation of, and a form of critical commentary on urbanism in these places, and the way we think about these broader urbanisms ought to be regarded

in part through the English example' (2004:2). This argument echoed Doreen Massey's often cited assertion that 'the local is always already a product in part of global forces' (1991:183). As such the industrial town of the North West is part of this wider global system through socio-economic and political relationships that are particularly evident in their urban ambitions and plans.

In addition to this relationship to wider global processes the industrial towns of the North West hold distinct relationships to the wider experience of British urban planning. This has resulted in specific spatial and aesthetic impacts on the towns that express national planning approaches in localised ways. Stephen Ward's research on 'Planning and Urban Change' (2004) discussed the growth of English industrialism as central to the founding of town planning in England. Ward's account of British planning history provides a strong context for the exploration of planning in the North Western industrial towns. His chronological description through distinct phases of planning ideology along with a succinct account of influential governmental reports, international precedent and specific policies provides a national context within which the regional study can be positioned.

Ward's (2004) study charted the development of town planning in Britain throughout the twentieth century and outlined the development of three complementary aspects of planning and urban change through the ideas, policies and impact of planning on Britain. He highlighted a complexity in assessing the impact of town planning due to the multiple agents that affect the outcome of each plan through wider social and economic forces. Ward also outlined a relatively limited power of town planners throughout the twentieth century to both affect urban change and wider urban decision making. Cullingworth and Nadin reasserted this point, citing Wiladavsky, 'if planning were judged by results, that is, by whether life followed the dictates of the plan, then planning has failed everywhere it has been tried. No one, it turns out, has the knowledge to predict sequences of actions and reactions across the realm of public policy, and no one has the power to compel obedience.' (Wiladavsky 1987:21 cited in Cullingworth 2006:1). This is a particularly relevant argument in the context of the North West as urban planning has had divergent impacts on the cities and towns of the region. Using Ward's study as a basis this study will highlight the particular instances that converge and diverge with the national experience.

In terms of urban change Ward focused on the complexity of assessing impact through social and economic affects, his national focus outlined wider spatial trends throughout the country in the twentieth century. This current study will look at the specifics of urban change in the

region compared against Ward's national experience. Historically the British debate on specific urban plans has focused on exemplary planners and plans (for instance, Patrick Geddes (Hysler-Rubin 2011, Volker 2002, Boardman 1978), Patrick Abercrombie (Hall 1995, Hall 2002, Matless 1993,), Thomas Sharp (Larkham 2009, Pendlebury 2009a, 2009b, Stansfield 2008, Ward 2008), Charles Reilly (Richmond 2001, Sharples et al. 1996) among many others) while this is a useful area of study it overlooks the normative experience of town planning evidenced in local authorities' in-house urban plans (excepting studies on the infamous in-house Manchester 1945 plan which was exemplary of the post-war reconstruction ideology). The study of the urban plans of the North Western industrial towns presents the opportunity to understand a normative experience of town planning.

In addition to the lack of interest in the normative planning in Britain, urban studies and discourse are largely city centric and this is particularly the case in globalisation studies that focus on the unprecedented growth of global urbanisation (Bell and Jayne 2006). This literature emphasises the power of global cities and the potentialities of developing nations. The demanding issues of the metropolis have led to an omission of the mid-scale urban hierarchy from current debate (Bell & Jayne 2006) or the experience of urbanity beyond the city. In their study on small cities, Bell and Jayne argued that this omission needs to be addressed to understand the range of urban experiences that exist beyond global city debates. They stated '... the woeful neglect of the small city in the literature on urban studies means that we don't yet have to hand wholly appropriate ways to understand what small cities are, what smallness and bigness mean, how small cities fit or don't fit into the 'new urban order', or what their fortunes and fates might be' (Bell & Jayne 2006:2). This argument can be further extended to urban typologies beyond city status which are quantitatively more common and sustain huge aggregate populations.

City studies are seen to be representative of a wide diversity of urban experiences and as such the urbanity of the town is implicitly seen as simply a smaller manifestation of city processes. Yet the city and the town potentially embody discrete forms of urbanism. Bell & Jayne assessed Hall's (1993) categories of the global urban hierarchy as a basis for discussion. In Hall's hierarchy the small city (and the industrial towns of the North West) fit into the lower scale of the 'Provincial City' (Hall 1993) below Global, National and Regional cities estimated as having a population of 100,000 to 250,000. In contrast to this Bell and Jayne argue that judging the urban hierarchy in terms of population size is problematic. They argued a culture of 'bigness' and 'smallness' exists beyond population size (Bell and Jayne 2006:2). They stated that smallness is defined by reach and outlook as much as population

size, suggesting that a new method of assessing smallness needs to be developed beyond demographics. This requires further analysis particularly within the Northern context to identify the similarities and differences between towns and cities and comparative studies of size, ambition and reach to create a more holistic typology of cities and towns in the region.

Bell & Jayne argued that urban competition in the small city is exacerbated by globalisation (2006 see also Hall 1993). They suggested that a culture of 'me-too-ism' exists in the management of small cities that relies on 'trading-up' (2006:1) or the ambition to become bigger and 'Mundanization'- the use of 'big-city policies and ideas in small-city contexts' (2006:1). Design strategies and policies are reproduced and reconstructed between global, national and provincial cities, this can be seen in the Barcelona model or 'Gaudi gambit' (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2004), the Flagship Building model of Malmo, or in the context of the industrial towns, the Mancunian Model. These strategies focus on the idea of the city as the exclusive urban experience undermining the role and form of other urban typologies and are based on a competitive ideology. This causes a number of issues in the translation of city models to smaller contexts (Bell and Jayne 2006) and presents a dilemma for the industrial towns between staying small or becoming bigger.

Peter Hall (1993) suggested that civic boosterism and promotion is one of the key forces of globalisation restructuring localities. He described this as a product of the decreasing relevance of the constraints of location, such as proximity to coal and access to waterways that determined the growth and economic character of the industrial period. He argued that industrial cities now have the freedom to shape their image in significantly different ways, creating complex and context specific urban impacts (see also Urry 2002 on 'Localities').

Stephen Ward addressed this explicitly in the opening of his study on place promotion, he stated 'the last quarter of a century has seen a massive worldwide growth in the practice of place marketing and promotion. Every town, city, region and nation, it seems, is now frenetically selling itself with assertions of its competitive place advantage. All places, even those least endowed with attractions, vie to ensure that the tourist gaze falls, however fleetingly, upon them. Traditional resorts find themselves competing with older industrial towns and cities as their abandoned factories and docks are recycled into the marketable commodities of heritage and leisure experience. Today's manufacturing towns compete for the uncertain favours of Japanese car makers, Korean electronics giants and other multi-national firms' (1998:1). In critique of this process Tim Edensor's

(2005) study of Industrial Aesthetics argued that local authorities are increasingly directed by economic investment needs and are increasingly using place as an image brand to encourage investment. He argued this is a paradoxical process as the authority strove to construct a unique identity to attract investment, investors have had little interest in maintaining or strengthening local uniqueness (a sentiment echoed in Urry 2002). Again, this is a significant process shaping the urban future of the industrial towns which has gone largely uncritiqued. This image-based process of selling place is further confounded by the mobility of leisure, as described by Urry & Larson (2011) as the 'tourist gaze' increasingly consumes places visually, with tourists seeking increasingly divergent and specialised forms of leisure and culture.

The core cities of the North West have created a strong precedent for the transition from manufacturing to cultural industries. The strategies of the Northern core cities have been critiqued outlining the range of regeneration models from cultural quarters; festivals; retail; flagship building (Hall, T. 2007, Hall, P. 2004, Montgomery et al. 2004, Wansborough 2010, McCarthy 2006, Miles 2005, Warnaby 2008, Crinson 2007, Williams 2004). The regeneration of Manchester and its creation of an economically successful retail quarter has influenced the regeneration strategies of the industrial towns, resulting in a recent succession of town centre shopping malls being planned and built (for example Bury, Wigan, Warrington, along with plans for Rochdale and Macclesfield, despite local protest). The efforts of the city is providing a precedent for transition in the wider region, but effort must be taken in the translation between city contexts and that of the town (Bell & Jayne 2006). While the regeneration of Manchester and Liverpool have been extensively critiqued, little attention has been paid to the regeneration of the wider region or the influence of the core cities' models upon the surrounding towns.

The 'mundanization' of policies and ideas described by Bell and Jayne (2006:1) highlight a further anxiety of global restructuring - an annihilation of the local. This can be seen in Koolhaas' 'Generic City' (1994), Auge's Non-places (1995) and De Certeau's Non-place (1980) that each illustrated an increasing homogenisation of built form and culture throughout the world's cities as a result of globalisation (although they differ dramatically in their opinion of impact). The replication and 'mundanization' (Bell & Jayne 2006:1) of city models along with an increase in the scale and scope of global brands has created a perceived threat of a loss of distinctiveness that has pervaded late twentieth century urban debate and is particularly evident in local civic groups, government policy and agencies (see New Economics Foundation 2005, 2010, and government policy on the

Portas Pilots 2011). In the industrial town this is coupled with the loss of a structural economic identity.

The spatial and material effects of globalisation have been discussed by theorists such as Marvin and Graham in 'Splintering Urbanism' (2001) that focuses primarily on the impact of infrastructures on urban form and society. The study documented the spatial and social effects of communication systems on the city in general. This is particularly relevant to the industrial town where transport systems dominate the urban form. Marvin and Graham argued that the infrastructures constructed to facilitate increased mobility between people, products and economies, physically segregate others and enclose parts of the city. They suggested that these paradoxical effects are evidenced in the 19th century train lines and canal lines, motorways through to the 21st century 'connectivities' of the internet which include and exclude in less material ways. The social effects of this 'splintering', to a great extent, has been the dominant cultural image of the industrial town throughout the 20th century.

This section has discussed the wider urban discourse surrounding the study of industrial towns through Bell and Jayne's (2006) argument of omission of the mid-scale urban hierarchy, a key way this project hopes to contribute to knowledge. The growth of urban competition and the particular manifestations this takes in new forms of architecture (Williams 2004) and types of promotion (Ward 1998) the replication of urban policies (Bell and Jayne 2006) and the affect on local distinctiveness. Finally key spatial effects of globalisation are discussed in the context of the industrial town.

Figure 1.6, Image showing contemporary re-use of industrial areas beneath Stockport Viaduct, 2013, Image author's own.



Contemporary Approaches to Industrialism

This section moves on to the discourse surrounding industrialism in England. This holds particular relevance to conservation and value debates as the industrial past is positioned and repackaged in relation to a new future. This debate highlights the constructed nature of the past and the cultural associations that underpin values to industrialism, urbanism and the past. The discussion then moves on to the relationship between industrial decline and the rise of industrial heritage projects as the historical manufacturing basis has shifted to an increasingly cultural economy. Next the section discusses the contested nature of heritage and the contrasting meanings of history and heritage, before discussing the relationship between heritage and identity. The section ends by discussing the particular context of Stockport, and the differing values towards its industrial past that can be found in previous urban plans and surveys of the town.

In his study on the culture of Victorian Industrialism Wiener argued English (and Northern) industrialism held strong associations to the conceptualisation of the past and future. Citing Horne he stated that 'things that are rural or ancient are at the very heart of English snobberies' (D. Horne 1969:38 cited in Wiener 1981) this highlighted the rural image of Englishness that was linked to a nostalgic past. In this construction, the ideas of architectural preservation and conservation was an inherently English characteristic and the destructive growth of the industrial town typified Northern-ness. Wiener (1981) suggested that the 'Romantics' (English ruralists) and 'Classicists' (Northern Urbanists) views of the rural and urban implicitly held opposing relationships to time. The Romantics saw an idealized version of the past, while the classicists saw a bright progressive future (these opposing values also had conceptual implications for the relationship between man and non-human nature). The growth of industrial towns represented a break in historic continuity and was future oriented in this way the industrial town clashed with the English ideals of conservation. This dominant image has had a great impact on the value of industrial architecture and development of industrial heritage projects in the twentieth century.

Yet the industrial town's relationship to the past was far more complex. The classical and gothic architectural styles typical of civic and industrial architecture of the period, was designed to reference powerful empires of the distant past and embody moral and social ideals (Webb 1976). In this way symbolism was used intentionally in the built environment to promote a civilized culture. In reference to Bradford's Victorian gothic architecture Webb (1976) stated 'Bradford's industrialists were eager for an architectural style expressive of their lives and values, and eager to be modern, yet lacked a vision of modernity. Their sense of social inferiority and political illegitimacy, their suspicion of art, their willingness to participate in an essentially aristocratic nostalgia for the past, hindered the creation of an architecture truly expressive of industrial capitalism and helped make way for the triumph of gothic.' (1976:45, see figure 1.7). Wiener stated this style of architecture was considered uncouth to the Romantics and this along with the pollution and social ills of the industrial town led to the cultural devaluing of Victorian industrial architecture. This continued until the mid 20th century with the founding of the Victorian Society (amongst others).

Values associated with the past and in particular the industrial narrative have been transformed since the post war period in the North West. This is noticeable in post war plans of Manchester (see Kitchen 1996, Larkham & Lilley 2003). The 1945 plan sought to replace the Victorian building stock of the city in an effort to move beyond



Figure 1.7, Gothic architecture of Bradford Town Hall sought to reference past empires, a typical style of civic architecture in the north-western towns, Image author's own, 2013.

the industrial image. Yet the failure of this plan and the subsequent reversal of attitudes towards industrial history and aesthetic have formed the basis of regeneration in the city (Wynne 1992). A shift in attitudes towards industrial history can be seen anecdotally in the re-instatement of St Helens' town motto. The motto was officially changed from 'Ex Terra Lucem' (1876) (From the Ground Light- in reference to the town's coal industry) to 'Prosperitas in Exclesis' (1974) (a more ambiguous –'Flourishing Well'). The London Olympic Games 2012 opening ceremony used the town's original motto as a concept for creative development. The popularity of the event caused a revival of pride in the town's industrial history and the local authority reinstated Ex Terra Lucem as the town motto due to popular demand in April 2013.

Since the decline of industrialism in England, heritage has become a major regeneration strategy in the cities and towns of the industrial revolution. Urry (2002) analysed the relationship between industrial decline and the rise of industrial heritage. He suggested this is due to a number of interlinking factors such as a useful legacy of derelict Victorian buildings, European funding, and the lower cost of tourism based job creation (when compared to manufacturing). This reappraisal of industrial architecture and its inclusion in official conservation policy has led to a complex and multilayered history of values associated with the industrial town.

This process of revaluing the industrial is in part a commodification of place (Urry 2002). Industrial historical narratives provide the basis for economic transition from manufacturing to tourism, and can be seen as a process of sanitisation (ibid). This sanitised urban history is used as an advertisement and the basis of rebranding of towns and cities (Urry 2002, Ashworth 2011, see also Urry & Larson 2011 on the Tourist Gaze). Urry stated that 'almost every town and city in Lancashire seeks both to attract visitors and permanent residents partly through repackaging its history and culture' (Urry 2002:159). He argued that Lancashire is particularly suited to a manufacturing to leisure transition due to the region's historical role in the development of 'mass leisure' (Urry 2002:158 also see also Urry & Larson 2011).

The changing historical values associated with the industrial highlights a differentiation between history and heritage, despite the terms being used interchangeably in policy documentation and guidance (such as the New Economics Foundation 2002, 2005, 2010). Ashworth (2011) proposed that heritage is an 'interpretation' of history. Many theorists have argued that history is contested (see Massey 1995, Samuel 1994, 1998, Ashworth 2011, Urry 2002, Hobsbawm on the 'invention of tradition' 2012). Massey (1995) stated 'perhaps a

really 'radical 'history of a place would be one which... recognised that what has come together, in this place, now, is a conjunction of many histories and many spaces' (1995:191). This pluralistic and constructed understanding of place is one which has been implicitly argued through the literature review through the contested notions of Northern-ness and the representation of industrial cities. Massey argued further, 'these conflicting interpretations of the past, serving to legitimate a particular understanding of the present, are put to use in a battle over what is to come. What are at issue are competing histories of the present, wielded as arguments over what should be the future' (1995:185). This argument highlights the direct influence the conceptions of the past have over the future, this defines a clear use in understanding the past representations in understanding current urban anxieties for cultural change.

The history of conservation in England highlights the selective narrative that encompasses debates of morality, class, philosophy, economics, and state ideology (Fawcett 1976). The roots of the official (state designated) conservation movement is generally associated with the formation of the voluntary Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877, although it can be traced further back in social history. The development of English conservation has embodied the values of Englishness and the changing values associated with industrial history (Urry & Macnaghten 1998, Samuel 1994, 1998, Cosgrove & Daniels 1988). Urry stated that conservation has often been sought to protect some aspect of the built environment that is symbolic and determined by 'a particular structuring of collective memory' (2002:157) in this way historical values are directly connected to the material environment. Urry (2002) stated that civic societies largely influenced local values of conservation that were determined by male 'non-local' activists presenting a particular construction of history and values.

Further to this partial valuing of constructed histories Massey argued that a particular form of historic value based on nostalgia, she stated 'the concept of tradition which sees in it only nostalgia understands it as something already completed which can now only be maintained or lost...So do many aspects of place-conservation, which are all too often attempts to freeze a (particular view of a) place at a (selected) moment in time.' (1995:184). This heritage approach can be seen in the industrial type designations of the UNESCO World Heritage project. Blaenavon (UNESCO 2001) & Derwent Valley (UNESCO 2000) exemplify the value placed on a nostalgic form of industry in the UNESCO project. UNESCO described the two towns as 'exceptional illustration(s) in material form of the social and economic structure of the 19th century' (2000). They emphasise notions of authenticity and integrity

which is equated from the period-specific examples of the towns. The project implicitly values the picturesque image of the early industrial period (see Cosgrove & Daniels 1988, Klingender 1947) which greatly contrasts with the aesthetic and development pattern of the amassed industrial town typical of the North West.

In contrast to this 'authentic' picturesque vision of industry, the industrial landscapes of the North have come to be valued as an alternative space aesthetic to the sanitised environments of the city (Edensor 2005). The industrial town and more specifically the industrial ruin have been re-valued as authentic in the un-sanitised aesthetic experiences they offer. The industrial ruin as the 'other' to the town centre allows a rich sensory experience, a site of escapism, play and experimentation (ibid), which is evident through sub-cultural use of the derelict buildings and the growing popularity of Urban Explorers. This can be seen as a niche form of 'vernacularism' (Ashworth 2005) which values the unofficial and diverse expressions of the local, ordinary and everyday lives and landscapes the rise of which has been linked to the pressures of globalisation.

This section of the literature review has discussed the construction of historical narratives that influence our perceptions of value with particular reference to the industrial. This presents a workable understanding of the shifting approaches to the industrial town and its relationship to wider urban and heritage discourses that link directly to conservation approaches, and concepts of authenticity and integrity. Finally ending with a discussion of the role of industrial spaces in subversive cultural debates. This discussion of history and heritage debates has helped to frame the approach of the study in questioning the dominant values and ideologies of particular representation types in the urban plans, material form and pictorial representation of the industrial towns. Additionally questioning the influence of these shifting ideologies in the development of future ideals for the towns.

The literature review has drawn together studies from diverse fields and perspectives on urbanism. The boundaries, methodology and specific approach of the current study have been framed by previous studies on industrialism, image and urbanity. The review has also begun to identify particular lines of enquiry for the study in order to contribute to current knowledge and discourse. These can be outlined as; a special interest in the material urban identities in the North and their relation to the Northern cultural image contributing to the debate on Northern complexity; an interest in the relationship between real and imagined landscape of the North influenced by iconographic landscape studies and focusing on urban plans, pictorial representation and the material environment; an understanding of how the towns fit into the national planning experience developing a narrative of urban

planning in the industrial towns and a specific focus the English urban experience beyond the city. In summary the thesis explores the way the industrial towns of North West England have been represented through history, through the construction of the image through the built environment of the towns, the dissemination of the image through pictorial representations and the problematisation of the image through urban plans.

02 Research Methods

This chapter outlines the methodology of the project. This begins with a discussion of the case study research strategy framing this within the context of the epistemological perspective of the study. The epistemology of the research comes from the research tradition of landscape architecture, the professional background of the researcher, a subject which transcends the boundaries of architecture, geography and art history. This influenced the research strategy and approach towards what constitutes knowledge. The focus on image and the built environment necessitated a qualitative research strategy which was influenced by the iconographic landscape approach, yet at key points this is supported by quantitative data. The next section describes the research design with an explanation of the research sample of eight industrial towns and specific case study of Stockport. This progresses on to the structural composition and order of the study and the types of information utilised for the research. The third section discusses the specific methods and techniques used in the study primarily concerned with archival research, discussing methods of synthesis and data collection. The final section outlines the limitations and implications of the research along with issues of trustworthiness.

Purpose of the Study

The study explores urban image in the industrial towns of North West England. The thesis begins from the idea that the towns are attempting to reposition themselves away from their industrial image in a variety of ways that impact the built environment. The urban image of the towns has become a particular area of tension as regeneration and rebranding projects have attempted to develop a new identity. The existing image of the towns is deemed as problematic and in conflict with their need for economic adaptation but without any explicit study of what the existing image is and how it has been constructed. This has created a distinct tension in the historic and contemporary image and form of the towns which highlights a relationship between the image and the material reality of the towns. This study seeks to understand



Figure 2.1, Post-Industrial Landscape Park, Duisburg Nord, Emscher Valley, Germany designed by Latz and Partners.



Figure 2.2, Post-Industrial Landscape Design, Charles Jencks, both images show uninhabited post-industrial redesign typical of 20th century landscape architecture.

the existing urban image of the towns and how it has been historically constructed as a basis for informed decisions on their future urban regeneration strategies.

Interest in post-industrial landscapes is high in landscape architecture, yet few projects deal with the large scale nuanced problems of inhabited urban industrial places. This could be a result of the critical success of Duisburg Nord (the regeneration and remediation of the monumental post steel landscape of the River Rhine, Germany, see figure 2.1). While Duisburg Nord was completed almost 25 years ago, the profession continues to focus on the adaptation of uninhabited post industrial landscapes into sites for leisure and tourism (examples can be seen in Jencks' Northumberlandia (2012, see figure 2.2) and the Helix, Falkirk, Scotland (2014)). While this is a legitimate and creative practice, the discipline continues to overlook the more commonplace urban landscapes of piecemeal industry that typified the industrial period in England between 1750-1900. This research hopes to redress that balance and to grapple with the mundane and complex issues of the industrial town.

The role of landscape architecture in the urban environment is contested both inside and outside the discipline, yet the profession has the opportunity to approach the urban environment from a unique position. The development of landscape architecture can be traced through many disciplines and the methods of practice and design today reflect this drawing on many types of knowledge and somewhat disparate perspectives to develop a holistic and multidirectional understanding of place. The next section outlines the epistemological framework of the project within this tradition.

Epistemology

The history and tradition of landscape architecture draws on knowledge from many different disciplines and modes of thought (Swaffield 2002) which is reflected in this thesis. Landscapes are omnifarious and people understand them in varied and divergent ways through quantitative and qualitative studies, through subjective personal experience and 'objective' professional opinion. Landscape also has many dimensions that can affect the way it is understood and described, through physical knowledge, social, cultural, economic and political knowledges, a factor that is evident in the diverse discourses of the literature review.

As the discipline has developed from a wide variety of parent disciplines theory in landscape architecture has historically been sparse (Swaffield 2002). Yet a disciplinary consensus of the need for theory has provoked heterogeneous responses over the past twenty years causing a number of debates regarding the boundaries of theory and research in the discipline (Swaffield 2002).

Swaffield, in his studies on landscape architecture research and theory (2002, Deming and Swaffield 2011), argued that knowledge in landscape architecture is situated as the specific site of study becomes the element that draws these diverse forms of knowledge together. This integration of different modes of thought is fundamental to both the discipline of landscape architecture (Swaffield 2002) and this study¹.

¹See *Limitations 2.1*
Integration of Different
knowledges

As a result of the numerous approaches that can be taken to understand landscapes, the profession, theory and research tradition of landscape architecture spans diverse sub-disciplines spanning scientific and artistic research models. Deming and Swaffield (2011) state that the basic mandate that aligns the divergent sub-disciplines of landscape architecture is a consistent interest in stewardship. They define this as 'the protection and enhancement of the conceptual, material and phenomenal relationships between human culture and non-human nature' (2011:18). Three theoretical bases stem from this central concept of stewardship covering instrumental, critical and interpretive theories (Deming and Swaffield 2011:30). They argue that instrumental theory in landscape architecture is concerned with 'prediction, control and practical action' (ibid), critical theory stimulates change and interpretive theory 'enhances understanding of meaning and context' (ibid). Within this paradigm the current research uses an interpretive approach and as such is concerned generally with the meaning and context of conceptual and material relationships between human culture and non-human nature.

²See *Limitations*
2.2 *Subjectivity and*
Transferability

Deming and Swaffield explain interpretive strategies as the ‘analysis and interpretation of text, signs, or images that people - both past and present - have created about landscape’ (2011:152)². This research strategy mediates objective and subjective approaches as ‘understanding is actively constructed through a reflexive approach between theoretical concepts and observed data’ (Deming and Swaffield 2011:152). The study approaches conceptual and material relationships from a visual perspective using images and the built environment as observable data. This aligns the study with the resurgence of interest in visual approaches and representation within landscape architecture (Dee 2004, Corner 1991, 1992, Treib 2008) and the debate exploring ‘geography as a visual discipline’ (Dee 2004:14, Driver 2003, Matless 2003, Ryan 2003, Rose 2003).

³See *Limitations 2.1*
Integration of Different
knowledges

Using visual interpretation as a basis, the types of knowledge relevant to the study become much more focused. The study became primarily concerned with graphic depictions of the towns based on ‘eye-witness knowledge’ (Cosgrove 2008). This covered subjective and objective artistic knowledges presented through pictorial, cartographic and textual depictions of the towns, professional knowledges produced in urban plans and visual data of the built environment³.

Many writers have demonstrated the linguistic roots of Landscape as intricately linked to pictorial qualities and visual knowledge (Cosgrove 2004, Dee 2004). This strong visual tradition of understanding the landscape has influenced the methods and sources used for different research agendas. Due to the specific focus on urban image this study was partly influenced by the iconographic landscape approaches discussed in the literature review, a key interpretive approach in landscape architecture (Deming and Swaffield 2011). The approach stemmed from Erwin Panofsky’s iconology system of a ‘‘deep’ theoretically driven interpretation of [signs’] broader social and cultural meanings and significance’ (Deming and Swaffield 2011:164, Cosgrove and Daniels 1988). While the particular methods of the iconographic approach have been discussed in the literature review, it is necessary here to discuss the specific types of knowledge that are accepted within these practices.

Iconographic landscape studies that have influenced this project are aligned by a focus on graphic representations of place, while chiefly interested in the visual depictions of eye-witness knowledge the study also includes reference to textual knowledges. Müller stated that ‘iconography can best be described as a qualitative method of visual content analysis and interpretation, influenced by cultural traditions’ (2011:286) asserting a primarily visual knowledge base. She proceeded to argue ‘visuals are treated as historic sources on culture, politics,

society, life at a given time in the past' (2011:286).

Cosgrove describes landscapes as simultaneously material and imagined (2010:15), a concept which has been discussed at length by other authors (such as Soja 1996). The three visual materials used in this study each present different visual knowledges about the site and articulate the distinct links between the material and imagined landscape of the industrial towns. From the urban plans which form a chief method of changing the material landscape and provide a view of changing urban ideals regardless of their realisation (Söderström 1996). To the artistic depictions of place that take the built environment as inspiration and the visual nature of the material landscape.

A chief way in which the study departs from the previous iconographic studies is through the distinct analysis of the material landscape, taking Richard Williams' study on the 'Anxious City' (2004) as precedent (discussed in the literature review). This approach sought to explore the multifaceted nature of urban images through both real and imagined iterations rather than exclusive focus on depictions of the landscape. Building on this approach, the study integrated sources that held distinct mediations between the real and imagined landscape through urban plans, pictorial representations and the material landscape. In conclusion, the epistemological framework of the study stems from the site utilising visual representations of place as the knowledge basis.

Research Design

Structural Composition

The overall structure of the study is composed as a case study echoing the iconographic landscape approaches discussed in the literature review and the situated nature of landscape knowledge (Swaffield 2002). Multiple methods have been drawn together to fulfil the aims of the research within the defined structure of the case study.

Scholz and Teitje's research on case study methods in urban studies recommend that case studies should be 'unique, one among others and always related to something in general' (2002:1). This premise has helped to structure the current study which continually references Stockport's position within the wider experience of the region's industrial towns⁴. As such, the case study is divided into two main sections firstly exploring the context of the towns in the region and the second focusing on the specifics of Stockport as a representative of the wider experience. The study is related to the general condition of post-industrialism that affects towns and cities across the world.

⁴See *Limitations*
2.2 *Subjectivity and*
Transferability

Scholz and Teitje state that the intentions of research case studies can be defined as intrinsic, stemming from interest in the researcher, or instrumental, using the case to understand a wider problem 'something other than understanding the particular case' (2002:11). As such this study can be seen as a hybrid of both intentions. This dual motivation of the study has shaped the intentions of the research, so while the project is structured as a case study and explores a single town in detail, the ultimate aim is to understand the wider condition of post-industrialism. The study is made instrumental through its focus on one particular case (Stockport) to understand the experience of a group of similar towns in the region.

The motivation for the research stemmed from personal interest in the particular issues of industrial towns, having grown up in one, that has been developed through undergraduate and postgraduate studies on the subject. Initially this interest stemmed from St Helens (see figure 2.3), due to its complex issues of identity and fragments of obsolete identities evident within its landscape. The validity of this interest increased with more objective study of the town and its representation of a more general condition. This formulated questions regarding similar places across the region finally expanding to the eight towns of focus in this study. Through an initial comparative study it was found that Stockport presented a more representative case of the wider experience, shifting the focus from St Helens to Stockport. As such, the intrinsic motivation of the research was the desire to explore the



contested urban future of the industrial town.

Figure 2.3, Photograph of St Helens, Merseyside, Image author's own, 2012.

The dual approach of the study, to understand the specifics of a case and its relationship to the general condition, helped to compose the proportionate weighting of the research sections. The study dedicated a similar amount research on the comparison of the eight towns and the urban image of the representative case. Therefore two contextual chapters relate to the wider context while three chapters analyse and discuss the specific case of Stockport.

These two objectives of the study employ different approaches to place and therefore two complementary sets of research methods have been chosen. This relates to the shift in data types between the two types of chapters related to contextual and specific. Using Scholz and Teitje's categorisations the research styles have been defined as embedded research methods for the contextual chapters and holistic methods for the chapters dedicated to Stockport. The twofold research types are engaged to explore both complexity and context while reflecting the aims of the research project.

Embedded research methods were employed to undertake the

contextual chapters, using multiple methods and integrating both quantitative and qualitative knowledge. This embedded section of the research compares the context and experience of the eight towns including Stockport. The second holistic research type analyses qualitative data types to gain an understanding of the urban image of Stockport.

Research Sample

The research sample focused on large industrial towns of North West England. The thematic focus on industrialism dictated the geographical region of study. The north west was chosen for its particular density of industrial towns and for this reason the focus was on the towns within the conurbation of Liverpool and Manchester, seen as the cradle of the industrial revolution (Stobart 2004). Rather than comparing the towns based on industrial types the focus on the conurbation diversified the industrial base of the towns sampled, crossing historic functions as coal, chemical and cotton manufacturing towns to identify a correlation in the condition of post-industrialism.

Eight towns in the region were found to be comparable from a quantitative survey of criteria such as size, population, and urban status (discussed more fully in Chapter Four). These are Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, St. Helens, Stockport, Warrington and Wigan, they each occupy the level below cities in the urban hierarchy (Hall et al. 2001) and sustain populations above 100,000 people. This categorisation approaches the towns as distinct from post-industrial cities building on Bell and Jayne's thesis on small cities (2006) discussed in the literature review.

The aim was to create a base of towns that are largely comparable and to identify a specific town that represented the general condition of the industrial towns (Stockport). The case study of a representative examples approach was chosen to allow a deeper analysis of the specifics of urban image in the context of the industrial town, rather than a wider survey of urban image in several towns.

Research Design

This section will discuss the research design and methods used for each section of the research. The project used a case study approach to understand the issues of the industrial towns as a category through a comparative study before focusing on the specifics of a representative case in order to develop a depth of research on

urban image. This is reflected in the design of the research which addresses this dual purpose. Mixed methods were employed in the study to gather the diverse knowledges of landscape described in the epistemology section. The steps required for each chapter will be discussed in relation to the comparative study and the specific case. The study utilised qualitative and quantitative accounts to create a comparative survey of varied knowledges regarding the industrial towns. This developed an understanding of the towns' complexities, similarities and differences from multiple perspectives. The initial comparative study focused on published and peer reviewed materials in order to objectively compare the towns as far as possible.

The study began with a basic data comparison of towns in the Liverpool - Manchester conurbation and a group of eight relatively similar towns were selected for further study. Initially the study focused on collating and comparing qualitative and quantitative previous studies of the towns to develop a holistic understanding of their current urban circumstances. This was supported by the researcher's own photographic surveys that compared key elements of the built environment in each town (such as civic architecture, transport interchanges and high streets.) The results of the studies were analysed and compared to understand how far the towns are similar



Figure 2.4, *Oldham Town Centre Plan, 1948, image taken in Oldham Archives and Local Studies.*

and what differences exist between them. A particular focus was also placed on the validity of using a single case as representative of the eight towns.

The study then moved on to a historical study of the towns which focused specifically on their experiences of urban change 1840 - present. Data collection was primarily focused on historic map

⁵See *Limitations 2.4 Data Access*

analysis and archival research focused primarily on urban planning in the towns. This created a standard urban history of the towns and highlighted the quirks and how individual towns differed within a broad similar trajectory. The results were used to understand the towns' experiences of urban development and to identify the normative case study of Stockport as representative for the wider towns. This chapter built a context through which the second half can be understood.

The second part of the research focused on the collection of data for the specific case study of Stockport. Archival research⁵ methods were used to collate data on urban plans, art and the historic urban development of the town. These materials were analysed using primarily visual methods supported by contextual studies, historic map analysis and direct observation of the material reality of the built environment at Stockport. This is divided into three chapters and used primarily archival research supported by direct observation. Therefore the analysis of the second section was more in depth and focused on three distinct types of urban image to provide an in depth discussion of the complexities of urban image both in Stockport. Each image type was discussed in a separate chapter to improve the transparency of the research (an issue highlighted in symbolic landscape approaches discussed in the literature review) and the links between them were discussed across chapters. This analysis of the urban image of Stockport was continually assessed against the standard experience to ensure a clarity on the particular ways in which Stockport differs from the norm.

Information Required

The dual strategy required different types of information. The first comparative section necessitated varied types of information aligning quantitative and qualitative information on the towns. The second section required primarily visual materials due to the urban image focus of the thesis. As a result each chapter utilised different source materials. This section gives information on the types of data collected, it is split into the two research types of the study the contextual research (using embedded methods) and the specific research (using holistic methods). Both types of research necessitated similar types of information yet the comparative study relied more heavily on secondary sources while the study of Stockport required more emphasis on primary materials.

Contextual

The analysis type for the contextual chapters was largely comparative

building a base level of understanding how the towns compare with each other, their similarities and differences and their historical urban development. This data was taken from largely secondary sources to gain large amounts of knowledge from a variety of perspectives that could be compared between the towns.

Primary sources:

Built Environment - Comparative materiality & spatial studies.
Comparative survey of urban regeneration projects.
Historic Maps -Comparative survey of urban change.
Urban Plans - Comparative survey of urban planning.
Newspaper articles - Contextual information regarding urban change
Government and Local Authority Policy.
Photographic Survey

Secondary Sources:

Local Authority Core Strategies.
Regional Urban Studies.
Urban Hierarchy Studies.
Landscape Character Assessments.
Local History Accounts.
Architectural studies.
Public sculpture studies.

Specific

The analysis type for the specifics chapters was mainly qualitative gathering visual data from both direct observation and archival studies. This material was mainly taken from primary sources to gain in depth data about the character of Stockport and its particular problems and opportunities.

Primary Sources:

Built Environment - Materiality & spatial studies.
Historic and Current Maps.
Urban Plans.
Newspaper articles - Contextual information regarding urban change
Historic and Current Government and Local Authority Policy.
Artworks.
Literary works.
Historic Photographs and Postcards.

Secondary Sources:

Local history studies

Figure 2.5, Image taken in Stockport Curatorial Services, Cheadle Hulme, March 2014.



Methods of Data Collection

As discussed the strategy for the first chapter was to collate diverse data to compare the towns from a variety of perspectives. This relied heavily on previous studies, bringing them together to compare the towns by their qualitative and quantitative characteristics. The studies chosen were chiefly related to the urban condition of the towns and provided data for each of the eight towns of this study.

Contextual Survey - Procedure 1

This survey largely made up the research undertaken for the 'Region Compared' chapter. Secondary sources were consulted and analysed to develop; firstly a list of comparable towns; and secondly an understanding of their similarities and differences.

The comparative review of the industrial towns began with basic data

collection regarding the size of the towns, this was compiled using data from the Office for National Statistics, and data published by the towns themselves (for instance within their Core Strategies). This covered size in population, area (km²) and density before moving on to a quantitative comparison of the towns. Following on from Bell and Jayne's thesis that the scale, scope and reach of urban areas is a better indicator of size than demographic statistics, a number of studies were collated that explored these notions in the towns selected. The urban status of the towns was developed from previous studies on urban ranking, economic linkages and commuter patterns.

The study then went on to analyse qualitative aspects of the towns beginning with their character. The information was again taken from previous studies and strengthened through focused supplementary primary data. The criteria focused on studies that had been carried out on each town by reputable research teams. The studies focused on the visual character of the towns, and was limited to studies that had produced comparable data about each of the towns. The geographical character of the towns was compiled using data from the national character areas survey undertaken by Natural England and material studies were compiled using data from the British Geological Survey area profiles.

This was supported by photographic character surveys regarding the layout, materiality and character of the towns undertaken by direct observation and map analysis. This site survey focused on the visual character of the towns and was based primarily on the style and materiality of the key shopping streets, civic, municipal and ecclesiastical buildings supported by clear landmarks in the town. Excluded from this survey was the wider extents of the town, for instance the suburbs and outlying central areas.

This data collection began with quantitative data to create a baseline comparison between the towns such as the geographical area of the towns and population numbers, map analysis was also undertaken to understand the spatialities of the towns. This was then enriched with qualitative studies of landscape character and architectural studies of the towns, developing a more nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences in the built environment of the towns. This survey was undertaken mainly throughout October 2013 - December 2013.

Contextual Survey - Procedure 2

This survey made up the research undertaken for the 'Regional Trends' chapter. Mainly primary source material was gathered for this data survey, and sought to develop an understanding of the shifting

experience of the towns throughout their histories, and to develop an understanding of the design trends evident in the region. This survey was undertaken using archival sources and necessitated visiting the local archives of each town studied and the regional archives of Manchester and Liverpool. Again the analysis of this material was comparative. Three key types of information were sought in the visits: historical maps; historic master plans; and finally direct observation in the towns of contemporary urban regeneration projects.

Figure 2.6, Bolton Evening News, August 1965, regarding Shankland and Cullen's Masterplan, Image taken in Bolton Archives and Local Studies, December 2014.



The strategy for the second chapter focused more closely on the material urban form of the towns with a historical perspective. This entailed archival research to understand how the towns have changed over time. The study began with the collation of the historic maps for each town compiled from an online database (Digimaps). The maps were simplified down to figure-ground data, tracing buildings and built areas and leaving open areas blank. This provided a clearer pattern from which to compare the urban changes occurring between the

periods and between the towns. This data was supported by contextual archival research materials were located in the archive using online search databases (where available) and requested before the archive visit. Alternatively, the archive was contacted and the project discussed in order to compile a list of relevant materials with the archivist. Often once in the archive, the archivist was able to find additional materials of interest to the study. Three types of materials were collated from each archive focusing on urban plans and improvement acts, civic societies and general urban histories of the towns, newspaper articles concerning the urban development and specific details on idiosyncratic urban changes.

A comparative table was created to record town plans along with their stated aims from the project, key information was also taken regarding the style and type of regeneration proposed in the study. The texts were searched for particular references to image or an opinion on the existing character of the town.

These materials were chosen to form a basic understanding of the towns' approach to urban development and the shifting approaches through the years. This presented a huge amount of data, photographs were taken of visual materials, and key notes were taken in the archive concerning written documents and highlighting key quotes that referred to the general experience or to the specific experience of the town. A second archival strategy was undertaken which involved the consultation of materials in the local studies section of the archive, and locating the Dewey section 711.48 - this provided a great deal of relevant information that would otherwise have evaded the online search (due to inappropriate titling, etc).

Projects of key interest were then researched outside of the archive using reference literatures on the urban history of the towns, and urban planning texts that made reference to them. These were located using Google Scholar and Google Books, library searches and bibliographical references. The Local Collections library at MMU was also invaluable in holding materials with relevant information. Much time was taken searching through historical guides to the towns in order to locate information of interest to the study.

Materials, particularly maps relating to the towns before ordnance survey were requested at the archives, where available and this was supported by online repositories of historic maps such as Oldmapsonline.org. This formed the basis of the urban inheritance and enabled the study to identify the pre - industrial urban form of the towns, this was analysed against the topography to highlight the prototypical relationship between streets, contours and rivers in the

towns.

Thirdly, the municipal art gallery and museum of each town was visited for supplementary information, and to identify particularly the way each town had been presented in art throughout time.

This survey was undertaken primarily throughout January 2014 - July 2014.

Archives visited and dates:

- Bolton Archives and Local Studies, - 14th and 15th April 2014, 1st August 2014, 18th December 2014.
- Bury Archives and Local Studies - 4th June 2014, 31st July 2014.
- Cooperative Archives 14th October 2013.
- Manchester Archives and Local Studies - 28th and 29th March 2014.
- North West Film Archive - 29th March 2014.
- Oldham Archives and Local Studies - 16th and 17th April 2014.
- Rochdale Archives and Local Studies - 7th and 8th November 2013.
- St Helens Archives and Local Studies - 3rd June 2013, 24th and 26th March 2014.
- Stockport Archives - Various Dates see below .
- Warrington Archives - 11th and 12th April 2014.
- Wigan Archives and Local Studies - 18th and 19th March 2014.

Art Galleries / Museums Visited

- Bolton Art Gallery
- Bury Art Gallery
- Gallery Oldham
- Manchester Art Gallery
- Museum of Wigan Life
- Rochdale Touchstones Gallery
- St Helens World of Glass
- Stockport Art Gallery
- Warrington Art Gallery
- Wigan Pier

Specifics Survey - Procedure 3

This survey made up the research undertaken for the 'Historic Representation of Stockport' chapter. This survey was undertaken primarily within the curatorial archive of Stockport, a specialist archive storing artworks not currently on display in the town's art gallery.

This archive is closed to the general public and access was granted for research purposes. The survey identified the way the town has been represented throughout history by analysing the content and style of artworks of Stockport. This was enriched through local archive sources

of published literary works describing the character of the town and references to works not held by the curatorial archives. Information was also gained from the MMU local collections, Stockport Art Gallery and Manchester Central Library and Archive. Further artworks were found in regional galleries and archives.



Figure 2.7, Unknown Artist, Hope Hill Mills, Stockport, Image taken in Stockport Curatorial Services, Cheadle Hulme, March 2014.

The visual depictions were photographically recorded and collated according to date and venue. The style and content of the images were analysed resulting in three stylistic categories that structure the discussion of the representation of the town.

This survey was undertaken over a number of months between March 2014 - January 2015.

- Stockport Archive Visits - 22nd April 2013
 - 31st July 2013
 - 15th October 2013
 - 29th and 30th July 2014
 - 20th and 21st August 2014
 - 17th and 18th November 2014
 - 27th and 28th November 2014
 - 3rd February 2015

- Stockport Site Visits -
 - 30th May 2013 - Mary Doyle, Urban Design Stockport MBC, Stockport Walk.
 - 14th April 2013
 - 23rd April 2013
 - 3rd May 2013 - Stockport RIBA Charette
 - 3rd and 4th July 2013

- 13th July 2013
 - 16th - 27th September 2013 - Stockport Industrial Heritage Project
 - 28th November 2013
 - 22nd - 25th August 2014
 - 31st August 2014
 - 10th January 2015
-
- Stockport Curatorial Archives - Bronwen Simpson, Stockport MBC, 21st March 2014.
 - Stockport Art Gallery - 3rd May 2014, 15th October 2013.
 - Manchester Archives and Local Studies - 28th and 29th March 2014.
 - North West Film Archive - 29th March 2014.

Specifics Survey - Procedure 4

This survey made up the research undertaken for the 'Urban Planning History of Stockport' chapter. The survey was undertaken at Stockport Local Heritage Library and archives and focused on collating data relating to urban planning in the town. The study required a visual analysis of the urban plans and so focused heavily on the imagery included in the plans. This was supported by contextual information of the plans, the designers and their design ideology and the discourse regarding planning in the town. The survey utilised historic maps, urban plans (relating to the central urban areas), manuscripts, newspaper articles, peer-reviewed journals.

The survey necessitated frequent visits to the archive in order to locate varied materials. Photographs were taken of the various urban plans consulted in the archive and collated according to the date of the archive visit. Historic OS maps were downloaded from Digimap and collated according to date and scale. Spatial analysis was undertaken to determine the development pattern of Stockport. Notes were taken for relevant materials consulted in each archive visit and again collated according to visit date. Materials of interest to the other research areas were commonly found and these were labelled and collated according to date.

The survey was undertaken March 2014 - November 2014.

Specifics Survey - Procedure 5

This survey utilised historic maps to understand the spatial development of the town. This survey relied heavily on archival contextual research on specific urban developments in the town. The study was also supported through character studies of the material

environment of the town these were undertaken on site and then supported using Google Earth and Google Street View. Materials were also taken from MMU Local Collections and Stockport Online Image Archive. This survey March 2014 - January 2015.

Limitations

This section discusses the limitations of the project and the various implications of the research decisions taken. The limitations can be cross referenced against the methodological discussions throughout this chapter.

Limitations 2.1 Integration of Different Types of Knowledge

Deming and Swaffield state that landscape architecture research brings together diverse types of knowledge in understanding the landscape. This expansive approach to knowledge in landscape architecture creates an extensive amount of materials to work with and encourages a heterogeneous approach to place. Yet the approach creates a number of issues regarding the scale of the study and the synthesis of materials.

Firstly, the wide variety of sources available creates an issue in controlling the scale of the study for an individual researcher over the three year period. Within the contextual studies an emphasis was put on secondary source materials in order to compare the towns from a variety of perspectives without greatly impacting the research schedule. With most of the studies having been undertaken as separate studies on individual towns care was taken to ensure each study used comparable methods and sources. A preference was made for research projects that conducted work on each of the eight towns in order to establish a parity between the studies, where this was not achievable has been highlighted in the thesis.

Secondary sources were sought that discussed specific elements regarding the urbanity of the towns focusing on urban size, character and ambition. These elements were chosen as a result of the literature review discussion and helped to limit the scale of potential sources. All the studies utilised were published works by academic and governmental bodies in order to ensure a standard quality of research. The authors of the studies were taken into account in the critique and comparison of the material, this was particularly important in the use of works produced by the local authorities that were often biased. In the second section a key emphasis was put on visual sources that portrayed some form of eye-witness knowledge about the site, in order to limit the boundaries of the study and create an achievable group of materials to collate.

Secondly, the diverse materials created some difficulty in synthesising

materials and the discussion of the analysis. This was found to be a larger issue in the first comparative section of the study, with some difficulties arising synthesising quantitative and qualitative materials. The quantitative studies allowed easy comparisons between the towns but overlooked the nuances and differences between the towns. The qualitative studies were much more difficult to summarise and compare by their nature but the discussion led to key findings on the particular differences experienced between the towns. As such the two types of research (qualitative and quantitative) were discussed somewhat separately while highlighting key links and contrasts between the findings of the towns.

Thirdly, the collection of varied data from both first hand and secondary sources causes some difficulties due to the shifting site boundaries of the place/places studied. While this study intended to focus on the geographic central areas of the towns (defined in these instances by the areas surrounding the town hall and main shopping areas and train stations, and bounded by railway lines and arterial arterial roads). 'Official' data sources usually encompass information from the much larger metropolitan boundary of the towns including the suburbs and outlying areas of the towns. Therefore all quantitative data of the towns is in reference to the metropolitan area, while qualitative data is collected regarding the central areas. The smaller area of qualitative study helped to limit the vast amount of variation that occurs on the outskirts and suburbs of towns, through multiple neighbourhoods, architectural styles, materialities and spatial complexities which are not directly relevant to the study. These two shifting definitions of the town boundaries do not impact the integration of the two types of data in this case, but in the interests of transparency the issue is included for discussion.

Fourthly, in order to limit the scale of the study published materials were sought in the survey of visual sources. This helped to limit the amount of materials available for research and also ensured a direct correlation with the way the town has been represented. This approach presented materials that crossed a number of viewpoints and motives for describing the town, from natives to outsiders and from different professions. Providing a view of the changing perceptions of the town in relation to the wider industrial discourse throughout the 19th and 20th century.

Yet this in turn created a limitation to the study as the focus on published materials systematically excluded a minority viewpoints. This can be seen in the lack of female perspectives (until Clapcott's work in the late 20th century), the lack of migrant views of the town and in the early period the lack of 'lay' or non-professional viewpoint, each of

which had fundamental roles in shaping the town. While this presents a significant issue in the narrow way the towns have been represented it did not affect the validity of the survey as materials that had not been published would not have entered into the wider construct of the northern cultural image, the focus of the survey.

Limitation 2.2 Subjectivity and Transparency

Deming and Swaffield (2011) highlight that interpretive research approaches are reliant upon the interpretation of the investigator, they state 'the consequence of becoming actively engaged in interpreting meaning is that conclusions can never be totally independent of the investigator' (2011:152). Similarly this is an issue identified in iconographical research discussed within the literature review. In order to explicitly address this issue two strategies have been undertaken to improve the validity of the research.

Firstly, a key issue identified in the iconographical approach was the synthesis of multiple sources into a singular narrative that obscured the research methods, sources and interpretation of the researcher. In order to improve the transparency of the research findings, methods and sources the discussion of particular materials has been dealt with separately. Care has also been taken to use a reflexive approach referencing the findings wider theoretical literatures and the observed data. This has been undertaken in order to contextualise the findings within wider research and increase the transparency of the research findings.

Secondly, the iconographic approach was seen to lack methodological structure and description (discussed in the literature review), therefore the research methods, sources and techniques have been explicitly described in order to further improve the level of transparency. This has been undertaken to increase the replicability of the methods and research study to other towns in the region and wider contexts.

Limitation 2.3 Transferability

The case study approach presents issues in the transferability of the research findings. In order to address these issues a large weighting of the research was given over to the comparison between the towns. This presented a good basis from which to understand the limits to transferring the findings as it identified the specific ways in which the towns were similar and different. The final conclusions discuss the findings in relation to these wider nuances between the towns.

The methodology of the study could be replicated in the wider towns of the region in order to find specific options for their futures. Yet, one issue in replication can be found in the case of St Helens which has a particularly poor tradition of pictorial depiction. This is an anomaly in the towns which each present a wealth of visual materials. In order to undertake the same methodology on St Helens, the study would need to take more focus on literary and textual description of the town in the section exploring the way the town has been represented. In reference to this the study presents a research methodology that may be useful for wider examples of culturally contested sites, yet the materials consulted would need to vary in accordance with the particular case. The method is particularly relevant to places that are contested and with strong cultural images, it would not be effective for those without.

Limitation 2.4 Data Access

Some difficulties arose within the particular procedures in relation to data access. This is due to a number of issues such as the varied protocols employed in the different archives, the content of the archive, the shifting classification systems of each archive and finally the shifting terminology associated with master planning throughout the periods surveyed.

Archives

Most archives in the North West have undergone refurbishment within the past 5 years. This meant that Liverpool and Manchester archives were inaccessible until May 2013 and March 2014 respectively, St Helens archive was also inaccessible until April 2013 and Bury archives until July 2014. This had positive and negative consequences as some of the archivists had a fresher memory of materials within the store due to recent location changes, while some materials have been lost in the process of refurbishment. It has also had a positive effect on the cataloguing systems of most of the archives, all of which can now be accessed remotely online (with the exception of Wigan and Stockport). This allowed time outside the archive to compile a list of relevant materials to be requested for viewing. The hard copy catalogue of Wigan's archive service meant that the visit and the materials collected could not be planned in advance and the accessibility to Stockport's collections was dependent on the archivist.

Archives and libraries across the region have had changes in budget and resources which have greatly affected opening hours and members of staff, which caused some issues in the time taken to collect data and the knowledge of the particular archivists.

Archive Protocols

Across the archives held in Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, St Helens, Warrington and Wigan different rules were applied to the access to data. Some archives had vast quantities of information available for reference on open shelving (such as Wigan), others are wholly stored away (such as Bolton) while the majority of the archives employed a middling approach. For this research project open shelving produced the highest quantity of relevant research data, as it allowed a search through materials within particular classification area of the archive rather than a reliance on the particular wording of the article. For example, most urban design master plans were found to be classified under 711.40942 (Dewey Decimal), which allowed divergently titled plans to be found such as 'Bolton as it might be' or 'A tentative scheme for Wigan', both of which would be difficult to identify using the archive catalogue. The open shelving system also depended less on the archivists understanding of the research project and their knowledge of the archival contents.

All local studies collections employed the Dewey classification system, except Wigan which used both Dewey and the Library of Congress classification. This classified the urban plans into two separate groups and locating materials became more complex and time consuming. Each archive also employed different periods of notice to access stored materials such as Manchester and Liverpool's 24 hour system, which can be contrasted to Bury's 30 day system (due to the archive undergoing refurbishment). This caused issues in the time schedule of the archival research shifting the plan from a period of two months to visit all archives towards a much longer and period of archival visits. Most archives were visited twice as a minimum, the first visit gathering data and scoping further materials with the help of the archivists. On first visit a key contact was made in each archive to discuss the project with, this proved beneficial in locating relevant materials and developing an overview of the protocols and materials within the archive, it also helped to quickly locate information upon the proceeding visits. More time was spent at Stockport archives, where data was collected over a period between May 2013-May 2015 over continual visits.

Archive Materials

While in theory each archive would hold similar information on their respective towns, the reality of visiting ten archives to collect data was different. Though most archives held relevant data, some had much scarcer materials held on the urban development of the town. There were particular differences in the presence of urban design schemes in each archive. Some archives held most if not all draft and final master plans of their respective towns including architectural

surveys and the design development of the projects. Yet towns such as Bury and Rochdale held no urban design plans of the towns developed before 1990, this necessitated a wider search for information within the local authorities planning department. Rochdale's planning history was particularly difficult to find relevant materials and a wider search of planning literature was undertaken, but the final study has a lack of information on this aspect of the town.

These vast differences in urban materials were due to different policies of archiving work within the planning departments of the local authorities, some materials have also been lost through fire and water damage. Other materials missing (or unable to be located) in the archives could be located with the architectural firm or the personal archives of the architect. This line of inquiry was adopted when difficulties arose locating the plans of Thomas Sharp's 1950 Stockport master plan and Gordon Cullen's 1960's Bolton plan (though this was eventually located within the archives under the name of the lead architecture firm, known as the 'Shankland plan'). Searches were undertaken at Manchester archives, the Thomas Sharp archive, Newcastle but the final work was dependent more on small elements from Stockport archive which helped to piece together the story as opposed to locating the full design drawings for the town.

Each of the archives also applied a cost to take photographs of the archival material, this was usually £5 per half day. To keep costs at a minimum this shifted the collection of data across the day into a two part system; finding and reviewing materials in the morning and documenting/photographing relevant materials in the afternoon. Photography proved a key way to document the materials accessed in the archives used to document visual materials such as plans, maps, images, paintings, sketches. This allowed the material to be thoroughly analysed for a longer period after visiting the archives. The half day charge as opposed to a 'pay per click' charge also meant a less judicious gathering of data, whereby materials were photographed and documented in case they may be of relevance in the future, this widened the scope of data gathered from each archive.

Shifting Terminology

Finally, locating materials using online catalogues and the help of archivists necessitated a survey of urban design terminology in England throughout 1800-now. Though many of the plans and materials held similar content, the terminology of the profession changed quite drastically through the period. This was undertaken with a trial and error approach and was greatly informed by open shelved archives and the MMU local collections. A list of synonymous terms was drawn up and used as the basis of the search terms used in each catalogue. As

the use of the catalogues advanced, the list of terms became longer and an iterative search system was undertaken to locate materials in each archive.

In conclusion, the study has developed from the landscape architecture research tradition which has brought a particularly expansive epistemology and varied approaches to research. The research takes an interpretive strategy which has been influenced by iconographic landscape studies, but differs from these in key ways. The study has been structured as a case study which begins with a comparative review of eight industrial towns in the region before focusing on one representative case to explore its urban image. In order to limit the scale of the study key strategies have been undertaken from the use of secondary sources in the comparative review and a focus on published visual materials in the urban image studies. The limitations of the study have been discussed and key strategies have been taken to address these regarding the integration of different types of knowledge, subjectivity and transparency, transferability and the particular issues of archival research.

03 Comparative Review of the Industrial Towns of the Region

This chapter determines the geographical region of the study and identifies the towns that will be discussed throughout the rest of the thesis. The overarching aim of the chapter is to explore the condition of post-industrialism in the region and the level of similarity and difference experienced between the towns. The chapter compares the towns using quantitative and qualitative data and assesses the validity of a single case study to represent the regional condition.

The literature review identified a tendency for the towns to be simplified into a universal cultural identity based on industrial decline, previous studies argued this has created a discrepancy between the region's cultural image and its reality (see Russell 2004, Ehland 2007). This chapter explores the subtle variations found between industrial towns in the region through their character, urban status and spatial typologies to build on the previous studies of the region. By identifying points of overlap and divergence between the towns the study begins to identify the specific elements that contribute to the 'urban kaleidoscope' (Caunce, 2000) complexity of the region. Through these two positions of similarity and difference the study will evaluate the level of similarity to address the validity of the case study and the level of difference to address the complexity of the region's urban identity.

Existing works on each town are compared to gain a breadth and depth of information using quantitative studies produced by government agencies, local authorities and academic studies, which examine urban status, economic relationships and demographic profiles of the towns. Qualitative studies are discussed exploring the character of place, found in Landscape Character Assessments, Historic Landscape Characterisation Projects and Architectural Surveys. Existing studies of the individual towns offer a depth of research that is unfeasible to undertake in a comparative study, as the studies present information about the towns from a variety of angles. The studies form a series of detailed comparisons which are supplemented by additional data from the Office of National Statistics, reports published by the local authorities, analysis of Ordnance Survey data, along with spatial and character surveys conducted by the author.

Defining the Region for Further Study

The North West of England is widely considered the first industrialised region in the world (Stobart 2004) and therefore presents an exemplary case for studies of industrialism. While the region is infamous for its explosive urban growth during the industrial revolution this is met by the eventual decline of industry which resulted in a densely populated network of post-industrial towns and cities. The recent 'Shrinking Cities' project (Oswalt 2005) focused on the dynamics of population decline in the Liverpool and Manchester conurbation (with a distinct focus on cities) in comparison to wider global examples. Since the publication of Shrinking Cities in 2005 the region has experienced a reversal of this trend with a population growth averaging 8% between 2001-2011 (Office for National Statistics 2012:2). These recent trends highlight the region's continued state of erratic transition into the twenty-first century.

The focus of this thesis is on the constellation of towns in the Liverpool - Manchester conurbation, as an abundance of de-industrialised towns surround the two cities. This sub-region is of particular interest due to the unique concentration of towns experiencing similar pressures of transition influenced both by the decline of industry, success of the core cities and wider global forces. This section of North West England crosses several administrative bodies and has never been officially designated a cohesive region. The legislative boundaries of the area have moved from the ancient kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria, the county boundaries of Lancashire and Cheshire, to the brief boundaries of Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire and finally the current smaller metropolitan boundaries (see figure 3.2-3.5).

Figure 3.1 Diagram showing the urban areas of the Liverpool - Manchester conurbation



The continual shifting of legislative territory has distorted the relationship that exists between the towns and cities of the area and created complex identity issues within the towns. While the area of study does not align with legislative boundaries, a series of distinct characteristics binds the region together from ecological systems to historic cultural and economic relationships. This has been the basis for previous studies throughout the past two hundred years focusing exclusively on the dual conurbation of Liverpool - Manchester, from Aikin's topographical study of the region (1795), Geddes (1915) urban transition study, Freeman et al's geographical study (1966), to the Shrinking Cities project (Oswalt 2005). This study transcends the legislative boundaries to compare towns across the Liverpool-Manchester conurbation. Placing the focus of the study on one section of the urban hierarchy of the region, the large towns, united through their urban status and processes from industrialism.

Historically, comparative studies have focused on categories of production as the unifying factor resulting in numerous studies of the cotton towns or coal towns as a distinct subject matter. While this is useful for the purposes of socio-economic studies of particular production types the comparison of towns across one section of the urban hierarchy allows an interrogation of the parallels and complexities of post-industrial transformation as a general condition. This shifts the focus of the study from industry specific towards an urban typology.

A factor that unifies the towns of the study is the landscape system of the region. The area of interest spans the Urban Mersey Basin (Natural England, 1997) landscape that stretches from the upland edges of the Peak district descending the valleys across the flattening land to the Irish sea. The area stretches 70km east-west and 30km north-south characterised by a unique formation of intricate geology that has influenced land use patterns (Natural England, 1997). Therefore the area is defined by both its natural and artificial characteristics, as various industrial types grew according to underlying geologies creating an urban-landscape typology.

An intricate network of rivers and further tributaries underlies the urban structure of the region with towns situated along the rivers and cities located at the major confluences. The area follows the Mersey catchment stretching north easterly along the river Irwell, described by Freeman et al. as the Mersey - Irwell Belt (1966). The structure of the region is determined by several rivers and tributaries within the Irwell and Mersey catchment from the Irk crossing east to south, the Roch crossing from the north east, the Croal crossing from the north



Figure 3.2 Diagram showing the ancient Mercia - Northumbria boundary c.500AD



Figure 3.3 Diagram showing the Lancashire - Cheshire county boundary c.1900



Figure 3.4 Diagram showing the Greater Manchester - Cheshire - Merseyside county boundaries c.1974

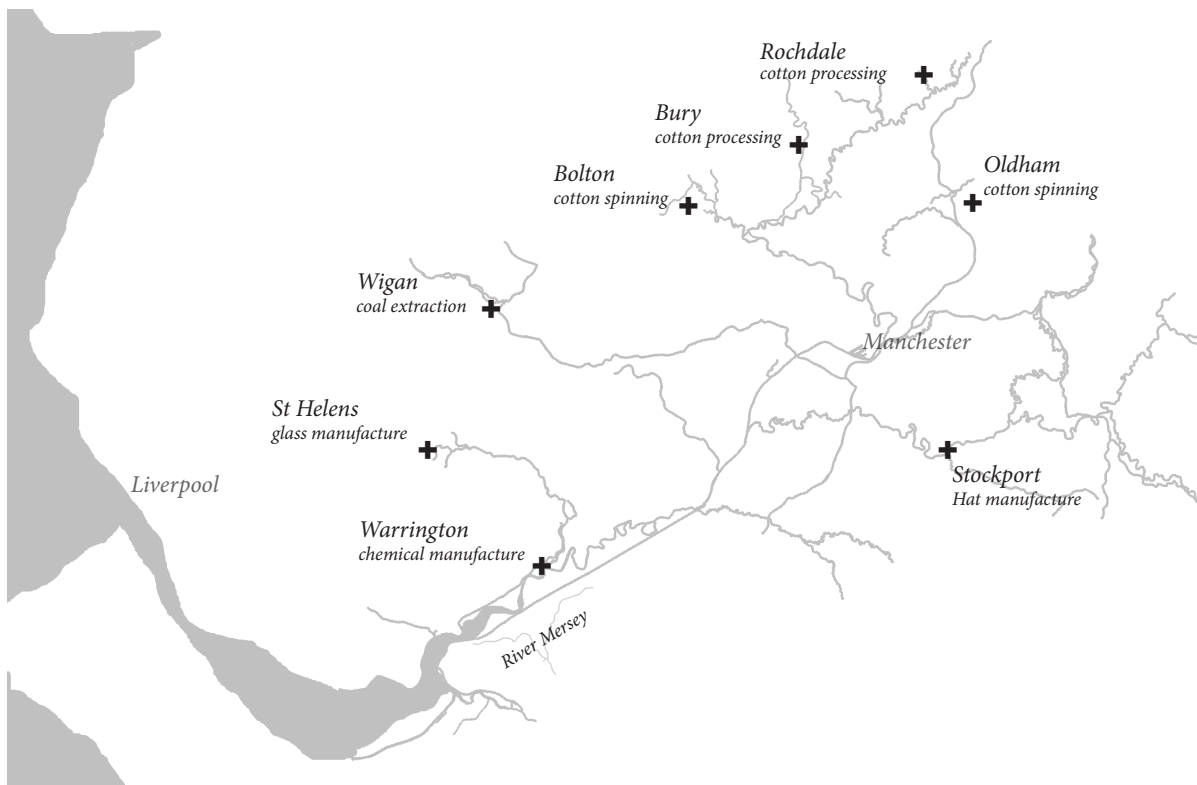


Figure 3.5 Diagram showing the current Metropolitan Borough boundaries

west all to the central course of the Irwell. The habitat types of the area are a complex sequence of rivers and streams, lakes, reservoirs and canals, fragments of ancient woodland, unimproved grasslands, lowland raised mires, brownfield sites and largely arable agricultural land. The region exhibits complex geological patterns of Carboniferous Westphalian rocks, outcrops of Upper Permian strata, Triassic sandstones, Pleistocene landforms and post-glacial sediments (British Geological Survey 2011, 2012) that have resulted in varied ecologies and vernacular architectures. The north eastern section of the Mersey - Irwell Belt utilised the system of waterways of the Pennine fringe to power the production of cotton, further west the Carboniferous Coal Measures and Shirdley Hill Sands gave rise to extractive industries, glass, steel and chemical production of the western towns. While the towns of the region are unrelated in terms of industrial production types they are united through the landscape system that provided the basis for the dense urban pattern that developed as a result of industrialism.

The complex character of the sub-region predated the growth of industry with the first definition of the area as a distinct systems was provided by the Domesday Survey 1086 (Darby and Maxwell 1962:392, Jewell 1994). The surveyors identified the area between the river Mersey and the Ribble ('Inter Ripam et Mersham') as an entity characteristically different from, yet influenced by, the ancient counties of Mersham and Northumbria. While the area lay largely in waste in the wake of the Harrying of the North, an extensive campaign to

Figure 3.7 Diagram of the industrial towns of the north west with their network of rivers and historic industrial type, surrounding the Liverpool - Manchester conurbation



destroy the villages and estates of the Northern shires by William the Conqueror in 1069, it still displayed a hybrid character that was difficult to define as absolute (Jewell 1994:97).

By the thirteenth century a number of urban centres began to develop as a network of market towns along the rivers that were linked by national north/south and east/west transport routes (Ashmore 1982:3). Explosive industrial growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth century led to the comparison of the towns of the sub-region by topographical writers. John Aikin's 'A Description of the Country From Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester' (1795) described the region as united through contemporaneous processes of industrialisation, urban growth and subservience to the larger centre Manchester. This initial hierarchical order was further explored through Patrick Geddes conurbation theory which defined the area as an interrelated socio-economic and ecological landscape of Lancashire (Geddes 1915). Geddes explained the conurbation as a two tier symbiotic hierarchy of 'workshops' or manufacturing towns, the 'market' of Manchester and the 'port' of Liverpool uniting the urban areas through productive and distributive functions (Geddes 1915:35). This description created a functional hierarchy of the region's spatial configuration, with smaller manufacturing towns serving the larger distributive centres of Manchester and Liverpool.

With the decline of industry the operative links described by Geddes are no longer serviceable in understanding the current region, yet a hierarchical urban structure is still evident. The large core cities of Liverpool and Manchester/Salford dominate the configuration of the region surrounded by a constellation of smaller urban centres that vary in spatial and population size (Hall 2008). The study will differentiate the hierarchical structure below the city level to define a number of towns with sufficiently consistent features to warrant the case study approach.

Defining the Towns

Notes:

[1] All population totals were taken from 2011 census data have been rounded up to the nearest 1,000.

[2] Metropolitan Area population results.

An initial survey of the most recent census population results (2011) presented eight towns of comparative size in the area. This first order classification highlighted an urban tier directly below that of the cities. The major cities of Liverpool and Manchester support population totals[1] of 466,000 and 503,000 respectively, while the smaller city of Salford recorded a population of 234,000. In comparison, eight towns in the region record populations above 175,000 with three towns exceeding the Salford total, this is seen at Wigan 318,000,[2] Stockport 283,000, Bolton 262,000. With five further towns recording lower, yet substantial totals at Oldham 220,000, Rochdale 212,000, Warrington 195,000, Bury 185,000, and St Helens 177,000. The small levels of difference between the populations of each town vary from 8,000 - 40,000 people which indicates a general group or comparative tier. Yet the population results show a significant variation between the highest and lowest populations of 141,000 between Wigan and St Helens, this points to a differentiation or sub-tier system that may be evident in the urban hierarchy of the region.

A lower tier of the urban hierarchy below the eight large towns can be determined as towns below 150,000 population, such as Runcorn recording 62,000, Widnes 61,000 and towns such as Leigh which records a population size of 46,000. This significant size difference marks them out as incomparable in size to the eight large towns categorised above. This difference in urban status is also evident in the smaller towns' lack of designation as Metropolitan Boroughs, as Runcorn and Widnes converge into the Halton Borough authority, while Leigh is designation part of the Wigan Metropolitan Borough.

The designation of Metropolitan Borough status also led to the important exclusion of Birkenhead from the eight large towns, which supports a large population but lacks the central authority permitted by the Metropolitan Borough designations to engage in the same practices as the larger towns. Similarly Metropolitan Boroughs such as Trafford were excluded on the basis of their multiple-centre configuration encompassing the towns of Trafford, Sale and Altrincham lacking a significant singular centre. The two towns of Birkenhead and Trafford also present a significantly different history of urban growth to the eight large towns that was based on planned settlements rather than the piecemeal development of the wider industrial towns. This highlights a shared development style in the chosen towns that will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The changing legislative boundaries of the towns makes the study of their population dynamics particularly difficult. Distinct interruptions

to population patterns occurred in the 1840's with the introduction of Municipal Boroughs and in 1974 with the introduction of Metropolitan Boroughs both of which extended the spatial areas included in the population statistics and therefore obscured the results (a more detailed analysis of these tentative population trends in the towns will be discussed in the next chapter). Within the most recent administrative boundaries (post-1974) the towns, and the region, have experienced a period of population decline broadly spanning 1981-2001 before a recent overall increase (Office for National Statistics 2012:2). The 4% average population increase across the region contrasts the larger 7% population increase experienced across England in the same period (Office for National Statistics 2012:1). These modest growth results are sharpened against the 19% population increase witnessed in Manchester 2001-2011 (Office for National Statistics 2012:2). As such the towns while the towns have experienced recent population growth, they are continuing to perform worse than the national average.

The spatial sizes of the eight towns permits a second simple comparison to assess broad quantitative similarities. The eight towns vary between 190km² and 100km² in terms of spatial area, Wigan is the largest town at 190km²[3] corresponding to its large population, Warrington ranks second covering 180km² of land, then Rochdale 160km², Oldham 140km², Bolton 140km², St Helens 140km², Stockport 130km², Bury 100km². These spatial figures can be compared to the cities which record Manchester as 120km², Liverpool 110km² and Salford 100km². With this comparison it is possible to see the similar spatial areas that are shared by both cities and towns, highlighting the significance of their spatial spread across the region. It is also possible to discern a smaller urban footprint of the mill towns in comparison to the more sprawling areas of the extractive and chemical towns at Wigan and Warrington.

Using data on the open space proportion of each town the spatial data and population size can be triangulated to find the average population density exemplifying a further similarity between the towns and distinction from the cities. All towns record an open space proportion of 50% across their boroughs except Rochdale with 75% open space (Local Authorities 2009-2014) [3]. The results of these average population densities show a broad correlation with the historic industrial types of the towns, with the mill towns generally displaying higher densities with the highest recorded by Rochdale at 5300 pop/km² while the extractive and chemical towns are less dense with Warrington recording a 2170 pop/km² average density (see table 3.1).

Notes:

[3] Spatial data taken from local authority core strategies 2009-2014 (Bolton Council 2011, Bury Council 2013, Oldham Council 2011, Rochdale Council 2013, Stockport MBC 2011, St Helens 2012, Warrington Borough Council 2007, Wigan 2011). All figures rounded up to the nearest ten.

The results also separate the towns from the core cities which record population densities of over 6000 pop/km².

From these initial figures it is possible to differentiate eight towns in the focus area that sustain large population levels and cover similar spatial areas. The towns are differentiated from the cities of the region in population size and average population densities, yet they differ in more complex ways too. Peter Hall's study of the urban hierarchy of England and Wales (Hall et al. 2001) presents a standardised method of ascertaining urban status and the aspects that separate cities from towns nationally.

Table 3.1 Showing the rank of each of the eight towns across population size, spatial size and average density.

Comparative Rank	Population Size	Spatial Size	Average Density
Highest	Wigan 318,000	Wigan 190km ²	Rochdale 5300 pop/km ²
2	Stockport 283,000	Warrington 180km ²	Stockport 4350 pop/km ²
3	Bolton 262,000	Rochdale 160km ²	Bolton 3740 pop/km ²
4	Oldham 220,000	Oldham 140km ²	Bury 3700 pop/km ²
5	Rochdale 212,000	Bolton 140km ²	Wigan 3350 pop/km ²
6	Warrington 195,000	St Helens 140km ²	Oldham 3140 pop/km ²
7	Bury 185,000	Stockport 130km ²	St Helens 2530 pop/km ²
Lowest	St Helens 177,000	Bury 100km ²	Warrington 2170 pop/km ²



Figure 3.8 Bolton Town Centre, image author's own, 2014. The image shows the main high street and town hall clock tower of Bolton highlighting the parallels between the Victorian and Modernist architecture of the town. This can be seen in the continuity of materials and the hierarchical scale of built form that preserves the sightlines of the town hall. The image also shows the historic approach to the built environment through the presence of mature street trees creating a more humanised town centre than that of a traditional industrial town, discussed later in the thesis.



Figure 3.9 Bury Town Centre, image author's own, 2014, the image shows the main high streets of Bury which illustrates the successive layers of regeneration in the town with examples of Victorian, Modernist and 1990's architecture. The image shows the visual connection to the surrounding hills yet also highlights the poorer quality of public realm regeneration through standardised street furniture, materials and detailing.



Figure 3.10 Oldham Town Centre, image author's own, 2014, the image shows the main street of Oldham highlighting successive layers of regeneration marking the town's main periods of growth, through the landmark of St Mary's church, the 1970's mirrored building and somewhat low quality 1990's red brick market hall.



Figure 3.11 Rochdale Town Centre, image Andrew Stopford, 2014, the image shows Rochdale town hall and a major vehicular route through the town highlighting the varied quality of architecture in the town. The foreground is dominated by dense industrial period architecture while the back right of the image opens out to Modernist style architectures and open spaces.



Figure 3.12 Stockport Town Centre, image author's own, 2014, the image shows the varied quality of architecture and topographical levels of Stockport, through the 18th Century St Peters church, the distinctive Victorian viaduct, the neo-classical Cooperative building, poor quality Modernist architectures and the contemporary glass facade of the Sky building. This level of stylistic variation is unique among the towns studied due to large scale demolition and restructure throughout the industrial and Modernist periods. The image also shows the hybrid elements of Stockport that fuse natural and man-made structures (discussed in further detail later in the thesis) through the cliff-face/brick retaining wall to the front left of the image.



Figure 3.13 St. Helens Town Centre, image author's own, 2014, the image shows the largely Modernist town centre of St Helens highlighting a shift in scale and materiality from the previous iteration of the industrial town. In the centre distance the unimposing town hall can be seen and the red brick Victorian library to its right marking a distinctly poor level of civic architecture in the town. The image shows the sprawling, low scale character of the town (discussed in more detail later in the thesis) on a largely flat site.



Figure 3.14 Warrington Town Centre, image author's own, 2014, the image shows the main street of Warrington with a contemporary regeneration project referencing the hidden river. The varied materiality and style of the towns Victorian architecture can be seen along with the later Victoriana style street lighting (stylistic decisions such as this will be discussed later in the thesis). The relatively wide street (for the industrial period in these towns) highlights a concerted era of street widening in the mid-industrial period which erased many of the signs of the town's earlier origins.



Figure 3.15 Wigan Town Centre, image author's own, 2014, the image shows the red brick, low scale character of Wigan with Victorian and 1990's replica architecture. Some details of the town's pre-industrial character can also be seen in the winding roads and tight proportions of the street.

Urban Status

Hall's study of the changing urban hierarchy goes beyond simple data using instead a matrix of urban indicators such as civic institutions and facilities, national retail chain presence and the number of cultural amenities. The study built upon the earlier work of Smailes (1944) and Smith's (1968) studies on the urban hierarchy of Britain. Hall's study describes a national urban hierarchy that helps to position the towns of the Mersey - Irwell Belt within the context of the national order.

The results of Hall's study confirms a shared urban tier that unites the eight towns of Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Stockport, Warrington and Wigan. Liverpool and Manchester are categorised as second tier cities (second to the capital city of London occupying the first tier), with the eight towns categorised as third tier urban centres. This third tier occupied by the industrial towns, essentially displays between six and twelve out of twenty urban indicators (in comparison to 17/20 and 19/20 indicators for Liverpool and Manchester respectively).

Hall's study identifies a level of difference that exists within the third tier, which is further divided into three sub-tiers: 3a, 3b and 3c. In Hall's study Bolton, Stockport, Wigan and Oldham (the most populous towns) are categorised as 3b towns, while Bury, Rochdale, St Helens and Warrington (the least populous towns) are classified as 3c towns. This confirms the conclusion of the population statistics for the towns which highlighted a level of variation between the highest populated town and the lowest. This highlights a level of difference between the towns yet also helps to differentiate how the towns vary from the core cities of the region.

The eight towns can be significantly differentiated from the cities of the region by population statistics and measures of urbanity, yet achieving city status has become a key ambition for the towns. Bell and Jayne describe this as an obsession with upward mobility influenced by inter-urban competition as urban areas seek to differentiate themselves in the global urban order (2006:1). The history of industrialism is uniquely linked to the growing competition for city status in England as the designation linked size with importance in reaction to the new industrial scaled cities of the nineteenth century (Beckett 2005). The distinction of city status changed over the centuries in response to this shifting urban hierarchy; from association with a cathedral, to minimum population requirements and key to the industrial towns - possession of a distinctive visual character (Hatherley 2012:59 ,Beckett 2005).

Three towns, Bolton, Stockport and Warrington have submitted multiple bids for city status throughout the period 1992-2012 with Bolton and Stockport submitting four bids each while Warrington submitted two. Bolton and Stockport were continually rejected due to their the lack of distinct character from Manchester, with neither town portraying a strong individual character in the eyes of the judges (Beckett 2005:169). This highlights the increasing importance on the image of place and highlights a direct tension in the towns with their replication of the Manchester model which will be interrogated in later chapters.

The notion of ambition in the towns presents the opportunity to compare less tangible aspects of the transition as they attempt to re-position themselves in the wake of industrialism. The repeated requests for city status from the towns highlight a level of ambition that disregards their sub-tier 3 status, with Warrington attempting to rise a theoretical three categories from 3c status to 2 and Bolton and Stockport attempting a two category rise from 3b status. Further examples of ambition and self-definition were evident in the Core Strategy reports of the individual local authorities. This data presented a more nuanced picture of the varied ambitions in the region. Warrington and Stockport predictably describe themselves as interdependent in the region sustaining positive links with the cities. Yet Warrington is the only town to suggest a competitive relationship with the region's cities within it's core strategy, suggesting an equal positioning. Stockport repeatedly references a struggle to position itself in relation to both Manchester and Cheshire which again echoes the sentiments of the city designation judges. Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens and Wigan describe themselves as largely dependent on the core cities with the ambition to strengthen their individual economies. Interestingly, these towns focus on collaborative futures discussing their relationships with neighbouring towns and positioning themselves within local contexts. In contrast the more ambitious towns of Stockport, Warrington and Bolton portray themselves as key regional players with more focus on their relationships with the core cities positioning themselves within a wider regional context.

The reality of the towns' relative positions in the region can be discerned to some extent through economic relationships of the region. A report published by the Work Foundation (2009) evaluated the economic relationships of the Liverpool and Manchester city region to highlight the varied nature of economic interconnectivity in city regions. The results of the report correlated largely with the towns' positioning of themselves. Similar to the results above, Warrington was found to have the most self-reliant economy categorised as an 'independent' economy and relationship with the city of Manchester.

Stockport was categorised as having an 'interdependent' relationship with Manchester. To the North of the region, Bury and Oldham were categorised as 'dependent' towns that rely on the economy of Manchester, again this correlates with an analysis of the town's respective core strategies. At the lower end of the scale, St Helens was assessed by the Work Foundation as being 'isolated' from from its sub-regional city of Liverpool. While not all of the towns were included in the study (Bolton and Rochdale were not studied), the results again illustrate a variation in the economic success and inter-relationships of the towns and cities. The Work Foundation results also highlight a variation in the economic success of the towns to the north of the region and those of the south, as the southern towns of Stockport and Warrington have the most robust relationships with the cities.

The results of the Work Foundation study focus on the relationships that exist between the towns and cities with an emphasis on the dominance of cities, yet a more subtle interrelationship between the towns exists. This can be seen in the 2011 census results regarding national commuter patterns (see table 3.2). A large transfer of workers between the towns is evident that is dependent on proximity, therefore towns closest to each other display the greatest transfer of people which is to be expected. The largest overall transfer of people between the towns can be seen in the relationship between Rochdale and Oldham situated 8km apart with an overall movement of 13,900 commuters travelling daily between the towns. In contrast the smallest transfer of people between the towns occurs between Oldham and St Helens, situated 41km apart with an overall movement of 280 people daily. The results of the commuter patterns illustrate a complex network of commuter movement which is based on a transfer of people between the towns and cities as opposed to the dominant pull of people from towns to the cities.

The results of the commuter patterns also highlight various levels of success in the attraction of workers. From this stance it can be seen that Warrington is very successful in comparison to the other eight towns, making a consistent gain of workers from all towns in the region. Warrington is also successful in its overall gain of employees each day as more people travel into (49,200) than out of the town daily (35,000) resulting in a net gain of 14,200 people. Warrington is the only town to achieve a net gain in the region highlighting its independent economy and can be compared with the cities of the region; as Salford gains 7,000, Liverpool 39,500 while Manchester attracts 106,700 commuters daily. Warrington generates, attracts and anchors economic investment more successfully than the other towns of the region. In this sense, Warrington's economy draws more similarities to a city while only possessing the civic and cultural institutions of a lower third

tier town.

The further seven towns of the region (Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Stockport, and Wigan) make net losses of between 7,200 and 32,000 workers in the daily commute. Wigan, the least successful in terms of attracting workers, makes a consistent loss of workers to the surrounding towns and has an overall loss of 32,200 workers in the daily commute.

A significant relationship between Manchester and Stockport is evident in the results of the commuter patterns which illustrates the strong interdependent relationship the town has with the city. The results show that 25,550 commuters travel from Stockport to Manchester daily, the largest movement of people evidenced between the towns and cities of this study. Conversely, Stockport also attracts the largest number of commuters from a city to a town in the region, attracting 11,700 workers daily. These results highlight the particularly strong interrelationship that has resulted from a mixture of close proximity (9km), effective transport links and a strong source of employment within the town. This also presents an interesting contrast to the ambition of Stockport for city status as the town aims to position itself as distinct from Manchester yet relies on a strong economic link with the city.

Notes:

[1] Interestingly Salford is classified as a third tier correlating more with the large towns of the region than the cities, a trend that was apparent in the population studies discussed earlier.

[2] Out of 354 Local Authorities Nationally

[3] As defined by Hall's 'measures of urbanity'

A further comparison of census data reveals the general structure of the towns' economies through the dominant employment types in 2011 (see Appendix 1). The highest level of employment shared by all towns is in the 'Wholesale and Retail Trade' (Census 2011) employing between 16-19% of the overall workforce of each town. 'Human Health and Social Work Activities' scored the second highest employer throughout the towns employing between 12-16% of the workforce. The third largest employer in most of the towns was recorded as 'Manufacturing' employing between 8-11% of the workforce. A variation in the third largest employment type is evident in Stockport and Bury which record 'Education' as their third largest employer of 10% of the workforce in both cases. The top three employment types in Bury and Stockport mirror more closely the economy of Manchester which has 16% of its workforce employed in retail type industries, 14% in Human Health and Social Services and 11% employed in education. The lower reliance on manufacturing employment types in these two towns suggests a more effective post-industrial transformation than the other towns of the region.

The comparison of the towns in terms of their economic regional standing provides interesting variations that exist between the status, ambition and reality of the towns. The study of census data

Table 3.2 showing commuter patterns between the towns and cities of the region using data from the 2011 census.

		Commuter numbers travelling from (town name)												
Towns	Bolton	Bury	Oldham	Rochdale	Stockport	St Helens	Wigan	Warrington	Manchester	Liverpool	Salford			
Bolton		4790	610	930	570	420	9110	530	1580	260	3630			
Bury	5080		1220	4870	560	140	900	230	2490	120	2150			
Oldham	810	1910		8000	1390	110	380	200	4530	120	990			
Rochdale	1270	4100	5870		620	120	510	210	2390	110	970			
Stockport	770	960	1670	890		220	740	800	11,700	310	1640			
St Helens	400	130	180	110	150		5790	2520	330	2210	350			
Wigan	4480	650	590	360	330	4070		2000	940	740	1660			
Warrington	1240	580	420	420	101	6800	6540		1800	3190	1740			
Manchester	7010	12,130	11,710	9270	25,550	1410	5420	4230						
Liverpool	300	200	120	100	300	5050	1580	2630						
Salford	6460	5690	2180	2280	3200	770	5850	2160						

Commuter numbers travelling to (town name)

has provided a good basis from which to understand the shared characteristics of the towns, particularly in their relationship to the cities of the region. The next section will focus more on the variations evident in the towns whereby qualitative data becomes more important.

Figures 3.16 showing Bolton layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial image shows the grid-like layout of Bolton, a result of less dramatic changes in level than some of the other towns studied. The image also shows the encircling major road system which has created a distinct spatial shift between centre and periphery characterised by larger industrial units and low density housing on the edge of the town.



The smaller images show the mixture of Victorian and Modernist architectures that characterise the low scale town centre of Bolton. Clear connections can be seen in the materiality and scale of the two styles that were further complemented by the retrofitting of green spaces in the town centre following Gordon Cullen's suggestions in the 1960's.

Figures 3.17 showing Bury layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial image shows the comparatively small and simple layout of Bury, encircled by a major road system. Again a distinct shift in scale and land function can be seen between the centre and periphery with a relatively compact central area and large areas of open space and industrial units outside the ring road.



The images show the scale and materiality of Bury's key spaces, notable for the late stylistic period of the town hall. Contemporary buildings in the town can be seen to have little relation to the previous periods in materiality or form.

Figures 3.18 showing Oldham layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial photograph shows the low density industrial units that dominate the central areas of Oldham. Very little spatial hierarchy can be found within the town centre. Again the town is encircled by a major road system, outside of which larger areas of open space dominate.



The images show the materiality and character of Oldham's architecture and open space system. The remnants of the pre-industrial and Victorian period show similarities in scale and stone while newer developments have sought to replicate the large scale red brick mills that were characteristic of Oldham in the industrial period.

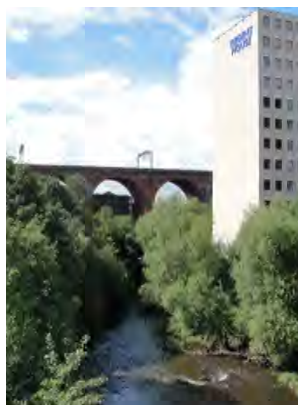
Comparative Review of the Industrial Towns of the Region

Figures 3.19 showing Rochdale layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial image shows the fragmented character of Rochdale's central area. Again bordered to the west and north by a major traffic system, some of the smaller early streets are still visible in the centre of the town. Huge, low density buildings mingle amongst small, high density areas within the centre. High rise flats and larger industrial estates are found on the periphery.



The images show the central area of Rochdale with pre-industrial churches, grand civic architectures and few remaining mill buildings. The river emerges in the centre of town, though its course runs largely below the town centre (discussed in greater detail later in the thesis).

Figures 3.20 showing Stockport layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The image shows the complex layout of Stockport with a large range of scales and densities within the central area. Rather than 1960's vehicular routes, the centre is bound by the large scale railway line of the Victorian period to the west and the M60 motorway to the north. Much of the pre-industrial form of the town is intact, focused around the market place. The course of the river is difficult to discern due to developments covering several sections through the town centre.



The images show the eclectic style of Stockport that has influences of mock-Tudor, Baroque, Industrial and Modernist periods of architecture. The images also further highlight the complex level changes of the centre.

Figures 3.21 showing St. Helens layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial image shows the relatively small and simple layout of St Helens. Again 1960's roadways encircle three sides of the centre. Large scale, low density buildings and car parks dominate the centre while terraced streets dominate the periphery of the town.



The images show the low density of St Helens and continued presence of industry in the town. The low quality of architecture described by Pevsner is also evident.

Figures 3.22 showing Warrington layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial image shows the dominance of the railway lines in Warrington that bind the town to the north, west and south. The river is evident to the south east and the original cruciform street pattern of the town is evident in the central area, dividing the town into quadrants. The south-west is densely packed fine grain, the north west dominated by open space surrounding the town hall and large scale buildings while the east is dominated by industrial scale units.



The images show the varied character of Warrington's central area with definite visual links to the Cheshire style pre-industrial period.

Figures 3.23 showing Wigan layout, taken from Google Earth, and author's own images of town centre character. The aerial image shows the layout of Wigan largely dominated by both railways and large vehicular routes. In the centre the pre-industrial layout is still evident with a mixture of fine grain tightly packed urban form contrasted with large industrial units.



The image shows the mixture of architectural styles in Wigan, from the red-brick Mancunian style to the timber framed Cheshire style.

Geography and Character

The overall character of the region has been categorised as the Urban Mersey Basin, within this area further similarities and differences can be found between particular towns. The visual character of the towns encompasses topography, geology, spatial layout, infrastructures and building materials that give a more intricate picture of the region's towns.

The importance of waterways to the region is evident in each of the towns with each showing intricate relationships to rivers, streams and canals. Six of the eight towns have rivers running through their central areas, namely Bolton (River Croal), Bury (River Irwell), Rochdale (River Roch), Stockport (River Mersey), Wigan (River Douglas) and Warrington (River Mersey). Oldham differs slightly as rivers pass to the west and south of the town but not through central districts. Conversely St Helens has a unique relationship to water as its growth as an industrial town was dependant on the cutting of the Sankey canal in 1757 that now passes through the centre while the town does not have a central river. The towns share a relative similarity in their relationship to waterways yet different character groupings exist as a result of the varied topographies.

The four towns towards the north of the region, Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Rochdale, share a particular visual character that is influenced by the nearby Pennines. The traditional materiality of these towns uses the underlying Millstone Grit that creates a continuity between the towns (though this has become less evident throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Natural England 2013:27)). The landform of the edge of the Pennines affects the character of each of the towns through their topographical variations.

Oldham exhibits the greatest variation in its topography while Bolton shows the least variation resulting from their relative positions in relation to the Pennines. The view of the moors is afforded in each of the towns by their relatively consistent height at between 100-300m coupled with the steep ascendancy into the Pennines (Natural England 2013) again reinforcing their similarity in character. These similarities are supported by Pevsner's descriptions of the towns that foreground the importance of the moors to their overall character, describing Bury as 'not too big for the open country and the hills to play a part in the visual scene.' (1969:99). The greatest variation in these towns can be seen in their style and quality of civic buildings and central areas (see images 3.16-3.23), and their layout in relation to the topography.

These northern area towns of the conurbation have irregular layouts



Image 3.24 Oldham Civic Centre

in response to their underlying topographies, Rochdale has the most irregular layout due to its positioning within the river Roch valley, while Bolton has the most regular layout largely following a grid pattern on its less steeply sloping site to the west of the river Croal. Bury and Oldham occupy sites along one side of their respective valleys. Green open spaces are evident on the periphery of each of the towns breaking up the outer ring of residential areas largely following the river courses. Civic buildings hold prominent positions in each of the towns apart from Bury, where the town hall is located on the towns periphery outside the arterial routes. The town hall's of Bolton and Oldham occupy the highest point in their respective towns, while Rochdale's famous neo-Gothic town hall is located along the banks of the Roch (though now culverted). St Chad's church in Rochdale sits at the hilltop overlooking the town hall and wider town. Bury, Rochdale and Oldham possess shopping malls that cover large amounts of their central areas constructed in the 1970's (Rochdale), 1990's (Oldham) and 2000's (Bury).

Bolton and Rochdale have been linked to a strong tradition of civic architecture that has resulted in some good quality environments within their centres. In contrast Oldham has been criticised for its lack of good quality civic architecture, something which the town has attempted to remedy through the construction of a new civic centre in the 1970's. Instead Oldham was praised by Pevsner for its monumental industrial architecture whose 'bulk dwarfs everything else' (1969:356), yet little of this architectural legacy remains.

Each of the northern area towns are less impacted by railway infrastructures than the southern towns of the region. Bury and Oldham no longer have a central railway station, though the path of the former railways is still evident on maps. In these towns the railway infrastructure is less dominating as their position on higher ground has enabled the lines to be cut into the ground, travelling largely below ground level in their central areas. Bury, Oldham and Rochdale connect to Manchester via the tram network largely following the path of previous railways. At Rochdale, and to some extent Bolton, the railway stations are located some distance from the central areas. Instead the greatest constraint of the central areas is arterial routes which encircle each of the towns.

St Helens, Warrington and Wigan share a less varied topography occupying flatter lands towards the south west of the region. The towns share a more sprawling layout than that of Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Rochdale as a result of their less constrained topographies and their initial industries based on mineral extraction and chemical manufacture. The towns vary in height from 10-180m above sea level

(Natural England 2013) highlighting a much lower flatter plain than that of the other towns. The traditional vernacular architecture and materiality varies between these towns with Wigan (and Warrington to a lesser extent) displaying Cheshire style half timbered buildings, more recently the towns have become more dominated by red-brick and in this sense have a visual link with Manchester.

The variation between the towns of St Helens, Warrington and Wigan can again be seen in their architectural style and quality. Of St Helens Pevsner stated 'Architecturally there is nothing to be said of St Helens. The centre is one of the least acceptable in Lancashire' (1967:385) although the updated version of the series was less harsh (see Pollard 2006). Warrington is described as 'not all bad' (Pevsner 1967:415) as the river, dignified civic buildings and the low building height help to improve the character of Warrington in comparison to St Helens for Pevsner.

These towns exhibit regular spatial layouts structured by one or two central streets, Warrington has a definite grid structure particularly on the western half of the centre, while St Helens and Wigan have more tree like structures following a central spine route. Railway lines and canals (both in use and derelict) are particularly prevalent in these towns which relied heavily on the distribution of coal, glass and chemicals. The path of these infrastructures constrains the spread of the central areas on two to three sides of the towns. Railway infrastructures are much more disruptive throughout the southern towns of St Helens, Wigan, and Warrington where the flatter land means the lines pass at street level. Warrington is the town most dominated by infrastructure with railways passing to the north, south and west due to its strategic placement between Liverpool and Manchester, the national north-south route and proximity to Chester. Warrington and Wigan are served by two railway stations in their central areas while St Helens has one station.

Both Warrington and Wigan occupy subtle dome shaped sites with the central crossing point of the towns located at the highest points approximately 10m higher than their rivers, away from the threat of flooding. Wigan's river Douglas passes to the east of the town beneath railway lines and roads. At Warrington the river Mersey is much more obvious from above as its wide course passes to the south of the centre along an exaggerated sinuous path. Conversely, St Helens occupies a depression in the landform with the central area at the lowest point with suburbs built the on higher ground. This is a result of the town's lesser flood threat, particularly historically, due to the lack of large natural watercourses.



Image 3.25 Warrington Town Hall With Parkland Setting



Image 3.26 Stockport Viaduct

Public space in the towns is aligned to their central high street routes, in both Warrington and Wigan a central public space connects at the central point of the two major routes displaying their historic role as market towns. St Helens and Wigan have public spaces surrounding their central parish churches, in Wigan this is hidden behind the densely built Wallgate, while St Helens parish church dominates the central shopping area. St Helens town hall is fronted by a public square, Wigan has a new civic square to the side of its town hall and Warrington's town hall is uniquely (for the industrial towns) set within a parkland emphasising its former role as a country house.

Stockport shares similarities across the two broad groups described above. The town shares the varied topographies evident in Bolton, Bury, Oldham and Rochdale but diverges from the Millstone Grit material tradition. Instead the town draws material similarities with St Helens, Wigan and Warrington based on a mixture of Cheshire style timber buildings and the red-brick associated with Manchester. As such Stockport exemplifies the two dominant characteristics of the region's towns.

Stockport has an irregular layout that is largely defined by three north-south routes. The river Mersey flows east-west following a fairly sinuous path, although the river has been culverted through the central areas of the town. Green open spaces follow the route of the river, much like that seen in Rochdale and Bolton. To the immediate north the M60 follows the valley east-west creating an abrupt limit to the town centre, this is matched by the railway line and viaduct to the immediate west. Industrial estates follow much the same line as the river congregating to the north of the town. The topography rises towards the south with the parish church of St Mary's and the market place are built on a prominent site on a high point in the valley, while the town hall occupies the highest land of the town centre. Therefore Stockport follows both traditions seen in the architectural use of topography in the towns for parish churches or town halls.

Through this comparison of spatial layout, character and geography of the towns it is evident that a number of spatial patterns have arisen from the particularities of each site yet some fundamental principles can be seen throughout. Each of the towns utilise their highest point for either a parish church, market place or town hall creating dominant visual landmarks. The towns all hold strong relationships to the natural and manmade watercourses that have influenced their spatial development. Each of the towns are influenced by the geology and topography of their respective areas mirrored in their materialities and spatial layouts. All of the towns are dominated by transport infrastructures, in the northern area this is largely through arterial

routes that encircle their town centres, while in the southern towns this is largely through derelict and in-use railway lines.

In conclusion, eight towns in the region can be described as reasonably similar in key ways. In general the towns are grouped together by their de-industrial status, third tier ranking in the national urban order, and location in the Mersey - Irwell Belt. This broad commonality validates the use of a case study to understand the industrial town as a condition. The more nuanced picture of the towns that has been developed through the comparative studies will allow a greater exploration of the specifics of each town.

The similarities between the towns was largely evident in the comparison of quantitative data. These comparisons showed similarities in the population, spatial size, density and urban status which united the towns across industrial types from traditional mill towns of Rochdale, Oldham, Bury, Bolton and Stockport to the extractive towns of Wigan and St Helens and the chemical town of Warrington. Similarly the region was described as a complex interrelation of natural landscape and artificial settlements that have resulted in a hybrid difficult to categorise into either distinction. This was evident through both the strong interrelation of spatial layout and underlying landform and the relationship between geology and architectural materiality in each of the eight towns. The diversity found between the region's towns builds on Caunce's description of the region as an 'urban kaleidoscope' (2000) with the specific ways in which the towns mirror and contrast with each other. The towns were grouped into two broad character types of the higher northern area towns and the flatter south western towns. These groupings highlighted the shared topographic and material relationships of the towns.

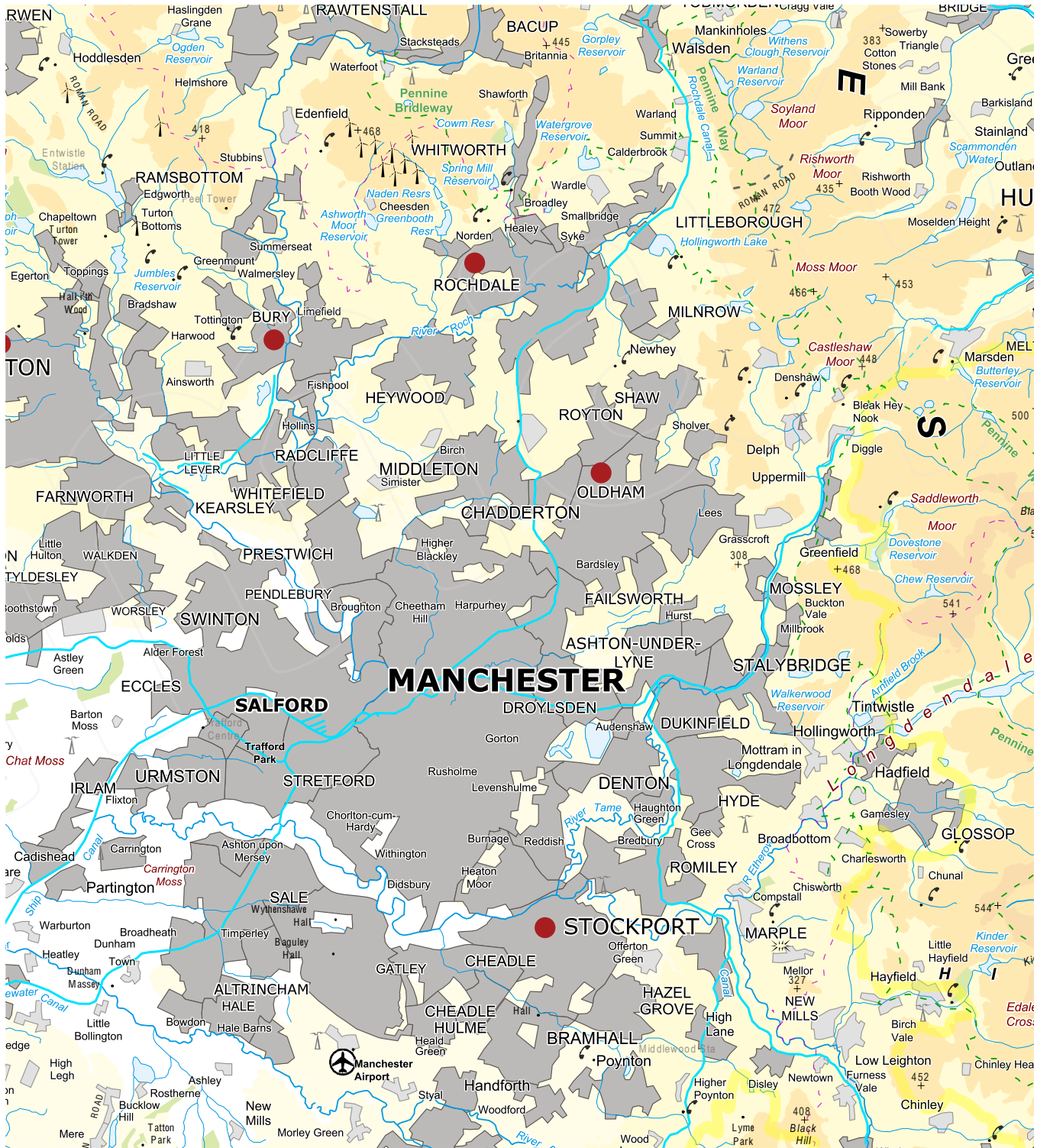
Quantitative data highlighted the particular differences between the towns and cities of the region, helping to consolidate the grouping of the towns. Key differences were discerned particularly in population sizes, densities, commuter patterns and the indicators of urban status. Although it is beyond the focus of this study, the comparison also highlighted Salford as an anomalous city which behaves more akin to the towns of the region in size, scope and outlook. These findings help to specify the ways in which city models can be inappropriate for the regeneration of the industrial towns which differ greatly in their ability to generate and anchor investment. The theme of industrial towns replicating city models will be picked up later in the thesis in the critique of current regeneration trends in the next chapter, and the particular case of the 2005 BDP Future Stockport master plan in Chapter Six.

Stockport was identified as a town that showed distinctive similarities to both character types in the region's towns, through its varied contours of the northern area and the materiality of the southern area towns. The case of Stockport was also highlighted as an interesting example in the context of the towns through its particular struggle to portray a character distinct from Manchester, its ambition for city status and its strength of relationship with the city evident in the commuter patterns. Throughout the comparative studies Stockport was shown to be a strong exemplary case, achieving middling to high results on each of the quantitative measures. As such Stockport will provide the basis for an in-depth case study throughout the later part of the thesis (chapters six to nine), acting as a model for the discussion of the towns.

Particular shared aspects of the towns' layout indicated the use of similar urban planning approaches in each of the towns, for example seen in the arterial routes of the towns. The specific planning approaches (and unplanned constructions) of the towns will be compared in the next chapter to ascertain distinct urban trends throughout the towns' histories. A broad picture of the towns' urban transition into and out of industrialism will be analysed to understand further the variations in the current experience of the towns, for instance how Bolton has developed a stronger civic tradition than Oldham. Through the identification of specific urban trends the study will begin to explore the images that have influenced the development of the towns throughout their transitions. This will also allow a critique of the current regeneration practices occurring in the towns. While this chapter has focused on the present condition of the towns, the next chapter moves on to categorise the pattern of urban transition in the towns.



Image 3.27 Large Regional map



04 Trends in the urban development of the industrial towns 1840-2015

Previous studies of the towns of the region have focused on the vast socio-economic shifts of the industrial period, in contrast, little work has analysed the spatial shifts and impacts of the period on the industrial towns. John K Walton argued that the changes of the North West throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should be understood primarily as an urban revolution rather than industrial (2000:131). Trinder continued this argument stating 'the development of manufactures was not synonymous with urban growth... None of the industries which most conspicuously expanded in the century before 1840 - coal mining, textiles, the mining and processing of non-ferrous metals, ironmaking, hardware, glassmaking, ceramics - was essentially urban' (2001:805). Through this 'urban revolution' lens little academic study has been undertaken to understand the dynamics of the region's change as an urban phenomena from both a spatial and ideological perspective. Urban change and transition has been a consistent aspect of the eight industrial towns throughout their histories. The spatial dimensions of this have been largely ignored due to a historical narrative based on the dynamics population growth. This chapter will chart the changing *urban* development of the towns.

Urban development in this chapter will be explored in three distinct ways covering 1. urban planning, 2. urban form and 3. civic tradition (or cultural investment in the built environment). The survey of planned changes will create a broad picture of planning trends and ideologies shared by the towns, filling a gap in the current canon of twentieth century British planning research on the normative planning strategies of local authorities. The analysis of these plans will allow an initial exploration into how industrialism has been addressed by urban planning and the images that have been employed to reimagine the urban future of the towns. Stephen Ward argued, in his study on planning and urban change, that 'planning policies supplement and attempt to order existing processes of urban change, but do not normally replace them' (2004:5). As such the towns have experienced great urban shifts that have occurred outside official town plans. In contrast to the planned urban projects, the chapter will also survey changes to urban form utilising historic map analysis- providing an

overview of the material changes to the towns. Conzen, in his research on the uses of historic maps for urban studies, stated ‘...they [historic maps] indicate phases of urban growth sometimes little known or quite unsuspected from the available records.’ (Conzen in Dyos 1966:117). Supplementing this information will be a discussion regarding the development of a civic tradition in the towns. This references the evidence of an interest in the quality of the built environment in the towns, through civic societies, publicly subscribed statuary and civic philanthropy to identify the towns that developed strong civic traditions. This begins to build on the results of the previous chapter in an attempt to identify the causes for the qualitative differences between the towns.

Seven phases of urban planning and change in the towns will be discussed. The phases of urban change have been categorised from the major shifts and planning approaches that were shared between the towns. This continues along the comparative theme of the previous chapter but shifts the focus from the current to the processes of transition in the towns from the height of industrialism until now. Key anomalies are discussed throughout to highlight the particular decisions, approaches or constructions that have led to the different experiences of the towns. The discussion begins with a survey of the ‘urban inheritance’ (Trinder 2005:104) of the towns, or their pre-industrial urban forms, which provides a basis for understanding further spatial developments throughout the towns’ histories. This comparative review of shared urban changes will move on to critique key current regeneration projects in the towns that highlight contemporary processes of transition in the towns.

The aim of the chapter is to; Firstly compare urban transition in the eight towns to interrogate the shared processes of change providing further information on the nuances of the towns; Secondly to analyse their urban strategies highlighting the changing images that have influenced the restructure of the towns; And thirdly to critique current regeneration projects bringing the results of the research up to the present day. This will provide an overall understanding of the urban development of the towns and their processes of transition through to the present day.

Urban Inheritance

Six of the eight towns existed as settlements of various sizes before the growth of mass production in the eighteenth century. Before this period various domestic scales of industry existed in the towns (Trinder 2005), this was evident in the settlement of Flemish weavers in the region between the fourteenth and seventeenth century, a coal industry which was evident from the sixteenth century (Swain 1986) and wire and glass making from the seventeenth century (Langton 1979). By the seventeenth century 21% of the Cheshire and South Lancashire population were town dwellers (Stobart 1993:227).

Detailed plans of the towns before 1830 are rare and therefore spatial information of their pre-industrial form is taken largely from the regional maps of the sixteenth to eighteenth century, along with the boundary reports of the 1832 parliamentary reforms. The regional routes of the early maps have been correlated against the boundary reports and historical information to give a more detailed picture of the pre-industrial form of the towns (disregarding the nineteenth century routes). While the Industrial and urban revolution had made significant changes to the towns by 1832, the commissioned reports named nineteenth century constructed roads and turnpikes allowing the identification of the older roads that formed the basic patterns the of pre-industrial town. Walton states 'the 'long' eighteenth century was the crucial formative and transitional period in the making of the new urban networks which had become so strongly articulated by the 1840's' (2000:125). In the towns of the Mersey-Irwell Belt the spatial arrangement of these networks can be traced back to the medieval period, the pre-industrial layouts of the towns influenced their subsequent urban development.

The most common settlement type of the towns was that of the market town. Walton states Lancashire in the sixteenth century 'came to be as well endowed with market towns as Sussex, Wiltshire or Leicestershire, with a density matching the national average of seventy square miles per market town' (2000:121). Following the national typology, the market towns developed at the the crossing points of regional routes (Morris 1994). Six of the towns developed as markets before the industrial revolution, whereas Oldham and St Helens lacked distinct settlements before the late eighteenth century (Trinder 2001). Bolton, Rochdale, Stockport, Wigan and Warrington are widely accepted as having medieval origins, though each have archeological evidence of Roman activity (Lowe 1972, Arrowsmith 1997, Kenyon 1991). Each of these towns were granted market charters in the thirteenth century with this period largely affecting their proto-development (whereas Bury only received a market charter by the sixteenth century).

Trends in the Urban Development of the Industrial Towns 1840-2015

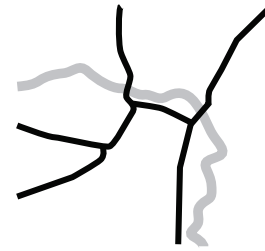


Figure 4.1 Preindustrial structure of Bolton

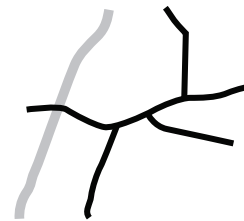


Figure 4.2 Preindustrial structure of Bury

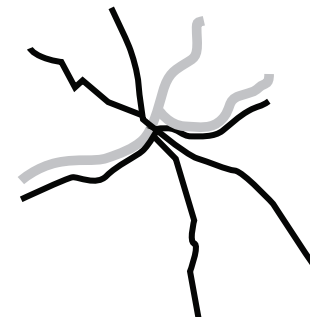


Figure 4.3 Preindustrial structure of Stockport



Despite the similar historical origin of the towns, key differences can be seen in their preindustrial urban forms. Stockport, Wigan and Warrington's early form developed along important routes into and out of the towns with strips of development and burgage plots. Warrington's early spatial layout clustered around a distinct cruciform layout, at the convergence of a north-south route across the river Mersey and an east-west route along the river. The majority of buildings followed the north south route marking its importance as one of only three bridging points along the Mersey, creating an important national route. The other towns of Stockport and Wigan developed less neat layouts with a more sinuous street layout. Stockport's form gathered mainly along one north-south route across the Mersey (Hillgate) leading to the traditional triangular market place layout, this can also be seen along Wigan's Wallgate. Rochdale developed at a fording point of the River Roch with the town developing equally to the north and south of the river banks. A forked route on the north bank created a more complex pattern of development than the cruciform typology. Bolton displayed a denser form congregating to the south east of crossroads between Manchester, Wigan, Bury, Chorley. Wigan followed a singular route alongside the River Douglas a strip town with burgage plots dating from the thirteenth century. Bury congregated primarily along an west-east route on the banks of the River Irwell.

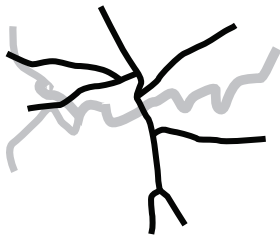


Figure 4.4 Preindustrial structure of Rochdale

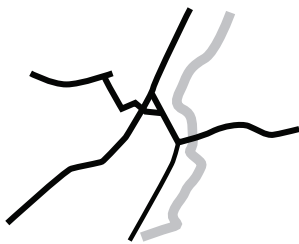


Figure 4.5 Preindustrial structure of Wigan

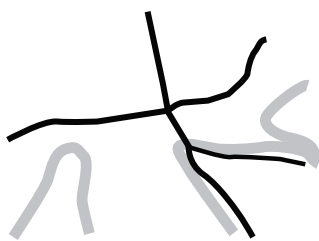


Figure 4.6 Preindustrial structure of Warrington

Oldham and St Helens are the only towns not to have held a market charter and therefore uninfluenced by medieval spatial development. Oldham's form is largely influenced by a forked route from Huddersfield to Middleton and a north-south route from Rochdale. St Helens pre-industrial existence was a chapel of ease along a Liverpool - Manchester route, with its initial growth a result of coal fields exploited through the cutting of the Sankey canal.

The diagrams (see diagram 4.1-4.6) show the particular arrangement of major routes in relation to the rivers of the towns. This gives a good picture of the original line of the rivers before any significant alterations. This highlights the relationship of the rivers to the original central districts of the towns, in contrast to the previous chapter that illustrated the largely broken and culverted river courses that are difficult to read in the towns' current forms.

This review of the proto-layout of the towns provides a basis to explore the urban changes brought by the industrial revolution in the towns. It is clear that most of the towns held their origins in the medieval period as market places influencing their development through burgage layouts and connecting routes. Three towns are markedly different from the norm, through the density of development of Bolton and the lack of pre-industrial form in Oldham and St Helens.

Periods of Urban Change

This chapter focuses on the spatial and temporal change of the region's towns. Stephen Ward's comprehensive study on the development of planning policy in England throughout the twentieth century describes seven distinct periods of planning that integrated new approaches into the national planning system. While the seven planning approaches are definitely evident in the plans of the eight towns of this study, an alternative categorisation of particular approach periods has been utilised in this study. Through a focus on the actual urban changes which were in some cases were the result of planning processes, but more often than not the result of economic shifts, private investment and the pressures of globalisation. This shifts attention to the impact of the plans on the towns, highlighting periods marked by intention, laissez-faire, inefficacy and implementation. The study also references less tangible shifts in the particular approach of each town through the development of philanthropic projects, public subscription schemes and civic societies that have cultivated particular civic approaches in the towns.

Through map analysis, (beginning in 1840 with the consistent mapping of the region's towns), archival material and a survey of town plans there are discernible shared periods of urban change throughout the history of the towns. Six phases of urban change have been identified in the eight towns of the region from an initial burst of infill growth between 1840-1900 affecting primarily the urban centres, a period of suburban growth 1900-1930, a period of stasis between 1930-1960, erasure and restructure dominating the period 1960-1980 and finally a period of peripheral redevelopment between 1980-2000.

1840-1900 Infill Growth

The analysis of maps between 1840-1900 illustrate the period of dramatic growth which is often quoted through huge population increases in the towns. The period is characterised by central growth clustering between the medieval routes of the towns forming dense central areas for each of the towns. The central areas increase in density and a period of civic building is undertaken by the majority of the towns between the years of 1840-1900. This is coupled with a pattern of ribbon development extending along the arterial routes into the surrounding countryside as the bounds of the town were expanded with new transportation types. The period is characterised by a general increase in the scale of individual buildings with a rebuilding of the medieval centres as preindustrial small scale architectures and narrow roadways are superseded by street widening schemes.

The development of transport infrastructures is a major spatial trend during this period as railways are constructed through each town, following the national railway mania of the 1840's (Klingender 1949), along with the construction of new roads and existing canals.

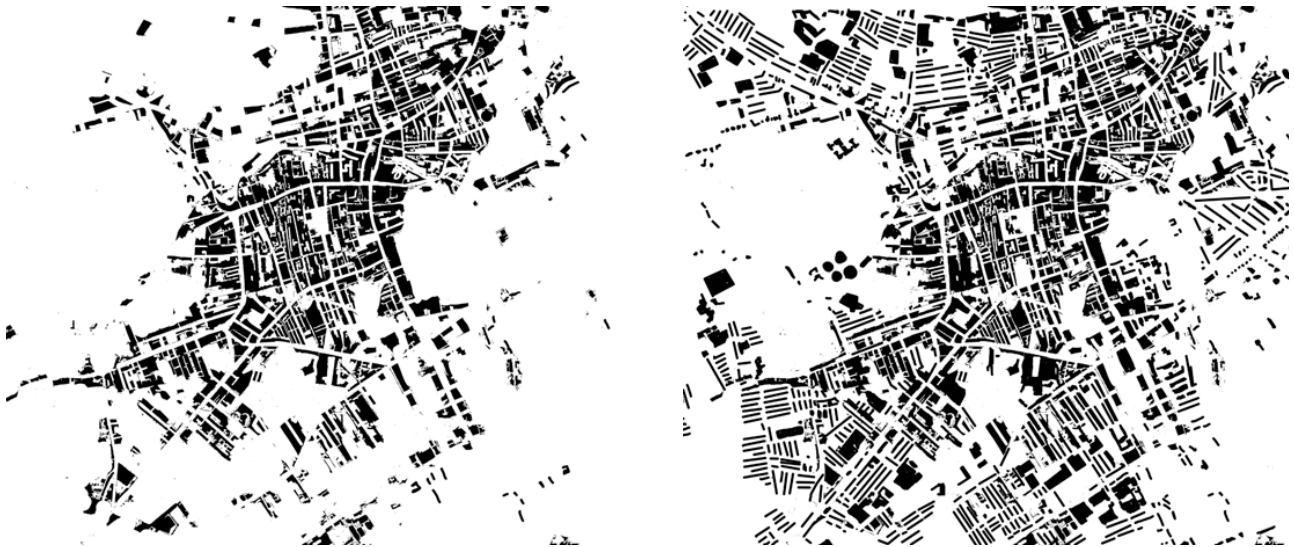
Urban planning during this period was enabled through Improvement Acts which were instigated by private developers (mainly industrialists) and the county borough, therefore most urban improvements were designed to increase production and distribution or promote the town through civic architecture. Smaller developments of industrial building and residential developments happened outside legislative practice creating a chaotic functional layout in the towns. Finally the vast construction of terraced streets to house the average growth of population by 100% throughout this period is seen across all towns (Counce 2003).



Figure 4.7 and 4.8 figure ground diagrams showing the infill development of Oldham increasing the central areas of the town and its increasing scale of industrial architecture between 1840 (f 4.7) and 1890 (f 4.8)

The increasing scale of architecture is most extreme in the development of Oldham throughout this period as the town develops a peripheral belt of monumental industrial mills. While Warrington exemplifies the rebuilding and renewal of obsolete urban form through street widening schemes. Of the medieval towns only Stockport did not undertake a programme of street widening during this period despite numerous attempts to pass an improvement act for the widening of Hillgate. Wigan's industrial development, based on the distribution of coal from the peripheral coal fields, led to a more pronounced level of spatial expansion during this period developing as a result of the extensive transport infrastructure of the town. The central area of Wigan experienced less of the dense infill growth as the central area became dispersed by new transport lines which were the focus of the town's improvement acts.

Bolton is a general exception to the rule during this period due to its dense inherited form. The town's development during this period occurred primarily as suburban growth typical of the later 1900-1930 period. The density of Bolton through this period and its growth outwards from the central core is reflected in the comparatively large population of the town at 61,000 people in 1851 growing to 168,000 in 1901 (Counce 2003:352). The town throughout this period sustained the largest population of the industrial towns. The terraced streets constructed at the edges of the town were coupled with model villages to the north of Bolton in Bank Top (founded by Ashworth Brothers



c.1830-1849) and Barrow Bridge (founded by R. Gardner c.1844), early and small examples of the burgeoning national trend of industrial model villages throughout the nineteenth century. The two model villages were philanthropic efforts to house workers in good sanitary conditions and to improve quality of life through education (Hartwell et al. 2004:168). The villages adopted a local vernacular style of millstone grit and stone two storey terraces on densely packed streets. Several of the streets at Barrow Bridge were connected by open allotments and each house has a private back garden, while Bank Top houses have small front and rear gardens.

Figure 4.9 and 4.10 Figure ground diagrams showing the suburban development of Bolton between 1849 (f 4.9) and 1894 (f 4.10)

The more general experience of residential developments throughout this period were primarily in the form of terraced streets along grid like roads throughout each of the towns. Yet key differences can be found in the terraced vernacular of each town responding to local site conditions and the availability of building materials affecting the layout and aesthetic. As such the mill stone grit terraces of Bolton differed greatly from the red brick terraced courts of Stockport constrained by the variations of the land form. Each town developed a distinctive terraced vernacular which varies from the stereotypical redbrick back-to-backs.

A further, well documented approach during this period was the development of public parks. Each of the eight towns developed their first public parks during this period normally in the form of land gifted by a local philanthropist and further developed by the local authority. Public subscription to decorate the parks with statues was common throughout this period. Bolton had the strongest tradition of public statuary, while St Helens, Wigan and Oldham lagged behind (Wyke 2004, Morris 2011).

During this seventy year period it is possible to discern a shared pattern of spatial development and urban planning in the towns. Yet a couple of exceptions exist stemming from the pre-industrial development of the towns as Bolton's inherited compact form and density influenced different processes of transition in this period. We can also see that the spatial development of the towns depended on their industrial type creating different spatial patterns in the mill and coal towns.

1900-1930 Suburban Growth

The next shared period of urban change is characterised by suburban growth occurring between 1890-1920. Less focus is placed on the development and renewal of central areas of the towns and a growth of suburban residential areas can be seen. The residential developments take the form of large uniform housing estates beginning with terraced developments before introducing less dense cul-de-sac typologies. Conversely industrial development continued to increase the architectural scale which began to dominate the edges of the towns.

Suburban growth during this period was directly linked to the improvement and diversification of local transportation services with the construction of tramways and bus routes. This created a spatial loosening that enabled people to live further from work while simultaneously splintering the spatial form of central areas. The developmental focus on housing was also a consequence of the national concern about slum dwellings typified by the terraced courts and back-to-backs of central urban areas.

The shift towards national planning with the 1909 Housing, Town Planning Act standardised the layout of new developments creating similar spatial forms across the industrial towns and the wider country. The layout and aesthetic was influenced by earlier model industrial towns and garden cities which favoured low density cottage-type estates and avoided straight lines in the layout of roads where possible. The planned estates and their origination on a drawing board

lacked a response to the local geomorphological conditions that was even evident the stereotypical terraced streets of the earlier period. The cottage style of development created vast areas of uniform layouts and building typologies that were indistinguishable between the towns but represented a major improvement in the living conditions of the working classes.

Ravenhead Garden Suburb typifies the development style of the period, St Helens was a suburban residential development initiated the same year as the housing act by the Pilkington Brothers, the largest employer of the town and overseen by Patrick Abercrombie (Barker and Harris 1955:480). The company bought 700 acres of land adjacent to their Ravenhead industrial site to the west of the town and surrounding a Victorian public park. The project was intended as a joint cooperative scheme between the Pilkington's and their employees who were encouraged to form building societies to finance building materials and construction. Two small prototype estates with a combined total of 122 houses were completed between 1919-1923 of a proposed 4,000 houses (Penny 1976). Ten streets were constructed in cul-de-sac and looped layouts connecting to a main road and the houses were semi-detached with a mixed building stock of 2-5 bedrooms in various sizes. Typically for the period, the project was initially affected by the onset of World War I and later by a slump in the local economy preventing any further building. In the interwar period the land adjacent to the estates was given over to the construction of council houses which continued the style of layout. The new public housing was also characterised by semi-detached houses with front and back gardens but with much less spacious proportions of both the buildings and the open space and using building materials of a lesser quality. This mixed effort of residential development and the watering down of garden city styles was typical of the suburban development of the towns throughout this period. The project at St Helens highlights the varied financing types that enabled the profusion of estate building between 1900-1930 from philanthropic projects, speculative builders, cooperative efforts and finally public spending through local authorities which created a diversity in the quality of the estates within the towns themselves.

The new style of housing being constructed at the towns was a source of pride for the local authorities with Bolton even constructing a model house in front of the town hall at Victoria Square for their 1928 Civic Week (Bolton County Borough 1929). Wigan holds the only exception to this style of development, which continued to construct suburban terraced streets throughout this period.

The major focus away from the central areas of the towns was a

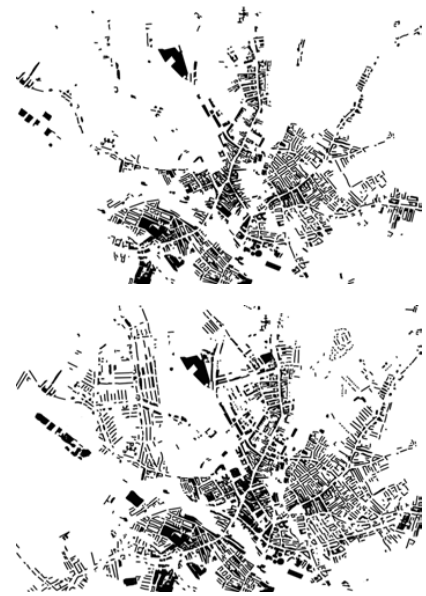


Figure 4.11 ad 4.12 Figure ground diagrams showing the terraced suburban development of Wigan between 1894 1930



Figure 4.13 Thomas Mawson's City Beautiful inspired proposals for Bolton's Victoria Square, 1910

consequence of the Housing, Town Planning Act's mandate which applied only to new developments. Outside of the legislative focus on suburban development some towns created proposals to revitalise their central urban areas which had become chaotic and unsanitary. Two plans were made by town planning professionals commissioned by private bodies (in the case of Wigan and Bolton) while one was drafted by the local authority at Stockport.

Bolton's early proactive approach to urban design was commandeered by industrial philanthropist Lord Leverhulme. Leverhulme's architectural patronage extended from projects on his estate at Rivington, workers housing and lifestyle at Port Sunlight, to the promotion of architectural education through his work at Liverpool School of Architecture, yet lesser known is his contribution to the urban design of his home town of Bolton. In 1910 Leverhulme commissioned landscape architect Thomas Mawson (whom he'd worked with at Port Sunlight and Rivington) to redesign the central area of Bolton. 'Bolton as it is and Might Be' (1916) sought to comprehensively improve the image and environment of Bolton through a City Beautiful style plan inspired by American urbanist Charles Robinson.

Mawson's designs rationalised the layout of Bolton through well

proportioned boulevards connecting the main landmarks of the town - the Town Hall with St Peters Church to the east and Queen's Park to the west of the town (see Mawson 1910, 1916). Mawson's proposals covered central area layout and planned civic buildings, residential proposals, park systems and traffic alleviation. The plan included a great level of detailed analysis of the existing situation in Bolton and was accompanied by a book and 6 part lecture series held in the town (Bolton Journal and Guardian, 3rd ,5th , 8th March 1911). Mawon's plan was well received within the planning community (Abercrombie 1918:262) but received considerable criticism from the local authority who deemed the plan a work of art not town planning (Bolton and District Regional Planning Committee 1945).



During this period a piecemeal adaptation of the rivers is also evident throughout the majority of towns. Wigan covered the River Douglas

Figure 4.14 Rochdale Town Hall with white dashed line showing the line of the River Roch beneath the Esplanade C.1930

with its Central Station (now demolished), Rochdale covered the Roch in three stages beginning with the South Parade before extending the Esplanade fronting the town hall, Warrington made adaptations to the Mersey through a river diversion beginning 1890 with a new residential estate covering a section of the original course built between 1900-1910, Bolton made smaller encroachments through the construction of Bleachworks and small buildings. Throughout this period Stockport made several plans to cover the Mersey which was only finally realised in 1939 (Gardner 1938). The rivers were culverted during this period due to their deteriorating condition through continued polluting practices coupled with the closure of riverside mills leaving derelict areas.

A less tangible practice arising in the towns throughout this period was a public interest in the environment of the industrial towns coming together to form civic societies such as Beautiful Oldham Society (founded 1902), and the Beautiful Warrington Society (founded c.1905), Bolton Civic Society (c.1911). This was a reaction to three things 1) the deterioration of the environment of the towns 2) the barrage of criticism about the squalor towns and 3) the loss of historical (pre-industrial) architecture throughout the Victorian Improvement schemes and industrial rebuilding. The civic societies varied in their aims and ideologies usually relating to the views of their founder from access to nature to architectural conservation. Beautiful Oldham was founded by Mary Higgs local activist and a personal friend of Ebenezer Howard, founder of the Garden City movement, as such the society was chiefly concerned with the providing natural spaces within the town in order to improve the morality of the workers, she states 'A whole generation is growing up in our unlovely streets with ideas taken from artificial, not natural beauty.' (Higgs 11th December 1901:11). Whereas Beautiful Warrington Society founded by local politician Arthur Bennett (later Mayor of Warrington) was more concerned with the destruction of the local style of architecture 'the warm red local bricks... after quite two hundred years, retain their freshness and their beauty, are no longer manufactured here, and, now, if any structural repairs or alterations should be needed in our dignified old houses, every local builder instantly crams in grey bricks amongst the red, and utterly destroys the harmony and beauty of the building...they insult the taste and hurt the eyes of every man or woman with a soul above a cow.' (Bennet 1905:26). The societies also produced tangible changes to the towns. Higgs invited Howard to present a lecture on the ideals of the Garden City movement to the society which culminated in a cooperative housing project constructed at Hollins Green in 1909 (Hartwell et al. 2004:549). The societies were a more formal and structured evolution of the public subscription schemes of the earlier period and affected some change in the environment of their towns.



Figure 4.15 Aerial View of Bolton, 1927, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows the layout of Bolton in 1927 around the time of the onset of industrial decline. The grid pattern of the centre is evident while the effects of industry are made visible through the polluted facades of the majority of buildings in stark contrast to those recently constructed / cleaned.



Figure 4.16 Aerial View of Bury, 1933, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows Bury, largely unrecognisable in relation to its current layout. The scene is dominated by terraced housing and mill buildings, very little of which still survives.



Figure 4.16 Aerial View of Oldham, 1926, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows Oldham in 1926 with a dense urban pattern along the central street fronts and monumental scale (highlighted by Pevsner) of the industrial mills.



Figure 4.17 Aerial View of Rochdale, 1926, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows the compact character of Rochdale in 1926 with clusters of fine grain buildings punctuated by relatively small industrial buildings.



Figure 4.18 Aerial View of St Helens, 1947, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows the sprawling character of St Helens in 1947 with miles of terraced housing to the north and west and industrial buildings, wastegrounds and coal pits to the south and east.



Figure 4.19 Aerial View of Stockport, 1927, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows the intricate pattern of urban form in Stockport in 1927 with very little zoning - where residential, industrial and retail buildings intermingle.



Figure 4.20 Aerial View of Warrington, 1920, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows the dominating elements of the river, roads and railways in the dense grain of Warrington. As a result of the dominating transport systems, warehouses and dock-style architectures are more apparant.



Figure 4.21 Aerial View of Wigan, 1920, courtesy of Britain from Above. The image shows the sprawling character of Wigan with vast rows of terraced housing but also the presence of vast coal pits and wastelands. Transport infrastructures dominate the town.

1930-1960 Stasis

The third distinct period each of the towns experiences is a period of relative stasis lasting thirty years from 1930 until 1960, this can be seen as a lagged result of the limitations created by the two World Wars. Throughout this period all urban changes were minor in scale in comparison to the earlier examples. Further extensions of the towns through low density residential growth were made while small targeted areas of slum clearance are undertaken in central areas. Small adaptive changes occur during this period particularly within central industrial areas as the terminal decline begins to affect most of the towns studied.

Planning during this period goes through a major shift towards the comprehensive spatial planning of existing areas which was made mandatory for all towns and cities throughout the country with the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. This induced a flurry of town plans drafted by existing employees of the local authorities, with most towns employing 1-2 full time staff supported by volunteers (Bolton Environmental Education Project 1990:5). The majority of plans for the towns were drawn up by civil engineers and borough surveyors which influenced the focus and style of the proposals in several ways. Firstly, the majority of effort in the proposals was aimed at traffic alleviation and control in the towns with all other considerations subservient to the traffic system. Secondly, each of the plans employed only prosaic ideas of post-war town planning lacking the innovation of the celebrated town planners and architects of the period. Thirdly, each of the plans followed the popular monumental civic style of architecture influenced by international modernism but lacked originality. The similarity of proposals are particularly prominent in Stockport 1945 Plan and the Oldham Town Centre Redevelopment Proposals 1948 especially in comparison to the better known Manchester 1945 Plan. Outside these in-house plans one commission was made for the renowned town planner Thomas Sharp to develop a second comprehensive plan for Stockport in 1950. The post-war plans of the towns were left largely unconstructed as a result of the immense cost of the proposals, a shortage of public funding and lack of building materials throughout the period.

1960-1980 Erasure and Restructure

'Had Orwell visited Wigan in 1976 rather than 1936, though much of the domestic squalor he described has been swept away, replaced by a squalor of a different order, the scenery of Wigan might have well appeared to him even uglier, and the possibilities of recovery more slight' (Hewison 1987:19)

The fourth period of urban change seen in the industrial towns was a shift towards the clearance of central areas of the towns. The clearances satisfied two main goals, to clear derelict and obsolete areas and to create space for new types of transport infrastructures. The clearances included terraced streets, industrial buildings, railways and retail areas signalling a huge restructure of their economies and urban forms. The new style of building that replaced the densely packed central areas was high rise towers and shopping malls creating space through the concentration of functions allowing larger areas of open space. The extent and impact of the clearances of this period are exemplified in Oldham (see diagrams 4.22).



Figure 4.22 Figure ground diagrams showing the vast area of clearance in Oldham between 1967 and 1983

This period saw a shift from public transport towards a rise in private car ownership as a result of two processes (among others), the closure of Railways following the Beeching Report and the construction of new arterial routes. The local authority planners during this period were largely influenced by the Buchanan Report (1963) but lacked imagination and expertise in their application of the proposals (Bolton Environmental Ed. 1990). This resulted in a profusion of new roads that did not always alleviate the traffic issues, some of which were deemed obsolete by the end of the period in 1980. Large bypass routes were constructed immediately adjacent to the central areas to ease traffic flow around and through all of the towns. The new routes necessitated large clearances often through derelict industrial sites and terraced slums, although debates occurred in each town as some areas were condemned in order to fit with new proposals rather than due to their obsolescence. The clearances and new routes greatly impacted the

urban grain, character and pedestrian accessibility of the central areas.

The Victorian shopping streets of the previous period presented numerous problems for the local authorities attempting to draw in new investments. These consisted of traffic circulation and access issues, small retail floorspace that were unable to accommodate large national chain stores, and an unfashionable image during a period of widespread modernisation. The period saw a rise in the importance of retail as a new economic strategy within the declining centres which resulted in a proliferation of shopping studies and retail forecasts both within the local authorities and external research bodies (such as University of Manchester 1964). The retail restructure of the centres replaced the industrial image of the towns with a new modernised shopping that was an important rebranding mechanism. New shopping centres were constructed in the towns that 1) could attract private investment 2) approved the developers plans namely Rochdale, Stockport, St Helens, Warrington and Bolton to various models. The reliance on private investment meant that the style and siting of the new shopping centres occurred outside the recommendations of the town plans.

Cleared Victorian shopping streets were replaced with large scale shopping malls influenced by American examples. Rochdale Exchange Shopping Centre, designed by BDP and opened 1978 took precedence from the practice's earlier restructure of central Blackburn in 1962 (Scott 1989). The centre covered an 11 acre hilly site to the north east of the town hall on the area of the former market place. The new building was designed to house offices and shops with a rooftop car park responding to the increased use of cars and lack of parking space in the former town centres. The exterior profile of the building exaggerated functions creating angular lines clad in brown tiles to break up the monotony of the building form and resist the damp climate (Scott 1989). The new materials, scales and forms of the shopping centres presented a new image for the towns positioning themselves away from the degradation and decline of the industrial image.

The retail restructure of Bolton utilised a very different model inspired by the English Townscape movement. Shankland and Cox supported by Townscape author Gordon Cullen developed a sensitive approach to the existing scale, materiality and structure of the town. Cullen's analysis of the central area of Bolton was unique in its detail and focus explicitly interrogating the existing image of Bolton through character and topographical studies. Five 'visual ingredients' created a framework for the proposals concerning 1) the organisation of the centre 2) routes to and from the centre 3) historical continuity 4)



Figure 4.23 Images from the Shankland Cox / Cullen plan for Bolton 1963



Figure 4.24 Images of Bolton's modernist townscape



the underlying topography 5) connections to the rest of the towns (Shankland and Cox 1963:27). The 1963 master plan proposed a modernist rebuilding of a large section of Victorian streets within the town's core (see images 4.23-4.24). Three major existing landmarks structured the proposals, the Town Hall, the Parish Church and the Flax Place chimney, these 'fixed design points' (Shankland and Cox 1963:32) governed the height of all new constructions to retain their visual dominance. The new buildings retained the former proportions of the streets through building line and height while introducing a newer style of architecture. The materiality and colour of the former streets was also utilised where possible which created a distinctive visual continuity between the old and new parts of Bolton (see image 4.24). Cullen took a progressive approach to the abandoned mills that surrounded the centre proposing the retention of key features as landmarks for the town. While the visual dominance of industrial architecture was conserved Cullen also proposed the use of former industrial machinery as 'museum pieces' (Shankland and Cox 1963:32) to be displayed in public spaces. The plan presented a very different style of restructure that was heavily influenced by the personal approach and expertise of Cullen resulting in a creative balance between the new and old.

The mass clearance and rebuilding of the towns sparked a revival

of public interest in civic societies with the formation of new conservation groups. These groups were chiefly concerned with preserving historical features of the towns and were often established by professional residents such as lecturers, industrial archaeologists and geographers. All of the towns experienced a sustained debate about the extent and impact of restructure that was prevalent in local newspapers throughout the period. Stockport throughout this time developed a particularly strong conservation movement which published books detailing elements of the town to be preserved such as 'Conservation and Change in Stockport: A Study of Stockport's Past, Present and Possible Future' (Stockport Civic Society 1973).

The clearance of the town centres was also accompanied by new era civic building coinciding with the Local Government Act 1972 (Hartwell 2004) shifting the towns from county to metropolitan boroughs widening their area of jurisdiction and the structure of the regional hierarchy. Modernism was the prevailing style of the new buildings creating new scales of architecture that transformed the skyline of the towns. During this period only Oldham and Wigan decided to build new town halls, the mean architecture of the originals having been the source of almost universal criticism (Pevsner 1969), while the other towns built ancillary buildings to house growing departments. Oldham's new town hall was built on the highest point of the town centre and stands fourteen storeys in Portland stone creating a new landmark for the town.

The period between 1960-1980 brought the most extensive changes to the towns through the demolition and construction of railway lines, civic centres, shopping centres, industrial areas which encompassed a wholesale restructure of the towns. The inclusion of private developers brought the financial capacity to undertake vast change but also a reduction in the control of the scale, scope, focus and quality of the restructure.

1980-2000 Centre / Periphery

This period is characterised by two opposing processes, the creation of new peripheral retail centres followed in quick succession by an attempt to regenerate central retail areas. The peripheral shopping centres capitalised on the spatial scale of derelict sites of former industrial works and the accessibility afforded by the arterial bypass routes enabling the sites to be easily accessed by car. This gave the peripheral sites an advantage over central areas which still struggled to accommodate cars. The new retail sites were characterised by shed-like light industrial constructions housed by national and international



Figure 4.25 Oldham's mill design inspired 'Spindles' Shopping Centre

retail chains. This increased the scale of architecture in the towns and introduced a new common aesthetic and materiality, reducing difference.

The accessibility of the new out-of-town shopping centres provoked a decline in the use of central areas by shoppers. In an effort to prevent the loss of economy in the town centres, a second effort to reimagine the town centres was undertaken. The towns that had seen extensive modernist rebuilding in the earlier period were refurbished while towns such as Wigan and Oldham constructed new shopping malls in post-modern styles. Wigan's new shopping centre was modelled on the historic arcades of the town using mock tudor styling while Oldham's Spindles Centre replicated the vast brick structures of the demolished spinning mills (see image 4.25).

Figure 4.26 Architectural detail from the Bolton Atlas Forge cleaned and being lifted into place as a sculpture after the closure of the forge.

A renewed interest in public sculpture is apparent in this period, with Bolton again being the most proactive town (Wyke 2004). This was a result of both a strong tradition for statuary in the town, but also the recommendations of Gordon Cullen. The town was the first to commemorate its industrial history with the immediate reclamation of artefacts in the closing factories (see image 4.26).



Current Regeneration Trends

A survey of recent regeneration projects undertaken between 2000-2014 indicates the central areas of the towns are experiencing a renewed focus in the wake of Manchester's 1996 post-bomb transformation and Liverpool's more sluggish regeneration since its year as the European Capital of Culture in 2008. Manchester's model of regeneration focused largely on the redesign of major public spaces in the city, exemplified in the projects Hanging Ditch (by Martha Schwartz, 1998 see Reed 2005:44-47) and Piccadilly Gardens (by Arup and Edaw 1998-2000 see Reed 2005:48-51). Prior to this Manchester and Liverpool had undertaken large scale industrial heritage projects based in Castlefield and the Albert Docks. During this period Manchester and Liverpool effectively shifted their industrial image to that of culture through the targeted repositioning of industrial images (Crinson 2007). This use of urban design to address the image of place is a trend that is becoming more apparent within the wider industrial towns of the region too. Within the last decade image has become exceedingly important within the towns as they attempt to recreate the transition seen in the core cities of the region. This is exaggerated through the increasing competition for economic investment in the towns. Four cases will be discussed that exemplify the relationship between image and place evident in the current processes of the towns' urban transition; Wigan Pier, Crowther Street Stockport, Oldham Old Town Hall and Rochdale's River Roch project.

Image is explicitly referenced in the contemporary reports and urban plans of each of the local authorities, a typical example can be seen in a soundbite from Councillor Baldwin, Cabinet Member for Culture and chair of the Regeneration regarding the current project to regenerate Wigan Pier again, stated 'Wigan is shedding the outdated, stereotyped image that has persisted for generations and it's thanks to exciting regeneration projects...' (Wigan Evening Post, 17th August 2005). The stereotypical image of decline exemplified in Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* is seen as problematic to the attraction of investment and is therefore being actively addressed in the regeneration projects of the towns.

Having been previously regenerated, Wigan Pier presents an interesting example of the complexity of the relationship between place and image in the towns and the difficulties they experience in reimagining themselves. As a quick review of the site's history, the name Wigan Pier became synonymous with the squalor of the industrial revolution accounted in George Orwell's 1937 'The Road to Wigan Pier'. The site fell into decline with the closure of the coal pits at Wigan and the Pier became a site of embarrassment for the



Figure 4.26 & 4.27 Wigan Pier c.1950

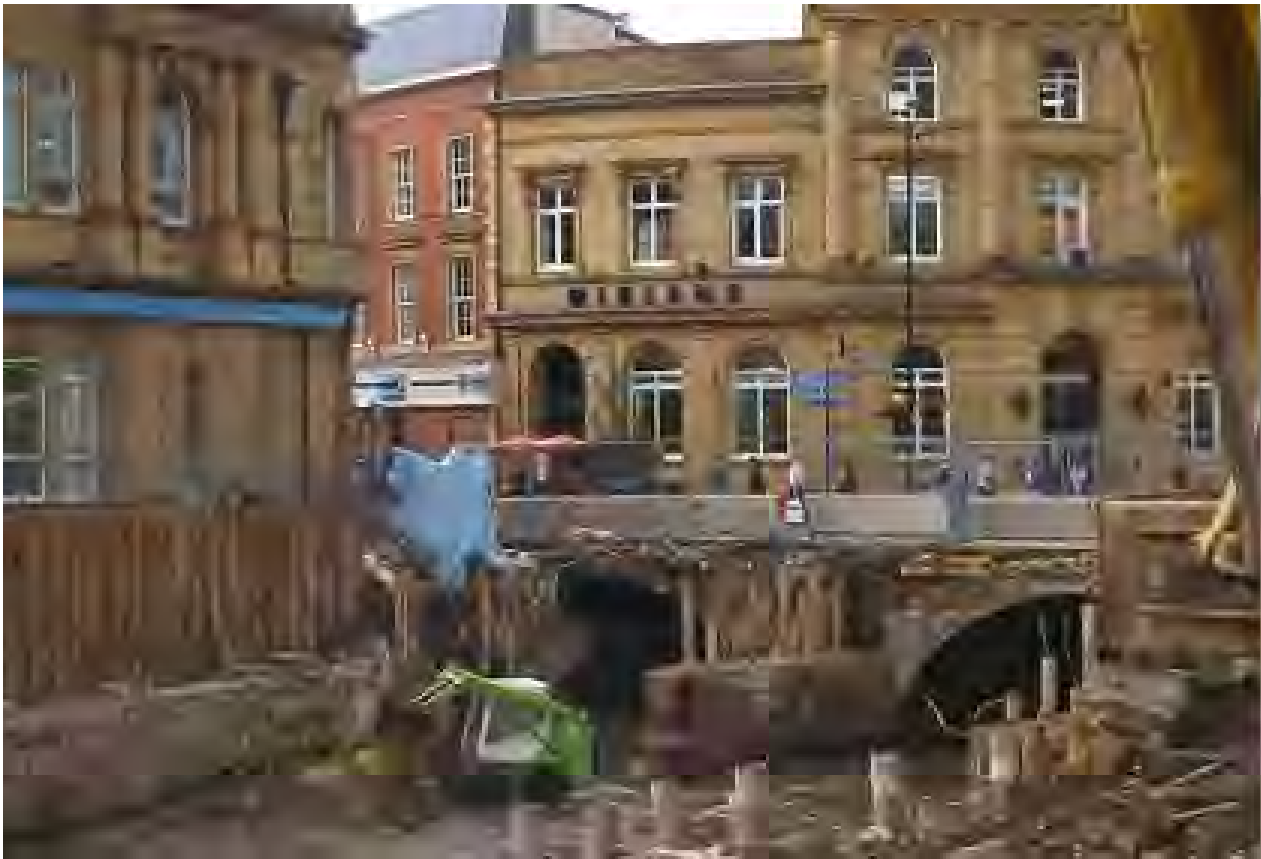


Figure 4.28, 4.29, 4.30 Wigan Pier 2014

local authority who made several attempts to have the buildings at Wigan Pier demolished (Hewison 1987). By the 1980's the local authority changed strategies and instead chose to use the notoriety of the Pier as a marketing tool for a new heritage museum. While the regeneration of the Pier began in the previous period of urban change in the towns, it is included in the current section due to its current second phase of re-imagining. The initial regeneration of the coal loading dock along the Leeds-Liverpool canal has been discussed at length by authors such as Hewison (1987) and Urry (1995) who both grapple with issues of authenticity in the shifting use of the Pier from industry to leisure and culture.

Thirty years on from the initial regeneration of Wigan Pier it is possible to critique the project's success in reimagining Wigan. The regeneration of the Pier mimicked processes being undertaken in the regional cities of Liverpool and Manchester with the transformation of the Albert Docks and Castlefield. Yet the replication of the strategy in the smaller context of Wigan was not as successful as the city examples for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the size and population of Wigan meant that there was a dearth of supporting tourist attractions to entice visitors to the Pier from wider areas. The niche attraction based specifically on the history of Wigan had a much smaller interest base than the more generalised histories presented by the cities (for example the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester displays a regional industrial narrative rather than a town specific narrative). Secondly the location of the Pier on the periphery of the town, (as a traditional industrial siting) impacted the success of the project making the museum difficult to access by public transport, on foot from the centre or through private transport due to the lack of space for car parking. The site failed to act as a catalyst for further regeneration of the neighbouring areas (see image 4.30) as had been the case in Liverpool and Manchester. This meant that a visit to Wigan Pier allowed a view of the wider derelict areas of the town, impacting the sites ability to shift perceptions of the town. As such the regeneration of the Pier lacked a clear strategy of how the site would fit into the regeneration of wider town spatially and imaginatively.

The Pier is currently under a new programme, the 'Wigan Pier Quarter' which aims to adapt the canal side and industrial buildings into a residential site for informal leisure. The old mill buildings of the Trencherfield Mill and associated complex has been converted into apartments influenced by the warehouse conversions seen in Manchester. The Pier and Trencherfield Mill is seen as a landmark for the town, a link to its past through recognisable images and visible on the main route into the town from the south. As such they symbolise the shift in approach to industry in the towns, which has become



increasingly important in the positioning of itself in relation to its past. The demolition of these sites has become less attractive as the towns hope to keep them as a symbol of how far they have come on the road to post-industrialism.

Figure 4.31 Discovery of Medieval bridge on the River Roch 1997

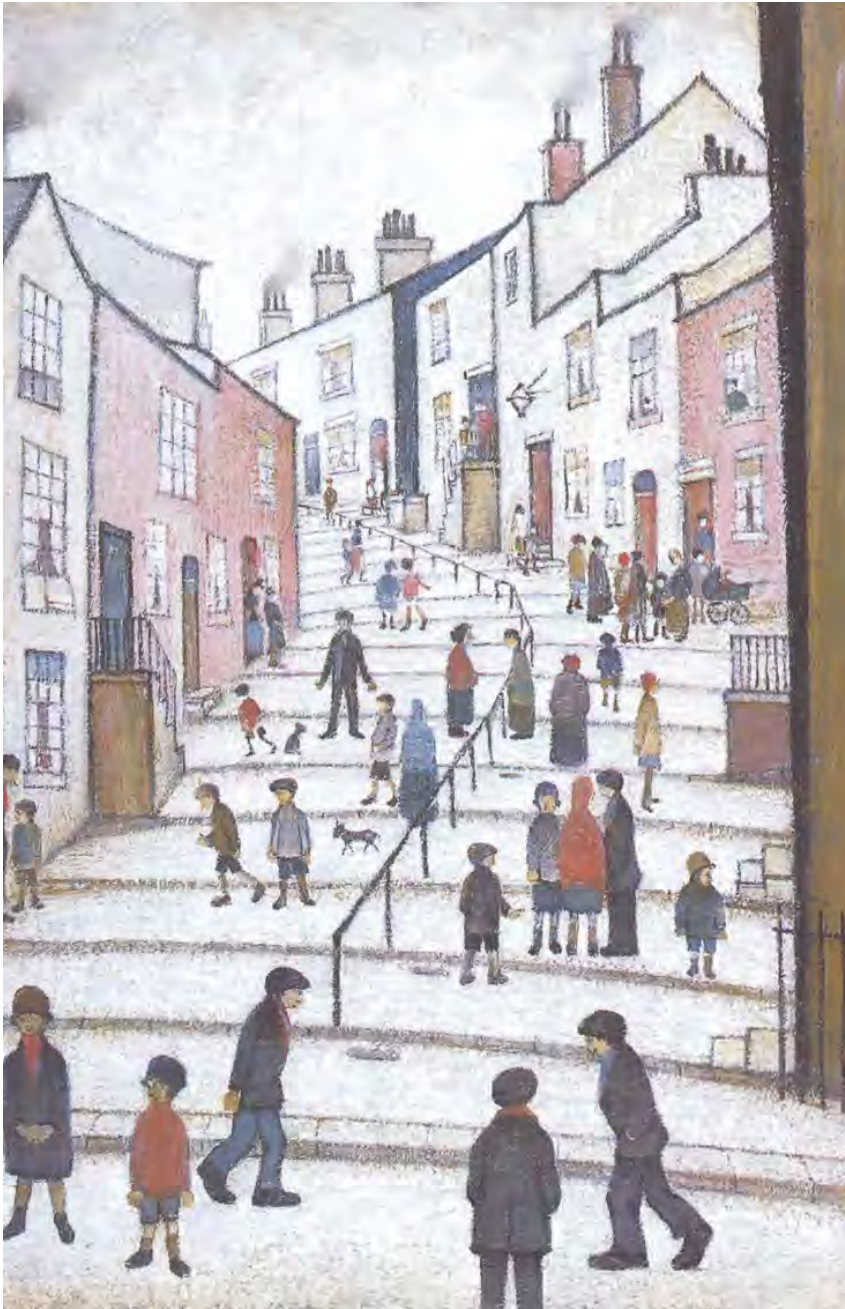
The River Roch project at Rochdale provides another water course regeneration influenced by the new cultural capital of waterside projects (Hall 2002). The project at Rochdale is of key interest in the region as it marks a new relationship between the urban areas and their central rivers. The Roch at Rochdale became heavily polluted by industrial usage and waste throughout the nineteenth century, in 1867 the river was described as ‘an imaginary stream in which there is nothing liquid but mud, situated in an invisible part of the town’ (Holyoake 1867:59) The decision to culvert the river came in the early twentieth century hiding the pollution and creating space for new transportation infrastructures. By 1926 the bridge over the river connected across seven smaller bridges measuring almost 500m creating an esplanade in front of the town hall. In 1989 the bridge was found to have serious faults in some sections due to the prolonged exposure to water as the concrete underneath the bridge began to fall away to expose the steel core. A project to refurbish and strengthen the bridge was undertaken in 1997. During this engineering project the river was open to view which uncovered the remains of a medieval bridge. There was a debate about whether the river should

be recovered or left open throughout the town and the decision was made to continue with refurbishment work and the recovering of the river.

In 2014, the local authority at Rochdale teamed up with English Heritage and the Royal Institute of British Architects to launch a competition to redesign the esplanade with the aim of reopening the river's course. The project to reopen the river was won by BDP and construction is due to start in 2015. John Percival, project leader at Rochdale council stated 'we are bringing 800 years of history into the modern era...it will bring a big chunk of pride back to Rochdale' (Manchester Evening News, December 2013) as such the project reimagines and re-images symbolic elements of the town's past. Part of the pride envisaged by the project is through the cultural repositioning of the river as a fundamental aspect of the town's history helping the town to stand out against the others in the region as 'once completed Rochdale will be the only town in Greater Manchester to benefit from an open river running through the heart of its town centre' (Manchester Evening News, 31st March 2013). The project exemplifies two processes occurring in the region, public-private partnerships to achieve regeneration projects along with the competitive repositioning of key industrial images.

Another key image-related project evident in the recent urban transition of the towns can be seen in the case of Crowther Street, Stockport, a small residential street in the town centre. Rather than the focus of a local authority decision, the project was initiated by private investment. The street was the focus of a painting and several sketches by LS Lowry throughout the early twentieth century (see images 4.32--4.34). The terraced street was a typical red-brick northern image made interesting through the steepness of the street that meant that the road surface was built as a series of low steps which were of particular interest to Lowry (Arrowsmith 1997, Sandling and Leber 2000). The street was demolished in the slum clearances in Stockport throughout the 1960's and the street lay as open space leading up to a late modernist residential area for almost 40 years. In 2006 the street was reconstructed to recreate the scene of the painting as a source of pride in the industrial past of the town and included on the town heritage trail despite its contemporary construction.

The reconstruction of the site highlights a lamentation at the loss of a marketable image for the town, Councillor David Goddard stated 'it would have been sad if it had been swept away and I am glad we are redeveloping the area and keeping it for prosperity' (Stockport Express, 14th May 2003). The project was undertaken by a local not-for-profit housing developer Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust in association with



Figures Clockwise from above left, fig 4.32 Crowther Street Demolition c.1980, fig 4.33 Crowther Street, 1930, LS Lowry, fig 4.34 Crowther Street Reconstruction 2013 (bottom left)

the Heritage Lottery Fund outside of any official local authority plan which highlights the current process of market led development in the towns. The project at Crowther Street is a particularly complex example of the paradoxical image of industry. A sanitised industrial image has become increasingly attractive to consumers and therefore investors while a non-sanitised industrial image is seen as problematic for investment.

The third example focuses less on a specific image like that seen in Orwell's Wigan Pier and Lowry's Crowther Street, but instead moves to the more symbolic image of the Victorian civic architecture of the towns. The civic rivalry between the eight towns in the industrial

period was embodied in their monumental civic architecture, each acting as a symbol for the progress and the success of their respective towns. Many of the buildings created within this period are critically acclaimed and significantly raised the standard of architecture within the towns. As identified in the previous chapter, Oldham differed in this tradition as the town had an austere approach to municipal architecture (Wkye 2004, Pevsner 1969, 1971). Oldham's original town hall was developed with mean proportions, a conservative architectural style and less opulent materials than each of the other towns (Pevsner 1969, Morley 2001). After the construction of Oldham's civic centre in the 1970's the original town hall eventually became vacant in 1991. Throughout the 24 years the prominent location of the derelict building emphasised the town's inability to attract investment for regeneration. This inability to attract investment was accentuated by the strong associations of civic pride with the municipal architecture of the towns.

Recently the local authority has secured investment for the regeneration of the building and the conversion of the Old town hall began in 2013 led by BDP. The building at Oldham will be transformed into a mixed use commercial development, the focus being a cinema complex with supporting restaurants and bars. The project will retain the facade of the building and regenerate the surrounding public realm. The commercial focus of the regeneration shifts the building from a symbol of public interest to private. This illustrates the trend in the region as the towns' are increasingly influenced by the retail industry as an economic replacement for industry. Again the example at Oldham illustrates the influence that private investment has over the location, style and type of regeneration occurring in the towns, while the official plans have a decreasing spatial focus and scope of influence. The dominant images of the towns are being reimagined and marketed by private investors based firmly on the models of consumption evident in the cities.

In conclusion, the towns have experienced a number of shared trends of urban development. Town plans have been present throughout this change yet have had varied levels of impact. The urban plans for the towns have become less spatially focused over the second half of the twentieth century as private investment has become a growing concern in the towns. The urban change experienced in the towns has been a result of mixed influences, from the decisions and projects of particular individuals, to the financial capabilities of the towns and their ability to attract investment. This discrepancy between urban planning and urban change will be explored in later chapters through the systematic analysis of them as separate (but linked) urban practices.

The survey of urban plans for the towns highlighted the shifting images that influenced ideas of good urban form. In the early twentieth century this was dominated by garden city aesthetics that influenced the development of residential areas through a standardised layout and density popularised in the 1909 town planning act. Throughout the post-war period this focused on a rationalised image of international modernism which was imposed on the towns in varying degrees in the mid-twentieth century, largely through retail malls. In the later twentieth century the preferred image was based on the ideal of private motor travel that influenced the arterial routes of the towns. While finally the early twentieth century image has been based on post-industrial city-ness influenced by Manchester and Liverpool. These consecutive images have continually influenced the urban development of the towns through both public and private investment. This has resulted in divergent and mixed images that the towns currently sustain. The chapter has begun to link the practices of urban planning to urban images and this is a theme that will continue throughout the rest of the thesis. Throughout the twentieth century the approach towards the towns was to reimagine them in a particular image, problematising their existing image. This will be explored in the next chapter through the specific case of Stockport, which will analyse the development of the urban image of Stockport through its representation in art.

The culmination of the successive layers of planned and fragmented urban change has resulted in the somewhat illegible current form and image of the towns. While illegibility and chaos was seen as an evil of the industrial period of development, the reactionary urban plans and projects have magnified this feature rather than provide a remedy. In this sense urban planning was unsuccessful in the towns. This is the result of several issues; the shifting popular approaches to both urban and peripheral space; the varied levels of finances to implement plans in each period; an overzealous emphasis on traffic alleviation; and

finally the influential role of private investors that has undermined public plans. This has created a varied impact of planning on the urban change of the towns throughout each period.

Initially the nuances between the towns were explored through their pre-industrial urban forms. This highlighted the difficulty in prescribing the onset of industry in the towns, as industry existed from as early as the fourteenth century, and the difficulty in charting the layout of the towns before the creation of the national Ordnance Survey in 1840. Despite this it was identified that the pre-industrial form of the towns was influenced by two fundamental factors, regional and national routes and their relationship to rivers. This reaffirms the conclusions made in the previous chapter, but importantly highlights the founding of this relationship to rivers pre-dating the rise of mass industry in the region. This is an important distinction as previous studies have focused on the relationship to rivers chiefly through their industrial usage, yet importance of rivers before the onset of the Industrial Revolution highlights a distinct shift in the relationship to water in the region throughout the subsequent centuries.

A particularly strong civic tradition was highlighted in the case of Bolton which stood out consistently in its approach to urban improvement. A continued level of civic interest and investment was cultivated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the philanthropic model villages, the varied projects of Lord Lever and the recipient of many statues from wealthy families, matched by public interest evident in statutory subscriptions. Later in the twentieth century Gordon Cullen's idiosyncratic approach to urban design brought a renewed level of interest in the development of the town centre. These factors have resulted in a strong quality in the built environment at Bolton that exceeds the level of the wider towns of the region. The strong civic tradition and level of investment in the built environment through subsequent generations is evident in Bolton's current urban form.

In contrast, the two towns of Oldham and St Helens, which lacked significant settlements before 1800 were seen to have a particularly weak civic tradition. This has continued to impact the subsequent development of the towns. A reason for this lack of civic investment could be the result of the absence of wealthy families in the area pre-dating the Industrial Revolution, preventing an early philanthropic tradition in the towns. This highlights the important role philanthropy has had in the prosperity of the towns, the loss of which is a major concern for their future development and deserves more critical attention. A trend witnessed throughout the twentieth century was the decreasing public interest in the urban centres. This can be witnessed

as a drop in the proactive projects for civic improvement created by civic societies (which has largely shifted to a more specialised interest in conservation in the region), a loss in philanthropic urban investment and a loss of publicly subscribed urban projects, such as the statuary that was popular throughout the nineteenth century. This has been matched by a rise in the privatisation of public space.

The historic approach of this chapter to understanding the current form of the towns has been particularly fruitful in unpicking their spatial logic. This method of enquiry will be used for the more specific study of the case of Stockport particularly in chapter seven which presents a narrative of Stockport's spatial logic that influenced its representation.

This overview of the development of the towns has provided a general picture of the region's urban transition. The subsequent chapters will focus on the case study of Stockport to explore the issues which have been raised in the comparison of the towns. Of particular interest in the next chapter will be the specific urban plans of Stockport that will allow a more sustained analysis of their impact on the town and the images they promote.

Stockport Contextual Information

This section of the research moves on to the specific case of Stockport, Greater Manchester. In order to provide a context for the various discussions of the town the following pages will outline the geographic area this study approaches as Stockport, the layout of the town highlighting key streets and areas of note throughout the rest of the thesis and a brief historical overview of the town. Further to this, the short section will present a series of photographs that serve to provide a general understanding of the town before the analysis of the following chapters. This will provide an orientation and reference point for the reader through a general visual portrait of the town.

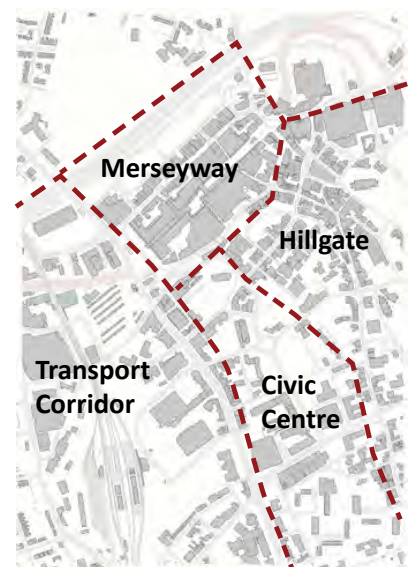
Stockport lies to the south-east of Manchester along the banks of the River Mersey. The town forms part of the continuous urban conurbation from the city of Manchester out into the Cheshire Plains. The area of Stockport of chief concern in this research is the central area that is bordered by the M60 motorway to the north of the centre, to the east by Knightsbridge and Millgate, to the south this boundary follows Edward Street stretching to the Town Hall and bounded in the west by King Street West. This area has been defined in this study as the town centre as it contains the main municipal, retail and service areas of the town. While the discussion focuses on this central area, it sometimes extends beyond the boundary to adjacent areas such as Portwood to the east and Edgeley to the west where necessary.

The town centre stretches along the banks of the River Mersey occupying four hills that line the valley. The river is largely hidden from view in the town by a series of bridges and structures that span its course, the largest being that of the Merseyway Shopping Centre. A national transport route travels north-south across the river along Wellington Road, which forms part of the A6 route from London to Carlisle. As briefly mentioned, Manchester's orbital motorway, the M60 runs east to west to the north of the town centre before continuing on to Eccles and Ashton-under-Lyne forming the circle around the city. Four rough character areas can be discerned in the town centre, the Market Place, Merseyway, the Civic Area and a transport area. The Market Place forms the historic area of the town and is characterised

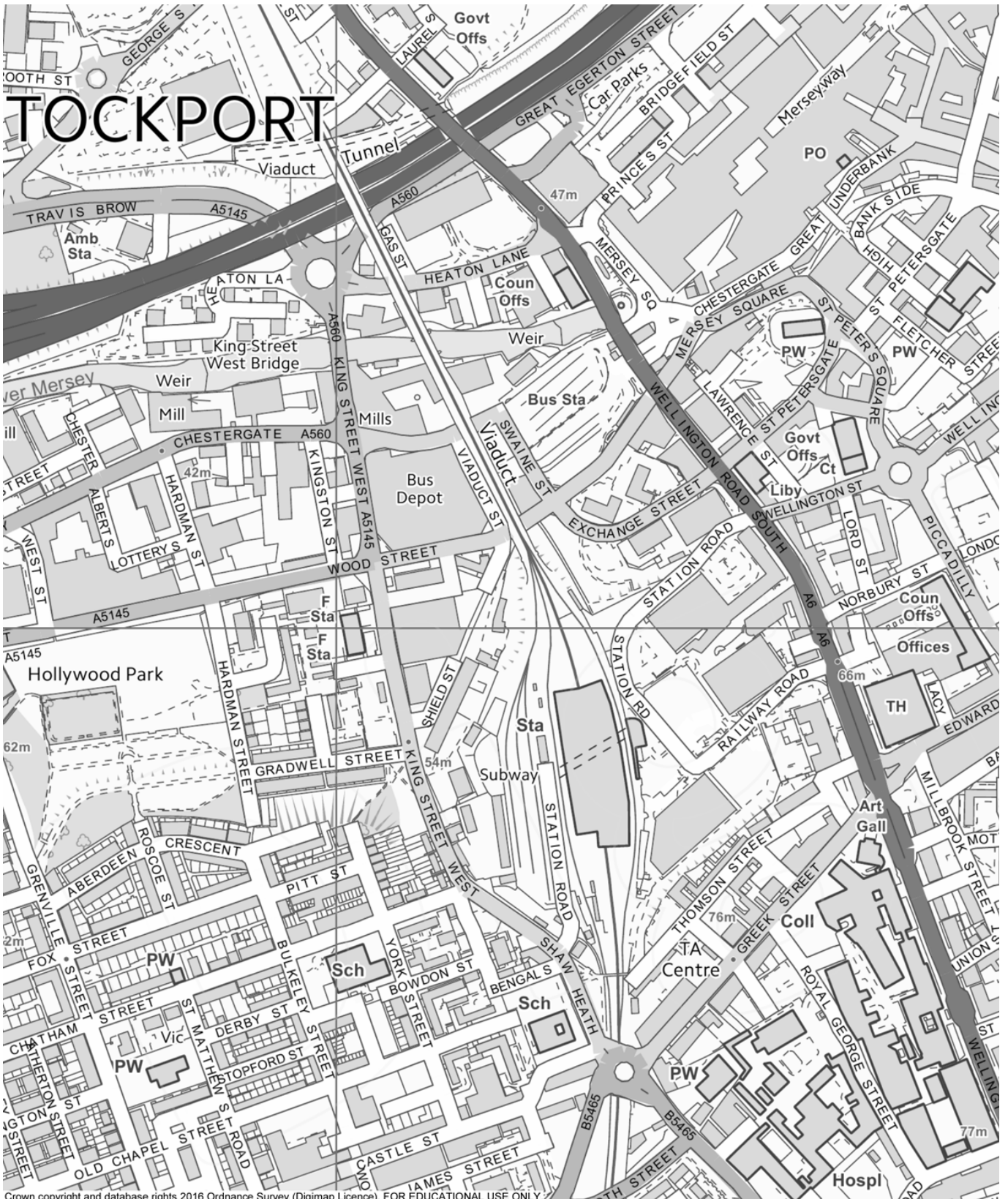
by the Victorian Market Hall, St Mary’s Church and a eclectic mixture of architecture dating 1400-1960. The area houses a number of Cheshire style timber framed buildings and occupies the land of a hill and small valley, the Hillgate Rise (Mellor, 1949). The area primarily follows the streets of the Market Place, Underbanks and Hillgate. The Merseyway area is characterised by the large Modernist shopping centre but includes the adjacent retail areas of Warren Street, a nineties red brick shopping area, and Princes Street the characterised by low quality Victorian architecture. The area is contained within the lower areas of the Mersey Flood Plain and as such is primarily flat, bridging the course of the river. The transport area is defined as such due to the presence of the Bus Station, Train Station and the A6, but is typically eclectic and sprawls from the banks of the (open) river southwards up the valley sides to the hill top around the train station. The site rises from the Mersey Flood Plain to the Great Moor Plain, due to the level differences there are more areas of land unable to be built upon which has created large areas of vegetated fenced off land and a less consistent building layout than the previous areas described. The area contains more varied building heights from Modernist tower blocks to low scale Victorian terraced shops. The final area of the Civic Centre is spatially less dense with larger areas of open space in the form of lawns and car parks. The area contains the primary municipal buildings of the Baroque Town Hall which is border by Brutalist tower blocks, and contemporary glass buildings. The area spans a hillside on the Great Moor Plain and as such houses many retaining walls and vegetated banks.

Stockport was officially founded in 1260 as a market town (Arrowsmith 2010:3). Manufacture and production grew in importance in the town from the sixteenth century onwards in the form of woollens and linen manufacture from domestic hand loom weaving, but cloth weaving had been present since the thirteenth century (Arrowsmith 1997:67). The town’s first factory system focused on the production of silk yarn, the water powered silk mill was built 1732 and lay in the Park area of the town at the edge of the River Mersey (ibid:98). By 1780 silk mills were being converted for cotton manufacture which was met by a rise in textile finishing processes which brought the construction of dye houses and bleach and print works and a rise in hat manufacture (ibid:104). Steam power was introduced to the town in 1791 (ibid:130) and after a series of cotton industry depressions in the nineteenth century engineering and hatting began to grow in importance to Stockport’s economy. Cotton entered decline in the 1920’s and had virtually disappeared by 1975, hatting also saw a period of decline yet the final hat factory was closed in 1997 (ibid:258-9). The local authority opened a Hat Museum in Wellington Mill in 2000.

Figure 1: Stockport character areas

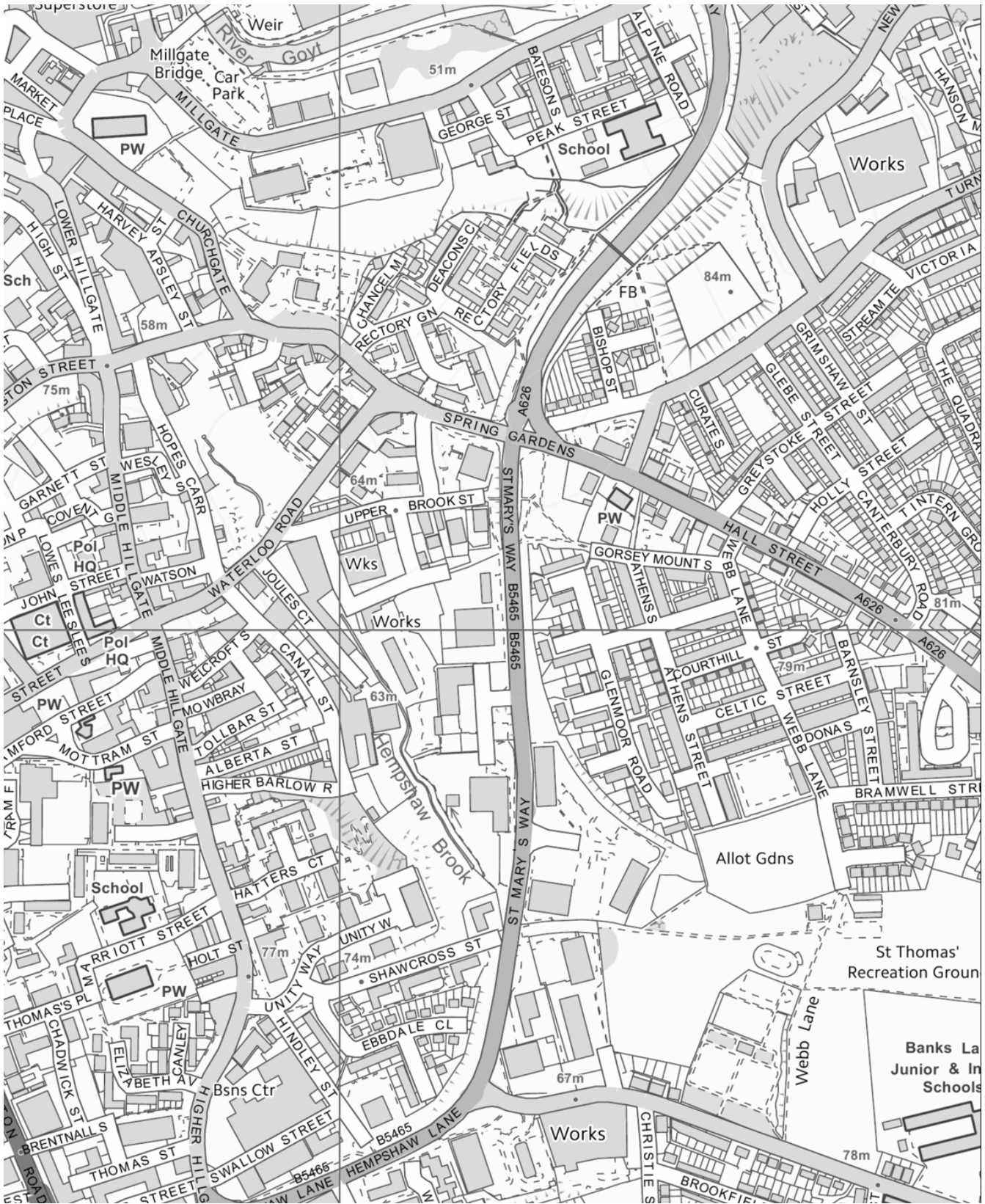


TOCKPORT

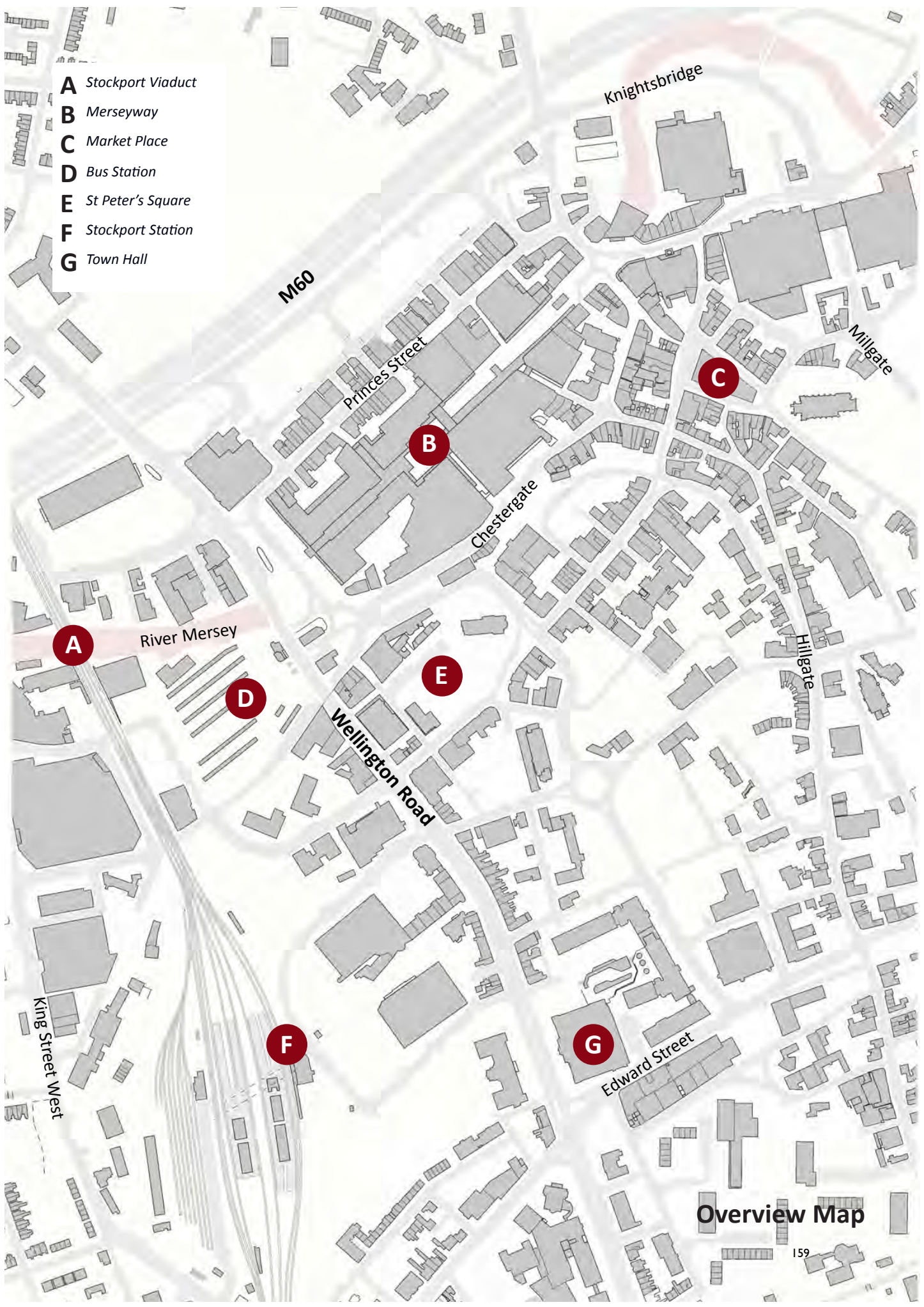


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Detailed Street Map



- A** Stockport Viaduct
- B** Merseyway
- C** Market Place
- D** Bus Station
- E** St Peter's Square
- F** Stockport Station
- G** Town Hall



Overview Map

Hillgate Character Area

The Market Place forms the historic area of the town and is characterised by the Victorian Market Hall, St Mary's Church and a eclectic mixture of architecture dating 1400-1960. The area houses a number of Cheshire style timber framed buildings and occupies the land of a hill and small valley, the Hillgate Rise (Mellor, 1949). The area primarily follows the streets of the Market Place, Underbanks and Hillgate.



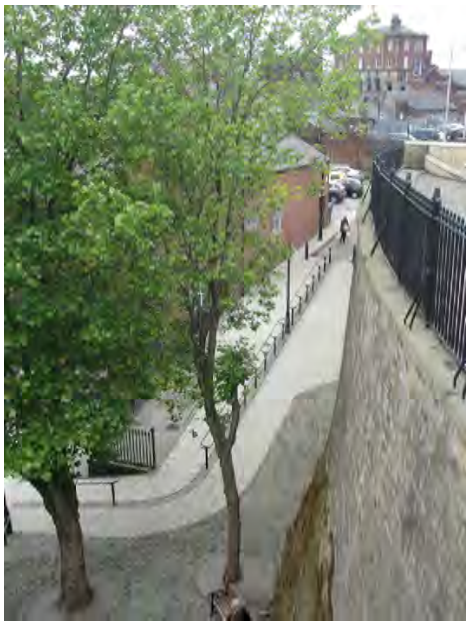


Images showing the Hillgate character area of Stockport



Figure 1.0 Title

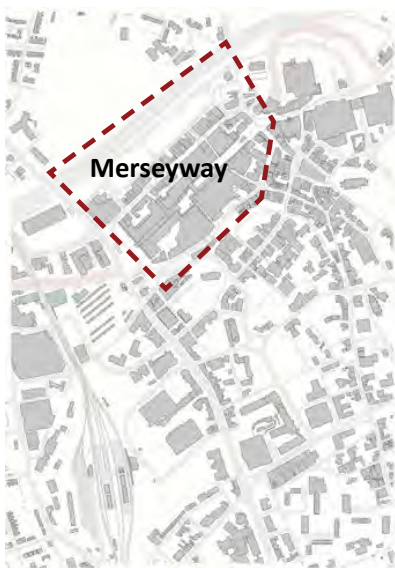
Images showing the Hillgate character area of Stockport



Images showing the Hillgate character area of Stockport



Images showing the Hillgate character area of Stockport



Merseyway Character Area

The Merseyway area is characterised by the large Modernist shopping centre but includes the adjacent retail areas of Warren Street, a nineties red brick shopping area, and Princes Street the characterised by low quality Victorian architecture. The area is contained within the lower areas of the Mersey Flood Plain and as such is primarily flat, bridging the course of the river.



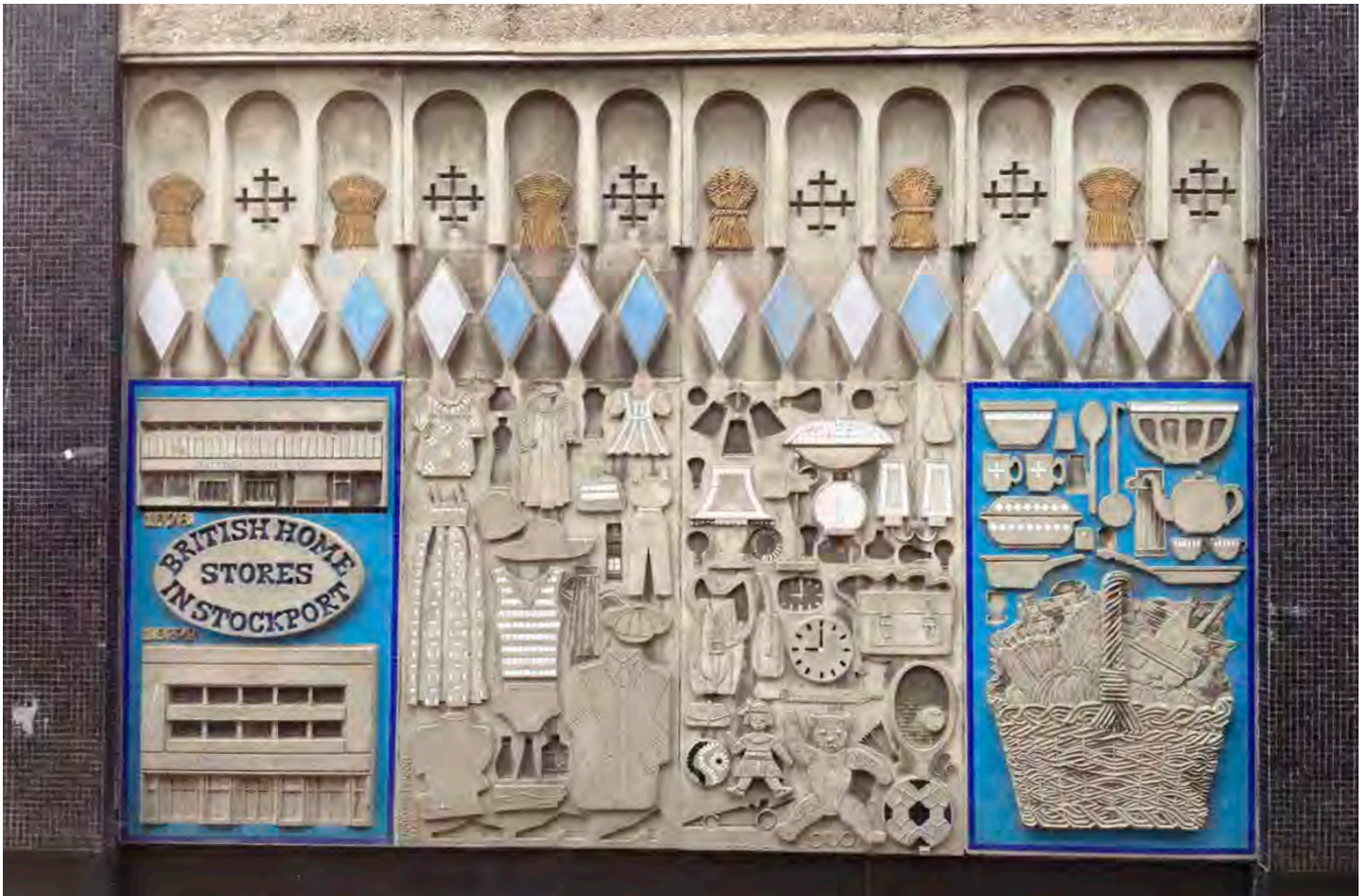
Images showing the Merseyway character area of Stockport



Images showing the Merseyway character area of Stockport



Images showing the Merseyway character area of Stockport



Images showing the Merseyway character area of Stockport

Civic Centre Character Area

The transport area is defined as such due to the presence of the Bus Station, Train Station and the A6, but is typically eclectic and sprawls from the banks of the (open) river southwards up the valley sides to the hill top around the train station. The site rises from the Mersey Flood Plain to the Great Moor Plain, due to the level differences there are more areas of land unable to be built upon which has created large areas of vegetated fenced off land and a less consistent building layout than the previous areas described. The area contains more varied building heights from Modernist tower blocks to low scale Victorian terraced shops.

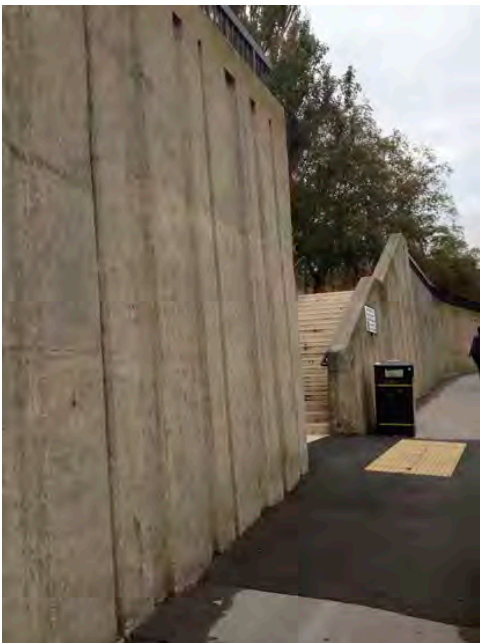




Images showing the Civic Centre character area of Stockport



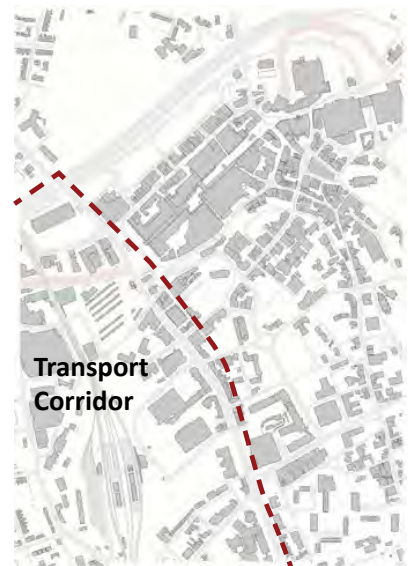
Images showing the Civic Centre character area of Stockport



Images showing the Civic Centre character area of Stockport

Transport Corridor Character Area

The final area of the Civic Centre is spatially less dense with larger areas of open space in the form of lawns and car parks. The area contains the primary municipal buildings of the Baroque Town Hall which is border by Brutalist tower blocks, and contemporary glass buildings. The area spans a hillside on the Great Moor Plain and as such houses many retaining walls and vegetated banks.





Images showing the Transport Corridor character area of Stockport







Images showing the Transport Corridor character area of Stockport



Images showing the Transport Corridor character area of Stockport

05 A historical survey of the representation of Stockport

This chapter begins to focus on the representative case study of Stockport. This initial chapter on the town explores the urban image of Stockport through representations of the town in art and literature, this directly addresses the research question through a detailed study of the graphic depiction of the town through time. So far the thesis has identified a number of ways in which image has become increasingly important in the industrial towns in their attempts to form a post-industrial identity. This chapter presents the results of a survey of Stockport's graphic depiction to understand the existing image of the town and its historical development.

The aims of the chapter are to 1) identify the urban image of Stockport in graphic depictions, 2) to explore the relationship between image and the built environment of the town 3) to identify the key locations that have contributed to Stockport's image. The chapter identifies three major stylistic periods in the depiction of Stockport that adhere to the conventions of wider artistic periods. As such the depiction of the town is described in reference to these wider artistic periods of the Pastoral and Picturesque, Sublime, and twentieth century Social Realism. These three artistic periods informed the style, content and tone of the images created that depicted the town throughout the centuries.

As discussed in the literature review, the industrial towns of the North have been represented in art, literature and social commentary creating an imagined north that contrasts the reality of a more nuanced experience (Russell 2004). This chapter will move beyond constructions of the North to survey and analyse the various ways Stockport has been imagined throughout its history and the reality this holds to the built environment.

Historically the towns have asserted their political and economic identities through the built environment, exemplified in their traditions of grand civic architectures. In the current effort to redefine themselves away from the dogmatic Northern image of declining industrialism the built environment has become a primary way in which the towns can construct a new visual identity. The survey of Stockport's representation throughout time will help to understand

the images and locations of the town that have reinforced its Northern image and those which have subverted it. The analysis of the content of the graphic depictions will also help to identify the quirks of place that separate the town as unique among the industrial towns, or the way its character fits into the nuanced 'urban kaleidoscope' (Counce 2000) of the region.

The survey of the graphic depiction of the town is based on published materials through art, photography and literature that have produced knowledge about the town's visual character. Due to its strategic position in the region Stockport has been represented by artists and writers continually throughout the last four hundred years. Initially accounts of the town were a result of its position along the river Mersey at a natural crossing point of the river and located between two warring counties. This made Stockport a regional gateway between Lancashire and Cheshire, and a national gateway between the North and South. As a result of this Stockport was the scene of national dramas seen in the continuing battles of the Royalists and Parliamentarians in the seventeenth century and the working class Blanketeer marches of the nineteenth century (Arrowsmith 1997). The town was also the scene of regional affairs as its successful market drew crowds of a twenty-mile radius from 1220 onwards (Scola 1992). Stockport as the location of a national and regional crossing point and as the scene of a weekly market (a space of both mundane occurrences and spectacular events) has meant that the town had a constant stream of visitors which in turn created a variety of representations and visual knowledges about the town.

Notes: [1] Although Dr Aikin spent a great period of his life in Warrington and Chester, his topographical account of Manchester and its surrounds was written, in 1795, from his home in Great Yarmouth: "The materials collected for the book [Aikin, 1795] were to be collected by Mr Stockdale, the proprietor, and the arrangement of them, and the composition of the work, were alone undertaken by Dr Aikin, but in fact it was from his exertions and the communications of his personal friends in that part of the country, that the most valuable portion of the matter proceeded, without which the performance would have been defective indeed." (Aikin 1823:170-171)

From the 1700's to 1800's accounts of the town were produced by visiting writers, such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Lewis and John Aikin[1]. This was the result of a wider national trend in topographical literature and art that was made possible by the innovations of national transport infrastructure in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The growth of transport routes was linked initially to the rise of Picturesque tourism that sought out (popular conceptions of) wild and natural scenes of the British Isles (Andrews 1989). This eventually spread to wider subject types and a particular interest in the changing scene of the country in the Industrial Revolution by topographical writers touring the country from London. These writers and artists aimed to document the innovations of industry and urbanity occurring in the North and the wider landscape of Britain. Their motive was to document the peculiarities of the region and country and focused on Stockport as an example of the wider processes of industrial and urban growth.

After this period descriptions of the town become more emotive as

national debates regarding industrial development became more contested through the combative attitudes of the Industrialists and Romanticists (Wiener 1981). These depictions of the town (and the region) sought to address the poor conditions of the working classes in England and as such focused on the worst examples of degradation, evident in the work of Engels, Ruskin and Carlyle. Again these depictions of the town were those formulated by outsiders and those viewing the North as foreign country (Russell 2004:10).

Only by the twentieth century was the town represented consistently by those with first hand experience of life in Northern industrial towns through LS Lowry, Alan Lowndes and Helen Clapcott, among others. Yet Waters argues that the depictions of the North seen in LS Lowry's paintings were the result of his status as a social outsider, stating 'he usually positioned himself in his industrial scenes as an outsider looking in' (Waters 1999:124). An element that can be discerned in the work of Lowndes and Clapcott too. As a result the graphic depictions of the towns have been predominantly created by those positioned in some way as outsiders and as such have depicted the town (and wider region) due to a variety of motives.

Through surveying the multiple ways Stockport has been depicted the study includes a number of viewpoints and motives for describing the town from natives to outsiders, and from a variety of professions. This provides a view of the changing perceptions of the town in relation to the wider discourse throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century covering changing perceptions of the past, nature, culture, and industry.

The chapter discusses three overarching stylistic periods of the representation of the town. These are the industrial pastoral, the industrial sublime and post-industrial transition. Each section discusses the dominant representation type of the period, recurring features, dominant viewpoints and the 'geographical realities' (Cosgrove 2008) of the scenes depicted.

Industrial Pastoral

Early representations of Stockport are dominated by a Pastoral style of painting that includes industrial elements, as such it is termed here the Industrial Pastoral. This style takes precedent from the idealised vision of pastoral life that permeated the art of the period between 1600-1800 throughout the Western world. The early animal grazing scenes of Stockport, typical of the Cheshire countryside, are integrated with the images of proto-industrialism as early signs of industry were already present in the town. Later in the period the town's representation became influenced by the stylistic compositions of the Picturesque as the conceptions of man and nature became separated.

The Industrial Pastoral period of Stockport's representation spanned the period between 1680 and 1835 beginning with the Mapp of Stockport, the earliest visual representation of the town (see image 5.1) through to Pickering's 'View of Stockport, 1835'. While the wider national Pastoral landscape painting depicted rural working life, the Industrial Pastoral scene depicted in Stockport and the industrial towns

Figure 5.1 Mapp of Stockport, 1680, from Arrowsmith 1997





of the region presented the towns as a collection of dispersed mills and churches within an riverine landscape (see image 5.2 -5.4).

Stockport was first described by the Rector of Stockport as an idyllic scene 'where the high bank of the Mersey's stream appears, a pleasant hill its summit gently rears...more varied this view contains, than all the charms of far famed Tempe's plains' (archaic quote translated from Latin by Henigbotham, 1882). This early description of Stockport predates visual representations of the scene but aligns to the Mapp of Stockport 1680. This illustrates the town as a small collection of streets spatially dominated by the topography of the valley and river. Over a century later, the description of the town maintained an idyllic quality and continuation of the river/topography theme in Daniel Defoe's description of the town as 'a large and handsome town occupying three hills and three valleys which are so serpentine as to form many pleasing prospects of churches, pieces of water' (Defoe 1769:397). While the description of the town was dominated by idyllic scenery, the growth of the town's urban structure is apparent in Defoe's account. The extent of the built form during this period is evident on the 'Plan of Stockport Township 1770' which shows the development of the town extending along each of its main streets and across the river to the north (see image 8.?).



Figure 5.2 from above View of Stockport, c.1750, Fig 5.3 Hope Hill Mills c.1750, Fig 5.4 Hope Hill Mills c.1750, unknown artist, images courtesy of Stockport Curatorial Services

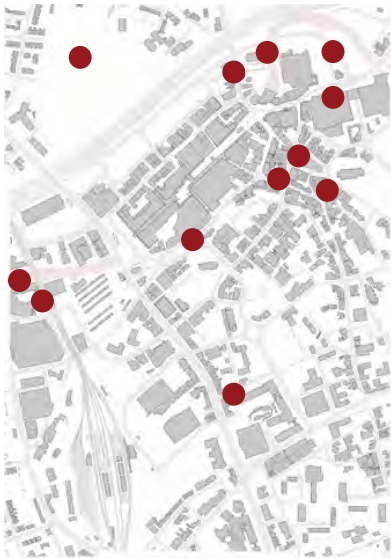


Figure 5.5 Viewpoint Locations for the paintings of Stockport between 1600-1835

The view of the town from Hillgate did not predominate the representations of the town through the period despite its status as the primary route of in to and out of the town. This was a result of the closed and narrow views afforded on by Hillgate which concealed the extents of the town preventing the extensive views desired by the topographical artists and writers during the period. The busy and narrow route of Hillgate was also not a conducive space for the detailed sketches needed for the development of the images. Instead the views of Stockport were located on the urban edge of the town through the period, creating a constellation of locations around the urban core of the Market Place and Hillgate. The locations varied between 300 - 800m distances from the market place (or 3-10 minutes walk) and only a short distance from Hillgate which would have eased the movement of artistic materials by minimising off-road travel.

The viewpoints of the town were located in the arable fields surrounding the town (see image 5.5), which gave a general view of its size and provided a secluded space for sketch work. The majority of painters chose to depict the town from the lower level of the banks of the Mersey which resulted in the river forming a recurring visual feature in the representation of the town. Yet, the height of the river in comparison to the view of the wider town made a difficult composition into a singular image, evidenced in Dayes' View of Stockport (see image 5.6). A selection of artworks also depicted the town from the

Figure 5.6 Dayes' 'View of Stockport' 1785



central area of the market place, which afforded a more spacious environment for the artist in comparison to Hillgate. The angle of the perspective in these images suggest that the artist depicted the scene from a first floor window, which again would have eased the process of making the image (see image 5.7). The view of Stockport Market Place from indoors also indicated the artists' status as a native of Stockport, as the majority of market place views were depicted by the local artists William Shuttleworth (1785 - 1829) and George Lowe (c.1800). Shuttleworth and Lowe's paintings of the Market Place in comparison to the subject matter of the topographical artists highlights the contrasting motives behind the images of the period. The visiting artists had little interest in the ancient and stable area of the market place and instead were interested in the modernisation of the town through advances in industry and the growth of urbanity. Shuttleworth and Lowe depicted the scenes of his everyday life which centred on the market place and were a token of their civic pride, particularly through seen in Shuttleworth's architectural scenes of the Parish Church (see images 5.8). The work of the topographical artists and their extensive views of urban growth greatly outnumbered the work of the native artists and were often much higher quality.



Figure 5.7 William Shuttleworth 'Stockport Market Place', c.1810 above & below Fig. 5.8 'St Mary's Church' c.1810

The distinctive landmark of St Mary's Parish Church was present in most scenes of the town despite the two contradictory motives which underpinned the town's representation. This is due to the positioning of the church on a prominent hill top in conjunction with the tower's height and characteristic outline. The dominating landmark of the church is evident in the close view of the 'Market Place' by Shuttleworth and Farington's 'View of Stockport' both painted c.1810. The distinctive outline of St Mary's Parish Church was supported by the battlemented outline of Castle Mill on the depictions of the town between 1778 - 1841 when the mill was demolished, this can be seen in the image 'Castle Mill and St Mary's Church' (1790).

During this early phase the depictions of the town did not differentiate between the organic and the mechanised, which was particularly marked in the eighteenth century representations. The buildings of the town were depicted as dispersed throughout fields and hills portraying both residential areas and industry without the visual classification of urban and rural land uses. This is evident in the engraving 'Castle Mill and St Mary's Church' 1790 (see image 5.9) which depicted the town from The Park (or the present day King Street East). Industry was apparent throughout the scene with the productive capacity of the land portrayed through arable farming, labourers at work in the landscape and a horse and cart transporting the products of industry. Mills were dotted throughout the scene between fields and houses, upon hills and within the valley with the signs of industry permeating



Figure 5.9 'Castle Mill and St Mary's Church' 1790, William Orme

the landscape. Hoskins (1955) likened the landscape of early industry to a Bruegel painting, full of detail, movement and business, which is evident in 'Castle Mill and St Mary's Church'. The scene also correlated with the mixed development type associated with the Hillgate route which will be discussed in coming chapters.

The national socio-cultural shift which saw the opposition of man and nature later in the period (Wiener 1981) was evident in the writings and imagery in Stockport. The chief purporter of the Picturesque, William Gilpin, wrote extensively on the values of nature untouched by man while all signs of industry were eschewed for naturalistic aesthetics (while paradoxically encouraging the aesthetic improvement of nature through drawing and painting) (Andrews 1989). Similarly the later paintings of Stockport began to depict this through increasingly defined boundaries between urban and rural visual elements of the town.

By the time of Pickering's 'General View of Stockport' in 1835 (see image 5.10) the signs of artifice and nature had been separated into two opposing domains. While both natural and artificial elements can be found throughout the engraving, the two occupy distinct areas of a rural foreground and urbanised mid-ground. The labouring figures of the earlier painting were replaced by leisurely middle-classes with figures walking and holding hands, sitting and playing.



Figure 5.10 'View of Stockport' 1835, Pickering

A single shepherdess was depicted with a group of cattle along the left hand side of the engraving but lacking the industriousness of the busy landscape of 1790. These shifts in the wider development of Picturesque theory, aesthetic tastes and the changing depiction of Stockport was the result of economic processes that were transforming both the use and value of the land nationally. As the economy shifted from the use-value of land typified by an agricultural economy to the industrial model of exchange value meant that the productivity of the land became less important economically (Daniels 1986). The conceptual oppositions created during this period permeated the illustrations of the town through visual stylistic devices employed by the artists of Stockport. Broadly, the compositional elements of the Picturesque are detectable in the paintings of Stockport through the strict definition of foreground, mid ground and background and the repoussoir framing devices of seen in Farington's 'View of Stockport 1810' and Dayes' (figure 5.12), 'View of Stockport 1785' (the repoussoir referred to elements that framed and directed the viewers eye into the painting often in the form of a tree framing one side of the scene (Andrews 1989)).

As the industrial production of the town grew throughout the early 19th century it attracted a number of topographical artists commissioned to depict the advances of industry to the wider



Figure 5.11 'Stockport from the West' 1819, Peter De Wint

country. During this period the naturalistic scenes of the earlier period continued to dominate the foreground illustrated in De Wint's 'Stockport from the West 1819' (see image 5.11) and 'General View of Stockport 1835' as artists trained in classical landscape painting began to paint increasingly urban contexts. Further renowned Royal Academy landscape painters that painted the town were Edward Dayes (1763 – 1804), Joseph Farington (1747 - 1821) both better known for their work on the Lake District and Wales and William Orme later renowned for his views of India (c. 1801-1805). In Francis Klingender's seminal text on art and the Industrial Revolution he stated 'at first the majority of topographical prints comprised architectural "prospects" recording the appearance of both cities and gentlemen's country seats. But as the great feats of road- and canal-building broke down the isolation of rural Britain, bridges, aqueducts, and other great engineering works came to occupy a progressively more important place in the range of subject matter.' (Klingender & Elton 1949:67). This development of subject matter towards industrial and technological advances can be seen in the depictions of Stockport, as earlier representations portrayed the extents of the town while later work of the Industrial Sublime focused on specific technological advancements discussed in the next section.

By the end of the period Stockport had expanded in all directions, the extent of which can be seen in the 1824 Map of Stockport (see image 5.13). At this point the urban growth of the town was presented as a positive contribution to the character of the town, as one traveller wrote 'Instead of the obscure and miserable place which formerly appeared on the Cheshire side of the river Mersey, a new town was erected as if by enchantment...the scene became equally gratifying, interesting, and important, to the merchant, the philosopher, and the statesman' (1817:245-6 Corry cited in Arrowsmith 1997).

Figure 5.12 'View of Stockport' 1810, Farington





Figure 5.13 Map of Stockport 1825

Industrial Sublime

'There is scarcely anything of the kind more striking than the appearance of Stockport.' 1847:197 Dodd

By 1840 the idealised Industrial Pastoral depiction of the town was coming to an end. The Industrial Sublime period that followed drew parallels with the sublime rhetoric of Edmund Burke's experiential theory. Burke's idea of the sublime described a sense of the awe and terror evoked by monumental natural scenes that differed from the beautiful and Picturesque in the sublime's darker qualities (Burke 1756). The artwork of artists such as Joseph Wright of Derby (see image 5.14) extended the experience of the sublime from natural to artificial subjects through the depiction of new forms and architectural outlines of the early industrial period around 1780. Sixty years later the depiction of Stockport, along with the other industrial towns, through art and literature shifted towards the industrial feats of the town that evoked the experiences of the sublime.



Fig. 5.14 Joseph Wright of Derby's 'Arkwright's Mills by Night', 1783

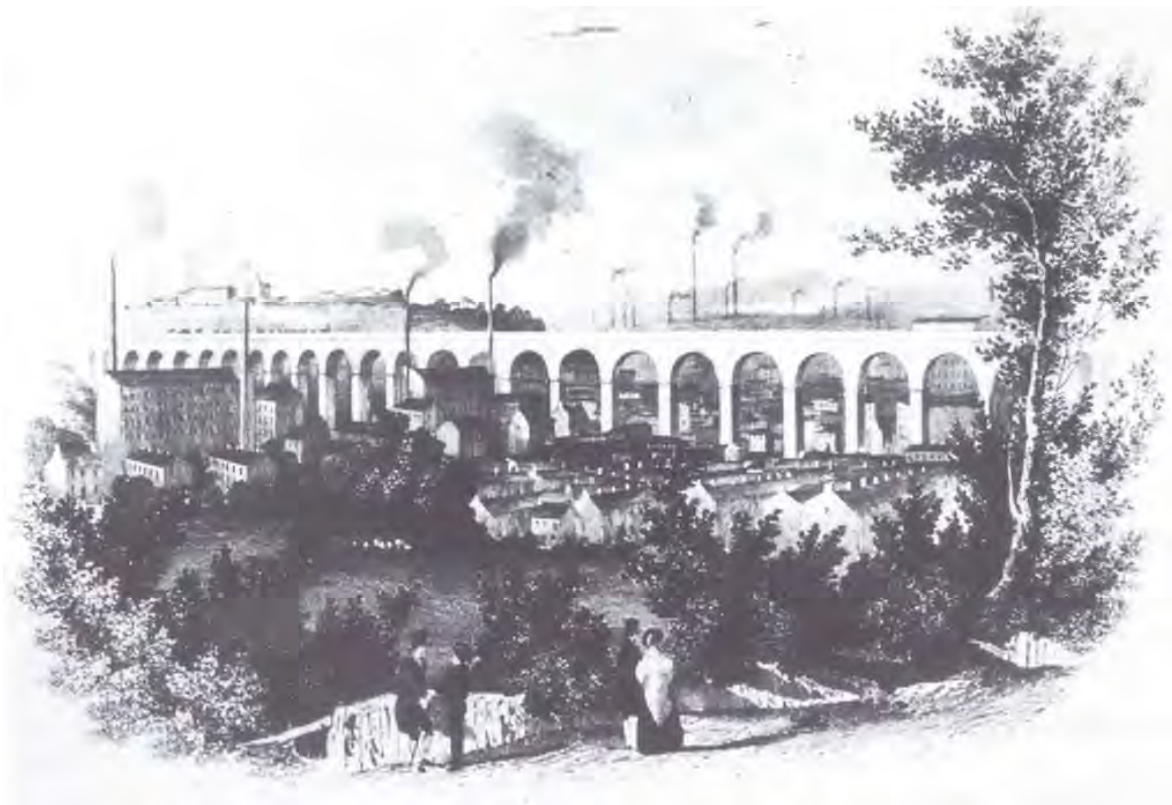
The period effectively began with the construction of the viaduct that transformed the representation of Stockport from a Picturesque landscape to an image of dense industrial urbanity. The impact of railways on the industrial towns has been argued by John Kellet, who described '...it was the influence of the railways, more than any other single agency, which gave the Victorian city its compact shape, which influenced the topography and character of its central and inner districts...' (Kellet 1969:xv). This process was further exaggerated in the case of Stockport through the visually dominating structure of the viaduct, the result of a monumental scale coupled with its central location in the town. Hoskins stated 'there is a point, as Arthur Young saw, when industrial ugliness becomes sublime. And indeed the new

landscape produced some fine dramatic compositions such as the railway viaduct over the smoking town of Stockport' (1955:178).

This shift in character from Industrial Pastoral to the Sublime is particularly evident in two engravings made within a decade of the viaduct's construction 'Stockport Viaduct from the South West' 1842 and 'Stockport Viaduct' 1848 (see images 5.15 and 5.16). The first image depicted the newly constructed viaduct to the conventional composition rules of the Picturesque of the earlier period. A rural non-productive foreground is framed by trees with an additional repoussoir device of figures gazing towards the viaduct. The viewpoint was taken from the agricultural fields at Cheadle Mosley, which would later become Hollywood Park, looking across the new terraced housing estate of Edgeley with Weir Mill and Kingston Mill visible in the middle distance. The engraving was published in Bradshaw's Journal in 1842, cropped and republished in Bradshaw's Hand-book to the Manufacturing Districts of Great Britain 1854 intricately linking the construction of railway to the presentation, representation and dissemination of eye-witness knowledge of the town.

The dominating form of the viaduct presented the first image of industrial sublimity in Stockport as the vast manmade structure provoked a sense of awe in its viewers. Klingender identified a 'railway boom of 1836-7 and... railway mania of 1846-9' (1949:123), as such the viaduct, constructed in 1839 was opened during the height of these two processes and upon completion was the largest brick

Figure 5.15 'Stockport Viaduct from the South West' 1842



structure in the world. To the industrialists the viaduct exemplified the possibilities of technology, engineering and progress. Through this vein the completion of the viaduct was internationally advertised as a great success and was likened to the Great Wall of China, one journal reported 'Stockport Viaduct - last week, was completed the greatest work of its kind ever executed in this country....Hundreds of people from this place [Liverpool] went on Dec 21st, to view its completion... The arches literally stride over that large town...This great work will long be a matter of wonder to the world.' (Hale 1841).

Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait's lithograph of the viaduct just six years later, was also intricately linked to the development of railways, as the lithograph formed part of his London and North Western Railway series printed by Bradshaw and Blacklock in 1848. Tait's engraving of the viaduct depicted the aspect of terror requisite to the sublime experience. The closer viewpoint of the viaduct from Wellington Road illustrated the more grim character of the town through the deteriorated condition of the river, the degradation of the surrounding buildings and the atmospheric condition. The vast scale of the viaduct was contrasted against the passing train, horse and carts and adjacent buildings, each adding to the lithograph's sublime character.



Figure 5.16 'Stockport Viaduct', AF Tait 1848

The river in Tait's engraving was distinctly different to those of the earlier period through the industrialised banks and reduced water level that was a result of vast siphoning works along various mill races through the town. In this sense Stockport's sublimity inverted the focus of Burke's theory on the sense of awe and terror provoked by nature towards the sense of awe and terror provoked by the defeat of nature. This extended the imagery of the Sublime propounded by Burke to both industrial and urban subjects.

The viaduct dominated the topography and natural boundary of the River Mersey and became a symbol for the advances of technology re-presenting the Pastoral image of the river of the earlier period. This was celebrated by the Industrialists and mourned by the Romantics. Ruskin argued against the widespread construction of huge infrastructures as he felt they represented the poor standards of urban growth 'for sake of distinctness of conclusion, I will suppose your success absolute: ...that you do not leave even room for roads, but travel either over the roofs of your mills, on viaducts; or under the floors in tunnels.' (Ruskin 1859, cited in Clayre 1977:136). The railway at Stockport also facilitated new travellers with different motives to the town which resulted in an alternative account of the town (and the wider towns of the region). As the social condition of the industrial towns became more notorious parallel industrial processes created greater travel speeds within a comprehensive transport network that enabled visitors to both access and directly compare the state of each town (Freeman 1999). The viaduct exaggerated this process as its physical height allowed an unparalleled view of the town, provoking Engels widely quoted description of the town as '...one of the duskiest, smokiest holes, and looks, indeed, especially when viewed from the viaduct, excessively repellent' (1845). This new ease of movement allowed concerned writers to compare and contrast the social conditions of the industrial towns and disseminate their writings widely.

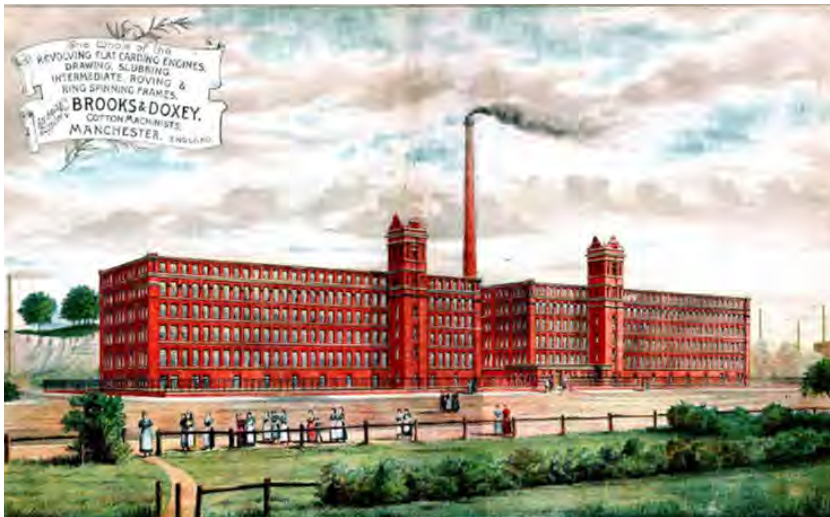
Figure 5.17 Below showing the location of the paintings of the Industrial Sublime Period

Below, fig. 5.18 Wellington Road, Stockport Infirmary, c. 1830



Throughout this period the view from the viaduct permeated descriptions of the town, yet was not the predominate viewpoint of the artistic representations (see image 5.17). Similar to the case at Hillgate, this was a result of the logistics of creating the artworks, as the speed of the train offered only a fleeting view of the valley below. The 15mph average train speed across the viaduct allowed a view of the valley for approximately 33 seconds before the densely planted embankments of the railway line. This length of time was enough for the initial impressions described by Engels but the slower and more detailed work of the pictorial artists made the representation of the town from the viaduct almost impossible. Instead the artworks depicted the town from the valley tops which matched the height of the viaduct (as seen in 'Stockport from the South West') or from the view of the viaduct from the lower angle of Wellington Road (depicted by Tait).

Wellington Road became the scene of many of the new depictions of the town, as the wide proportions of the street and development of new institutional and civic building contributed to its popularity as a viewpoint. The town depicted from this location was predominantly urban in character with the new scales and styles of architecture



Above, Figure 5.19 Widening the Viaduct, 1888

Left, fig. 5.20 'Brooks and Doxey Ring Mills', 1892

dominating the wider landscape of the town (see image 5.18). This type of scene with a focus on architectural objects rather than the wider landscape view can also be seen in the promotional material of particular factories, seen in the 'Brooks and Doxey Ring Mills' advertisement c.1892 (see image 5.20). Dramatic events were also depicted which emphasised the sublime character seen in the '1851 Park Mills Fire' for the Illustrated London News. This illustration portrayed a sublime scene through the monumental structure of Park Mills intensified by the flames and human panic of the scene's foreground. Later in the period the advances of photography were used to record the technological advances of industry which again reinforced the Industrial Sublime character, this can be seen in 'Widening the Viaduct 1888' (see image 5.19).

The decreased interest in the representation of St Mary's Parish Church as part of the scene at Stockport was the result of the church's location and dissociation from industry. The distance of the church from the viaduct meant the town could not be easily depicted in a single composition. Secondly the majority of visitors bypassed the Market Place travelling through the town via Wellington Road and therefore avoiding the church and finally the increased interest in industrial subjects came at the expense of the more historic examples in the town. Palliser stated 'by the 1840's churches were no longer the most prominent buildings in towns such as Manchester and Leeds, Oldham... their traditional dominance of the skyline had been displaced by the factory chimney.' (2000:179), in Stockport the church maintained its dominance against the height of the new chimneys in the valley bottom but the monumental structure of the viaduct dominated public interest. In their effort to illustrate industrial and urban advances the topographical artists excluded non-industrial subjects and so only depicted a limited view of the town. Instead the Market Place was depicted again by local artists. The new routes of Wellington Road

Figure 5.21 'Underbanks' Lees, 1890



and the railway decreased the traffic along Hillgate making the old core easier to paint. The Market Place was the scene of two paintings through this period (see image 5.21), 'Underbanks' and 'The Market Place' which were both painted circa. 1880 by a local artist H. Lees. In these scenes little of the industrial expansion and advancement of the town can be seen depicting a character that would be expected of smaller Cheshire market towns.

The dominant character of the sublime experience of Stockport extended beyond the representation of singular architectural objects through the general topographic descriptions of the town. This is exemplified in Baines and Parson's account of the town, they stated 'manufactories, rising in tiers above each other, when lighted with the brilliant gaseous vapour of modern discovery, present in the evenings of winter months a towering illumination of imposing grandeur' (Baines and Parson 1825:721). The new lighting technologies of the industrial period in conjunction with the smokey and damp atmosphere of the industrial town brought a 'vaporious quality of light gave a new dimension to the artist' (Waller 1983:99) evoking the qualities of Joseph Wright of Derby's artwork. Early attempts to abate the pollution problems in Stockport went unenforced as local councillors argued 'the discouragement of smokey chimneys may mean a blow to local industry' (1875 Public Health Act, cited in Mosley 2013) and in some instances was seen as a positive symbol of technological advancement. Pollution became a particularly dogmatic image of the industrial towns beginning in the Sublime period but lasting late into the twentieth century, a satirical postcard of the industrial period depicted Stockport as a Victorian woman wearing a large hat of

smoke with a Cheshire Cat muff with the slogan 'I'm waiting for you here at Stockport' (see image 5.22). This shift of tone in the Industrial Sublime depictions of the town (in contrast to the Pastoral) portrayed more negative aspects of industrialism that came to form national conceptions of the North.

Baines and Parson's description of the tiered industrialised valley of Stockport pervaded subsequent topographical accounts of the town throughout the nineteenth century with a continual rewording of their description. This was the result of a proliferation of topographical literature throughout the latter half century which compiled existing works on the towns (and the wider country), this can be seen in Lewis' account of the town which states 'the houses rise in successive tiers round the sides of the hill, from the base to the summit; and the numerous extensive factories elevated one above another, and spreading over the town, present, when lighted during the winter months, a remarkably striking appearance' (Lewis 1848:209). This succeeded in reinforcing the sublime character of the town to a wide audience as the description became a motif for Stockport. This reworking and re-presentation of the same subjects was also seen in the later depictions of the viaduct as the initial paintings and lithographs of the railway were repeated through the use of the same view points and scene proportions. The repetition of AF Tait's initial scene can be seen in the sketches and paintings of the Northern School artists LS Lowry's, Trevor Grimshaw, William Turner. Further examples can be seen in the repetition of scenes such as 'Stockport Viaduct from the South West' which was later re-recorded in 'Stockport from Brinksway 1906' by local artist E. E. Smith. These later re-presentations of the viaduct shifted its image from that of sublimity towards a symbol of industrial decline.



Figure 5.22 Stockport Postcard, unknown date, Stockport Image Archive

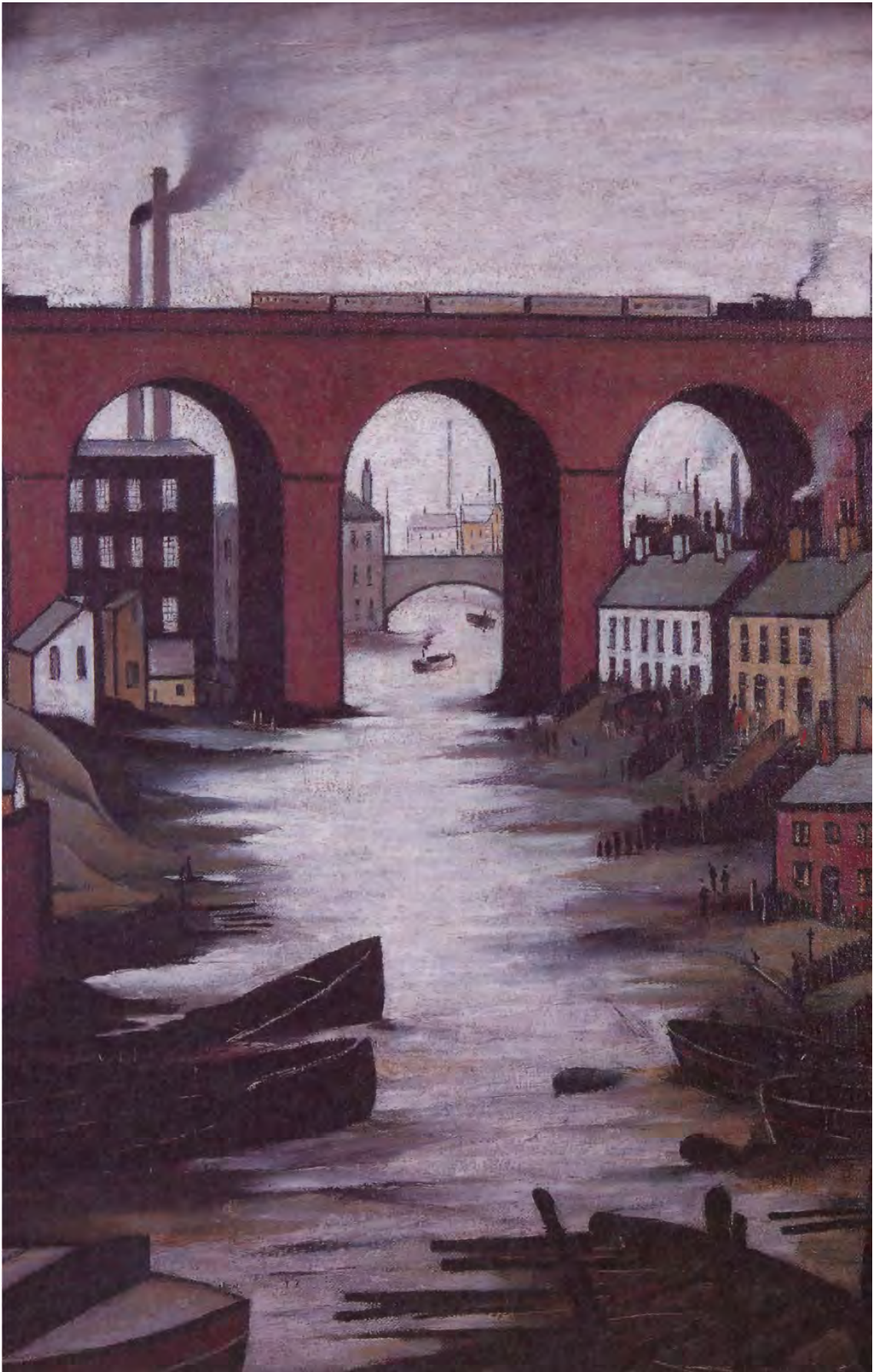


Figure 5.23 'The Viaduct' Lowry, 1930

Post-Industrial Reactions

Throughout the nineteenth century industrial subjects became tinged with the negative social and spatial effects it had influenced, exemplified in Engel's description of Stockport. Once industrialism began to decline in the region the motivation for the town's depiction shifted. Throughout the twentieth century the images of the northern towns provoked diverse reactions to the transition that ranged from grief, nostalgia, confusion and despair to hope and ambition. The period was marked by the rising national interest in Social Realism (Tucker 2011) that was typified by the work of Tom Harrison's Mass Observation project that 'sought, in opposition to the dominant mainstream, to give a voice to "the ordinary and non-vocal masses of Britain' (Harrison 1961, p. 14)' (Tucker 2011:4). As such the period saw a growth in the publication of Northern pictorial responses to industrialism and decline that were largely absent from the earlier periods.

The most iconic images of the loss of industry were those painted by the renowned Northern artist LS Lowry (1887-1976). Lowry's life spanned the pinnacle of industrial growth and through its subsequent decline and this motivated his continual painting and repainting of scenes across the industrial towns of the region. Paul Morley in his recent book about the North stated 'for Lowry the modern world begins with the building of Stockport viaduct...he returned to it again and again, elevating it to a ubiquitous sculptural symbol of the beginning and end of progress...' (Morley 2013:301). Lowry's sketches and paintings depicted the sublime character of the viaduct tinged with a despair and grief at the loss of a way of life. This melancholic sentiment re-presented the viaduct in the wake of industry as the 'end of progress' directly contrasting the excited work of the topographical artists in the earlier period (see image 5.23).

Lowry's work greatly influenced the work of a new group of artists that sought to record the scenes of the industrial landscape, moving from the domain of professional topographical artists to that of the native 'Northern School' (Davies 1989) of artists. The Northern School was comprised of men native to the region born between the years 1900-1950 whose style and subject of painting was similar in subject and tone to Lowry's. Davies explained 'a so called Northern School of urban, industrial and social realists forms a nucleus for a wider, multifarious movement in art that draws from the local peculiarities, traditions and unmistakable character of the North West.' (1989:9). The Northern School painted scenes across the industrial region of



Images from above: Figure 5.24 Heaton Lane, Stockport, Turner, c.1949, Figure 5.25 Stockport Viaduct, Delaney, c.1950, Figure 5.26 Stockport Viaduct, Lowndes, 1973, Figure 5.27 Stockport Viaduct, Grimshaw, c.1960, Figure 5.28 Chestergate Valley, Turner c.1950

Greater Manchester, yet several artists focused largely on Stockport throughout their careers, namely Alan Lowndes (1921-1978), the confusingly named William Turner (1920-2013), Arthur Delaney (1927-1987), Trevor Grimshaw (1947-2001). Each of the artists had a particular fixation on the viaduct and it was depicted continuously throughout the period 1930-1980 (see images 5.24 - 5.28).

*Below Fig 5.30 'Stockport' Lowndes, 1953
Bottom, Figure 5.29 'Stockport from
Pendlebury' Shaw, 1966*



Despite the interest in the viaduct the Northern School's viewpoints were not tied as closely to the main transport routes as the topographical artists of the earlier period and therefore were able to depict a wider range of views that resulted from their detailed knowledge of the town. This resulted in a diversity of scenes and viewpoints during this period and a greater focus on areas little shown previously, such as St Petersgate, Tiviot Dale Station, and the Market Place. There was also again a great overlap between the artists, with each re-presenting the same viewpoints in an iterative influence upon each others work (see images 5.29-5.30), this is exemplified in Lowndes 'Stockport', (1953) and Peter Shaw's 'Stockport from Pendlebury Hill' (1966). While many of the scenes were not directly industrial in their subject matter, they evoked the effects industry had had on the town, such as the corrosive effects of heavy pollution that are evident the Northern School's imagery.



Nostalgia was an underlying theme for the majority of the Northern School artists as many of the paintings were created retrospectively. Here, the artists reconstructed the landscapes of their childhood ignoring and hiding the signs of change that were evident in the landscape during the period. Waters stated the rise of Modernist planning and demolition of large areas of the industrial towns 'generated both a desire for the promises of the "new Jerusalem" offered by postwar planners and new capacities for nostalgically remembering a vanishing world' (Waters 1999:121). These themes were prevalent throughout the depictions of Stockport through the period linking the images to the national post-war politics of modernisation to the local effects of reconstruction.

To the Northern artists the pollution and smoke was a distinctive part of Northern life, and particularly life in Stockport. For Lowndes pollution created the particular atmosphere that he liked in the town. Once the Clean Air Act of 1956 brought an end to pollution it remained a key element in Lowndes' work, which brought a nostalgic element to his scenes. Davies states 'the trips made every year to Stockport through 1960's broke Alan's heart. With the Clean Air Act, and the shift in the local industrial economy, much of the Stockport of his youth had disappeared.' (1989:197-8). Similarly the artists continued to paint scenes of the town that had been demolished or reintroduced elements to the scene that no longer existed in the town. This work was created from memory, sketches and photography that allowed the artists to transcend time and the contemporary scene of the town. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century a particular emphasis on the symbols of transition, as opposed to symbols of industry, emerged in the artworks of the town. This was evident first in the slum clearance subject matter of Harry Kingsley (1914-1998) that depicted the processes of demolition in the town between 1960-1981 (see image 5.32). While Lowndes, Turner, Delaney and Grimshaw were depicting lost landscapes Kingsley's work focused on the act of transition and the landscapes this produced. The decimated areas of the town were contrasted against the everyday life of the town's residents in Kingsley's paintings evident in the women and children depicted in *Early Morning Stockport, Cheshire* (1974). This depicted loss in a more explicit way through the piles of debris and rubble that became the backdrop for people's lives throughout the period. Kingsley's work created a nostalgic view of a stable way of life by depicting the changes occurring in the town.

Figure 5.31 showing the location of the paintings of the Post-Industrial Reactions Period





Images showing the demolition subjects of Harry Kingsley, Figure 5.32 The Cooling Tower, Stockport, Kingsley, 1981, courtesy of Stockport Curatorial Services

Opposite Page: Figure 5.33 Early Morning Stockport, Kingsley 1974, courtesy of Stockport Curatorial Services



During the same period and in contrast to Kingsley's work, the local authority was presenting the product of the clearances as a symbol of progress. The town's Official Handbooks throughout this period focused consistently on the new Modernist architecture that had been constructed on the cleared sites. The photographic scenes presented Stockport as a newly built town with a new future that aligned itself in direct contrast to industrialism. The clean white lines, new materials and architectural forms presented a rationalised and progressive image of Stockport despite a continued presence of industrial and historical objects within the town. This can be seen in a particular visual focus on the Merseyway Shopping Centre (built c.1963), which became a primary advertising image of the local authority. The Merseyway not only presented a modern image and avoided industrial subjects but also de-valued the historic function of the Market Place as the primary retail area. Merseyway was used in conjunction with further Modernist developments on the cleared industrial lands to present the town as both successfully post-industrial and modern (see images 5.34 and 5.35). The advertisements of the the authority throughout this period minimised the visual links to industrialism in the scenes despite its continued presence in the built environment during the period. This



Images showing the Modernist advertisements of Stockport local authority c.1960-1980 Figure 5.34 'The New Maternity Unit at Stepping Hill Hospital' Figure 5.33 'Mottram Street Flats - An Award Winning Development by Stockport Corporation' both from Stockport Official Handbook, 1976





Figure 5.34 Merseyway Shopping Centre, from 'Nairn Across Britain, 1972

Modernist and progressive view of the town permeated the years 1960-1980 and contrasted sharply with the imagery of the 1956 Official Handbook that focused on industrial and tudor assets of the town. The local authority disseminated their new image of Stockport through town handbooks and postcards, further to this the new architecture received wider praise and dissemination through the BBC television series 'Nairn Across Britain' (1972). Here Nairn argued the Merseyway was an exemplary standard of contemporary design.

By 1979 the local authority was beginning to reengage with the historical areas of the town as the council commissioned a series of six postcards using historic photographs of the town (Stockport Advertiser, 4th October 1979:3). The postcards focused on Edwardian scenes of Stockport taken between 1910-1914 and depicted the area surrounding the Market Place and Hillgate showing a preference for non-industrial subjects. Seven years later in 1986 the local authority was beginning to re-present the town's industrial past through a series of postcards commissioned on the theme of Industry and Transport by the Council Leisure Services (Stockport Messenger, 12th December 1986:7). This had followed the listing of the railway viaduct and Wellington Mill in 1975 to Grade II* and Grade II respectively (Historic England 1975) which was the result of a shift of listing powers from central to local government (Cullingworth et al 2014:322). The listing of the two industrial structures was also reaction to the wider revaluing of Victorian industrial architecture that had begun to emerge in the country (Hewison 1987). The series of twelve 1986 postcards depicted the working life of Stopfordian's in the 1920's and as such the scenes focused on factory interior views of workers (Stockport Messenger, 12th December 1986:7). Yet the images presented a nostalgia for a past way of life that did not extend to the wider industrial environment of the town. As such the revaluing of industrial history into a heritage for the town in the 1980's focused only on very specific images of industry.

More recently Helen Clapcott's (b. 1952) depiction of the town has re-ensaged the link to industrialism through the careful representation of the contemporary town. Clapcott's depiction of Stockport has spanned the changes and redevelopment over the past thirty years (Lambert 2013). As a result she has continually re-presented the scene from the same viewpoint incorporating new developments but also reintroducing demolished elements. As such Clapcott's work is influenced by the nostalgia and retrospective views of the Northern School. While the majority of factory chimneys have been demolished in the town Clapcott substituted their vertical presence with the high rise tower blocks of Lancashire Hill, and the smoke of the industrial period with fumes rising from residential chimneys

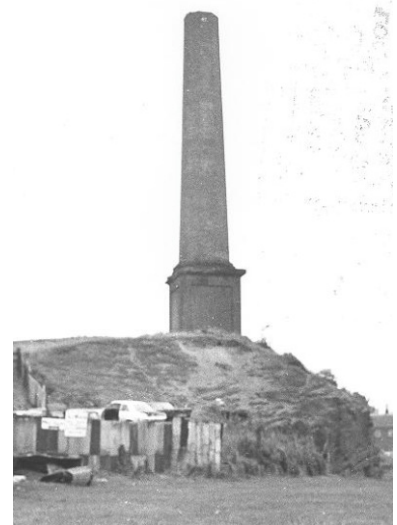


and from construction processes (see images 5.35). Further to this Clapcott routinely included the chimney of Travis Brook Mill (Orrel's Chimney) on Hunstman's Brow despite the demolition of the chimney in the 1980's (Ball 1983:15). This process of including demolished elements was the result of Clapcott's iterative process developing each painting from on site sketches (both contemporary and old) and a vast collection of photographs taken of the town throughout the thirty years.

Using this process Clapcott amalgamated the two subjects of demolition and construction in her paintings of the town echoing the transitional subjects of Kingsley. The two processes collide continually in Clapcott's work as the town is depicted in a constant state of change. The scenes show diggers, construction workers, lorries and cranes that are normally eschewed in conventional art as she focuses on the symbols of transition. The result is a busy landscape that depicts something of the anxiety for change in the town. Clapcott's bird's eye

Above Figure 5.35 'Round the Mills', Clapcott, 2012

Below Fig. 5.36 Orrel's Chimney, 1979, courtesy of Stockport Image Archive





Top Figure 5.37 Clapcott's Crowther Street depicting the scene of Lowry's painting of the same name in the process of reconstruction, 2013
Bottom Figure 5.38 Stockport, Eisler, 1991

perspective of the town reflects the viewpoint of the topographical artists yet it is met with an intimate knowledge of the town and the landscapes that she paints.

Clapcott's scenes are the result of field survey work sketches and photographs that capture both transient features (see image 5.37) and long standing symbols of the town, through the presence of the viaduct. She stated 'some of my friends who enjoy photography would deliberately take the train back and forth across the viaduct just to take that shot' (Mersey Basin Campaign 2007). This presents the later technology of photography that has allowed an new group of works depicting the view from the viaduct, evident in Georg Eisler's 'Stockport' 1991 (see image 5.38).

Photographer John Davies also focuses on the transitional aspects of post-industrialism, in his photography of the North, that engage particularly with the reconstruction of the town's identity (Gee 2010). Davies two published photographs of Stockport show the view of the town along Wellington Road and towards the viaduct, the key locations for the Industrial Sublime artists and commentators (see images 5.39 and 5.40). From these locations in Stockport the photographs depict two key areas of change over the past century, showing the mingling of old and new identities in the town.

Davies' work has been described as portraying 'a narrative constantly written over' (Gee 2010:330), this is an aspect of Stockport's more recent depiction that can be seen in both Davies' and Clapcott's work. Davies stated 'the thing that attracts me to Stockport in particular is that it has changed out of all recognition in recent times, yet it has not lost the traces of its long history' (Davies 1987:25). The depiction of the town has become more focused on transitional qualities and divergent uses of the past that communicate the level of change in the town. Yet Davies' work also ties in to the local authority's interest in re-presenting itself as the artist was commissioned by the council to create a series of photographs of the town in 1987 (Stockport Advertiser, 4th June 1987:5). Davies' experience as a (rural) landscape photographer led to the authority's decision to commission him suggesting the council's interest in depicting the town as less urban. John Baker, head of Stockport Museums at the time stated 'John's earlier work has included photographs of Northumberland, the Lake District and Scotland. We are looking forward to seeing some excellent views of the Stockport landscape' (Stockport Advertiser, 4th June 1987:5). This highlights a tension in the approach to both industry and urban subjects in the local authority during the 1980's especially when considered alongside the Industry and Transport postcards commissioned the year before in 1986. The postcards and photographs



Figure 5.39 Stockport Viaduct, Davies, c.1986, showing the complex built layering of Stockport and elements of deterioration documenting the 'traces' of the town's history.



Figure 5.40 Mersey Square, Davies, c.1986 . Davies' image focuses on the transitional aspects of the town while highlighting areas of constancy, described by Gee 2010 as a 'narrative constantly written over'.

were commissioned by different departments in the local authority that held contrasting ideas of history and heritage in the town, with the Museums and Art Gallery interested in non-urban subjects while the Council Leisure Services were interested in a particular vision of working-class history. This shows a lack of cohesive strategy towards the representation of the town which was met by a distinct desire to reframe the past in the 1980's.

Throughout this period between 1979-1989 aerial photography became a key feature in the newspapers of the town. While the town had been photographed from above since the 1920's as part of the national Aerofilms project, the increasing use of aerial photography in the planning and construction of the M63/M60 motorway created a large body of high resolution images (Baldwin and Baldwin 2004). The photographs of Stockport from the air charted the monumental changes occurring in the town which the local newspapers published on a regular basis (Stockport Advertiser, 8th August 1979, 10th September 1980, 5th February 1981, Stockport Express, 4th April 1974). The Manchester Evening News reported on the initial images 'here is an aerial view of the heart of Stockport, where the rapid rate of development is transforming the scene week by week' (Manchester Evening News, 3rd September 1965). The construction of the motorway presented the greatest level of post-war redevelopment while the technology of aerial photography allowed a catalogue recording the changes to the landscape.

For Clapcott the motorway presents a new landmark that adds to the historic layers of the town and is depicted repeatedly in her paintings. This is joined with the distinctive form of the Pyramid at King's Valley that presents not just a new symbol of the town but creates a visual marker for a lost industrial landscapes. Photographer Aidan O'Rourke stated 'shapes change cities. Stockport has rebranded itself with a pyramid of sharp edges of blue seen through the round headed railway arches.' (2004:17). In a similar process to the railway and Wellington Road, the motorway has presented a new viewpoint for the town. This viewpoint from and of the motorway has come to dominate contemporary depictions of the town, seen extensively in O'Rourke's photography of the M60 (see images 8.?). The contemporary artists and photographers of Stockport focus their viewpoints on the specific locations of transition, similar to that of the topographical artists. They present a view of Stockport that aligns to their particular motive for image making and in doing so present the same elements recurrently. Throughout each period these recurring elements come to form symbols of Stockport and form the basis of the visual currency of the town.



Figure 5.41 West, Clapcott, 2012

Transcending Styles

Three sections of the chapter have focused on the changing styles, viewpoints and symbols of Stockport throughout its representation. This section rather discusses the ubiquitous elements of the town that have transcended the stylistic and motivational preferences of the artists. The topographic nuances of Stockport have been imagined relatively consistently, despite the revolutionary transition of its urban form and character in the 18-19th century. The topography of the town defined the pattern of growth (discussed in the previous chapter) and influenced the style and form of architecture and infrastructure in the town from the early form of Hillgate to the more recent construction of the motorway.

As early as 1795 Aikin describes 'some of these houses have apartments hollowed out of the rock, and the appearance of the whole to one who surveys it closely is very singular. On the summit of the rock is an upper row of houses, completely encircling the market place, which is spacious and convenient.' (1795:443). While Lowry had a particular interest in the topographic details of industrial towns, he stated in an interview with Hugh Maitland 'steps and things...I liked doing steps...steps in Stockport...steps anywhere you like, simply because I like steps' (Sandling 2000:60). The importance of landform features dominates Clapcott's depictions of Stockport and are also evident in the naming of her paintings; 'Urban Valley', 'Built by the River', 'Sandstone Hills', 'Where Two Rivers Meet'.

The height variations in Stockport has presented artists, and visitors, with a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives from which to view the town. The views of the town were continually referenced throughout its history, although opinions vary of the aesthetic most concisely communicated as a 'grim but splendid' view (Pevsner 1969:121). Though the aesthetic (and what it represented) were not always deemed beautiful, the presence of views persisted throughout each of the descriptions. The consistent reference to the views of and within Stockport has made the experience of the town very visual, an aspect not traditionally equated industrial towns. Although views, prospects, and vantages seem a typical way to describe 'eyewitness knowledge', it diverges from descriptions of other similar industrial towns throughout each period. For example, Rochdale has a similar topography, and history to Stockport (discussed in previous chapters), the topography of Rochdale climbs steeply from the river Roch, nevertheless 'views' are rarely mentioned in descriptions of Rochdale (see Appendix 2). This is a result of the town's orientation to the topography as Stockport's infrastructure cuts across the contours providing views down into the valley while Rochdale's main streets pass along the valley bottom.

The depiction of Stockport has changed in style throughout the past three hundred years. This is a result of wider changes and trends in art that have formed the basis of each period of representation. This can be seen in the influence of the Pastoral, Picturesque, Sublime and Social Realism artistic styles. Alongside this the particular locations chosen as valuable viewpoints has changed throughout each period as a result of these stylistic conventions and the accessibility of particular areas of the town. As such the views created of Stockport through each period present only a limited version of the town which excluded areas that did not conform. This has resulted in the simplification of the image of Stockport.

The strict stylistic preferences of each period affected the content type and location of the viewpoint. Therefore, the earliest period was dominated by urban and rural views taken from the edge of the town, the second period was dominated by views from Wellington Road and the third period located almost exclusively in the valley. Each of these locations were predominant areas of change through their respective periods and aligned closely to the development of three transport infrastructures in the town that will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five. The study revealed a relationship between transport infrastructure and the creation and representation of particular images of the town that will be explored more later in the thesis. This presents interesting findings for functional urban strategies that traditionally have little interest in the visuality of the town as they can be seen to have a dramatic impact on both the development of an urban image and the representation of it. This is of great significance for the towns experiencing current re-imaging strategies.

The depiction of the town through scenes of transition overlooked more stable areas of the town. This was a result of the artists' shifting motives for painting the town which were influenced by national interests in urban growth and decline. Few artists were interested in scenes that did not depict the changing areas of the town. As a consequence they only provided a restricted view of the town. This means that the images depict a reality of the town yet they also exclude large areas and characters. Further to this scenes and images of the town were reinforced through their repetition by subsequent artists, strengthening the narrow vision of Stockport. It has been argued in earlier chapters that each of the towns have distinct visual differences and complex characters. Yet in this chapter it has been found that the stylistic conventions of each period and the exclusive preference for particular content types have made Stockport and the wider towns appear homogenous.

The survey of images also reaffirmed aspects that are distinctive images for Stockport. This can be seen in the recurring landmarks

of the Church, the Viaduct and the Market but also in less object oriented elements such as the topographical variations of the town. This understanding of what has made Stockport notable to those representing it can be utilised in an urban strategy that seeks to work with the existing image of the town rather than defining a new one. The next chapter explores this idea more fully through the analysis of the ideal urban images that have been proposed for Stockport in its town planning history.

06 A historical review of town planning in Stockport

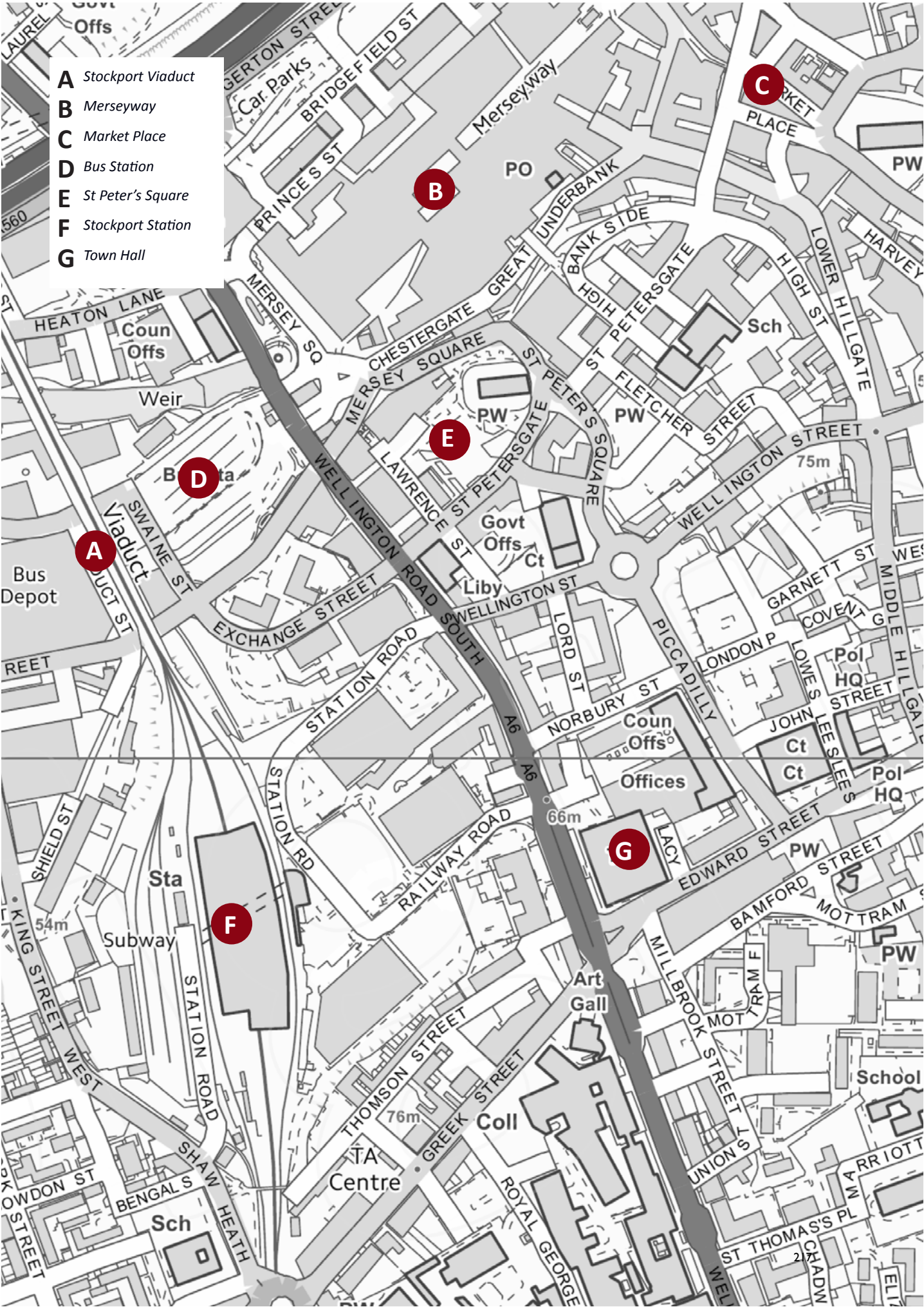
This chapter forms an enquiry into the visual history of urban planning in Stockport, to identify key issues related to the town's current development and to identify the valuing and devaluing of particular urban images in the planning of Stockport. This draws a direct comparison to the planning histories of the wider towns discussed in earlier chapters. A survey of the town's urban plans was undertaken using historic planning documents, local newspaper accounts, and council meeting minutes.

The aims of the chapter are to 1) to present the particular development of urban planning in Stockport, 2) identify the urban images valued and devalued through each period, 3) to critique the plans in reference to their spatial impact on Stockport and its urban image.

The chapter identifies the planned development of the town through the nineteenth century improvements to key development plans of the twentieth century. The chapter is divided into general planning periods of the Improvement Acts and the early planning attempts undertaken between 1800-1945. The second section discusses the post-war approach of the town through the plans of William Gardner (Stockport civil engineer) and Thomas Sharp from 1945-1968. This moves through to the third section which outlines the plans of the late twentieth century discussed as a 'post-Gardner' period of 1968-2000 before the final section focused on the BDP 'Future Stockport' plan.

Two key plans have had the greatest spatial impact on Stockport, namely William Gardner's 1945 plan and BDP's 'Future Stockport' plan 2005, the current town plan. Neither was fully implemented yet fragments of both plans scatter the town's current form. The wholesale construction of both plans was impeded in the first instance by the economic difficulties of the post-war period (Kynaston 2008) along with general confusion regarding emerging planning processes (Smith-Morris 1997) and more recently the financial crisis of 2008 affecting both public and private investment types.

These two plans sought to redefine Stockport's identity during periods of great uncertainty, they also hugely influenced subsequent planning approaches in the town. The two plans proposed a new image for Stockport based on accepted models of good urbanism and in doing so problematised the existing image of Stockport. The plans symbolise very different periods of development and approaches to planning. At 60 years apart the 1945 and 2005 plan highlight the changing ideas of urban problems and the divergent solutions that result from this. The context of post-war 'reconstruction' that occurred outside bomb damaged areas (see Larkham and Lilley 2001) coupled with industrial decline offered Gardner the opportunity to initiate great change in the town in 1945. Similarly, the context of Manchester's extensive rebranding coupled with the increasing inter-regional competition between the towns has led to the period of anxious change evident in the 2005 plan.



- A** Stockport Viaduct
- B** Merseyway
- C** Market Place
- D** Bus Station
- E** St Peter's Square
- F** Stockport Station
- G** Town Hall

Improvement Acts and Early Town Plans

Historical development of planning in Stockport

The improvement acts of the Victorian period are included in the discussion of Stockport's planning history as they represent initial local attempts to adapt the urban structure of the town accepted by central government.

As with each of the seven further towns the Victorian period in Stockport was marked by unprecedented urban growth and population increase. This led to a number of issues affecting diverse groups of the town's community that provoked Improvement Act submissions. The vast increase of residential areas put a strain on existing water supplies and sanitation that led to the proposal of Improvement Acts by voluntary groups, reformers and wealthy residents for the benefit of the wider town. At the same time the growth of industrial production and its associated infrastructure led to Improvement Acts initiated by wealthy industrialists for their own economic gain. Therefore many different groups converged to petition for improvement with varied motives resulting in somewhat disparate urban changes. A lack of early urban reforms was a particular issue at Stockport as the town lagged behind the other industrial towns in the improvement of drainage and paving (Manuscript: Friendly Remonstrance, anonymous author, 1850).

Initial Improvement Acts were made in Stockport in the late eighteenth century as the town saw a 370% population increase between 1750 and 1801 (taken from Arrowsmith 1997:264). Two connected Improvement Acts were drawn up in 1780 and 1785 for the widening of Churchgate and cleaning of streets and the levelling of the market place along with other improvements (Arrowsmith 2010:77). The plans were aborted but Churchgate was eventually widened in 1818 and the Market Place was levelled and paved in 1820 (ibid:80). The 1826 Police Act led to the gas lighting of the town's streets (Arrowsmith 1997:173).

The later Improvement Acts at Stockport focused on targeted elements (see figure 6.2), such as the Wellington Road Turnpike (1824 Improvement Act), the construction of the covered market (1860 Improvement Act) and St Petersgate Bridge (1864 Improvement Act). These early improvement acts had huge spatial impacts on the town despite their spatially focussed nature. The largest impact on the town resulted from the construction of a western bypass for the town at Wellington Road which allowed the faster flow of horse drawn traffic into and out of the industrial areas of the town. The road fundamentally altered the orientation of the town as new developments congregated along the easier route shifting the town centre away from the historic core of the Market Place.

The shift of the town westwards from the Market Place caused access issues with the historic area of the town which became effectively inaccessible from the west due to the densely built ravine of the Underbanks. This led to the demolition of a corner of the outer Market Place and construction of St. Petersgate Bridge (manuscript, 1864 Improvement Act) which allowed ground level access to the Market Place. The construction of the market building (manuscript, 1860 Improvement Act) four years earlier had been the result of sanitary reforms that contained and rationalised market functions (Schmeichen and Carls 1999).

A much wider ranging Improvement Act was approved by central government in 1837 that had been drawn up by the new administrative body of Stockport formed in the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 (manuscript, 1837 Improvement Act). This act again grouped together improvements for the construction of new streets, paving of existing streets and the construction of a new town hall (not undertaken until 1908). This general process towards the planning of larger areas was eventually made requisite by the national planning legislation in the early twentieth century.

In 1911 Stockport's local authority began discussions for a town plan based on the ideals of the Garden City movement (Town Planning Review 1911, Stockport Advertiser May 1911). Throughout this period the local authority was planning multiple civic projects from a new police station, law courts, public library, the widening of Chestergate and Prince's Street in 1910 (Antonioni 1971:5), to a proposal to culvert the River Mersey in 1906 (ibid:3) all of which would have been included in the wider town plan. Professor Charles H. Reilly of Liverpool School of Architecture was appointed to advise on the projects which is testament to the town's interest in civic improvement through the period (Stockport Advertiser, 10 June 1911). One year later a formal application was made to the local government board for the 'authority to prepare a town planning scheme' (Stockport Advertiser, 7 August 1912). But much like the varied fates of the earlier Improvement Acts the plan did not reach beyond embryonic stages. The plan appears to have been thwarted by persistent tensions within the local authority regarding the improvement of the town. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw perpetual debates about the siting, style and architecture of the new buildings and tensions were so great that they resulted in the resignation of council members creating a continual renegotiation of the existing committee members (1901-1930 press cuttings re: tenders 3:52, Stockport Archives) impeding the development of a plan.

The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 made town planning

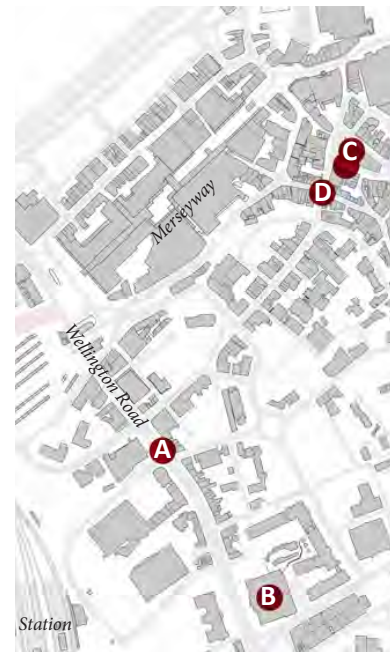


Figure 6.2 Stockport Improvement Acts

- A** 1824 Wellington Road
- B** 1837-1908 Town Hall
- C** 1860 Market Place
- D** 1864 St Petersgate Bridge

obligatory for authorities with a population exceeding 20,000. This act provided state subsidies for the clearance of slums, which was undertaken by the town, though not within a wider development plan. By the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 and the Housing Act of 1936 the local authorities were again encouraged to create development plans. Yet Stockport did not produce a plan throughout this period despite monumental changes taking place in the town centre, such as the eventual construction of the Merseyway Road in 1939.

1945-1968 Gardner- Sharp Plans

Stockport finally undertook its first complete development plan in 1945 once town planning became requisite in the towns. The act bound local authorities to the development and publication of town plans every five years which necessitated a thorough survey and analysis of the town using defined criteria to propose future land uses in the borough. Development plans attempted to remedy the issues of the town as a whole and incorporated complex and varied aspects that formed and influenced the town. The survey and analysis of the town through criteria set by national government helped to define key issues to be addressed by the plan. The plans relied heavily on the availability of national finances to fund the large-scale changes proposed for the town.

The 1945 plan for Stockport was undertaken by the civil engineer of the borough William F. Gardner who had been employed at the local authority since the 1920's and was instrumental in the design and construction of Merseyway Road in 1939 (Antoniou, 1971). The postwar period in Stockport saw the decline of both the textile and hatting industry (Arrowsmith 1997) as such, the plan came at a period of relative insecurity of the town's future.

Stockport's 1945 plan was comparably simpler than contemporaneous plans, such as the Manchester 1945 plan and even those of the wider industrial towns such as Oldham's Town Centre Plan 1947. This was possibly the result of a lack of training or experience and the resources available to Gardner. The plan envisaged wide ranging changes yet was vague in the detail and analysis of the town, it aimed to 'keep the best, improve the mediocre and abolish the worst' (Gardner, 1945:3). The Stockport document lacked an overall spatial layout of the proposed town which was substituted instead by simple axonometric drawings of the layout and style of specific areas in the town, with the greatest attention given to the proposed civic centre surrounding the Town Hall. The image projected for Stockport was one of Neo-Classicism with a heavy focus on the rationalisation of the town through zoning and the creation of imposing architectures within wide open spaces. Morley recently stated 'the town planners did not want a Stockport where Lowry with his musty tinted glasses felt at home... they wanted a Stockport where traces of the industries that had tired themselves out and failed to keep up with changing trends and minds were obliterated' (Morley 2013:347). Similar town planning ideas permeated both the Manchester and Stockport plan through zoning, the creation of civic centres, tangential traffic routes and the distribution of open spaces.



Figure 6.3 Gardner's 1945 Plan overlaid on current town

Key




-  Bus Station
-  Proposed New Buildings
-  Proposed Open Space

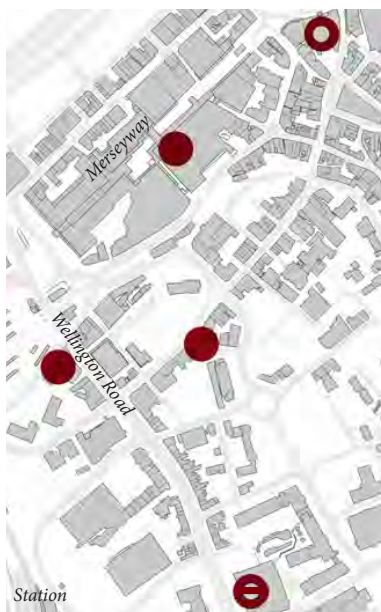


Figure 6.4 Gardner's 1945 Civic Centre Proposals

The Stockport plan sought to address a number of issues of the town, with the main focus on the traffic issues of Wellington Road. Gardner proposed a large orbital route diverting non central bound traffic to the east and west of the town at the Town Hall junction (see figure 6.3 and 6.4). Pedestrian and vehicular crossing of Wellington Road was minimised as far as possible to allow the free flow of traffic through the town. This led to the relocation of the bus station from its original site on Mersey Square to the opposite side of Wellington Road at Daw Bank, connecting the train and bus station on the West side of the road. A pedestrian and vehicular route was proposed to link the bus station with Mersey Square underneath the arches of Wellington Road. The newly completed Merseyway Road was discussed briefly to discourage the opening of shops along the route which was seen to encourage pedestrian traffic along an important vehicular route.

Key

-  Original Town Hall
-  Suggested sites for civic buildings 1837-1945
-  Site of current town hall



Further proposals included a new market hall to the North of the river and a neoclassical civic centre to the south of Wellington Road. The proposed civic centre settled the rumbling debate of the nineteenth century of the siting of the civic buildings. The proposed consolidation of the buildings between Greek Street and St Petersgate adopted the popular tastes of post-war town planning and ruled out an alternative suggestion of interspersed buildings located throughout the town at St Petersgate, Wellington / Mersey Mill sites, and the old Union Workhouse (see figure 6.5). Further suggestions were made to increase the open space quota of the town centre through the maintenance of the open land between Merseyway Road and Chestergate which had lain as open since the demolition of the riverside mills with the construction of the Merseyway road.

Figure 6.5 Civic Building Options Considered by the Local Authority Between 1837-1945

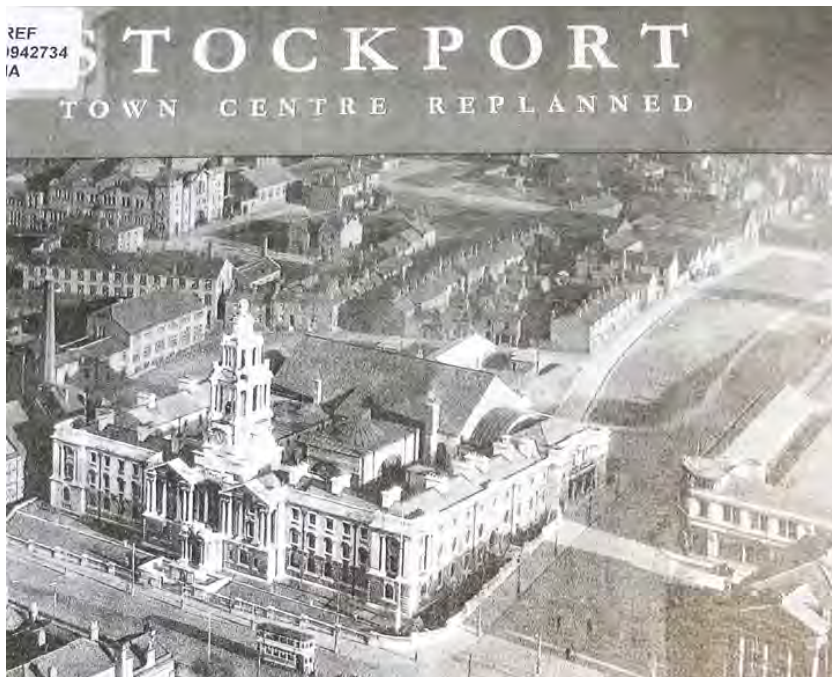


Figure 6.6 Thomas Sharp's Stockport Replanned, 1950

By the time of Thomas Sharp's commission at Stockport he had gained fame as a town planner through his popular writings on the English Townscape through 'Town and Countryside: Some Aspects of Urban and Rural Development' 1931, 'Town Planning' 1940, 'The Anatomy of the Village' 1946, and 'English Panorama' 1950. In the post-war period Sharp became a prolific reconstruction planner commissioned by local authorities to redesign their town and city centres in the wake of bomb damage. His most detailed and famous works focused on the cathedral cities of Durham (1940) and Exeter (1946) earning him a strong reputation as a town planner (though neither plan was implemented in full). Sharp was intricately involved in the development of town planning legislation through his work at the Ministry of Works and Buildings between 1941-1943 contributing to the Scott Report on rural land use and the Dudley Report on the design of houses (Erten 2008). His involvement in national legislation continued during his years in consultancy after his commission at Stockport through publications such as 'Design in Town and Village' (Sharp & Gibberd 1953) published for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. His influence as a planner also extended to presidential appointments for both the Town Planning Institute 1945-6, and the Landscape Institute in 1947.

Sharp developed a very personal response to the towns he redesigned and applied his own idea of Townscape that had developed throughout his professional career. Sharp's townscape was essentially urban and took precedents from the pre-industrial settlement types of England. He sought a defined contrast between urban and rural aesthetics that he felt was best exemplified in medieval towns of the country. While his aesthetic ideals were based on earlier periods of development he

used them as a model of urbanism rather than replicating their historic aesthetics.

Sharp developed a strong attitude towards industrial landscapes that is evident in most of his theoretical works. While a disparaging attitude towards industrial towns was common, Sharp's stemmed from his personal experience of his upbringing in Durham, a city surrounded by coalfields. He deemed the towns inhumane and responsible for the break in the cultural tradition of good English urbanism. His professional understanding of industrial landscapes was greatly developed through his first major commission for the heavily industrialised South-West Lancashire conurbation in 1930. His report demonstrated a detailed understanding of the diverse landscapes and towns that form the region between Liverpool and St Helens, again with a personal approach that was also evident in his regional planning.

Conversely this report also showed the beginning of Sharp's fall out with the town planning profession over a disagreement of the authorship of the publication (Larkham 2001). Throughout his career he became notoriously difficult through disputes on most of his plans and projects. While no major disputes have been recorded for the Stockport plan quite significant differences of opinion are evident between Sharp and the local authority.

Little has been written about the Stockport plan, beyond the high cost of Sharp's commission in the town (Larkham 2001) and a short reference to the civic centre at Stockport representing an anomaly in Sharp's work (Larkham 2004).

Figure 6.7 Sharp's proposed civic gardens at base of Chestergate cliff



Sharp's plan for the town covered the central area of Stockport from the viaduct as the western boundary, to St Mary's Church on the east, Princes Street to the north and Greek Street to the south (see figure 6.8). The plan was chiefly concerned with the siting of major functions including sections on traffic, retail, open space and housing (in order of proportionate weighting in the plan). Similar to the 1945 plan, the majority of discussion and detail was made regarding traffic easement in the town. Sharp's proposals for Stockport were remarkably similar to Gardner's; proposing a bus station at Daw Bank, new market hall, public open space at Chestergate and, in contrast to Sharp's other work, a civic centre.



Figure 6.8 Sharp's 1950 Plan overlaid on current town

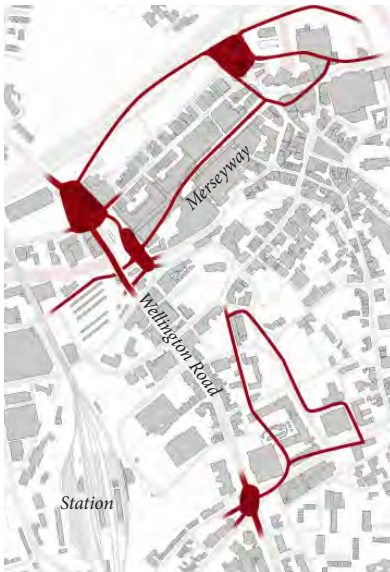


Figure 6.8 Sharp's proposed traffic solutions

with striking architecture (Sharp 1940).

The feature of the cliff and the law courts was to be heightened by a formal park at the base of the cliff connecting to Merseyway Road. Sharp envisaged this relationship between the landscape and architecture to be as dramatic as Castle Rock at Edinburgh (Sharp 1950:13). While the open space at the base of Chestergate was first proposed by Gardner in 1945, his plan gave little detail regarding the function or style of the space. Sharp rather proposed a formal urban park layout to reinforce the urban nature of the site as opposed to the naturalistic style of parks in urban areas corresponding to his writings and earlier works (see Sharp 1931). In these ways Sharp gave detail and personalised design approach to Gardner's broad town planning ideas.

While the 1945 plan gave little information regarding the preservation or demolition of buildings, Sharp's plan proposed an extensive rebuilding of the town through the phased demolition of the majority of town's building stock (see figure 6.9). Seventy of Stockport's buildings were deemed sound with the remaining categorised as 'obsolete' for immediate demolition or 'obsolescent' for future rebuilding (Sharp 1950:5). Despite large scale demolition, Sharp planned to rebuild the town along the original street pattern and scale of the former structure. This phased approach to rebuilding is also exemplified in his plan for Exeter (Sharp 1946).

For Sharp, the layout of Stockport was a significant aspect to be retained. The irregular pattern of the streets surrounding the marketplace fit well with the irregular aesthetic of Sharp's ideal of the English townscape. Although the majority of buildings were to be demolished, the original pattern of these streets was to be reconstructed maintaining the medieval pattern. The curve of the streets allowed a sequential revelation of views that Sharp enjoyed in pre-industrial towns which he termed a 'kinetic vision' (Sharp 1968) in his published writings. Yet equally important in Sharp's decision to retain the original street pattern was the complexity of the topography along the streets that would have complicated any drastic changes to layout. Sharp saw the topographical complexities of Stockport as the opportunity 'to create some special and striking effects of of urban landscape' (Sharp 3:1950).

Beyond general zoning Sharp introduced a townscape aesthetic to the town. This can be seen in a series of architectural relationships to frame and reveal views set up along Wellington Road, Merseyway, Piccadilly, Greek Street, Chestergate, and the use of open spaces to divert and obstruct views at Mersey Square, the Market Place, and again along Wellington Road and Chestergate. Though these devices

are not discussed in the plan they are evident through the examination of the design layout of the town against Sharp's previous commissions.

Contrary to Gardner's plan, Sharp proposed a series of roundabouts and a small bypass route of the town centre to deal with the traffic issues of Wellington Road. This was a typical demonstration of Sharp's unique approach to road layout which contrasted the general consensus for orbital routes at the time.

The plan was published as a 16 page black and white booklet outlining the major proposals through plans, artistic illustrations, models and diagrammatic explanations (see figure 6.9). The publication was accompanied by an exhibition held at Stockport Art Gallery July in 1950 and a short series of semi public talks by Sharp.

The short booklet of the master plan had a simple layout with minimal colour to reduce the cost of publication. This is particularly evident in comparison to Manchester's long and highly detailed study of the 1945 Plan (Perkins and Dodge 2010) and Sharp's earlier plans published by the Architectural Press. There was little space in the published plan for survey and analysis with the focus mainly on the proposals. The restrained production also resulted in decreased quality as the reduction of colour plans to black and white made them difficult to read. The plan was split equally by text and imagery with the greatest amount of text dedicated to traffic easement in the town. Only two illustrations were included in the plan, one overall master plan, one demolition plan, two detailed plans, and one image of the model. The illustrations for the project highlight the image of the English village scene that was to be constructed in Stockport.

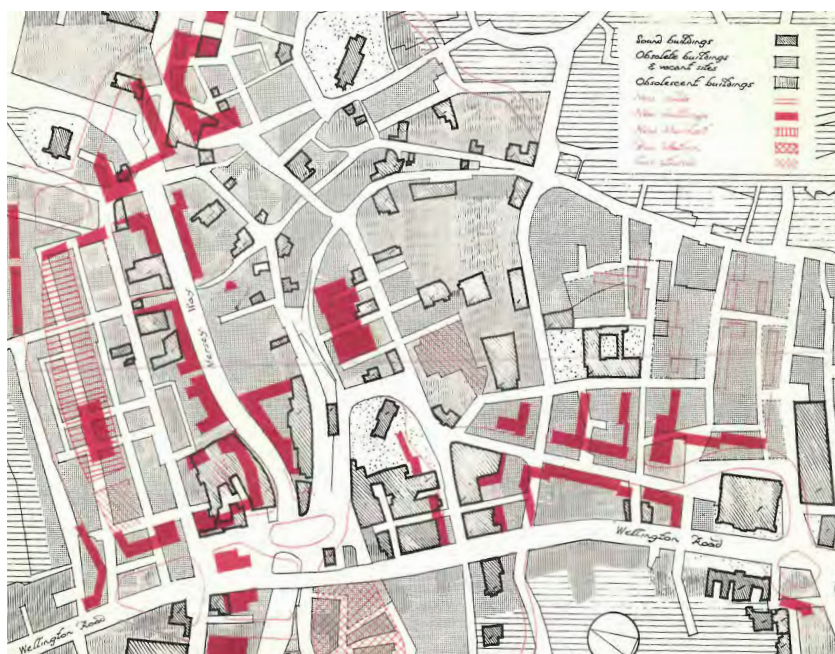


Figure 6.9 Sharp's original proposed demolition and phasing

Further to the publication of the booklet, the discussion in the local newspaper and series of public talks and exhibition allowed the public to gain a further understanding of the plans. The level of public engagement appears to have been small with just three public comments published in the local newspaper, while Sharp's address drew a crowd of 100 residents. The concerns raised both in the newspaper comments and questions at Sharp's public debate showed a concern for the cost of the proposed works, despite the local headline running as 'A Cheap Scheme' (Stockport Advertiser, 29th June 1950). Economic worries headlined the local newspapers throughout 1950 'Has production peak been reached?' (Stockport Express, 8th June 1950) and 'Drift to economic disaster not yet halted' (Stockport Express, 1st June 1950) as the industrial towns slid into terminal decline. No comments showed evidence of concern over the level of demolition planned for the town, highlighting the general consensus for modernisation in the post-war period (Ravetz 1980).

1951-1968 County Borough Plan

Sharp's plan was adopted by the council in 1951 and integrated in a larger scheme authored by Gardner covering the entire borough. This plan included a housing strategy and zoning for the wider area. The 1951 Written Statement provided a little more detail on the proposed plans which were directed at improving living conditions through the 'amelioration of substandard and overcrowded housing' (Stockport MBC 1951:3) and a greater quantity and distribution of public open spaces throughout the borough. The 1951 survey quantified the borough's open space at 409 acres, proposing to more than double this amount to 1027 acres by 1956. Zoning was undertaken in the plan to relocate 'non-conforming users' (Stockport MBC, 1951:5) continuing the sanitary reforms of the town through the separation of industry and housing. Finally, traffic again was a key aspect of the plan with the aim to 'promote the smooth and safe flow of traffic' (ibid:6) in the town.

The plan continued within the 1945 framework, proposing a civic centre surrounding the town hall though Sharp's contribution to develop a separate court area was dropped. The traffic solutions by 1951 had become much more modest as Gardner's orbital route and Sharp's bypass were deemed too technically difficult. The traffic proposals were replaced by a single route connecting Mersey Square and Daw Bank beneath the arches of Wellington Road. The proposals for the new bus station and market hall were approved by the time of the 1951 written statement, though the town had to wait thirty years until the bus station was finally opened.

The next town plan was written in 1958, again authored by Gardner, and worded almost exactly the same as the 1951 plan. The only additions to the plan were made by external bodies such as the electrification of the London- Manchester railway line. Despite the same aims and proposals as the 1951 plan, (and largely the 1945 plan) none of the proposals had been undertaken. Instead, within this period large areas of slum clearance had been undertaken outside the proposals of the development plan on a case by case basis. The Greek Street - St Petersgate areas was cleared as part of the slum clearance during this period to allow the development of the civic centre to begin.

1968-1981 Post-Gardner

The 1968 plan was the first written for the town without the input of Gardner. The plan again shadowed the 1945 plan with most proposals in construction or advanced development, therefore the plan cites the civic centre and the bus station as proposed additions to the town. Yet great shifts were proposed regarding the traffic issues of the town following the publication of the Buchanen Report in 1963, through the addition of two major town routes and the incorporation of two Greater Manchester routes. The plan proposed an east-west bypass which would become the M56 along a similar line (though larger scale) to Sharp's bypass proposal. The plan also proposed a realignment of the A6 to shift the main traffic route again to the west of the town, both routes were to be built to 'urban motorway standards' (1968) (see figure 6.11). A smaller addition was proposed to the existing Wellington Road through a split level junction to allow the pedestrianisation of Castle Street. Manchester's tangential routes were to pass the the Northern edge of the town centre through the Manchester bypass and the south eastern edge of the borough by the Manchester Eastern bypass. Finally the plan also cites an ongoing aim to improve the open space of the borough which was still estimated at 409 acres almost twenty years after the proposal to double the acreage.

A 1976 plan for the town focussed on the housing in the wider borough and by 1998 a huge change had been instigated in the development plans which began to have a less spatial focus in the form of Unitary Development Plan.

Realisation of the plans

The 1945 plan remains the most successful plan in terms of physical

Figure 6.10 Gardner's Influence





Figure 6.11 1968 Traffic Proposals

impact, despite the protracted construction time. The bus station finally opened in 1980, the civic centre opened in the 1970's, both of which shifted the twentieth century development of the town towards Wellington Road magnifying the importance of the route to the town. Despite the lack of immediate application the 1945 plan remained highly influential in the subsequent development of the town and was still evident in the plans covering the period up to 1981.

The final civic centre lacked the neoclassical style of Gardner's plan and the subtlety of Sharp's proposals for the centre was also lost. The development of the complex adapted Sharp's road layout and building placement, a key aspect of his approach to townscape. The layout of Greek street remained straight as its original configuration contrary to Sharp's proposals to curve it. The new connection between Greek Street and Wellington Street proposed by Sharp was constructed, but again straightened and moved further from the Town Hall. The straightening of the roads removed a key stylistic device of the townscape movement: the visual logic of the curved streets to frame, conceal and reveal views through the varied spatial relationships of buildings.

The development of retail space along Merseyway was one of Sharp's ideas to be adopted and adapted in the town contrary to Gardner's proposals to maintain the primacy of the road as a vehicular route. Yet the final development of Merseyway went beyond Sharp's proposals and the road was pedestrianised and surrounded on three sides by a mall development. The development of the mall affected the surrounding town centre, yet occurred outside the proposals of any of the town's development plans. Merseyway Shopping Centre further boxed in the route of the road, ignoring Sharp's plans to improve the connections between the north and south of the road. The proposal of a large traffic roundabout at Mersey Square was also changed into a public space as frontage to the Merseyway mall. Again the course of the road/new pedestrian street was straightened ignoring the subtleties of Sharp's townscape.

Sharp's northern bypass proposal appears to be the basis of the M56/A560 (now adjacent to the M60) connecting Portwood to the west of the town. When initially proposed in 1950 the technical complexity of the project was deemed impossible, with one Stockport resident remarking 'anyone standing on Lancashire Bridge and looking over the river in the direction of Portwood, can judge for themselves the difficulties involved in carrying out the new road, skirting the Tiviot Dale chapel...' (Stockport Advertiser, 6th July 1950:4).

The construction of Merseyway Shopping Centre obstructed the development of the proposed civic park. Again the eventual

developments of the town ignored the 'art of architectural relationship' (Sharp 1953:10) proposed by Sharp through the loss of the park contrasted against Chestergate cliff. The eventual construction of the Merseyway shopping centre treated the street at Chestergate as the back-of-house with ramp access to the centre's rooftop car park.

The scale of demolition proposed for the town was greatly scaled back and many of the seventy buildings deemed 'sound' by Sharp were demolished in the proceeding years, conversely buildings suggested for demolition were retained. The largest areas of demolition were at the Piccadilly residential area (to accommodate the Civic Centre) and Daw Bank industrial area to the west of Wellington Road (to accommodate the bus station).

Gardner's personal influence on the spatial development of the town was huge (fig. 6.10). Originally trained as a civil engineer, Gardner's proposals lacked a sophisticated understanding of town planning and focused greatly on easing the flow of traffic through the town. Each of Gardner's plans and projects sought to protect Wellington and Merseyway Roads from any traffic disruptions, yet through moving all major civic functions along the Wellington Road axis he consolidated the traffic problems of the town and undermined the primacy of the market place as the centre of the town (though this was in process from the 1904 decision to move the town hall to Wellington Road). Gardner also had a great spatial effect on the town through the slum clearances undertaken on a street by street basis rather than according to a larger plan.

Throughout the development plans published by the local authority, they became less spatially focused with each plan. This was a result of the particularly problematic experience of implementing the plans in Stockport but can also be seen as a general deterioration in the interest in town planning within the local authority. This can be seen in the relatively progressive years that saw the commission of Prof. CH Reilly through to Thomas Sharp in 1950. The waning interest in spatial planning witnessed nationally and its specific form locally resulted in recent plans proposing no spatial changes to the form of the town (for example the 1998 Unitary Development Plan). It is not until 2005 with the commission of BDP that the town began to show a renewed interest in its spatial form.

Future Stockport 2005

Building Design Partnership, an international architectural practice were commissioned for the 2005 master plan for Stockport. The practice has a strong connection to the North through the early work of the partnership's founder George Grefnell-Baines, opening his practice in Preston, Lancashire in 1937 (White 1987). Grefnell-Baines not only contributed to the architecture of Preston but also had a keen interest in the conservation of the town's historical architecture (Hatherley 2012:76). Between 1937 and 1970 the practice grew and opened studios in Blackpool, Rochdale, Manchester along with wider UK locations and undertook projects in many of the northern industrial towns (White 1987). Further to this association with the towns, the practice gained recognition through the commission of Grefnell-Baines for the Power and Production pavilion of the Festival of Britain 1951 as the practice had become synonymous with northern architecture and therefore industry (Hatherley 2012:75).

Currently the partnership's head quarters are located in Manchester and continue to produce plans for towns and cities throughout the north west. The practice were involved in the post-1996 regeneration of Manchester and the more recent development of Liverpool¹. The practice also currently works on projects in the industrial towns such as Rochdale River Roch regeneration and Oldham Old Town Hall (both discussed in previous chapters). BDP's mission statement is to 'work closely with users, clients and the community to create special places for living, working, shopping, culture and learning across the world.' (BDP, 2014). The practice has changed significantly from the early work of Grefnell-Baines, in the structure and organisation of the company (Hatherley 2012:77) from a cooperative structure towards a limited company.

Main Proposals

The master plan covers the town centre of Stockport roughly from the M60 as the northern boundary and the Town Hall - Art Gallery section as the southern limit (fig 6.12). The plan focused on a larger east-west town centre area than Sharp and Gardner, expanding to the Portwood industrial estate to the east and stretching across the viaduct to the Edgeley housing estate.

The plan reviews the economy, policy and physical condition of the town centre to develop 'key infrastructure projects' (BDP 2005:5) that focus on the regeneration and creation of public space. A background report, vision for the town and a set of detailed projects structure the report.

Figure 6.12 Future Stockport BDP 2005

Key

- Proposed New Buildings
- Proposed Open Space



offering 'net additional commercial floorspace of up to 1million ft2' (BDP 2005:x). Key retail areas were planned for development along the M60 and older retail areas were connected through a 'retail circuit' (BDP 2005:10) of public space and anchor stores. Within the plan public space forms the connecting structure between the retail and leisure areas of the town and is seen as a prime spot to redefine the image of the town.

Public space therefore acts as both a physical infrastructure and a marketing tool. The main public space proposals were drawn up for Mersey Square, St Peters Square, St Andrew's Square, along with a new riverside park which form the retail circuit when coupled with the recently regenerated market place. These focus on key points along an east-west pedestrian corridor largely avoiding the major traffic route of the A6.

The strategy to increase the retail economy within the industrial towns

is not new. Reports on the retail provision within the towns and the region were published in the post-war period as the reduction in population impacted the central areas (for instance see University of Manchester, Dept. Of Town and Country Planning, 1964), this was also coupled with the need for more employment opportunities in the wake of industrialism. BDP was particularly central to the early projects of retail focused regeneration in the declining industrial towns with their seminal project at Blackburn between 1965-1977 and their later development at Rochdale Exchange Shopping Centre completed in 1978. These town centre redevelopment projects created a new image



Cheelergate Looking Towards Mersey Square



Figure 6.13 above right taken from BDP Future Stockport, 2005
Fig. 6.14 above left Market Street Manchester

of modern retail in conjunction with the demolition of the obsolete image of industry as part of the wider road restructures and clearances of the 1960-1980 period. The approach has shifted over the past fifty years from that of complete rebuilding towards targeted measures of high impact projects.

While the style and approach towards the existing town has evolved through the twentieth century, the fundamental model of retail as a regeneration tool has continued. This form of private-led regeneration can be seen as the result of the failure of the post-war plans to find financial backing (Leary and McCarthy 2013:57). Instead the regeneration of the towns has become increasingly market led in order to fund urban projects and could be likened more with the improvement acts of the nineteenth century that were heavily influenced by the demands of the industrialists. In this way the master plans drawn up for the towns, such as Future Stockport, become both an advertisement for potential investors and physical model for the future town. This skews the role of the designer as the improvement of the physical fabric of the town holds tension with the financial desires of the investors. This is evident in the Future Stockport plan which tries to address the urban issues of the town centre through the creation of new floorspace and a new contemporary image for the town.

The new public space and buildings planned for Stockport sought to update the 'unique but backward looking viaduct brand into a contemporary and progressive but still unique statement and logo' (BDP 2005:13). This quote highlights the level of crossover between the urban design plan and branding strategy as the physical infrastructure of the railway is explicitly discussed as not just an image associated with the town, but as a logo. This need to create an appealing contemporary image to investors problematises the existing image of the town in both its obsolete and working infrastructures.

The regeneration of Stockport's image focused on the highly visible area of Mersey Square in BDP's plan. This proposed the creation of a large circular public space fronting the Merseyway shopping centre, crossing beneath Wellington Road and incorporating the bus station to the west. A central landmark feature was proposed for the space - 'The Source' a large water feature referencing the River Mersey below the square. The new public space would be anchored by a new transport interchange, library and cultural centre visible from Wellington Road and the viaduct to become the 'locally and nationally recognised centre of Stockport' (BDP 2005:VIII).

Further secondary public spaces were focused on areas of the town with the room to accommodate new retail floorspace, centring on St Peter's Square connecting with Wellington Road and the new space of St Andrew's Square connecting to a new retail mall recently renamed 'Red Rock' along the edge of the M60.

St Peter's Square was the first major regeneration project to result from the BDP Future Stockport Plan, which created a public space surrounding St Peter's Church. In 2014 it was announced that the bus station will undergo regeneration as a transport hub, first outlined in BDP's 2005 plans (Manchester Evening News, 11th July 2014), to begin in 2015/16. The transport hub will link together the train and bus station beneath the viaduct and create a space for a metro link extension from Manchester (ibid). Further to this, the retail plans for the M60 corridor were approved in January 2015 (Manchester Evening News, 23rd January 2015) to create the 'Redrock' retail/leisure facility, initially named 'Bridgefield' in the BDP plan.

Realisation of the plan

St Peter's Square is the most significant regeneration project to be constructed so far from the BDP plan. The project can be seen to embody the new image for Stockport set forward in the master plan. The square was redesigned in 2007 and is situated to the south of Merseyway and east of Wellington Road. The site is on the grounds



surrounding St Peter's Church (1770) and is bordered by largely Victorian era architecture of bank chambers and institutional buildings. Historically the site accommodated the church parsonage, public baths, a school, cinema and offices. The site was an important traffic junction for trams in the early twentieth century, operating as a secondary stop to Mersey Square.

Figure 6.15 Mersey Square proposals showing the Source water feature, taken from BDP Future Stockport, 2005

The redesign of the square took several precedents from the regeneration of Manchester's Piccadilly Gardens which can be seen in the layout, style and function of the space. Similar to Piccadilly, the new open space incorporated a new office block providing both a financial return and a contemporary backdrop that re-contextualises the site's historic features. Another parallel with Piccadilly Gardens can be seen in the design layout which is best understood from above (Byass 2010) (see fig. 6.16-6.17). A sweeping pathway creates a pedestrian link between Wellington Road and the market and the surrounding building plots are mirrored in the paving of the square. The statue of Richard Cobden was relocated 48 meters into the square moving it from its original site at a busy traffic junction. The design used materials similar to that of Piccadilly gardens.

Figure 6.16 right St Peter's Square, BDP
Figure 6.17 below Piccadilly Gardens,
Manchester



The siting of the square is the result of the economic logic of the master plan creating the retail circuit between old and new retail areas of the town. In this way the site does not conform to the spatial logic of public squares which traditionally intersect busy pedestrian routes (Gehl 2011). While the square is central to the main areas of the town (see fig. 6.18) no major pedestrian routes cross the square. Two weak pedestrian routes skirt the edge of the square but these are severed by roads and ground height differences that isolate the square. As the only project to be completed so far the square is successful in creating a Mancunian contemporary image but lacks visibility through use and positioning to shift the image of the town.

Further examples of the influence of Manchester's regeneration on Stockport can be seen in the re-contextualisation of historic features. The Manchester plan saw a variety of strategies to re-present the city's past through place naming practices (such as Spinningfields, Cotton Field Park in New Islington that reference historic land uses in contemporary areas), the re-contextualisation of historic objects such as the movement of Victorian statues at Piccadilly Gardens and the reinterpretation of the the past (seen in the sanitised narrative of Castlefield). Each of these strategies can be seen in the BDP future Stockport plan. The use of historical nomenclatures can be seen in the 'Arches' and St Andrew's Square. The re-contextualisation of historic features can be seen in the movement of the Richard Cobden statue St Peter's Square (Manchester Evening News, 15th February 2007), and the re-imagining of the viaduct within a contemporary public plaza (see image 6.15). Finally, the reinterpretation of history can be seen in the landmark 'Source' proposed for Merseyway Square which seeks to relink the town to the River Mersey.

Much has been written by other authors on retail led regeneration (such as Instone et al. 2006) and the tension this creates with the

localised economies of existing smaller shopping areas. The location of Red Rock will compete with the existing retail areas of the town economically but also visually due to its proximity to the regional route of the M60. The proposal creates a large area of retail and focuses on encouraging new investment through image making rather working within the current structure of the town.

Rebranding public space has become a key tool to draw investment into the town, which is achieved through the creation of a contemporary image. This ambition to rebrand the town to encourage investment causes friction with the existing image and form of the town. Aspects of the town are valued (or devalued) based on their conformity to the image deemed attractive to investors. From this perspective, the existing images (and therefore physical aspects) of Stockport are problematic due to their association with past models. This positions the ambition to protect and enhance the local distinctiveness of the town (referenced in the BDP plan) in direct tension with the need to create a new image. The need for investment reduces the qualities of the town to economic value judgements based on image and branding.




This again draws similarities to the regeneration of Manchester, with the key public space projects of Hanging Ditch and Piccadilly Gardens. Both squares constructed a new image for Manchester through new aesthetics, materials and layouts in highly visible locations at the junction of major railway stations and retail. Both projects commissioned internationally famous architects for the design of the spaces to cultivate a new global image for the city. This regeneration began a new aesthetic for Manchester which positioned itself away from the redbrick and concrete of the Victorian and Modernist city period respectively. The new materiality saw the profusion of glass, grey/blue slates and pale natural stone to the traditional palette of the city. With the success of the rebranding of Manchester these materials and layouts have developed into an aesthetic of legitimacy in the region which are continually redeployed in the wider industrial towns to signify successful regeneration and attract potential investment.

While the visual references proposed for the town are region specific their aesthetic is global, echoing the reimagining of Manchester as a global city. While Manchester's branding into a competitive global city was successful in the creation of a post industrial image, the level of competition does not seem immediately viable for a smaller town such as Stockport due to lower private investment interest. Yet the Mancunian model also creates a tension with the ambitions of the local authority in their continual bids for city status. Through engaging the accepted urban image of Manchester the town reduces

its likelihood of gaining city status due to the concerns of the judges regarding the town's character (discussed in earlier chapters). As such the town needs to focus on developing urban proposals that integrate and engage Stockport's existing image and build on unique aspects that mark it as different in character to that of Manchester.

Figure 6.18 Pedestrian Routes in relation to St Peters Square

Key

-  Major Public Spaces
-  Pedestrian routes
-  St Petersgate Square



Stockport's planning history largely aligns with regional narrative developed in the previous chapter (evident in post-war Gardener plan and BDP's image plan) but occasionally diverges from this, evidenced in the town's particular struggles to both develop and implement urban plans seen in the fate of the 1911 plan. The two plans of Gardner and BDP have had the greatest impact on Stockport, yet planning or the creation of town plans specifically has not been a significant factor in the spatial development of the town. Instead the development of Stockport has been influenced more by piecemeal development and transport infrastructures than urban design, an aspect shared among the industrial towns. This creates a major question for the spatial logic of the Stockport that will be interrogated through the urban changes of the town in the next chapter.

The plans for Stockport highlight significant changes in the role of master plans over the past fifty years and particularly the shifting images that they impart. The shift from comprehensive planning (and its rationalised images) to neoliberal models (accompanied by branded images) is a particularly strong narrative in the experience of Stockport. Each of the plans from Gardner, Sharp and BDP constructed a new image for the town based on widely accepted contemporaneous models of urbanism. Gardner's plan reimagined Stockport along visually referencing the modern images of the newly emerging profession of town planning, Sharp's plan envisaged the redesign of Stockport based on pre-industrial English urbanism while BDP's Future Stockport visualised Stockport as Mancunian. All plans sought to achieve these very different aims through the redesign of public space in the town, through the creation of civic centres, urban parks and plazas in highly visible locations.

In each of the plans the existing image of Stockport was in direct tension with the proposed image. This resulted in proposals that compete and contradict with the spatial and visual structure of the town. While Sharp's plan showed a greater level of engagement with the existing town than Gardener and BDP, the English town aesthetic preferred by Sharp was discordant to that of the industrial town (something which Sharp wrote about extensively). In this sense, none of the plans engaged with the existing image of Stockport, an approach which is only evident in the context of the industrial towns in Cullen's Bolton Plan 1963 discussed in the previous chapter.

Most research on town planning focuses on the political and national development of the profession and legislation (such as Cullingworth et al 2014, Hall 2002, 2010, Ward 2004) or on the biography of particular town planners (such as Larkham 2003, 2004, Pendlebury 2004, 2009). While this is useful in the development of a town planning canon it

has created a large knowledge gap on layered impact of planning on specific places. There is also a lack of research on normative practices of town planning, such as those undertaken by in-house planners. This is a particular oversight in the context of the industrial towns whose redevelopment was largely the result of in-house planners and their shifting attitudes towards good urban design. This chapter has gone some way to begin to piece together a place - based tradition of urban planning, something which could be further developed in understanding the urban history of the industrial towns.

The next chapter will explore the urban development of Stockport outside town planning schemes in order to link urban image to the built environment. This will look at key spaces and elements that have contributed to Stockport's urban image through time.

07 A Narrative of Urban Change in Stockport

Stockport has a complex and somewhat illegible layout on first sight, this chapter will discuss the shifts in landscape appropriation that have resulted in different visual characters and urban images in the town. Rather than the result of urban plans, the development of Stockport has been dominated by the transport infrastructures of road, rail and motorway. This chapter discusses the impact of these infrastructures on the visual character of Stockport's central area and their role in informing the town's urban image. This develops a narrative to understand the spatial and aesthetic logic of Stockport.

The aims of the chapter are to 1) explore the specific urban development of Stockport 2) interrogate the spatial and aesthetic development of Stockport 3) explore the links between urban development and the visual identity of the town discussed in Chapter Three.

Three routes have informed the structure, form and use of the town throughout its history, the Medieval route of Hillgate, the Victorian London and North Western Railway and the twentieth century Manchester Outer Ring Road (M60). The earliest route of Hillgate was typified by the small scale movement of market goods, this was later eclipsed by the industrial scale and speed of the railway that facilitated the movement of coal, cotton, hats, silks and passengers before the increased scale of individualised mobility and international logistics enabled by the M60. As such, each of the three routes increased the movement of goods and people across and along the Mersey Valley adapting the town to the shifting needs of new modes of production and transportation. As a result they influenced the way Stockport was seen and represented as they each presented a particular view of the town to larger groups of people through each respective period.

The routes characterise major periods of development in the town through their production of new spatial types, technologies and architectures of each period. Through their fundamental roles in the movement of people and goods the infrastructures have attracted land uses and architectures that depend upon the function of

the route. As a result whole landscapes of interrelated uses have congregated along the routes that were governed by the prevailing ideology of each period. Each infrastructure ushered in a new way of relating to the geography of the town, which is evident in their physical forms and wider landscape types. As the basic organisational structures of Stockport the routes represent the physical functioning of the town and the cultural ideas of the society that created them. Each period, route and wider urban landscape illustrates the shifting dynamic between man and nature through their changing approaches to the existing landscape that exhibited various degrees of adaptation, manipulation, construction and destruction. Therefore the infrastructures dominated not only the movement through the town but also the wider spatial, functional and aesthetic development of particular areas. This interlinked development between the transport routes and urban growth has resulted in distinct aesthetics that characterise separate areas of the town, a key way in which Stockport differs from the wider north-western industrial town experience.

The chapter is structured by sections discussing each route moving through their historic context and landscape appropriation types, their wider ancillary landscapes and processes of demolition and construction. It can be seen that the different ideologies of each period and their ways of approaching the landscape led to different development styles and spatial patterns that created different visual characters through each period, that in turn have had a direct impact on the urban image of Stockport. This will illustrate the link between the built environment, the urban image and pictorial depiction of the town.

Hillgate

Hillgate was the initial route to structure the development of the town. The road is an ancient route dating to the Medieval period that runs North/South along the Eastern edge of the town centre (see figure 7.1). Hillgate structured the original core of the town connecting to a ford in the River Mersey, the route ran north to Manchester and south to the town of Buxton, extending to London by the eighteenth century. The road's greatest period of influence on the town began in the period before the town charter of 1260 and continued up to the early nineteenth century.

The earliest surviving map depicting the Hillgate route was drawn dated 1660 but evidence suggests the route may pre-date the Norman Conquest of 1066 (See Arrowsmith 2010) with some suggesting its origins in the Roman[1] period (GMAU (Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit) February 2011, Nevell 2010). A castle and parish church strengthened the use of the route through the movement and congregation of people into the town in the 10th century. A market granted by Royal Charter in 1260 eventually developed that exploited the natural meeting point of the ford and the stream of people travelling between Manchester and Buxton funnelled in along the Hillgate route. The importance of the route was further concretised through the construction of Lancashire bridge creating a permanent river crossing point connecting the national north/south route between London and Carlisle via Manchester.

Hillgate was developed incrementally over the centuries with the earliest section forming Lower Hillgate, a later (mainly) Georgian section forming Middle Hillgate and a Victorian section forming Higher Hillgate. The initial extent of built development along Lower Hillgate stretched 250m from the Market Place south of the town by the seventeenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century Middle Hillgate stretched 600m from the Market Place, and finally by 1824 the built development of Hillgate reached 1km south from the Market Place forming the upper section of the route, Higher Hillgate. The staged growth and period of building each section of the route is reflected in the plot styles and architecture of the three sections of road.

The layout of the town between the river and Lower Hillgate developed as a typical Medieval English market town layout characterised by a densely built route leading to a triangular open space at the centre of the town (Morris 1994). Related land uses and buildings accumulated along the route such as burgage plots, shops, small warehouses and workshops which began to define the early shape and layout of the town. The building line immediately abutted the roadway creating a

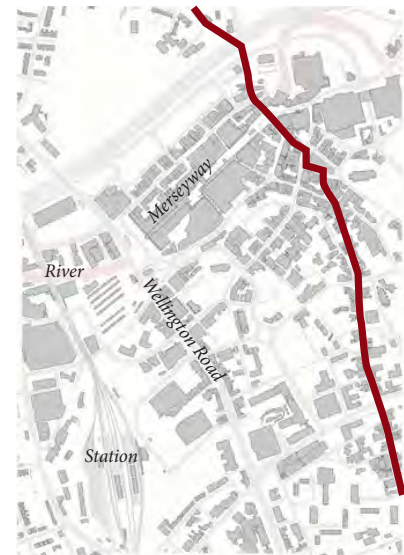


Figure 7.1 Showing the route of Hillgate through Stockport

Notes: [1] Antiquarian accounts of coins, ceramics and tessellated pavements have not been authenticated (GMAU 2009). 1850-1870 OS maps state the area of Castle Hill was the site of a Roman camp.



Figure 7.2 Showing the building grain along Hillgate & 7.3 Showing the Cheshire style timber buildings typical of the 1600 period

narrow street width of 6 meters and the varied uses created diverse plot sizes and frontages.

Specialist shops and warehouses were built that developed from the market stalls held within the town (Arrowsmith 2010). Francis Pryor argues that the contribution of workshops to the development of industry in the country has been overlooked in the narrative of the Industrial Revolution (1991). The warehouses and workshops of Hillgate produced retail goods for the weekly market that contributed to the early presence of industry in Stockport. This led to warehouse buildings that preceded mass industrial production, seen in Samuel Oldknow's Hillgate weaving warehouses that preempted his construction of Hillgate Mill in 1790 (Arrowsmith 1997). In this sense Hillgate cannot be categorised as a preindustrial route but instead was central to the more gradual process of industrialisation that characterised the centuries between 1500-1750.

During this period of Lower Hillgate development the spatial pattern of the town was fundamentally influenced by the valley system and contours of the landscape. The route developed along the Hillgate Rise ridge of sands and gravels following the pattern of the underlying geology (Mellor 1949:10). The original castle was built on a promontory above the river ford, a natural defensible spot which was further exaggerated through the construction of a motte and bailey (see Nevell 2010, Arrowsmith 1997). The Market Place and church were built to the immediate south of the castle on higher flatter land away from the threat of floods.

The architecture of Lower Hillgate was predominantly timber constructions, characteristic of Cheshire, with great variety in the size and detailing of the buildings that indicated wealth and status in the town (Arrowsmith 1997). The timber tradition continued in Stockport despite wider national timber shortages of the Elizabethan period and resisted the 'Great Rebuilding' period (Hoskins 1953, Arrowsmith 1997) at the cusp of the sixteenth and seventeenth century while the wider region of the North of England was rebuilding in stone. This was due to the natural resources of the town, as the underlying sandstone rock was too soft to use as a building material (though two sandstone houses were built and St Mary's church was originally constructed of local sandstone which later needed replacing with a tougher stone (Arrowsmith 1997)). Therefore the process of building the central area, from either timber or sandstone, was the result of an interconnection with the immediate landscape through tree felling and quarrying (Dyer 2006).

Small scale modifications of the the existing geomorphology became

common throughout the eighteenth century. The houses, shops and warehouses along Hillgate, the Underbanks (occupying the Tin Brook ravine) and High Street (named for its street level rather than function) were hybrid constructions of carved rooms in the sandstone escarpments, with additional rooms, floors and fascias added to create dwellings. This began a very intricate adaptation of the land that was characterised by small subtractions of the existing rock. These subtractions varied in size from 50 m³ - 600 m³ from the small hybrid constructions of excavated rooms to the carving of leats, tunnels and sluices beneath the town which developed with the growth of water powered industry from 1600 onwards. Further adaptations to the town's topography were constructed through the creation of public stairways connecting the multiple levels of the town.

The subtle negotiation between architectural practice and the landscape is evident in the Burgage plots of the town which developed in a less regular fashion than the national typology. The intricacy of the contours prevented traditional long linear burgage plots resulting in an irregular pattern of development that mirrored the undulations of the ground. The burgages created an intricate system of land production and construction that linked the architecture of the town to the agricultural use of the immediate landscape through market gardens and allotments of the Burghers.

The fundamental importance of the town's topography in the spatial development of the town is evident in the toponyms assigned throughout the period. The 1660 map reveals the foundation of the town's structure according to landforms seen in 'Top o' the Hill Houses', 'Hillgate', 'High Street', 'High Bank Side', 'Mill Hill', 'Underbank' along with the numerous 'banks' and 'brow'[2] toponyms. These topographical names helped to navigate the town through the use of the landscape features as major landmarks supported by architectural features such as the manorial corn mill 'Millgate', the parish church 'Churchgate' and the expanding scope of the town's reach through the naming of routes such as 'Chestergate'. Newly formed industrial areas also took on landscape features in their early naming practices in the town, seen in the development of Park Mills on the Park common lands in 1732 and later Hope's Carr Mills.

*Notes: [2] Named for its street level as opposed to the more common use of the term
[3] from 'Brae' denoting hillside or steep bank*

The intricate topographical relationships reflected a perception of the landscape as an interconnection of natural and artificial before the conceptual oppositions of the industrial period (Wiener 1981) reflecting the Pastoral representation of the town discussed in Chapter Three. This can be seen in the interlinked development of agriculture, industry and the market that underpinned the economy as well as the hybrid landscape - architectures discussed above.



Figure 7.4 Samuel Oldknow's Georgian brick house along Hillgate

An incremental construction of civic buildings on the Market Place occurred between 1200-1800 through the construction of court rooms, corn exchanges, mills, mercantile houses and public houses. As such the market place became the central core of the town housing the main residential, retail, administrative, social and religious functions which reinforced the importance of the Hillgate route.

Middle Hillgate developed as a wider route at the convergence of High street and Lower Hillgate. The building line through this section was initially much less dense with Georgian detached houses constructed along the roadway. Public buildings were also located along Middle Hillgate, such as the Wesleyan Methodist Church constructed in 1759. Public Houses and Inns proliferated along the route to accommodate travellers and visitors to the town.

The predominant architectural style of Middle Hillgate introduced a new material palette and building aesthetic. The national style of Georgian architecture was introduced to Stockport in the form of symmetrical sash windowed town houses with centralised classical doorways exemplified in the house built by local industrialist Samuel Oldknow c.1740 (see image 7.4). The material palette of the period was dictated by local resources due to the difficulty in transporting heavy building materials before the construction of the canal or train line. The new style of buildings were constructed of brick using clays from the surrounding area which were also dependent on the extraction of coal from local seams to power the kilns. The new brick houses were varied in size and plot type, creating a mixture of terraced and detached sections along the route. Brick fields and kiln works emerged on the southern edges of the town in order to supply the growing demand. The introduction of brick manufacture to Stockport also fuelled the reconstruction of older premises in the central area and a fashion for rebuilding the timber facades in brick (Neaverson 1994). This created a mixture of architectural styles and periods along the route.

This layering of architectural styles and periods on Hillgate worked in contrast to a somewhat reverent relationship to the past through the use of historic aesthetics that is evident during this period in Stockport. Once the castle of the Medieval period had been demolished (of which the date is unknown), the castellated aesthetic was reintroduced to the site through the construction of Castle Mill in 1778. The Mill was built to an oval plan with a central courtyard and battlemented walls evoking the former use of the site, with the style and layout of the building proving less functional than conventional rectangular mills. St Mary's church, another landmark of the town, was rebuilt at least twice in the same style (c.1300, and 1813-17, Arrowsmith 1997:59) on

the same site since its founding in the twelfth century. These processes resisted the forces of aesthetic change in the town and attempted to fix the town's visual identity through this changeable period.

Higher Hillgate was constructed to wider proportions again as silk and cotton industries grew in importance and the traffic travelling along Hillgate increased. Along Higher Hillgate the flatter land allowed a more spacious layout to develop and new buildings were constructed set back from the street contrasting greatly to the lower, earlier sections of the road. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century brought larger industrial development to the higher reaches of the road as factories and warehouses began to accumulate along the route.

The width of Lower Hillgate accommodated packhorses that transported wares to the town's weekly market but by 1725 the route between Manchester and Buxton (taking in the Hillgate section) was taken over by a turnpike trust (Arrowsmith 1997:114). This improved the maintenance of the roadway and constructed a short stretch on Lancashire Hill that missed out a difficult section of the route at Dodge Hill. A regular passenger coach service between Manchester and London was set up along the Manchester - Buxton Turnpike as a result of the improvements (Arrowsmith 1997:115). While the turnpike improved the condition of the roadway somewhat, it increased the traffic travelling the route, which caused particular issues through the narrow stretch on Lower Hillgate.

The Hillgate route provided the predominant view of the town throughout the period 1200-1800 for people travelling through on their way between Manchester and London and those stopping by at the weekly market. The view was comprised of a densely built town core with variety in its building materials, architectural style and period of construction. The view from a carriage would have flickered between houses, workshops, warehouses, shops and industry in quick succession before arriving at the open space of the market place dominated by St Mary's church. The narrowness of Hillgate and the short view length resulting from the curved line of the street provided a direct contrast to the spaciousness of the market place.

By 1762 the growing traffic issues were compounded by the construction of a turnpike branch line connecting Stockport to Sandon (Arrowsmith 1997:114), south of Stoke on Trent, which filtered more traffic through the centre of Stockport along Hillgate. Traffic increased again with the cutting of the Manchester - Ashton Under Lyne canal in 1790, with its terminus at Lancashire Hill, as wagons began to transport coal and manufactured goods to and from the wharf. While the later



Figure 7.5 Showing the Victorian terraced street of Crowther Street parallel to Hillgate

Figure 7.6 Showing the Greek Revival St Thomas' Church, Higher Hillgate

additions to the road were more conducive to wheeled traffic, the central area of Stockport quickly became congested with the increase of horse and wagon traffic which could typically carry five times the load of the packhorses resulting in much larger vehicles (Szostak 1991). The descent from the Market Place to Lancashire Bridge was particularly treacherous for wheeled traffic and horses struggled to pull wagons up the steep incline to the north of the river up Lancashire Hill.

Two acts were submitted to central government for the permission to widen Hillgate in 1775 and 1785 (Arrowsmith 1997:160) in a similar vein of those seen in the wider industrial towns of the period. Yet the complicated architecture of Hillgate which fused building construction with the ravine of Hillgate and the Underbanks made the widening of the existing street exceptionally difficult and the project was eventually dropped.

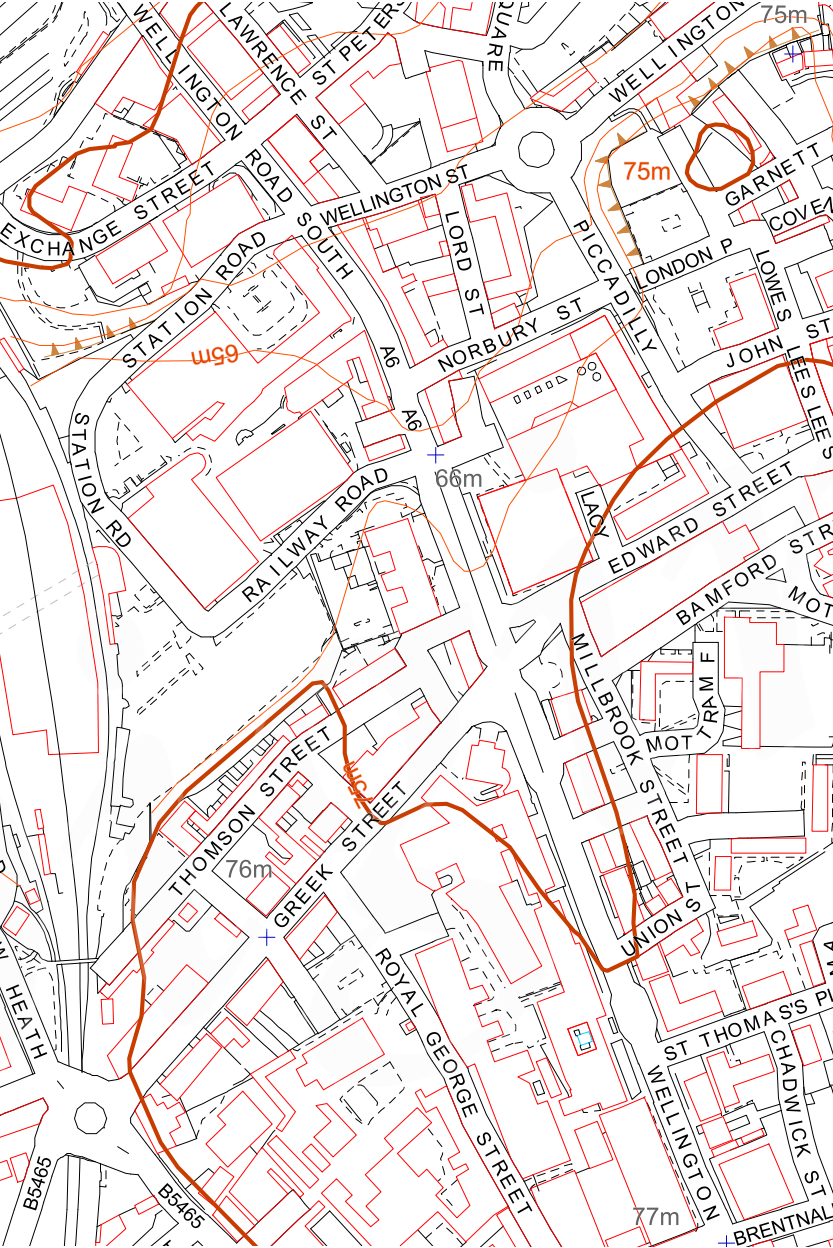
New side streets were constructed which reflected a new approach to building in Stockport through formal planned developments which responded less to the ground conditions and more to the location of factories. This created a grid of residential terraced streets aligning east-west across the Middle and Higher Hillgate section to house increasing number of industrial workers in the town. The expansion of Hillgate along side streets brought the introduction of Victorian red brick Terraces and Courts that were typical of the industrial period, and exemplified in Crowther Street (see image 7.5).

With the greater connection and ease of travel between Stockport, Manchester and London the architectural tastes of the town shifted, this is evident in the development of civic and ecclesiastical buildings during this period. Further additions to Hillgate saw the construction of St Thomas' church in 1822-5 (see image 7.6) that introduced a dramatic neo-classical style of architecture to the route and a new materiality using stone quarried at Runcorn (Davy 1839) and made available through the branch canal. The construction of the church also preempted the spatial shift of the town as the church was oriented in relation to both Hillgate and the new turnpike built in 1824 to the west of the town, Wellington Road.

The new Wellington Road acted as a bypass for the town centre and aimed to ease the steep descent of the valley. The width of the road allowed larger volumes of traffic to cross the river than that permitted by the Hillgate route. Pryor again argues that the construction of roads has been overlooked in the industrial development of England with little attention paid to the technical intervention they necessitated (1991). This technical difficulty is exemplified in the case of Wellington Road, as the variation in the land height was made level as far as

possible to ease the movement of heavy wagons that could transport heavier loads and pay higher tolls (Pryor 1991). Therefore Wellington Road necessitated the construction of an eleven arch bridge to connect up the Cheshire and Lancashire sides of the Mersey Valley.

The bridge was a major feat of engineering through large scale earthworks to excavate materials, levelling and decreasing the gradient. The bypass was also a rare approach to accommodate increasing traffic in contrast to the more common programme of street widening throughout the region. The construction of the road altered the tradition of informal development and slight topographical modifications seen at Hillgate to a new era of extensive adaptation that was later exemplified in the viaduct.



London & North Western Railway

The construction of the railway in 1840 occurred during the period widely referred to as a national railway mania (Kellett 1969, Freeman 1999). The railway at Stockport formed an initial line between Manchester and Birmingham which was later extended to form the London and North Western Railway, increasing the efficiency of travel between the two cities of Manchester and London. The construction of the railway invalidated the use of Hillgate in conjunction with the development of Wellington Road as the industrial function of the town grew in prominence. The railway adapted the town to the transportation needs of heavy industry and increased the capacity for people and products moving through the town. The visual character that resulted reflected the industrial ideology of the defeat of nature, which was evident in the large scale adaptation of the landscape throughout the period.

The most prominent direct impact of the railway was the construction of the viaduct spanning the Mersey Valley. The extent of topographical adaptation needed to flatten the gradient of the railway signalled a new approach to the existing landscape of the town through complex engineered level changes.

Considerable earthworks had been undertaken previously in the town through the construction of Wellington Road in 1824 sixteen years before the viaduct. Cut and fill activities were undertaken in order to level the gradient of the route, which contradicted the national standard practice of the period. The standard approach developed by John Macadam (then the Surveyor General of Metropolitan Roads in Great Britain) required the roadway to be elevated above the adjacent ground to facilitate drainage (McAdam 1816, Garrison & Levinson 2014). The general downward gradient of the road into the Mersey Valley meant this was unfeasible and unnecessary as water could drain down the route rather than across it. Instead, land cut away to level the gradient along the centre of the route was placed at the

Left, Fig. 7.7 Contours along Wellington Road indicates topographic manipulation in the construction of the road

Below bottom, 7.8 Stockport Infirmary with low retaining walls on to Wellington Road c.1900 courtesy of Stockport Image Archives

Right, Fig. 7.9 Shows the cross section of the road with higher land to the sides of the street contained behind retaining walls



side of the roadway creating raised edges (see image 7.7). This led to a distinctive cross section as the new buildings alongside the road were raised above the road height. The result was a number of visually dominating buildings raised and set back from the road level supported by low retaining walls (see image 7.8 and 7.9). The expertise and tools required for the manipulation of the landform at Wellington Road preceded the much vaster scale adaptation of the railway line.

The line at Stockport passed through largely agricultural undeveloped land to the west of the town contrary to contemporaneous railway projects that necessitated large scale demolition. Therefore the engineer's main challenge was to maintain a level gradient across the Mersey Valley through the construction of the viaduct. George Watson Buck was appointed as the chief engineer for the Manchester - Birmingham Railway having assisted Robert Stephenson, a prolific and renowned early railway engineer, on the London - Birmingham Railway construction 1833 - 1838.

Pryor (1991) states that railway engineers of the period relished the challenges posed by land forms and sought to overcome them rather than avoid them through route diversions. This can be seen in the self-imposed gradient limitations set by the railway engineers, exemplified in Stephenson's 1:330 gradient limit (Hoskins 1955). Stephenson's practice greatly influenced Buck during their work together on the London - Birmingham construction. The design of Stockport's Manchester - Birmingham line is testament to this as the gradient limitation necessitated vast cuttings and bridges across its varied course. The steep gradient of the Mersey Valley at Stockport was overcome by brick viaduct 33m above the river, closely followed by a series of earth works to level over 70,000m² of land before cutting a tunnel for the railway through the highest sections of the land.

Buck's work at Stockport was also greatly influenced by the early viaduct examples of his contemporaries in the previous decade, such as George (father of Robert) Stephenson's stone Sankey Viaduct



A Narrative of Urban Change in Stockport

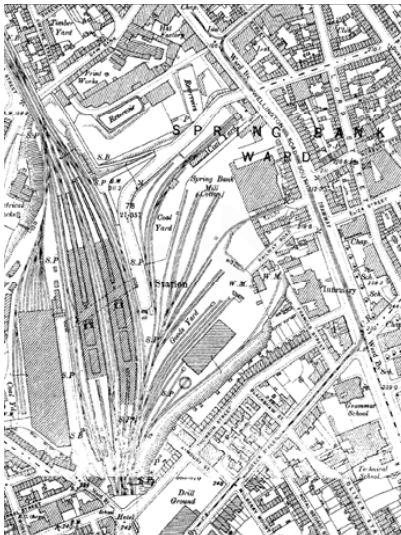


Left, Fig. 7.10 Construction of Wolverton Viaduct c.1837



Above, Fig.7.11 Dane Viaduct, GW Buck

Above top Fig. 7..12 Construction work at Camden Town c.1830's



Above, Fig. 7.13 Spatially dispersed railway yards at Edgeley Station/ Stockport Central c.1900

Below, Fig. 7.14 Grain of building form along the railway



(1828-30 Liverpool - Manchester Railway) and Robert Stephenson's brick Wolverton Viaduct (1838 London - Birmingham Railway) (see image 7.9) both of which required huge earthworks. Buck's distinctive aesthetic style can also be seen in his design of the lesser known brick Dane Viaduct near Holmes Chapel station south of Stockport and Guide Bridge Station, Heaton Norris (1841) (see image 7.11).

The development of Buck's approach to the existing landscape can be seen through his earlier work on the Camden Town - Tring section of the London - Birmingham Railway (Skempton 2002:95). Here large areas of land were cut and bridged in order to pass the railway through at a level gradient through both existing urban settlements and open rural areas (Smiles 1868:362) (see image 7.12). Charles Dickens' account of the railway construction works at Camden Town reveal the extent of earthworks undertaken in the project, he described 'deep pits and and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking, propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill...There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water and unintelligible as any dream...In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress; and, from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement.' (Dickens 1836:62-3). The project at Camden Town was less severe than the case of the valley system at Stockport but greatly developed Buck's approach and experience of landform manipulation. As such, Stockport became influenced by its long distance connection to London and the innovations that were taking place in the capital.

The railway brought a series of new spatial types to Stockport from its supporting infrastructure of warehouses and loading yards through to its influence on residential developments and greater access to cheaper building materials. The railway influenced a very different spatial pattern to the ribbon development seen at Hillgate towards a more sprawling and less dense urban form typified by railway yards (see image 7.14). This produced a larger scale of building to accommodate the vast amount of materials and products transported to and from the town via the railway.

An indirect effect of the railway's construction developed a new spatial appropriation of flatter lands in the district. Simpler and quicker methods of residential construction were facilitated by the mass transportation of building materials into the town via the railway. The new housing estates occupied more level areas to the west of the

railway planned along the conventional grid layout of the terraced streets. While the level landform eased initial construction it presented long term difficulties in the drainage of sewage and grey water. Hoskins argued the drainage issues of flatter land influenced the use of the term Slum from 'slump' to denote a wet mire (1955:171). The new estates in Stockport congregated along the Great Moor Plain and created grid residential areas across the flat terraces of Brinksway, Portwood and Edgeley (see image 7.15), reflecting the indirect but wide ranging influence of the railway.



Figure 7.15 aerial photograph showing the grid like pattern of the Edgeley estate 1927, Britain from Above

The construction of the viaduct influenced further large scale earthworks in the town chiefly accompanying the construction of roads and bridges as knowledge and expertise developed both locally and nationally. Eight further bridges were constructed to cross the River Mersey and later the level complexities of the historic core (see image 7.16). The placement of bridges was dictated by the underlying geology of the river banks on a base of Trias Sandstone away from the softer areas of Permian Marl found along the river's edges (Stockport MBC 1980). Further topographical adaptations were undertaken through the creation of large reservoirs through the excavation of superficial layers of the land. These works were generally between 1,000 m² (Albert Mill Reservoir) and 28,000 m² (Edgeley Bleach Works reservoirs). These early adaptations focused largely on the control and containment of water systems in the town, while later adaptations contended with the existing landforms of the central area. This saw the levelling of the Market Place and the construction of St Petersgate Bridge (1866-8) connecting the historic core to the new western centre.

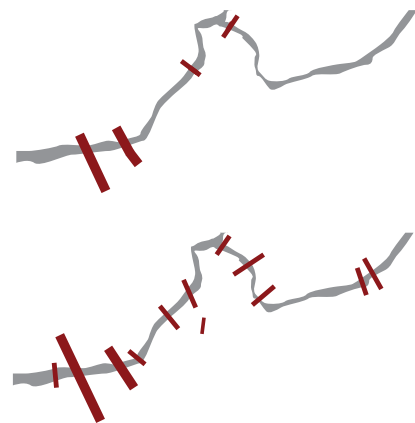


Figure 7.16 1840-1890 Bridges over River Mersey at Stockport

The initial dramatic spatial impact of the railway was also met by slower processes of urban change as the relationship between the railway and the surrounding landscape matured. This was evident in the changing land uses adjoining the railway. The construction of the railway influenced changes in the existing use of the land within thirty years of its construction, from a high status residential area to a working class estate. Before the railway villas had been constructed in the 18th century (GMAU 2011)[1] to the west of the town converting the landscape of the arable farmland, mosses and common land into private parkland with large detached houses. The Villas lined the old routes connecting Stockport to Chester and Cheadle and housed local industrialists on the higher edges of the town. Each of the houses were demolished[2] or converted to public usage in the wake of the railway's construction. This was both a direct result of the railway and a reaction to the subsequent development of the Edgeley and Hollywood housing estates on the surrounding land.

[1] The villas The GMAU 2011 historic landscape characterisation survey suggests 'high status' villas were constructed in the area throughout the 18th century as buses allowed the development on the urban periphery.

[2] Using historic OS maps it is possible to give an approximate date of demolition of each Villa. Daw Bank House lasted until 1900, Hollywood House until 1890 (its wider landscape was also deforested), Spring Mount landscape was deforested in 1880 although the house survived amid factories until 1950, Springfiled House demolished 1920s, Edgeley House was converted into a public park and hall in 1920, Green Hill House was demolished 1890, Cheadle Mosley House 1880, and finally Lark Hill House 1890. The site of each house was redeveloped as part of the large Edgely estate, although many of the Villa names remain in the streets, neighbourhoods and parks of the estate.

During this period place naming practices also shifted from topographic

details towards references to local mill owners and prominent people and families as the landform of the town became less important to navigation. This can be seen in 'Marsland Street', 'Bamford Street', 'George Street', 'Eliza Street', 'Edward Street' and industrial theming seen in 'Viaduct Street' renamed c.1890 and 'Mill Passage'.

[3] The original train station for Stockport was located on the Lancashire side of the valley which was seen as far away from the town centre (Arrowsmith 1997). An experimental station was opened at Edgeley which later became the permanent station for Stockport town centre. The construction of Edgeley Station as a trial meant that the style and scale of the building was modest especially in comparison to the monumental viaduct.

The eventual siting of the railway to the west of the Market place attracted new developments towards the central station at Edgeley^[3] which eased the transportation of goods. New industrial and civic areas developed along the western edge of the historic core compounded Wellington Road (the western bypass) as the new central route. This was met with a desire to redefine the image of the town from the traditional identity of the market town to an industrial power house which was manifested through the urban projects aligned to the Wellington Road route.

The industrial ambition for the town was strengthened by the shift of political power away from Manorial Government through the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. The new council was largely comprised of industrialists involved in the Stockport - Manchester railway committee of 1834 that brought about the construction of the railway line (Holland 2004:15). Vincent Holland, historian of the railway, explained 'once in power the new council vigorously set about the task of ensuring Stockport would never be the same again' (2004:17). The built environment was seen as a key way to assert the economic power and the future of the town. Once the new authority came to power they aimed to align themselves away from the previous form of local government (associated with exploitative taxations) through changing the location of the planned town hall at the market place to the new route of Wellington Road (1837 Stockport Improvement Act).

Prior to the founding of the municipal authority two efforts to situate the town hall at the Market Place were undertaken with the purchase of Underbank Hall in 1823 and a bid to construct a new town hall on the site of Baker's Vaults in 1826 (Stockport Council, 1908). Both bids were unsuccessful and the administration of the town continued from various sites at the court house on Castle Hill and the Manorial Offices on Vernon Street. The new authority aligned the town's image to a future associated with industrial growth of the railway opposed to the historic development of the Market Place. All new civic and institutional buildings aligned themselves with the new western centre of the town at Wellington Road, between Hillgate and the railway and their architectures were influenced by wider precedents than those seen in the other industrial towns.

The development of the town hall was affected by continual debates, mentioned in earlier chapters, which saw the building's construction delayed until 1908 (Stockport Council, 1908). The late development of the building in relation to the wider towns' civic architectures meant the local authority at Stockport could choose from a range of precedents across the region. The new town hall aligned the town away from the northern industrial image of Manchester using Nottingham Town Hall as the primary precedent (Stockport Council 1908:5). The new town hall was designed as a white Baroque building of portland stone by Sir Alfred Brumwell Thomas (The Architectural Review, 1908:136). The building contrasted sharply with the dark Neo-Gothic and Classicist tradition of the North West, but also with the polluted fascia of Stockport's existing buildings. This period of civic construction came at a vital period in the region's history at the cusp of industrial decline in the cotton towns while Stockport's prosperity continued through hat manufacture. The style and materiality of the civic buildings at Stockport highlighted the town's continued growth contrasting with the surrounding region.



Figure 7.18 Construction of Stockport Town Hall c.1907, courtesy of Stockport Image Archives



Figure 7.19 Contrasting patina of Stockport Town Hall in relation to polluted facias on the wider town, 1931, Britain from Above

The architectural style of the civic buildings along the route introduced an eclectic variety that referenced buildings in Stockport and the wider country. The Greek Classicism of St Thomas' Church on Hillgate by George Basevi was reflected through the construction of the Art Gallery in 1925 by James Theodore Halliday. The Greek doric, yellow sandstone Infirmary by Richard Lane in 1832 was coupled with the Queen Anne style Stockport College by Cheers and Smith in 1909 and the Renaissance style red brick Central Library by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope in 1913. These have been more recently joined by the Brutalist Stopford House 1975, the contemporary glass offices of St Peter's Square BDP, 2006 and the cantilevered Anthra zinc building of Stockport College by Austin Smith Lord in 2010 that have updated the cluster of styles.

The construction of the railway and its role in redefining the town's identity also presented a new relationship to the past that worked in direct contrast to that seen in Hillgate. In the first instance the chosen path of the railway ignored the field boundaries that had dominated the development pattern of the previous periods (Pryor 1991). The new local government associated also introduced an eclectic civic architecture that directly contrasted the traditional vernacular of the Market Place. Therefore the construction of the railway greatly affected not only the spatial development of the town, but also the way it presented itself through a shift in civic and institutional buildings both stylistically and in terms of location.

The viaduct's role in the new industrialised aesthetic of the town went unchallenged during a period of adaptation to the railway in 1887. The capacity of the railway needed to increase through the construction of extra tracks which required the expansion of the viaduct. Rather than imprint a new visual style on the project, the engineer Francis Stephenson, retained the dimensions and form of construction of the viaduct despite the technical advances and stylistic changes that had occurred in the fifty years since the viaduct's construction (Rennison 1996:268). This reinforced the dominance of the viaduct on the visual experience of the town through its expanded structure and the replication of its style. This can be seen in contrast to the three Castlefield Viaducts (Ashmore 1982) in Manchester constructed throughout the same period which each employ a different materiality and architectural style.

These civic and infrastructural constructions resulted in a very different visual experience of the town than that afforded from Hillgate. This was met by an unprecedented increase in the number of travellers and visitors viewing the town facilitated by the two western transport routes of the railway and Wellington Road. The presence of the viaduct dominated the view of the town through both its imposing structure and the commanding view of the town from it. The view from the viaduct created a fleeting view of the industrialised Mersey Valley at chimney height, while the monumental structure was visible from Wellington Road. Both views emphasised the industrial function of the town as their routes passed through newer sections of the town bypassing the varied functions and styles evident on the Hillgate route. This was reflected in the pictorial depictions of the town throughout the period discussed in Chapter Three. Along the bridged valley the view of the town was shifted to an oblique angle down into the newly industrialised Mersey Valley, greatly contrasting the intimate eye level view afforded of the town through Hillgate. The view from and of the viaduct was a much wider perspective of the town that starkly contrasted the narrow view along Hillgate.

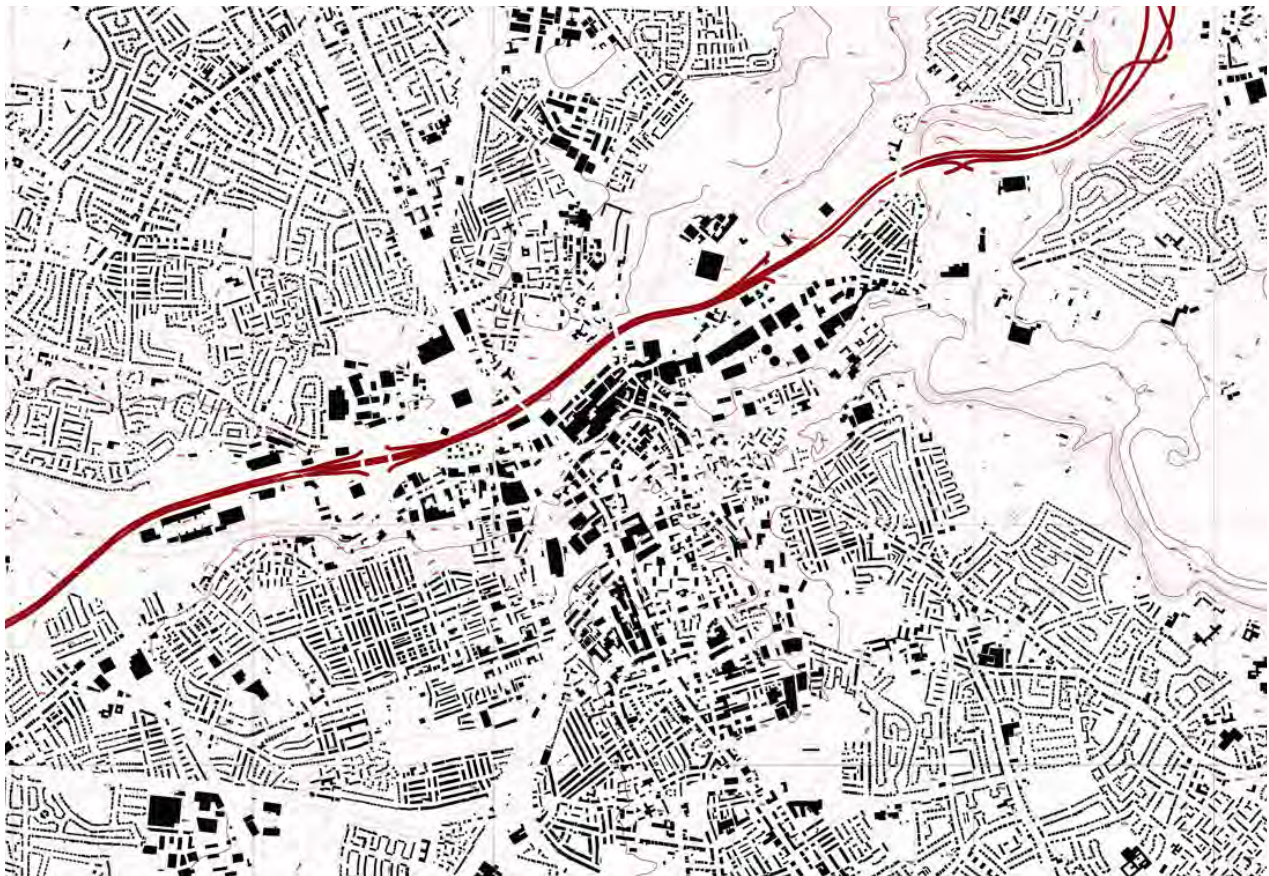
The railway continues to affect the development of the surrounding landscape continually recreating and redefining its relationship to urban development. While warehouse and reservoirs have become more rare with the decline of industry, the construction of apartments and car parks have become increasingly common with the increase of commuter travel. This shifting predominant use of the railway from industry to passenger travel coupled with the rise in private car ownership has modified the original spatial configuration of the railway's direct influence, as associated landscape uses disperse to wider locations and car parks replace the loading sheds. This rise in private car ownership also led to the third infrastructure of discussion the M60.



Figure 7.20 Aerial photographs showing the dominating line of the viaduct and Wellington Road, courtesy of Britain from Above



Figure 7.21 Aerial photographs showing the dominating line of the viaduct and Wellington Road, courtesy of Britain from Above

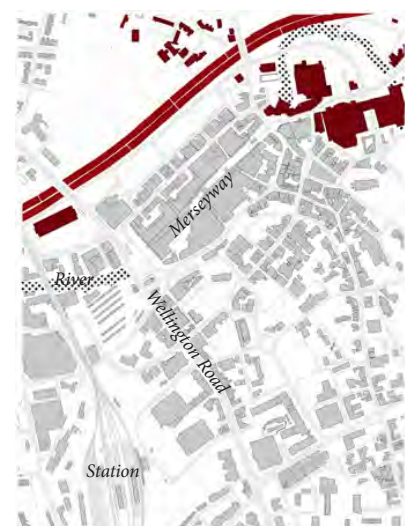


M60

Manchester's orbital motorway, the M60, runs immediately North of the river Mersey at Stockport marking the start and end of the circular route designated junction 27 - 1 west-east. The M60 was built incrementally over 40 years as a collection of shorter motorway bypasses for the region's towns before being amalgamated into a bypass route for Manchester. The section of the motorway which passes through Stockport was initially planned as a 3 mile east-west bypass for the town and construction began 1979 (Ball 1983:1). This formed a continuation of the Sale eastern - Northenden bypass completed in 1974 and Stretford - Eccles bypass completed in 1960 and (1986 for the Carrington Spur section) which connected to form a continuous bypass to the south west of Manchester. The continuous circuit around the city was eventually completed and renamed as the M60 in 1999 (Hyde et al. 2004).

The development of a bypass route that traversed the northern edge of the river in Stockport was first suggested in Sharp's 1950 plan. At the time the project was deemed infeasible due to the technical difficulty of the topography along the valley. Yet the project was resurrected with the development of Great Edgerton Street a bypass route from Portwood to Brinksway (A560 planned in 1969) which travelled

Figure 7.22 Showing the line of the Motorway through Stockport
 Fig. 7.23 Showing the spatially dispersed associated building forms along the motorway edge of the town centre



beneath one arch of the viaduct. The route was quickly accompanied by the construction of the M63/M60 to the immediate north.

Throughout the 20th century the town developed increasingly sophisticated scales of topographic manipulation. A shift from the large scale earthworks of the earlier period towards more targeted solutions can be seen in the development of the Merseyway Road Bridge in 1939. This construction was a precursor to the processes at work in the construction of the M60.

The River Mersey became increasingly polluted from years of industrial usage coupled with the decline of the water powered mills that lined its banks which formed a derelict corridor through the centre of the town. The decision to culvert the river in Stockport was a common response seen throughout the wider region as the industrial function of the rivers reduced (for example see Ashworth 1997 on Manchester's Lost Rivers). Plans to culvert the river began as early as 1909 with suggestions to construct a vaulted brick bridge (Antoniou 1971:1). Plans were developed again in 1925 to construct a concrete decked roadway above the river from Wellington Bridge to Warren Street but again this was unsuitable as the river banks would struggle to support the structure (ibid). The third suggestion submitted in 1936 was accepted, this proposed the construction of reinforced concrete portal frame with secondary supporting beams for the decked road (ibid). The road was completed in 1939 just before the onset of World War II (Smith and Webb 2007).

The advances of the Merseyway Road and M60 shifted the earlier examples of landscape adaptation towards the full construction of new landscapes. The M60 extended the approach of Merseyway through the construction of vast structures that support the flow of traffic and mediate natural processes. The route of Merseyway Road and the M60 were both determined by the lines of the existing landscape contrary to the viaduct and Wellington Road, which were based on a direct conflict with the valley system. Yet the M60 and Merseyway impact the natural functioning of the valley and construct new landscape patterns to deal with the complex issues of water management in the adapted valley.

The constructed landscape of the M60 can be seen through the flood basins, shifted and widened flood plains, new land forms, embankments, cuttings, cliff faces, retaining walls, borrow pits and surplus mounds. The motorway engineers effected larger changes but attempted to minimise the visual disruption in contrast to the earlier approach of the railway engineers who constructed monumental structures as a symbol of their achievement and prowess. This is

Figure 7.24 River Mersey before Mersey Road construction 1922



evident in the contrasting methods and tools used in the alignment design of both the railway and the motorway. While the railway ignored the field boundaries of the land as they plotted the route on maps, the motorway engineers used aerial photographs that enabled detailed production and replication of existing landscape features (Bridle et al. 2004:320).

The designed route of the motorway resulted in expansive landscape works to shift and reconstruct the floodplains replicating their original character in alternative locations. The line of the motorway and its interweaving green infrastructure mimic the meandering forms of the river valley contrasting with the grid like structures of the 19th century. New concrete retaining walls were installed to replace the nineteenth century bricked banks of the Mersey (Ball 1983). Vast works were undertaken to remediate and strengthen the ground of the old sewage works. Huge excavation works were needed to Dodge Hill below St Mary's RC Church which presented a complex array of obstacles; the excavation of the hill required the creation of a rock cut cliff face headed by a brick retaining wall anchored through the ground between a tight gap of underground air raid shelters and a railway tunnel while supporting the ground of the church on top of the cliff (Ball 1983). The construction and engineering of the route required solutions to appease both the existing geomorphology of the land coupled with the accession of historical infrastructures.

The aim to replicate the existing landscape type was outlined in detailed design guides for the construction of new motorways that focused on minimising the visual impact of the road. The line chosen for the M60 at Stockport followed the existing Cheshire Lines Committee Railway line to the north of the town centre 'to avoid using a new line of severance' (Charlesworth 1984: 202), lessening the visual disruption of the construction. This can be seen using aerial photography of the town which illustrates the vastness of the motorway that dominates even the monumentality of the viaduct, yet the view of the motorway is largely shielded from the town centre.

While the motorway landscape mimics natural patterns this is mediated by national visual guidelines of how English motorway landscapes are expected to look. The path of the motorway at Stockport follows the principles of the Department for Transport's design guidance to minimise visual impact (DfT 1992). This guidance echoes the post-war British style of motorway design for 'flowing alignment and the relationship between horizontal and vertical curves' (Bridle et al 2004:325) through strict guidelines of road to contour alignment. These guidelines in turn have been heavily influenced by national ideas of Englishness and the English landscape aesthetic



Figure 7.26 Aerial Photograph of the Mersey Valley with Stockport town centre in the mid-distance

(Matless 1998, Merriman 2007). The adoption of national design guidance at Stockport has shifted the cultivation of a responsive individualised approach to the landscape towards a national standard practice that can be seen to reduce difference and distinctiveness. In response to this the Department for Transport's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges recommended that structures along the motorway are key spaces to create distinctiveness. They stated 'designs and finishes of major road-corridor elements like overbridges and retaining walls are opportunities to give a sense of place and provide interest for the road user' (DfT 1992:1). Yet the cost and detailed work needed to develop individual bridge designs meant that the thirteen bridges needed for the motorway between Junction 26 and Junction 2 at Stockport were all standard constructions. In contrast, the retaining walls and cut cliffs that were unavoidable in the construction of the motorway created a number of distinctive features along the road section.

These particular engineered features have become characteristic visual indicators for the town, this can be seen in the sandstone cliff-face cut from Dodge Hill. The visual interest of the cliff face is increased by the texture and pattern of the cut marks in conjunction with the natural qualities of the rock (see image 7.27). The visual prominence of the cliff face is also emphasised by its height and abutment to the road, which is the result of the constraints of the site (namely the location of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church to the immediate north of the cliff) but also a common design strategy in motorway design (DfT 1992).

Yet the greatest visual locating factor of the road was not a product of motorway design, the presence of the viaduct is the major landmark of the route as the Victorian structure accommodates six lanes of traffic through two of its archways. This landmark for the town is closely followed in prominence by the striking structure of the Pyramid of King's Valley (constructed in 1992). While these features are spread across a distance of 1.2km the speed of the traffic results in the visual experience of them as a quick succession (see images 7.31). The spacing of the three landmarks at 600m apart and the national speed limit of 112km/h means 20 seconds elapse between each of the landmarks between Junction 27 and Junction 1.

The motorway has overtaken the railway and Wellington Road as the primary viewing points of the town as the capacity of the motorway greatly increased the number of people viewing the town. In 2010 Junction 27 to Junction 1 at Stockport accommodated 128,400 vehicles per day (GMTU 2011) hugely increasing the number of people passing through Stockport. While increasing the number of people viewing the town, the motorway has also changed the major landmarks that are

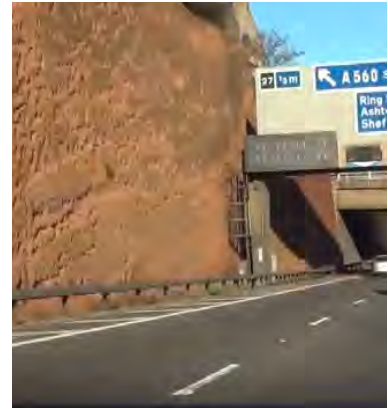


Figure 7.27 Showing the texture of the cliff face along the M60



Above top Figure 7.28 Dispersed built form along the M60 corridor
 Above Fig. 7.29 Line of the M60 through the built form 1950, showing demolition path

associated with Stockport. This reflects the developmental processes seen at Wellington Road as the route became a key site for the town to assert its identity. Yet the motorway differs in the spatial layout and architectural style of the new landmarks, which are fundamentally influenced by the speed of movement. This has resulted in an architecture of large distinctive forms with less emphasis on detail evident in the Pyramid, this can also be seen in the lesser visual impact



of St Mary's church from the motorway. The spatial development of the wider motorway area is dictated by the proximity of the Junctions and land function emphasis on car parking which has created a much more dispersed character than that of the central area. The landscape of the M60 is characterised by large scale shed type developments of retail parks interspersed with fragmented remnants of previous uses (see image 7.28).

Both the M60 and Merseyway Road illustrate a shifting approach to place and past. While the 19th century infrastructures of the town were constructed to enable and sustain industrial growth, the two routes of the twentieth century broke with this tradition. The roads instead sought to increase the capacity of the town to meet the rising needs of individual car travel and undertook a process of industrial demolition in the town (see images 7.29). The construction of Merseyway and the motorway required the demolition of old industrial areas of the valley namely the demolition of Mersey Mills and Adlington Mills in the 1930's and the demolition of Travis Brook Mill, Throstle Grove Mill, The Park, Warren Mills along with residential areas of Brinksway in the 1970's. Many former industrial areas have been replaced by peripheral industrial retail estates and supermarkets illustrating the post-industrial transformation of the river valley and

Figure 7.29 Showing demolition processes in the construction of the M60 at Stockport, image courtesy of Stockport Image Archive



Figure 7.30 Showing the Merseyway Shopping Centre, built over the Merseyway Road in the late 1960's, image courtesy of Stockport Image Archive

town in general. Such developments can be seen at Knightsbridge replacing Park Mills, the Peel Centre replacing the Portwood Gas Works, and Green Lane industrial estate replacing George's Road Sidings.

The road construction as a clearance strategy was also seen in the earlier example of the Merseyway Road on a much smaller scale. The construction of the road necessitated the demolition of a number of mills to cover the heavily industrialised river. Similar to the process of the M60, the construction of the Merseyway Road was followed by the development of retail units, the first being national chain stores BHS and Marks and Spencer's. These were built to a larger scale than the traditional retail architecture of the town responding to the scale of the road and the surrounding buildings of the Fire Station and Bus Depot. The later closure of the road and construction of the Merseyway Shopping centre above its course (1964-70) brought further clearances as the Victorian Fire Station and Bus Depot along with smaller industrial works were demolished. The style of the shopping centre sought to replace the old image of industry in the town with a progressive modern style discussed in Chapter Three (see images 7.30).

This new approach characterised by the Merseyway Road and the motorway was met by a period of standardisation efforts to reduce the impact of the topography upon the town, as the intricacies of the contours were levelled through clearances and new constructions. This is evidenced particularly through the clearance of slums and construction of the civic centre surrounding the town hall, where huge efforts were made to create level surfaces necessitating the construction of concrete retaining walls to reduce the impact area of sloping ground (see images 7.?). The presence of water through earlier landforms such as reservoirs were also reclaimed during this period.

A process of standardisation was also evident in the street naming practices in the post war period. This saw the renaming of main vehicular routes in line with a national road naming system, therefore the initial east-west bypass was named the A560, Wellington Road became known as the A6, St Mary's way became the A626, Nangreave Road became the B6171. This practice was also evident in the renaming of the multiple bypasses that formed the circuit of Manchester's outer ring road into one route name of the M60 making it legible within the regional and national system as a singular entity.



In conclusion it is argued that the urban image of Stockport has been fundamentally influenced by its transport infrastructures. This can be seen in three particular ways, firstly the transport routes influenced the spatial pattern and function of their wider supporting built landscapes which in turn created architectural styles and visual characters distinctive to each route. Secondly, the routes each increased the capacity of people travelling through Stockport and therefore viewing the town. Thirdly, the speed, viewpoint and transportation mode of each route affected the types of landmarks and the way the town was seen for the passengers travelling through. Collectively these elements coalesced to form a limited image of the town circulated to the majority of people in each period.

Stockport developed as a series of different areas, in contrast to the wider north-western industrial towns that continually adapted their central areas. As the function of each area in Stockport declined the town shifted spatially to appropriate new land and transport infrastructures. Through each period, the edge of the routes were used as spaces to construct a new urban image, seen in the movement of civic areas and deliberate style shifts. This has resulted in large fragmented blocks of character areas that are a product of each period. While the example is extreme in Stockport, the role of transport infrastructures in constructing, presenting and disseminating urban image is one which appears to be present in each of the north-western industrial towns.

Hillgate was based on an incremental and adaptive style of landscape appropriation that resulted in a fine urban grain and complex interrelation between landscape and architecture. This created an intricate visual character that was largely influenced by the market function of the town and the landform pattern.

The London and North Western Railway drew the town westwards towards flatter lands. The landscape appropriation type was based on the defeat of nature and saw the construction of grid-like structures and monumental engineering projects. The view of the town from the viaduct and Wellington Road presented an industrial scale and character of the town that emerged along the Mersey Valley.

The M60 adapted the town to east-west traffic subverting the historic importance of the north-south connections of the town. The new motorway extensively constructed a new landscape that was influenced by natural forms and ideas of English landscape aesthetics. The speed and view of the town from the motorway shifted the landmark types of the town towards large distinctive forms and colours seen in the Pyramid and the red sandstone Dodge Hill cliffs visible at

Opposite page: Figs 7.31 Screen shots of the journey between junction 27 and 1 of the M60 at Stockport

60mph.

Each infrastructure produced and sustained new spatial arrangements and relationships to the wider landscape that matured over time. These long term processes are evident in the shifting use of the infrastructures wider supporting built landscapes. In this sense the development of the motorway is still within an early transition period in the process of developing a wider supporting network of built form. So far this has been characterised by out of town shopping uses but presents an interesting opportunity for Stockport's future urban strategy. The local authority has the option to continue the traditional urban growth types of the town by developing a new centre at the M60 or to shift strategies towards developing a structure that aligns the fragmented centres of the town.

08 Conclusion

This thesis explored three types of urban image in the North Western industrial towns. The towns' urban images have been highly contested throughout their histories evoking scenes of progress, domination, decline, loss and grief that were amalgamated into the Northern cultural image. The development of this cultural image was intrinsically connected to the built reality of the towns' urban condition which in turn created a strong link between image and urbanity in the region. Further to this urban design has recurrently formed part of the story of how the towns chose to define themselves. This practice has been recently compounded by the redefinition of the region's core cities through urban regeneration which has culturally repositioned Liverpool and Manchester and generated growth. Despite the prevalence of these practices the local authorities show a vicarious interest in image ignoring the impacts for the built environment and vice versa. Instead the regeneration of the towns has been led by myopic urban agendas that have impacted the future development of the towns through intended and unintended consequences. The complex relationship between the image of the town and the objectives of urban regeneration can be seen to be multifaceted, led partly by investment needs and partly by cultural ambition. These ideas have been embodied within the architectural objects of the towns forming a collection of paradoxical ideas and ideals representative of different periods.

The conclusions of the research begin with a summary of the project, the main findings and contribution to knowledge. The discussion then moves on to re-address the research questions and to provide some answers gained from the project. The discussion moves on to the conclusions of the research in relation to Stockport and the wider industrial towns. The research hopes to provide a method of understanding urban image in the industrial towns in order to create more informed urban strategies and some specific ideas for the future development of Stockport.

Thesis Argument

The pressures of urban competition are causing the towns to reposition and restructure themselves to attract investment. This strategy has created a pattern of redevelopment that goes un-critiqued and unquestioned. Urry stated that 'almost every town and city in Lancashire seeks both to attract visitors and permanent residents partly through repackaging its history and culture' (2002:159). The thesis critically addresses urban competition and its particular manifestation in the north west, a region traditionally built on urban cooperation (Counce 2003).

The thesis approaches the town as an urban entity distinct from the city and questions the validity of replicating and competing with city strategies building on Bell and Jayne's thesis of the Small City (2006). From this perspective, it is argued that the towns need to develop urban strategies that are culturally appropriate for their scale and scope of urbanity. The research presents a method through which the towns can begin to explore their urban futures through critique of their past development.

The thesis argues that the industrial towns while quantitatively similar, contain nuanced characters that can be found both between and within the towns. This complexity of the region has been simplified through homogenous cultural images (Counce 2000, Kirk 2000, Ehland 2007). It is argued that while distinct characters have existed within the towns throughout their histories, the overriding interest in the specific subjects of urban growth, industrialisation and decline contained the representation of the towns to a small number of types. This was further exaggerated through the view of the towns from major transportation routes, these were the primary scenes of industrialism and presented a limited view of the town for artists and visitors. While the image of the towns has changed quite dramatically over the centuries, this process has continued into the present. As such representations of the towns have been fundamentally influenced by infrastructure, presented the interests of the viewer and overlooked diversity.

An inherent tension exists between the cultural identity of the towns' and their function, historically they have been defined by industry yet this became a problem (both functionally and culturally) as soon as industry ceased to be active. As such, the existing image of the towns has been consistently problematised through consecutive urban strategies that positioned themselves against industrial aesthetics and forms of urbanism. As a result the historic character of the towns has been dismantled and fragmented without a consistent replacement.

The towns as such have become increasingly illegible. Additionally, the competitive urban strategies have produced a series of urban restructures based fundamentally on retail development that have come at the expense of other areas.

Finally the thesis argues that through critically understanding the development of urban image in the industrial towns the local authorities can make more informed choices and decisions regarding the urban future of their towns. The method of understanding urban image presents a particular way in which each town can understand the nuances of their development and position themselves in relation to this. The method also presents the opportunity for the towns to critically evaluate their past strategies and their success (or otherwise) in repositioning the their urban images.

Chapter Summary

The first chapter of the thesis 'A Comparative Review of the Industrial Towns of the Region' focused on the comparison of eight industrial towns from a variety of perspectives related to the built environment. This section of the study highlighted the quantitative similarity of the towns seen in their shared population numbers, densities and spatial size. It was argued that the towns occupy a distinct level of the urban hierarchy as third tier urban areas. Having lost their traditional cooperative roles within the region it was found that the towns have shifted towards a competitive urban model that pitches the towns against each other and the core cities. It was found that the towns have varied levels of ambition and the aim to achieve city status was a key trend of the economically stronger towns. Further to this it was argued that the towns are different to the region's cities in scope, ability and reach and should not continue to be approached simply as smaller versions of the city.

While similarities were found in quantitative comparisons, differences between the towns were largely qualitative aspects that were particularly evident in the built environment. This was shown through the towns' spatial layout, architectural styles, materialities, their relationships to topography, alignment within the valleys, and the quality of their urban spaces and architecture. It was found that the towns displayed varied approaches to the built environment with some towns exhibiting higher quality urban conditions in comparison to other towns. Each of these aspects presented the greatest variations between the towns. From these results it was evident that the towns have heterogeneous characters, identities and ambitions while their size, type and status are homogenous. Stockport was identified as an exemplar due to the average quantitative results of the town that highlighted it as a normative example. Further to this in the qualitative results Stockport provided an example which combined the characteristics of the wider towns and presented pronounced identity issues relating to its historic position between Lancashire and Cheshire and its recurrent bids for city status.

The findings of the chapter in relation to the variation in urban quality were then explored in more detail in Chapter Two, 'Trends in the Urban Development of the Industrial Towns 1840-2015'. This chapter looked more specifically at the urban development of the towns, their respective traditions of civic investment and their patterns of 'urban inheritance' (Trinder 2005). The chapter identified broad shared trends of urban development in the towns while highlighting key anomalies and best practices.

'Urban inheritance' (ibid) was seen to be a fundamental influencing factor in the later development of the towns, as the original street pattern and relationship to topography largely withstood subsequent restructures. Further to this it was found that towns with strong levels of urban inheritance, or a well developed urban form that predated the first industrial revolution, were more likely to have developed a strong civic tradition. The results illustrated that Bolton, spatially the largest town by 1840, developed a strong civic tradition that was cultivated through several generations of philanthropy. The investment made in the built environment at Bolton significantly improved the quality of the urban condition and encouraged further investment through workers villages, institutional architecture, public statuary and civic amenities such as museums and libraries. This philanthropic tradition in the town greatly influenced each subsequent generation to invest further in the town's built environment. This tradition of civic interest in Bolton was further cultivated through twentieth century urban planning initiatives epitomised in Shankland and Cullen's 'civic husbandry' approach in the 1960's.

In contrast, towns such as St Helens and Oldham, which were products of the industrial revolution and lacked a pre-industrial population and urban form, had a much weaker civic tradition with minimal philanthropic investment in the built environment. As a result, this lack of investment continued throughout each generation creating a weak civic tradition and resulting in a lack of quality in the built environment that continues to affect the towns today. The contrasting fortunes of Bolton (which has been widely praised for its built environment) in comparison to Oldham and St Helens (widely criticised for the condition of their built environments) highlights the importance of cultivating a strong civic approach for posterity that can be continued and developed through each generation.

The results of Chapter Two also found that a wide range of urban plans and strategies had been made for the towns, largely following national planning fashions and the guidance of the national planning system. The results indicated that the urban plans had little affect on the towns with the majority of urban changes occurring outside the recommendations of the official town plans. It was also found that image is becoming increasingly significant in the regeneration of the towns through key projects attempting to reposition the towns' cultural image.

Chapter Three, Four and Five moved to the specific case of Stockport as an exemplar for the eight towns. The town was deemed to be a good example as it presented the indeterminate characteristics of the region's towns, exhibited a typical spatial and population size, and

was found to be in the process of cultural repositioning. Following on from the conclusions of Chapter Two, which indicated a great level of difference between planning and urban change practices, these chapters interrogated the representation and graphic depiction of Stockport, its urban plans and built environment separately.

Chapter Three 'A Historical Survey of the Representation of Stockport' explored graphic depictions of Stockport and their relationship to the built environment, these took the form of written and visual accounts of the town. The chapter identified three major periods of representation of the town that were positioned in relation to industrialism and significantly influenced by wider artistic styles, these were defined as the Industrial Pastoral, Industrial Sublime and Post-Industrial Recations. The chapter also identified key landmarks that have contributed to Stockport's urban image throughout its history, specifically, St Mary's Parish Church, the Viaduct and the Pyramid. It was found that depictions of the town had focused on areas of change and transition through each period and was heavily influenced by artist motivations and stylistic conventions that resulted in homogenous depictions of the towns.

Chapter Four 'A Historical Review of Town Planning in Stockport' focused on the visual history of urban planning in Stockport. The focus on one location rather than a singular planner or period allowed an exploration of the layered and cumulative affect of urban planning on the town. It also allowed a further exploration of the varied impact of the plans upon the town, highlighting specific fragments of the plans to be constructed. The results identified a historic pattern of planning struggles in Stockport which resulted in generations of unrealised plans in the town despite an early proactive approach.

The planning experience at Stockport demonstrated the level of influence individuals can have in the urban design practice of the towns, as William Gardner in-house civil engineer affected the greatest impact on the town (through his influence on the construction of Merseyway Road, the location of the Bus Station and Civic Centre) in contrast to shorter term (and highly paid) expert consultants such as Thomas Sharp that had virtually no impact on the town. The research also uncovered some interesting developments in the anomalies of Thomas Sharp's approach in the town which had been previously highlighted by Pendlebury (2009) and Larkham (2004). This can be seen in Sharp's wide criticism of civic centres that contrasted his approach to Stockport. The inclusion of a civic centre at Stockport in Sharp's plan was the result of the continual debates within the local authority prior to his commission that effectively vetoed Sharp's approach. This highlighted the scale of influence of the local authority in urban plans created by outside professionals.

The research also highlighted a constant preoccupation with traffic alleviation in the town which permeated every plan throughout the twentieth century. This can be seen as a factor that affected each of the industrial towns and was a result of the need to update town centres for the increasing use of car travel, yet also the product of an over-reliance on civil engineers to develop urban plans (as the post-war plans of all eight towns were produced by small teams of civil engineers with little wider disciplinary input from architects or town planners).

The research found that the successive urban plans for Stockport were each based on the creation of a new image for the town that aligned it away from industrialism and the towns' existing image. The ideological approach of each period brought with it a new aesthetic associated with the dominant planning ideal of each period. This can be seen in the rationalised monumental architecture of the modernist period, the English urbanism of Thomas Sharp and the Mancunian aesthetic of BDP. None of the plans actively engaged with the existing image of Stockport, an approach only witnessed in Cullen's Bolton 1963. Chapter Five developed a narrative of the urban changes experienced by Stockport, this attempted to make legible the somewhat chaotic urban form of the town. This was achieved through the discussion of three key transport infrastructures that have structured and influenced the overall urban development of the town throughout its history. These results made clear a relationship between sites of image production and mass transit that characterised the historic development of the town. The results showed that Stockport consistently developed linear 'centres' along new transport infrastructures rather than the traditional layered rebuilding seen in the seven further towns.



Figure 8.1, 'Old and New Lancashire Hill', M. Cowley, c.1990, Stockport Heritage Services

Research Questions

The overall research question of the thesis asked:

- **‘What is the urban image of the north west post-industrial town?’**

This was followed by the secondary questions:

- **‘How has the urban image shifted throughout time?’**
- **‘How has urban image influenced urban development in the towns?’**

The thesis found that the urban image of the industrial towns is fragmented, paradoxical and partial. The image of the towns has been fragmented initially by the loss of the hegemonic visual culture of industrialism. The decline of industry broke down the overriding visual identity of the towns. Further to this process, the image of industrialism was actively replaced by the ideal urban images of town planning that sought to reimagine the industrial towns for the twentieth century. These types of proposed images shifted throughout each period of development in accordance with shifting planning ideologies creating a number of short-lived reconstruction aesthetics. This was a key way in which urban image has affected the urban development in the towns, in return, wider changes within the built environment, the result of piecemeal change and civil engineering initiatives, deconstructed industrial areas and exchanged them with retail areas and mass transport. These new developments each presented new images of urbanity and therefore created a reciprocal relationship between image and the environment. None of the plans to reimagine or regenerate the towns were implemented in full resulting in a patchwork (or kaleidoscope to elaborate Counce’s reference) of fragmented images that related to alternative periods of development.

The cultural associations with industry throughout different periods has resulted in paradoxical images of the towns. As such images of growth, progress and domination of the early industrial period are contrasted with images of decline, loss and grief of the twentieth century. Further to this, the layering of successive fragmented images of planning has compounded these paradoxical images through their own cultural associations of particular planning ideologies. The repetition of particular scenes of the towns has further strengthened this contradictory aspect as strong images of progress from the nineteenth century (such as Stockport Viaduct) were re-presented in later periods as images of decline (seen in Lowry’s depictions) layering multiple meanings on particular urban areas and scenes.

The depiction of the towns within the wider cultural image was seen

to be partial and focused specifically of areas of transition overlooking areas which did not conform. The depiction of the towns was based on stylistic conventions of each period that resulted in a collection of similar artworks of the towns. Therefore the way the towns were represented in each period created a media-based convergence that emphasised similarity and compounded the homogenous character of the Northern cultural image. In contrast few works depicted the towns' more stable areas and those that pre-dated industry overlooking the heterogeneity of the towns. As such the depiction of the towns was limited and did not present the complexity of the region.

The thesis argued that three particular types of urban image are significant in the context of the industrial towns. In order to explore the relationship between image and the built environment in the towns three types of urban image were studied. It was found that the urban images developed throughout time as a complex interrelation of graphic depictions, urban plans and the built environment that represented, problematised and constructed urban images. It was found that these three urban image types are interlinked practices, a factor that is not acknowledged by current urban strategies.

Graphic depictions of the town were shown to be a result of the built environment mediated by artist (and market) motivations and stylistic conventions, which presented a limited or partial view of the town. It was found that wider trends of English art and cultural interest impacted the depiction of the town creating a canon of industrial subject artworks that related to the Pastoral, Sublime, and Social Realism. This factor contributed to the perception of a homogenous regional character as each town was depicted according to the same artistic styles in each period. Urban plans proposed new visual models for the town based on accepted images of urbanism which reacted in various ways to the limited view of the town depicted in the cultural image and built reality. They engaged only superficially with the concept of urban image seeking to replace one with another with little analysis or evaluation. The built environment significantly influenced the previous types through the material reality of the town which provided specific views and images aligned to artists motivations and an existing aesthetic to reposition. Therefore, the built environment was used consistently throughout history to present a particular image to the world which changed throughout different periods according to different ideologies. In addition, the Northern cultural image was one not based on falsehoods and did depict a reality of the towns, but it excluded scenes that did not conform. Further to this, urban plans problematised the existing urban image and transposed them with accepted images of urbanity in a simplistic way. As such while the urban images of the towns have shifted and changed throughout time, the approach towards them has remained the same.

Contribution to Existing Knowledge

The study has contributed to current studies on the Northern cultural image (such as Kirk 2000, Russell 2004, Ehland 2007, Counce 2000) through a specific focus on the relationship between image and the built environment. The Literature Review identified this gap as a lack of research on the specific material ways in which the North diverges from its cultural image. It was argued in the thesis that the cultural image of the North was heavily influenced by representations of urbanity which in turn were influenced by the material reality of the towns. The study of these issues elaborated the debates regarding the Northern image through an interrogation of its specific elements and relation to the built environment.

The study evaluated the reality of the homogenous cultural image through a qualitative and quantitative comparison of the towns, to understand how far they are similar and how far they diverge from the stereotype of regional uniformity. Further to this, the study of a singular case study and the specific images associated with it allowed an in-depth enquiry into their connection to the built environment and the impact of images on the urban development of the town. This extended the application of the Northern cultural image debate which has traditionally examined literary and visual materials without significant reference to place or interrogation of localised issues (preferring to address the North as a whole). The focus on urban image and the built environment also extended current debates on place marketing as it began to unpick the impact of image on place.

Further to this the study contributed to traditional studies of visual culture of the Victorian industrial town (such as Freeman 1999, Dyos and Wolff 1973), discussed in the Literature Review, through a continuation of the subject into post-industrialism. As such the study continued the subject matter and focus on artistic and literary descriptions into the twentieth and twenty-first century, highlighting the layered and cumulative ideological aspects of the images and their relation to the built environment.

In addition, the study contributed to the canon of twentieth century town planning in England as very little academic attention had focused on the urban planning schemes of the industrial towns. As such the study presented empirical work that had not been done before by reviewing the urban plans of the region's towns throughout the twentieth century. The research also highlighted the dearth of information on the in-house plans of local authorities despite their exemplary status as normative practices of urban planning. The study highlighted particular instances that converged and diverged with

the national planning experience presenting a regional review of planning in the North West. The plans are particularly pertinent to the development of urban planning in England, as the system was founded in reaction to the chaos and deprivation of industrial urbanism. This highlights the town plans as a key area for future research that could interrogate further the impact of town planning in the region and contribute to in-depth studies of the particular plans. The study of the region's planning history is of key interest to understand the ways in which the monumental challenge of ameliorating the worst excesses of industrialism was achieved throughout the twentieth century. The initial study of urban planning in the region also contributed to two further existing arguments through the extension of academic interest beyond the city scale, and the focus on the visual aspects of urban planning.

The focus on the urban scale of the town attempted to broaden the academic interest in cities towards other normative forms of urbanism extending Bell and Jayne's thesis on the Small City (2006). This questioned the ascendancy of cities and the logic of urban competition in the context of smaller areas. The study highlighted specific ways in which towns differ from the cities of the region, in order to outline the towns' pertinence as a distinct subject for academic study. As such the thesis argued that current trend that approaches towns as small versions of cities overlooks key ways in which towns and cities differ beyond size.

The study of the imagery of urban plans has traditionally been dominated by a post-war focus in England. This study contributed to the existing work of authors such as Perkins and Dodge (2012) through a sustained analysis of shifting imagery of urban planning across the twentieth century, within the regional context of Greater Manchester. This explored the way in which the urbanity of the industrial town was problematised and uncovered the ideal urban images proposed for the towns throughout the twentieth century.

It was argued in the thesis that image is becoming increasingly important factor in the urban strategies of the industrial towns, and this process can be seen across English urban areas as global urban competition grows. As such the study presented a distinct method of analysing these processes in relation to contexts with strong cultural images. This addressed issues of identity, heritage, urban ambition, the built environment and image as interlinked subjects aspects that are traditionally approached as discrete.

The results of the research led to a number of conclusions that relate to the specific case of Stockport and to the general condition of the

towns and the practices engaged to reposition them which will be discussed separately.

Stockport-Specific Conclusions

The research found that Stockport was representative of the wider industrial towns of the region as the town was found to be quantitatively average for the eight towns in question. Further to this the town showed distinctive similarities to the two qualitative character types of the region's towns, through its varied contours of the northern area and the materiality of the southern area towns. In addition Stockport presented complex identity issues that epitomised similar tensions in the wider towns seen in the tension between past and future, county allegiances and position and status within the region.

Following on from this the town was seen to be distinct from the group in particular ways. This can be seen in the historical development pattern of the town which jumped from place to place rather than the layered pattern observed in the wider towns. This resulted in more distinct character areas relating to specific development periods in the town. Further to this the development of town planning in Stockport was somewhat abnormal in the region. As such while some of the findings of the research can be applied to the wider towns in general, other findings were specific to Stockport itself. This section discusses the conclusions regarding the specific context of Stockport and moves on to outline clear directions for future urban strategies in the town.

The research identified a number of connected issues in relation to Stockport's built environment and urban image. It was found that the town has multiple contradictory images that relate to distinct periods of time in the town's development, but also to particular character areas of the town centre. As such the town centre has a fragmented character that relates to different functional needs, transport modes and different periods of the town's development. In addition the town was seen to have a number of identity issues that relate to how it portrays itself, its connection to Cheshire and/or Lancashire, its connection to Manchester and its status as a town. Further to this it was found that historically visual town planning has been largely unsuccessful in Stockport.

Stockport experienced continual difficulties creating an urban strategy throughout its history, which extended beyond the usual difficulties of the other towns of the region. This was particularly evident in the 90 year period it took to agree on a style and location for the Town Hall. These difficulties caused several issues for the town, it resulted in a

protracted development period that meant the town lagged behind the development of the other industrial towns. It also meant that once a decision had been made the local authority was unlikely to move in response to expert advice (this can be seen in the fate of Thomas Sharp's plans for the town despite paying extremely high fees for his proposals). It also resulted in a huge amount of development occurring outside town plans as the town was subject to change without an overriding plan while the local authority debated the best course of action. As a result the decisions and indecisions of the local authority that were initiated the early 1800's had knock on effects for the growth and development of the town throughout the twentieth century. This issue highlights the importance of planning decisions for the future development of the town and the longevity of their impact.

The research found that Stockport's current urban proposals re-envisage Stockport as a contemporary Mancunian town, this directly contradicts the town's ambition for city status and undermines the town's existing identities. The Mancunian model has become the basis of transition for each of the towns as it formed a successful regeneration and repositioning strategy for the city of Manchester. In order to generate growth and successfully reposition themselves the towns replicate the aesthetics and strategy of the city. This repeated use of the Manchester model is reducing the material individuality of the towns creating a more homogenous regional aesthetic that could further compound the Northern cultural image. Therefore it is argued that the local authority at Stockport (and the wider towns) has an important decision to make regarding its future urban image and identity.

Within this thesis it is argued that the town is currently pursuing short-term investment-led urban regeneration that will impact the development of the town through subsequent generations. Therefore it is argued that the town (and the wider towns) now have the opportunity to develop long term urban strategies that allow them to culturally reposition themselves through informed decisions that take into account the relationship between place and image and the successes and failures of past attempts to redefine the towns. As such it is argued that future urban strategies for the towns should be based on a thorough understanding of their existing urban images and town planning history in order to reposition themselves effectively.

The research found that Stockport has a historic tradition of urban development that leaves behind obsolete areas. As a result, each major development period in the town shifted its centre to a different area. Each of these areas were dominated by major transport routes creating a series of linear centres surrounding the routes that have

little engagement with previous areas of the town. So far these linear centres have focused on the Market Place / Hillgate route that spanned 1200-1820, the railway / Wellington Road route that spanned 1820-current and the most recent M60 route that began in the 1970's to the current period. It is argued that the local authority at Stockport has the option to either continue this tradition of spatial development or to propose a new pattern for the future. In making this decision the local authority would begin to engage on a more complex level with the urban development and image of the town beyond stylistic preferences to create more informed decisions regarding the town's future.

The option for the town to continue the historic tradition would mean focusing new developments along the M60 corridor. This would bring all new civic and institutional functions to the side of the motorway creating a new urban centre for the current period. The opportunity presented by the M60 would result in a new spatial type that is unavailable to most other urban centres in the UK, that is the result of the proximity of the motorway to the town centre at Stockport. This would create a unique development for English motorways and urban areas and could help to align Stockport's identity away from the Mancunian model (depending on the aesthetic of the new architecture). While the design proposals of the Future Stockport plan align the Redrock retail scheme to the roadside this effectively brings peripheral land uses into the central area of Stockport. In contrast, the thesis argues Stockport has the opportunity to develop traditionally urban central functions to the edge of the motorway. This would begin to utilise the vast areas of unbuilt land surrounding the motorway (excepting floodplains) and create a new accessible and visible centre along the motorway.

Using the historic eclectic tradition of Stockport as a model, the new centre would continue the past processes of development which introduced new styles of architecture to the town each time the development area moved. As such the town would need to introduce a new architectural style that incorporates new material types and forms that are unassociated with the existing characters of the town. To some extent this has process has begun through the development of the Pyramid at King's Valley. From the analysis of speed of travel and visual experience of the motorway discussed in Chapter Five, the surrounding development would need to be characterised by bold sculptural forms and colours spaced approximately 500m apart and clustered around the junctions. This focus on the busiest route of the town presents the opportunity to redefine Stockport's current urban image unhindered by existing materials of the town.

In contrast, the town also has the opportunity to break with its traditional development type. This option would see the town focus on consolidating the existing linear centres into a legible core. This approach would need to focus future development on the spatially dispersed area between Stockport Central Station and Hillgate amalgamating the areas of the railway through to the Market Place, which would involve the creation of a legible and functional connection between the two sides of the town. This approach would take a more conventional approach to urban design and would have less impact on the urban image of the town, due to its focus on less conspicuous routes. In contrast this approach would present the opportunity to continue the development of an eclectic architectural style in the town or the explicit choice of a new architectural style and would necessitate a more nuanced approach to the existing form and future development.

Both options present an opportunity to develop the eclectic architectural features of Stockport, with one focusing on bold new designs while the second would focus on a more nuanced approach to combine the existing aesthetics.

The research also presents some conclusions for the development of urban image within the local authority outside traditional urban planning and architectural practices. The analysis of the representation of the town throughout history found that the local authority had shifted the way the town was presented through official documents according to fashion. It is argued here that a more comprehensive and considered approach is needed in order to portray the distinct characters of the town as a legible image. This would mean suspending architectural style values instead focusing on the historical importance to the town. Further it would need the local authority to consciously decide which images they want to represent the future of the town and which they wish to discard. This would present an initial step in defining how they wish the future town to look and how they might go about achieving this.



Conclusions for the Wider Towns and Recommendations for Further Research

The conclusions regarding Stockport's image hold important impacts for the seven other industrial towns of the region. The method presents a way of evaluating and understanding the image of the towns and the relationship to the built environment providing a basis for future decisions. Surveying the way the town has been represented throughout history provides a way of understanding the unique aspects of the towns' development and evaluating the success and failure of past regeneration.

This thesis argued that by paying particular attention to the existing urban image, the way it has developed and has been constructed, creates the opportunity to devise an urban strategy that addresses image effectively. As the towns need to identify their position in order to be able to move from one condition to another. The survey of the way the towns have been represented through history provides a basis from which the local authority can reevaluate which images they prefer and which they would like to readjust. As such it is recommended that each town undertake a similar study in order to understand the specific development and unique features of their town. In this sense the method presents the opportunity to explicitly evaluate the towns'

Opposite Page: Figure 8.2, St. Helens Skyline, Image author's own, 2013.

historic and current images. Finding that the construction of towns' urban image is tied to infrastructural routes in the context of the north-western industrial towns provides a key space to target regeneration or conservation practices. Similarly through surveying the historical development of the urban image, it was evident that particular images have been represented consistently throughout the town's history. Again these present particular sites through which the town can redefine or strengthen its existing image. This foregrounds the urban image of the towns as a particular site of contestation and its particular relevance to urban and design planning. It also presents a distinct opportunity for the local authority to explicitly define the urban image they wish to portray.

In addition to these recommendations for future practice, the research presented further directions for further research. It was found that historically the responsibility for civic improvement in the towns lay primarily with individual philanthropists and to some extent civic societies, this responsibility has shifted towards the local authorities to safeguard and create an urban inheritance for the future. This is of particular importance for those towns with a poor record of urban planning and architectural quality which have the opportunity to cultivate a new civic approach. Yet similarly this is of key importance to all the towns in their current regeneration strategies which need to approach the built environment as an investment for the future as opposed to a commodity. As it was found that the built environment has a great impact on the urban planning approaches of subsequent generations. The research suggests that new forms of civic engagement are needed in order to rekindle the philanthropic interest in architecture and urban design. This provides a distinct area for future research.

The study identified a number of key planners in the development of the towns throughout the region, particularly influenced by the professors of the Liverpool School of Architecture in the early twentieth century. Charles Reilly, Patrick Abercrombie and Stanley Adshead had a major influence on the region through a continual input of consultancy work, dissemination of ideas through the Town Planning Review and creation of design competitions (such as the Lever Prizes in Civic Design c. 1909). The extent of this influence presents another key area for future research. The study of the regional impact of the individual planners would present a contribution to existing knowledge through an extension on the work of their design ideologies. Further to this it would provide a critical analysis of planning impact in the region rather than the planning narrative of individual cities. Consequently the urban plans held in the archives of the local authorities present significant sources of information for future research on the urban

development of the region, the national planning system and the influence of particular planners.

Further to this, the methods of the research highlighted a number of issues in the regional archival services. In undertaking the research it became apparent that cuts to local authority funding has impacted archive services in the region, as opening hours, staff numbers and expertise has been greatly reduced in recent years. This has a direct affect on the accessibility of materials in the archive that are often dependent on staff knowledge. It was also found that the archives hold divergent practices in their numbering and cataloguing systems that makes comparison of materials between towns particularly difficult. Further to this the partial digitisation of catalogues is an area that needs further improvement with towns such as Wigan and Stockport offering no digital cataloguing system presenting further emphasis on the expertise of the archivist to find relevant materials. It was found that the archives were not accustomed to urban research with greater level of organisation and working geared towards human history. As such locating aligned materials such as town plans was often stored across different holdings and difficult to access. Significant improvements could be made to the study of the region's urban history through a comprehensive approach to urban materials. The recent refurbishment of Manchester Archives and attempt to create a regional database through Greater Manchester Lives will hopefully improve access to information for future research on the region. It is also suggested that the creation of a large regional archive could help to align materials and to increase access to the archive holdings in response to reduced opening times of local archives. This would mean a significant increase in the size and resources of Manchester Archives.

In conclusion, the research found that the towns have experienced great shifts in their urban images. Through the three perspectives of urban plans, graphic depictions and the built environment it was found that urban plans have consistently problematised the existing image of the towns and presented a new image based on contemporaneous ideal urban images. It was found that the graphic depictions of the towns have consistently focused on particular elements and overlooked the diverse characters of the industrial towns. The built environment surrounding infrastructural routes was found to be a key space for the creation and construction of urban images as they provided the scene of the town for the majority of visitors.

Using Stockport as a case study it was found that the way the town was represented in art and cultural materials affected its urban strategies and built environment. The town sought to construct new images through both planning and through piecemeal urban change that presented a different view of the town through three major periods. Infrastructure was a central feature in the construction of the image of the town as it presented an accessible view to artists and visitors and presented the town's contemporary architecture through each period.

While infrastructure had a major role in the construction and dissemination of the towns image, the urban plans repeatedly overlooked this factor. Instead planning was focused on traffic alleviation and the construction of a new image based on contemporaneous ideas of good urbanism that shifted throughout each period. The most recent example was found to be the Mancunian model. It was argued that this reluctance to analyse and evaluate the existing image of Stockport led to interventions which problematised the towns existing image rather than working within it. This has resulted in fragmented and contradictory characters areas within the town that align with the ideals of different planning eras.

It was found that trends analysed in Stockport were evident in the wider towns as they developed similar urban strategies and plans throughout the twentieth century, each of which (with the exception of Cullen's Bolton) attempted to construct new urban images that contrast and contradict the existing image of the towns. Further to this, the ideal urban images put forward as models were similar for each town, following the trends of rationalisation, urban renaissance, and neo-liberalism. These processes worked against the nuanced complexity of the region's character and attempted to create a normative acceptable urban image. As such the towns are losing their diverse material qualities. While this is a matter that is seen as a globalisation issue and usually argued by conservationists, the process is more complex.

The shift towards acceptable urban images can be seen to echo the economic ideology that shifted from regional cooperation (Counce 2000) to regional competition. The cooperative model saw a nuanced industrial base that interlinked the urban areas of the region with each town specialising in different manufacturing processes. This led to a diversity in the character and architecture of the towns which finely contrasted each other. Since the competitive model has been adopted, with the decline of industry each town has begun to compete with each other for the same workforce and financial investments rather than cooperate. Parallel to this, in seeking to attract investment the towns have sought to create widely accepted images of urbanism that borrow material palettes and architectural styles from the cities, in a process that Bell and Jayne termed Mundanisation (2006:1). This process has created tension with the historic urban structure and aesthetic of the towns while at the same time the towns are holding on to past identities through heritage projects. As such while the towns are becoming increasingly competitive, in order to do so they are becoming more similar and creating divergent approaches to their urban forms and histories.

The industrial towns of the north-west have a series of persistent images that hold distinct relevance to their urban forms. In turn these images have influenced, and continue to influence the development of urban strategies and visual planning in an effort to re-present themselves. Often these urban strategies attempt to shift the towns urban image in order to attract private investment rather than the result of a considered approach towards the future identity of the town. As such the context of the study addressed three debates regarding the Northern cultural image, urban scale and competition, heritage and identity. It was argued that a critical understanding of the development of urban image and the built environment is needed in order to produce informed and responsive urban strategies for the future.



Figure 8.3, Aerial View of Stockport, Smith and Webb 2007

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