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## **Urban Landscape Approaches for a de-industrialised town: City Beautiful and Modernist Restructure in the Case Study of Bolton, Manchester**

### **Abstract**

Through a case study of Bolton, Greater Manchester, this paper discusses questions of continuous change, development and adaptation in the urban landscape, during the decline of industry from 1909-1963. The aim of the study is to explore the changing attitudes of planners towards revitalizing urban landscape design in northern England. This case study presents the analysis of two visionary plans: 'Beautiful Bolton', by landscape architect Thomas Hayton Mawson and 'Town of the Future' by urban designer Gordon Cullen. Both plans demonstrate an evolving idea of modernisation of the urban landscape, from the City Beautiful approach employed by Mawson, to the 'Townscape' modernism of Cullen.

The focus in this paper is upon the redesign of the de-industrialised British town of Bolton by Thomas H. Mawson (1861-1933) and Gordon Cullen (1914-1994), how they in their separate plans interwove international ideas and precedents, while balancing this with a sense of guardianship for the existing urban identity. The two visions, Mawson's City Beautiful scheme designed in 1910, and Cullen's subdued Modernism envisioned in 1963-1965, span the turbulent decades of cultural change associated with industrial decline in England. As such, the plans present two urban landscape strategies that relate to the wider developments of the profession of landscape architecture and urban design. Both Mawson and Cullen's particular approaches to the difficult context of decline, obsolescence and identity highlight the relevance of their planning and design strategies for contemporary designers. Despite express approval from their contemporaries, who stated that 'these reports are worthy of detailed study by all who are seriously interested in urban renewal' (Meadows 1966: 518), the two schemes have not been analysed or discussed in detail in the context of either urban design or local history.

### **The need for regeneration in industrial towns**

The urban condition and quality of life in British industrial towns was a significant topic of debate in the nineteenth and twentieth century. During this period the towns of Greater Manchester became synonymous with industrial degradation, epitomised in Friedrich Engel's description of nearby Stockport as '...one of the duskiest smokiest holes, and when viewed from the viaduct excessively repellent' (Engels 1892). In 2002, urbanist Peter Hall termed the apotheosis of this industrial urbanism between 1880-1900 'the City of the Dreadful Night' (Hall 2014:13-48). In addition to this the ills of industrial growth were quickly followed by the economic decline and deindustrialisation processes of the early twentieth century that further exacerbated the problem. Cultural geographers Lovatt and O'Connor explain: '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 devastating effects of long-term structural employment, but with a wider sense of loss of purpose; of identity' (Lovatt and O'Connor 1995: 127).

Bolton, sitting 20 km to the north west of the City of Manchester in the Greater Manchester area in northern England (Fig.1), underwent vast urban growth during the industrial revolution from the late eighteenth century that shifted its function, form and identity into a chaotic urban character. Along with its surrounding towns, Bolton symbolised the degradation of declining industry, seen in its sprawling and polluted character in Figure 2. The plans for Bolton discussed here highlight two alternative approaches to the issues of mid-sized industrial centres. The provincial scale and the inflated ambition of Bolton makes its redesign by two influential designers of particular interest during a time when in most towns of a similar scale and scope (Hall, Marshall and Lowe 2001: 802) borough engineers were drawing up urban plans within the local authorities.

### **Mawson's Plans for Bolton: suburbs and city center**

#### *Principles for urban renewal*

Mawson's plans for Bolton were developed between 1910 and 1916, when, his career was transforming from garden design to landscape architecture, and the awareness of town planning was growing exponentially, demonstrated by the Housing, Town Planning Act (1909) and the establishment of the School of Civic Design at Liverpool University (1908). In his 1916 pamphlet on Bolton, the by then successful author of the influential book *Civic Art* (1911), described his home country's town planning as follows: 'In England there are two schools of town planners [...] While one devotes its energies to the creation of so-called Garden Cities and Model Garden Suburbs, the other dreams of great civic centres and processional ways and grand architectural exteriors' (Mawson 1916: 13). In this commentary, Mawson highlights the two contradictory directions of the early town planning movement in Britain: Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities concentrating on suburban growth in opposition to the city-centre rebuilding model of the City Beautiful, inspired by the Beaux Arts approach and American Town Planning. Although Mawson's note was sceptical about both movements, the period was crucial in the evolution of town planning. The turn of the 20th century brought new theories and a broad international discourse, which helped urbanists from different countries and different backgrounds to spread their ideas. In the decades between 1889 and 1913 a growing number of urban theories and ideas were emerging in Europe and North America (Meller 1995:295) that influenced Mawson and his contemporaries in Britain (Freestone 2007: 26).

The exchange of European and transatlantic urban ideas between European designers and their American counterparts was facilitated by a series of events (Von Petz 2004: 9). Conferences, such as the First Congress on Public Art in Brussels in 1898, the 7th Congress of Architects in London (1906), the International Congress of Architects in Vienna (1908), the First International Town Planning Conference in London (1910), and the yearly organised National Conference on City Planning in the United States of America (from 1909) gave platform for the regular exchange of ideas (Freestone and Amati 2014; Freestone 2015). In France, the Great Exhibitions held between 1856 and 1900 were used 'as an educational context in which to pursue an understanding of modern social

life' (Meller 1995:296). Other exhibitions, such as the Columbian Exhibition of Chicago in 1893, and especially the City Planning Exhibition in Berlin in 1910 (exhibited the same year in the Royal Academy of London), and the Cities and Town Planning Exhibition in the UK (in 1913) helped to strengthen transatlantic relationships and formal partnerships (Chabard 2009). These exhibitions attracted a wide range of professionals, from architects, engineers and landscape architects to city administrators, journalists and economists, who all contributed to the debates, creating a period of 'truly international discourse' and trans-disciplinary approaches (Bohl 2009: 9).

Mawson's principles for the renewal of cities, exemplified in his plans for Bolton, demonstrate the growing international exchange. At the time, influences from abroad were especially strong in Mawson's place of residence, the North West of England. The Mancunian philanthropist Thomas Coghlan Horsfall (1841-1932) for example, played a strong part in publicising the advances Germany had made in the field of municipal planning to his regional and national contemporaries. His report 'The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People: The Example of Germany', was a core text that introduced German town planning ideas to Britain (Horsfall 1905). His writings were widely known in the North West due to the concerns of living conditions in the region's industrial cities, and were developed further by John Nettlefold, a Birmingham city councillor (Nettlefold 1914).

The American City Beautiful Movement also had a strong impact on the North West. The Atlantic port of Liverpool attracted a vibrant cultural life, that enabled professional exchange of urban ideas on occasions as the first City Beautiful Conference in 1907, where Horsfall, among others, presented his ideas influenced by international examples (Collins and Crasemann Collins 1986:368). In 1909, at the University of Liverpool the first degree course on planning in England in the department of Civic Design was established (Freestone 2007: 26). The first Chair of Civic Design, the architect Charles Reilly (1874-1948), was central in disseminating the principles of City Beautiful and the examples of Paris and Beaux Arts architecture, and in the organisation of the new course (Collins and Crasemann Collins 1986:26). The foundation of the course was financed by (Lord) William H. Lever, a local industrial philanthropist, resident of Bolton, and a generous supporter of civic improvements (Freestone 2007: 26-27.). In 1909 Lever invited Mawson, who earlier designed his private gardens, the landscapes of Lever's model village at Port Sunlight and other public projects, to improve his hometown Bolton, and to teach Landscape Design on the new course at Liverpool.

#### *Mawson's career as town planner and landscape architect*

During this period Mawson's international reputation and career in town planning was developing at an extraordinary rate. As he began to work on the Bolton plans for Lever in 1910, he attended the National Housing and Town Planning Conference in Vienna, and presented a paper at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Town Planning Conference. The Conference in Vienna had several effects on Mawson that will be discussed in detail in relation to his plans for Bolton, while the RIBA conference gave him the opportunity to meet 'urban planners [...] coming from Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, the United States and also from Brazil' (Simões 2012), such as Daniel H. Burnham and Charles Mulford Robinson from the United States

of America, Eugène Hénard and Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier representing France and Rudolf Eberstadt, Werner Hegemann and Josef Stübben from Germany (RIBA 1911). In 1910 Mawson also undertook his first lecture tour of the United States of America, where he lectured at prestigious universities such as Harvard, Cornell and Yale. During his travels he met Frederick Law Olmsted Junior and his stepbrother John Charles, and visited their office. In 1911 he accepted an invitation by Olmsted Jr to attend the National Conference on City Planning in Philadelphia, where he actively took part in the discussions (Proceedings 1911: ix., Chabard 2009: 210). His travels gave Mawson an in-depth understanding of the strong relationship between town planning and landscape architecture in the USA (Peterson 2009).

In the period between the two publications of his Bolton plans (1910 and 1916), Mawson became an internationally renowned successful designer of town planning schemes for towns as diverse as Calgary, Borden Ottawa, and Athens (Fig. 3). At the same time, the 'Olmsted of British town planning' continued to develop his international career as a garden designer, writer and campaigner (Cherry 1993: 328). In a national context, Mawson's urban ideas were formed in parallel to the establishment of British statutory town planning and its origins in public health concerns, that were tied to industrial urbanism (Cullingworth and Nadin 2006:15). The publication of the 1909 'Housing, Town Planning, Etc. Act' strengthened Mawson's case for the necessity of town planning. Yet in contrast to the bill and the ideas about town planning in the Garden City movement, Mawson called for the redesign and improvement of existing towns and cities. This broadened the English debate, that focused on housing and social reform, from new developments to that of existing centres (Cherry 1974: 26).

Mawson also aimed to create a bridge between garden design and landscape architecture, integrating both into the forming profession of town planning. Together with Patrick Abercrombie he campaigned for the foundation of a Society of Landscape Architects, as a 'generalist coordinating body', and he discussed this idea in The Town Planning Review (Mawson 1911-1912; Cherry 1974: 56.). 'With an emphasis on civic art', the two terms 'town planning' and 'landscape architecture' were at this point for him almost interchangeable, exemplifying the international and trans-disciplinary trends of the period discussed above (Cherry 1974: 56). His designs, theoretical works and roles in the professional life of town planning and landscape architecture led him to be the president of both the Town Planning Institute, and the Institute for Landscape Architects. His writings helped expand and promote the new profession of landscape architecture, which helped him to address the complex issues of the industrial built environment. Mawson designed his 'Bolton Beautiful' scheme within this context of radical intellectual and professional change.

### *'Bolton Beautiful'*

Mawson first published the plan in 1910, with the title 'Bolton: a Study in Town Planning and Civic Art', and in 1916 published an extended version of his principles contextualised in a theoretical text on town planning in the pamphlet *Bolton as it is and as it might be*. His commissioner, William Lever, had developed some initial ideas regarding the main structural elements of Bolton when he asked Mawson to design it in detail (Mawson 1911: 265). At this time, Mawson's project was a unique and early example of urban planning. Patrick Abercrombie described it

as 'a volume which can hardly fail to stimulate interest...it would be an excellent thing if every town in the country had some such volume presented to it' (Abercrombie 1918: 280), thus highlighting the scarcity of (published) urban plans that tackled the issues of central urban areas. Additionally the uniqueness of the plan can be seen in its combination of the two hegemonic planning strands of the period, fusing the ideals of the first garden city, Letchworth (1903), with the aims of the City Beautiful (Waymark 2009: 202). Mawson proposed the creation of garden suburbs with groupings of houses around triangular spaces with allotments in the middle, and at the same time created grand gestures such as arcaded boulevards, and 'Park Causeways' (Mawson 1910), that linked the historic town centre with the surrounding hilly landscape. (Fig. 4)

The vantage point of the nearby hills served as the ideal location for a new imposing museum building, that was visible from many locations in the town centre (Fig 5 and 6). The visual prominence of the museum over the town was testament to the value Mawson placed on education and cultural growth, which can also be witnessed in his personal approach to development as a designer and teacher. As stated above, he paid particular attention to the questions of revitalising the existing city centre, explaining that 'most men, who would face the planning of a new town with a large optimism, shrink from the task of remodelling an old one' (Mawson 1910: 7). Mawson developed his scheme on the central idea of utilising the existing architectural assets and heritage of Bolton. He aimed to keep and reinforce the municipal centre around the Town Hall, to retain the public library and infirmary buildings and intended to open up and improve the ageing Market Hall, as the key aspects of urban vitality. Through the existing urban structure he designed grand vistas to create visual links between principal Parish Churches and the new municipal centre (Fig. 7 and 8), and both visual and physical links to the existing green areas around the city. The latter largely focused on the extension of the nineteenth century Queen's Park, one of the main focal points of his proposals.

Another revolutionary element of Mawson's design was to build on the existing industrial resources of Bolton, according to his town planning principle of importance of finding each town's individual character, which in this case was industrial (Mawson 1923: 774). He mapped and mentioned industrial buildings with good architectural quality and aimed to use these in his plans for the town's future.

Exemplifying the value he placed on education and development, Mawson gave six lectures to the Bolton Housing and Town Planning Society and public lectures in Bolton's Albert Hall, to teach both town planning professionals and the residents of Bolton of the benefits of the plan for the town and the wider principles of town planning in general. In his eyes, the plan served to improve the town centre and to make a meaningful change for the residents of Bolton, whom in return affectionately coined the name 'Bolton Beautiful' for the plan (Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council 1989: 3). Mawson's lectures gave not only a thorough analysis of his plans but also introduced the wider subject of town planning to the general population of Bolton. Before analysing his Bolton proposal in depth, he covered topics such as 'Meaning' and 'Scope of town planning'. Except for Mawson's deep interest in the role of education, the introductory nature of the lectures highlights the infancy of town planning ideas in wider cultural consciousness.

### *The city as a whole*

Mawson's landscape architectural background can be clearly seen in the particular emphasis he laid on mapping the existing green spaces and creating a new park and parkway system for Bolton (Fig. 9). Having attended the National Housing and Town Planning Conference in Vienna that year, Mawson proposed a mixture of a radial and concentric chain of green spaces for Bolton that echoed the Viennese Ringstraße concept of linking parks and green spaces together. At the same time, Mawson was aware of other city planning concepts that used the encircling green systems. In his book *Civic Art* for instance, he referred to a 1910 Berlin plan by Professor Eberstadt (Mawson 1911: 84) (Fig. 10). His park system for Bolton consisted of various types of green spaces with different functions. Beyond the existing parks he recommended the use of unbuilt areas to be included in a comprehensive plan. While talking about the inner parts of the town, Mawson also referred to American examples, arguing that American Civic Art planning 'never loses sight of the spectacular possibilities in arranging their civic centres' (Mawson 1910: 29). To fulfil this aim Mawson designed several small green spaces for Bolton, that referenced the contemporaneous New Earswick plans by Parker and Unwin (Waymark 2009: 202.). This contrasted the town planning trends of the wider region and nation, that focused on the construction of residential suburbs. On the rare occasions that the urban core was the focus of town planning, the infancy of the profession and lack of qualified specialists resulted in a number of ineffectual plans, such as the one for Stockport (1911), that missed the vision and feasibility of Mawson's plan for Bolton.

Besides Mawson's principle to create unifying and pleasing aesthetics for the built environment, his plans were founded on a thorough understanding of the urban structure and the actual needs of the city and his design decisions were based on practical ideas. In Mawson's understanding, utility was the way to create beauty, therefore the 'Bolton Beautiful' is 'Bolton Useful' at the same time (Mawson 1916:14).

As a newspaper reported at the time, Mawson hoped that his Bolton lectures would direct public attention towards a more holistic view of town planning with comprehensive plans for whole cities, rather than a focus on discrete aspects. At the time Mawson presented his plans to his audiences, it was 'the most ambitious scheme of its kind so far conceived in regard to any English town' (Bolton Journal and Guardian 1911). Yet the prescience of Mawson's informed approach was unnerving to the inexperienced municipal planners employed within the local authority who railed against the plan, stating it was a superficial work of art rather than an act of town planning, (which they defined as being concerned only with new developments (Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council 1989:1)). Although they were not realised, his plans were very well received among informed contemporaries (Abercrombie 1918: 262).

### **From 'Bolton Beautiful' to 'Bolton of the Future'**

Mawson's ambitious and holistic plans for Bolton were cut short by the turbulent period of the two World Wars. Throughout the 1920's and 1930's all town planning activity in Bolton focused on new suburban residential developments. As the local authority became aware of the importance of the profession, Ernest Harvey Doubleday was appointed as The first Town Planning Officer in 1935. Doubleday and his successors replaced central urban slum housing for 30,000 people in the inter-war period (Bolton MBC 1989: 5).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Clement Atlee's labour government created a programme of wide-scale restructuring of Britain's bomb damaged and antiquated cities, prompting a boom in town planning. Following the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act all British towns and cities were statutorily obliged to publish urban plans and throughout the 1950's the examples were almost unequivocally Modernist in aesthetic and ideology (Larkham and Lilley 2001:6). The sentiment for Modernity brought a focus on central urban areas, which had been unique in Mawson's pre-war example. Bolton's local authority positioned itself against the national plan for decentralised New Towns. Despite the reconstruction of other urban centres to new socialist ideals of substantial areas of open space, zoning and Modernist architecture, the post-war plans for Bolton also ignored this trend and re-focused on suburban housing. This aversion to Modernist development in Bolton was shared by the proponents of the emerging 'Townscape' movement, who fought against both the dominating tabula rasa approach and the sprawling suburbs of the early 1900's and New Towns. Architectural critic and Townscape proponent Ian Nairn (1930-1983) labelled suburban housing 'subtopia' (Nairn 1955) and the New Towns were argued by critic and historian James Maude Richards to be 'lopsided and amputated suburban communities' (Richards 1953: 29) that lacked the subtlety and contrast of earlier settlements. These opinions were a reaction to change and loss that was also met by a growing concern for the preservation of historic buildings (Pendlebury 2004: 332). In addition, architect Peter Laurence argues that the British Townscape movement was a 'reinvigoration' of the civic design tradition of the turn of the 20th century that could be traced 'further back through the Civic Art movement' (Laurence 2014: 224) drawing parallels between Cullen's and Mawson's approaches.

Alongwith Ian Nairn, Townscape was generated by a collective group of contributors to the British journal *Architectural Review* with initial authors Gordon Cullen (1914-1994), Thomas Sharp (1901-1978) and Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1983), later expanding to almost 200 others (Aitchison 2012: 332-333). As a result of both the persistence of the campaign and the extent of readership the ideas of these authors permeated mid-century planning debates. By the 1960's, Townscape's initial focus on Britain expanded to an international topic with features and monographs on the Townscape values of Italy (De Wolfe 1963), America (Nairn 1965) and India (Cullen 1961). Townscape though was imbued with the ideals of pre-industrial English urbanism, epitomised by Thomas Sharp as 'a fine, singing, high-flying bird ... knocked to smithereens by two wretched missiles: one the smothering dough-lump of the Romantic Revival; the other the iron-hard money-bag of the Industrial Revolution' (Sharp 1940: 23). The Townscape approach called for sensitive regeneration that drew out the peculiarities of place while superimposing formal Picturesque composition devices onto urban forms, an approach that complimented Mawson's earlier work on Bolton. Yet Sharp's quote highlights a false aesthetic conflict between 'picturesque' Townscapes and degraded industrial towns that we will see Cullen successfully resolved in his plan for Bolton. Overall the level of skill, thought and detailed survey work required to achieve Townscape principles meant that, while the editorial campaign was successful, it had a liminal place in general practice.

### **Cullen's 'Bolton of the Future'**



### *Conflicting Ideas about the reconstruction of Bolton*

Cullen, the consultant for Bolton's redesign from 1963 to 1965, was trained as an architect working in Britain and Barbados before expanding his interests into architectural journalism, illustration, film-making and most notably, urban design. His ideas on town planning became widely known through his richly illustrated regular Townscape series in the *Architectural Review* between 1946-1956. In 1961 Cullen published an amalgamation of these studies in his seminal text 'Townscape', and in the more widely known abridged version 'The Concise Townscape' in 1971. Though Cullen's Townscape series and monograph brought him fame largely as an architectural illustrator rather than urban designer, he went on to produce plans for towns throughout Britain and India (Cullen 1961; Gosling 1996). Cullen's work at Bolton is representative of his little known plans where he worked relentlessly to solve the issues of each town he designed epitomising his 'uninhibited personal and expressive response to place' (Jarvis 1980: 50).

While Cullen began work on Bolton his career was shifting away from illustrative work. In 1962 he had returned from American research with Ian Nairn and Ian McHarg on 'Urgent West', that explored Townscape principles in an American context (Engler 2015: 254; Pendlebury and Erten 2014: 223). Following this Cullen sought to transform his ideas into professional practice to support his grander ambitions as an author and educator (Orillard 2012: 726). His commission at Bolton represented the mainstay of his work as a consultant often working in partnership with architect-planners such as Shankland Cox, who in the same period worked on Liverpool and Alcon Industries. At the end of his commission in Bolton in 1965, Cullen produced the paper 'Meaningful City' for the *Journal of American Institute of Architects* with Denise Scott Brown (Engler 2015: xxi). It analysed perception, messages, meaning and modern image in the urban environment (Mallgrave 2011:11), exemplifying his ongoing efforts to disseminate his ideas internationally while working in consultancy. Although his work at Bolton represented a run-of-the-mill commission for Cullen, he integrated and applied his theories and methods in a nuanced response to the context of the town.

Cullen was commissioned to undertake the central urban area proposals (Fig.11) for Shankland Cox's wider strategic urban plan for Bolton. Cullen approached the town as a 'meaningful' urban landscape, integrating people and place into his analyses of history, topography, materiality and scale, which in a parallel commission he termed 'The Scanner' (Cullen 1965). The logical and methodical system of analysis seen in The Scanner seems at first to be at variance with Cullen's more well-known approaches to visual concerns. Urban theorist Geoffrey Broadbent explains: 'the deceptively easy nature of his presentation blinded people to the profundity of what he was trying to say' (Broadbent 2003: 272). The Scanner categorised two overarching concerns: 'Human and Physical Factors'. Human factors related to the specific qualities of place such as meaning, happiness, sadness and fulfilment, while physical factors related to the organisation of the environment (Cullen 1965). The framework for these two strands and the detailed questions defined in both categories brought together the strong personal elements of his work (Orillard 2012:728) into a cogent system of analysis (Fig 12).

Cullen's approach to physical factors in the context of industrial towns differed quite significantly with some of the

other Townscape authors. For instance, Thomas Sharp's analysis of Stockport (Sharp 1950) focused largely on a functional and visual appraisal of the town that attempted to mask its industrial character. Cullen's sensitive approach to the existing scale, materiality and structure of Bolton, transcended the aesthetic ideals of Sharp's Townscape, corresponding instead to 'the Art of Making Urban Landscape' 's (Hastings and Pevsner, 1944) earlier description of the Picturesque as 'the ability to visually reconcile...seemingly incompatible elements' (Pavesi 2013:114) regardless of style or period. In addition to this Cullen went beyond the dominance of the eye at Bolton (often criticised in his and other Townscape theorists' work), and incorporated sound and smell his analyses of the town's 'physical factors' (Jivén and Larkham 2003: 68). This sensory expansion in Cullen's approach was a direct response to the amplified sounds and smells of the industrial context of Bolton, with Cullen taking particular offence to the smell of the local gas works.

At the time of his commission in Bolton several large-scale reconstruction projects had been undertaken in similar industrial towns in the UK (Scott 1989:3). Victorian shopping streets were replaced with shopping malls influenced by American examples. The new materials, scales and forms of the shopping centres created a new image for the towns, yet the existing character and visible history of the towns had been wiped away. The level of loss to the built environment provoked a growing discourse on conservation in the UK, exemplified in the RIBA Symposium 'the Living Town' (1959) where a Geddesian style 'piecemeal' approach to urban design was advocated (Glendinning 2013: 298). In reaction to this trend Cullen championed historic continuity in his plans, while he understood the need for physical regeneration, he met this with a sensitivity to the human aspect of environmental change and loss. In his analysis he stated 'the town centre is not regarded by Boltonians as a sparkling and attractive centre to which they can turn with pleasure for their main shopping, entertainment, recreational and social needs...this leads many to believe that such facilities are not there and what is more, never likely to be there' (Cullen 1963:25). Cullen intended to improve Bolton for its residents, seeking to to provide not only new surroundings but also a new way of life and hope for the future. While he sought to rationalise the town's layout, the plan presented a very different style of restructure to that of mainstream Modernism. Instead his human approach analysed the organisation and layout of the town from the perspective of the pedestrian, aiming to improve the experiential qualities of the town centre. Further to this he sought to re-engage citizens with their town in an approach he termed 'civic husbandry' (Shankland Cox 1963:33), encouraging a collective pride in the past successes of the town, heeding again the 'human factors' of memory, association and democracy.

#### *Interweaving the Human and Physical: Landmarks and Parks*

Cullen's analysis of the town resulted in his identification of 'fixed design points' for the conservation of landmarks to create a visual continuity between the old and new town (Shankland Cox 1965:32). He stated 'too many landmarks destroy the purpose of their existence' (Shankland Cox 1963:29). As such, his restrained choices defined as the Town Hall, St Peter's Parish Church (also were highlighted in Mawson's plan) and the Flax chimney, determined the height of all new buildings to retain their existing visual dominance. He argued that at least one, but

preferably two, landmarks should be visible from each open space in the town centre to allow pedestrians to accurately gauge their location. In addition to this height regulation Cullen proposed 'the design must recognise the landform and make it an integral part of the town centre' (Shankland Cox 1965: 33), again diverting from the mainstream Modernist trends.

This physical framework was enhanced by a series of parklands, open spaces and urban squares. Cullen sought to extend the existing Victoria park (also the focus of Mawson's plans) to form a continuous parkland from the centre to the western suburbs (Fig. 13). The park would provide 'a pleasant lunch time spot within strolling distance of their [office employees] work' (Bolton Evening News, 4th August 1965), again creating new lifestyles for Boltonians. A second, more naturalistic parkland was proposed to the east of the centre following the course of the River Croal (Fig. 14). The 'Croal River Park' would create a continuous parkland connecting to Manchester 20 km away, drawing parallels with Mawson's Green Belt, while providing a framework for environmental remediation and a new opportunity to introduce a culture of recreation that had been largely missing in de-industrialised towns. Within the centre, Cullen proposed a system of squares to break up Bolton's dense nineteenth century urban grain and connecting the parks with urban spaces (Shankland Cox 1965: 28). These urban squares integrated green elements and created an experiential sequence from rural to urban characters. He achieved this by proposing the strategic demolition of Victorian blocks to punctuate the density of the town. The use of the open spaces was promoted by the creation of covered walkways and pedestrian thoroughfares shielding Bolton's residents from the poor Moorland weather (Fig. 15), echoing his much more widely known 'Westminster Regained' proposals of 1947. In the same area all traffic signs were to be removed and new paving, seating, trees and planting to be introduced to establish a human scale 'providing a wide open space for sitting, walking - or just looking' (Bolton Evening News 4<sup>th</sup> August 1965). The new squares, planting and street trees also provided a method of dispersing the smell of gas from the town centre that Cullen had identified in his smell analysis of the town. A new civic theatre opposite the town hall was planned to strengthen the civic character and to help define Victoria Square as the major central urban space. Ian Nairn, when he visited Bolton a decade later, stated 'now it is all pedestrian, as is the fashion, but in this case the fashion works.' (Nairn 1975).

#### *Interweaving the Human and Physical: Architecture and Continuity*

Cullen sought to encourage historical continuity by mirroring the colour, scale and materiality of the existing urban form (Fig. 16). As discussed new buildings retained the proportions of the former streets through building line and height. Within large areas of reconstruction individual buildings were designed by separate architects to avoid homogenous facades and to create stylistic variety. Cullen's creation of a visual structure within which architects could work took precedence from traditional English urbanism, yet the new buildings were not historicist in style. Rather the new architecture was distinctive of its period while respecting the old character through the use of the same materials as the former streets (Shankland Cox 1963: 33), such as the distinctive yellow-beige York Stone seen in Bolton. This developed a distinctive visual continuity between the new and old parts of the town that was also further enhanced by a systematic 'spring cleaning' (Bolton Evening News, 4th August 1965) to remove the layers of

industrial pollution from the pale toned building stone of the existing centre, greatly refreshing the town. Further unifying elements were proposed through the disciplined use of agreed lettering and signage for shop fronts and civic buildings, again integrating Cullen's previous work on the coordination of external fonts at the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Industrial features were retained for posterity and historical continuity with former industrial machinery installed throughout the town as 'museum pieces' (Shankland Cox 1965: 32) further encouraging civic engagement. By creating areas for rest, leisure, retail and office work the plan envisaged a new aspiration and ambition for the town's residents away from the dreary daily patterns of the earlier millworkers. As Cullen eloquently stated 'making a town centre should not, in Bolton, be a matter of devising spectacular "gimmicks", or indulging in expensive schemes of beautification. These are usually absurd and defeat their own ends. Success, rather lies in attaining specific and genuine standards which clearly benefit the ordinary town centre users, and which are not merely related to any one individual building but the town centre as a whole.' (Shankland Cox 1965:44). His proposals were led by a thoughtful analysis of the existing human and physical to produce a sophisticated design that blended 'modernity, tradition and locality' (Matless 1998: 246). A decade later, Cullen's approach was supported by his friend and colleague Ian Nairn, who, stated: 'what I am interested in is the towns themselves...they're mostly industrial places where the real hard stuff of Britain is going on, but mostly with very great character, much greater than they're given credit for' (Nairn 1975). While the regional-scale Croal River Park was not undertaken, the creation of unity in diversity in the town's architecture, 'spring cleaning' and a framework of pedestrianised urban squares continue to benefit Bolton. A contemporary critic stated 'the significant thing [in Cullen's scheme] is the way the problem has been studied in this particular situation and the care with which proposals have been worked out. One feels that Bolton has been given a program which is related to its needs and within its means, but which at the same time aims at a high level of urban amenity and efficiency' (Meadows 1966: 518). His sensitive approach to both the human and physical aspects of renewal is now known as having 'restored civic pride' in Bolton (Brown 1971: vi) leaving a legacy on not just the built fabric of the town but also the lives of its residents.

## **Conclusion**

The Bolton plans by Mawson and Cullen were unique and progressive, specially when positioned against the widely accepted planning ideologies of their contemporaries. At Bolton both designers combined new ideas on town planning, architecture, landscape architecture and urban design in order to improve the existing town for its residents, albeit in different ways. Mawson aimed at integrating various international town planning strategies, seen in the Beaux Arts vision of the American City Beautiful, the English Garden Cities and the Austrian Ringstrasse idea. Cullen effectively mediated the Modernist desire for rebuilding with the English urban tradition with sensitive proportions and materials respecting the existing character. Both analysed peculiarities of the existing urban landscape of the industrial town, enhanced the natural elements within it and sought to create an integrated green system by linking the urban spaces of the town with the wider landscape and mitigating the ills of the industrial towns. The relevance of the two plans was proved much later, in the 1995 plan for Bolton. The plan aimed to

celebrate the millennium by revisiting and implementing parts of Mawson's and Cullen's schemes as part of the Millennium Commission Bid (Freer 1996). The extension of Bolton's Queen Park, one of the central ideas by both Mawson and Cullen, was discussed again as a key idea to improve the town centre. Mawson's and Cullen's comprehensive approach dealt with questions pertinent to current practice, such as the development of a sense of continuity of new built structures with the past and the wider landscape. Finally, rather than follow the specific design ideologies of their respective periods, Mawson and Cullen in their own way devised plans that responded to Bolton's specific issues and resolutely focused on improving the environment for the town's residents.

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