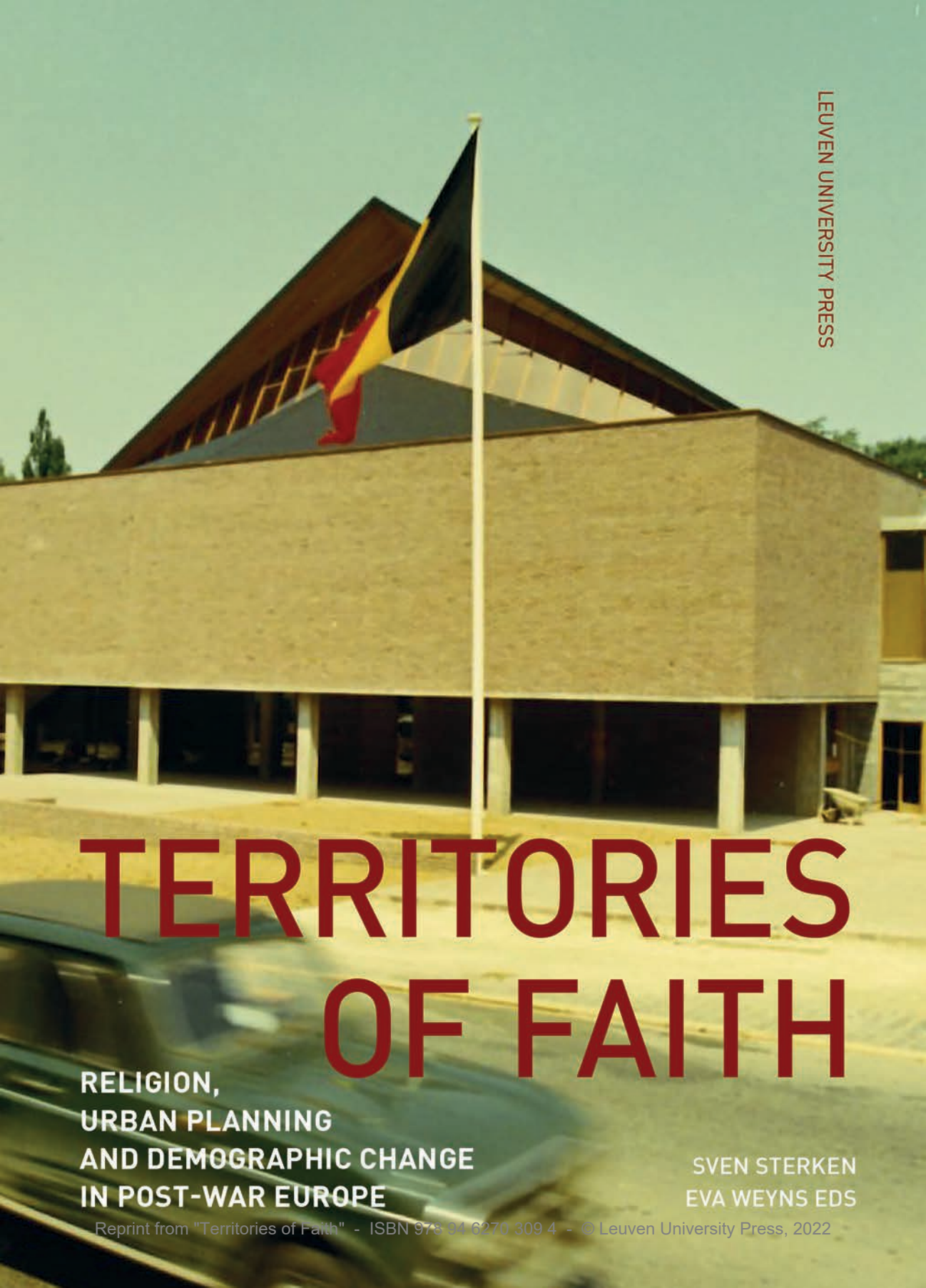

LEUVEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

TERRITORIES OF FAITH

RELIGION, URBAN PLANNING AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN POST-WAR EUROPE

SVEN STERKEN
EVA WEYNS EDS

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

As is often the case with edited volumes, this book has been long in the making. It started with the international seminar "Territories of Faith: Religion, Demographic Change and Urban Planning in Europe, 1945-1975" on 2-3 July 2017, which was organised by our research group, Architectural Cultures of the Recent Past, at the Faculty of Architecture of KU Leuven, in cooperation with KADOC, the Documentation and Research Centre on Religion, Culture and Society at KU Leuven. The seminar brought together a number of scholars who responded to an international call we had launched to find out who else was pursuing investigations similar to our research project, "Catholic Territories in a Suburban Landscape: Religion and Urbanisation in Belgium, 1945-1975". This project, generously funded by KU Leuven's Research Council (project IF 14030), addressed the intersection between pastoral provision and urban planning — a relatively new research field that seems to be attracting primarily younger researchers. With the seminar, it was precisely our aim to give this fresh research a dedicated forum and see whether we could work together towards a more enduring and ambitious output.

In the optimism of those two beautiful, early summer days, we committed ourselves to producing a book based on the various papers that had been presented and thoroughly discussed at the seminar. That was easier said than done, however: the processes of fine-tuning the scope of each paper in relation to the overarching theme; the selection of cases to be discussed; the choice of illustration material to be included; the copy-editing of the texts (most of which were written by non-native speakers); and last but not least, the peer

reviewing of the final manuscript have taken over four years to complete. It has been an "adventure" in the literal sense of the word (a "be-coming"), illustrating that even in a unified Europe, and despite academia being an international environment, a myriad of cultural differences come into play when trying to systematise the way ideas, facts and data are to be put into words. We are therefore very proud to say that all the authors remained aboard and wish to thank them explicitly for their patience and perseverance. So thank you Angela, Judi, Mélanie, Sofia, João, João, Jesus, Umberto, Maria Antonietta, Davide, Ferdinando, Alba and Ellen. Along the way, two additional authors, Marina Wesner and Kees Doevendans, have joined us, and we are grateful to them for having accepted our invitation and being so cooperative with our often short deadlines.

The wonderful exchange of ideas, discussion of cases and conversations about methodological issues we had at the original seminar was due to a large extent to the generosity and expertise of the members of the international scientific committee we brought together for the occasion. We are extremely grateful to Ricardo Agarez (University of Evora), Olivier Chatelan (Université Jean Moulin - Lyon 3), Jan De Maeyer (KU Leuven), Rajesh Heynickx (KU Leuven), Peter Heyrman (KU Leuven), Andrea Longhi (Turin Polytechnic) and Robert Proctor (University of Bath) for not only their active participation in the seminar, but also having reviewed this book's papers at a later stage in the editing process. Robert deserves a special mention for his nuanced but clear advice at certain stages of the project, while the input of Jan and Peter has been vital for Eva's doctoral research project, which lies at the centre of this book.

We are further very much indebted to Nina Woodson for the copy-editing of the manuscript; hers was not an easy task, for the majority of the essays have been written by authors that are non-native speakers, the editors themselves included. Yet she committed to it with the velocity, nuance and patience that is the hallmark of a true professional. Along the same lines, Luc Vints, our contact at KADOC, should be mentioned; throughout the process, he has continued to encourage the project in his typically calm, but firm, manner. Lastly, we want to express our deep gratitude towards the anonymous peer reviewers and the editorial board of the KADOC Studies Series and Leuven University Press for giving us the chance to share this research with the wider scholarly community. The Faculty of Architecture of KU Leuven helped make this possible through generously supporting the language editing.

A final word of thanks goes to our partners and families for their enduring patience and their support in the pursuit of our academic ambitions.

Sven Sterken, Eva Weyns
Mechelen, October 2021

1
PLANNING FOR FAITH IN WYTHENSHAWE, MANCHESTER

ANGELA CONNELLY

> In the midst of our joy, we are deeply grateful to His Lordship the Bishop for allowing us to build such a noble and majestic church that so proudly dominates the whole estate. We are grateful to the inspiration of Mr Adrian Gilbert Scott that has so admirably suited the church to its site and purpose.[1]

In a brochure to accompany the opening ceremony for Saint Anthony's (1960), a Roman Catholic church in the City of Manchester's garden suburb of Wythenshawe, the writers extended their gratitude to those people they deemed most relevant: the bishop and the architect. On focussing only on these two, they overlooked both a variety of actors working at different scales who may have had a less direct impact on the shaping of the church's final siting, form and programme and the impact of a novel set of planning strategies that took effect in post-1945 England. Indeed, the planning context is all too often overlooked in narratives around twentieth-century religious history and architecture. The passing of the 1946 New Towns Act and the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act gave England a comprehensive planning system that included powers to compulsory purchase of sites required for redevelopment. This meant that religious organisations became involved with local planning authorities in a more formalised way than before. Moreover, the widespread clearance of inner city slum housing presented a major problem to England's religious organisations, with many nineteenth-century churches

1 Woodchurch, DSA. "The New St Anthony's Church, Woodhouse Park, Manchester". Souvenir of Solemn Opening, 3 November 1960 (Manchester: J.E. Mulligan & Co. Ltd, 1960), 9.

left bereft of their former congregations. Religious organisations needed to follow the people to proposed new housing estates and, consequently, construct new buildings and form new congregations. The extent to which religious organisations were engaged in or consulted on the development of such strategies is under-researched. An analysis of the negotiations that took place between municipal and church authorities reveals much about the social and cultural position of religion in the post-1945 period; a period when, arguably, secularisation was taking hold and religion was perceived to be losing significance.[2]

The relationship between post-1945 planners and the Roman Catholic Church in England points to the pragmatic discussions held regarding land acquisition and site exchanges and the desire for religious groups to provide "landmark buildings".[3] This suggests that church buildings held importance for post-1945 planners and were seen as an integral part of the new housing estates. Beyond the provision of church buildings, academic neighbourhood scale surveys hint at the social value of religious organisations in providing space and activities for developing communities on the new estates — whether for religious or secular purposes.[4] Similarly, research on the Church of England's architectural response to being placed in interwar suburbs demonstrates how their church buildings sought to respond to their context and contribute to community development.[5] Churches were perceived to be essential parts of communities, and their buildings often provided a focal point for groups. Nevertheless, a detailed study of suburban estates in southern England reveals the fears of church leaders about the encroachment of secular use, particularly because their own premises were often sidelined on secondary streets.[6] The interface of sacred and secular — which can be examined through an analysis of the religious built environment — remains an interesting line of enquiry to pursue.

The post-1945 period of English religious history provides a distinctive context because of the growing collaboration amongst the major Christian denominations in a range of matters, such as community development. Despite this, architectural and planning historians tend to focus on individual denominations and, consequently, overlook this wider faith experience, which came as a result of intense negotiations. The impact of liturgical renewal also leads

2 The secularisation thesis, which posits that the shift to modern, urban societies rooted in science would lead to religion dwindling, is widely contested. A critical overview of the debates can be found in Nash, "Reconnecting Religion with Social and Cultural History".
3 Proctor, *Building the Modern Church*, 278.
4 Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*; Walford, *The Growth of 'New London'*; Clapson, *Working-Class Suburb*.
5 Dwyer et al., "Faith and Suburbia".
6 Walford, *The Growth of "New London" in Suburban Middlesex*.

many historians to focus on the buildings rather than the processes leading up to their creation, which occur at a variety of spatial scales. Given that the Church of England was, and still is, regarded as the established state church, questions arise around the nature of the collaborative Christian networks and their impact on the final sites and forms of church buildings.[7] Moreover, how did the churches relate to the secular planning authorities, and what impact did this have on their strategies for rebuilding? By widening the analytical focus, the multiple actors and sources of knowledge around religious buildings come into view.

This chapter therefore focusses on the post-1945 English context by examining the negotiations and debates around the placement of churches in new estates. Both the planning authorities and the churches themselves worked at multiple scales and, consequently, the chapter outlines the debates at national, municipal and neighbourhood levels. The national-level negotiations of the Churches Main Committee — a collaborative body set up to negotiate with the UK Government — set the scene for a consideration of how their fears played out, or not, in the city of Manchester. The chapter then discusses Manchester's flagship, experimental housing development at Wythenshawe and the building of Saint Anthony's in one neighbourhood sector. The main argument is that the churches worked closely with policymakers and local planners at various levels in order to balance competing interests. Religious analyses of the situation dovetailed with those of the planners, albeit in a socially deterministic way; church buildings were perceived as crucial in fostering social ties and good citizenship habits in developing communities, which belied their collective significance to the people the churches were intended to serve. The analysis therefore fills gaps in our understanding around inter-denominational cooperation, the negotiations at different spatial scales and the influence of various actors involved in church design at a local level.[8] Before delving into the primary data, it is essential to provide a contextual understanding of the legal status of Christian denominations in England and the sources of funding they could draw upon.

7 The global ecumenical movement which sought to bring various Christian organisations into unity had an influence in England. It has been argued that the twentieth century saw the passing of "Protestant England" to "Christian England". See Green, *The Passing of Protestant England*. That said, the ecumenical movement may have encouraged closer collaboration between the churches in England, but it resulted in very little direct displays of unity, with the exception of the United Reformed Church in 1972, which brought together the Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church of England. See Guest, Olson and Wolffe, "Christianity: The loss of monopoly", and Orchard, "The formation of the United Reformed Church".

8 In line with science and technology studies, the term "actors" here refers to both human and non-human agents (which can take the form of materials, strategies, technologies and so on). See Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

Toleration and Pluralism: Relationships between Church and State

In England, the Church of England (also referred to as the "Anglicans") became the established church when it broke away from Roman Catholicism in the early sixteenth century. Once governed by Parliament, with the reigning monarch as its head, the Church of England today is largely self-governing, with powers to create new parishes, for example; such measures must, in turn, be approved by Parliament, but they are rarely, if ever, amended. The Church of England therefore has a particularly close relationship to the governing body of the United Kingdom. A number of other Christian denominations also co-exist and, consequently, England has long been known as a place of religious tolerance.[9] In 1828, the practice of Roman Catholicism was permitted again after having been illegal for around three centuries. Subsequently, large-scale immigration, particularly from Ireland, ensured that Roman Catholic church attendance grew until the 1970s. Additionally, there are a number of "dissenting" or "non-conformist" faiths, such as Congregationalists, Methodists and Quakers, who broke away from the Church of England over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The popularity of the non-conformist denominations peaked in the late-nineteenth century, when they enjoyed a share of around one-quarter of all churchgoers. The relationship between the state and the Church of England may seem arcane to contemporary English citizens, but it has been asserted that "the state is as confessional as ever: it is just that sacral values have been in practice secularised".[10] Questions may be raised, however, about the privileges that were afforded to the Church of England through its relationship with the state and the consequent implications this had for other religious denominations.

Funding for new churches, across all denominations, came from a variety of sources. This was particularly problematic for the Church of England due to its inflexible, centralised structure. However, in 1954, Parliament passed the Housing Areas (Church Buildings) Measure enabling the Church of England Commissioners to make interest-free loans or grants to erect new church buildings or acquire sites where it could be demonstrated that a substantial new population had come into being since 1936.[11] Such centrally allocated funds were matched by those raised within the diocese and locally amongst parishioners. For example, the Bishop of Manchester, William Greer, raised 259,000 pounds from businesspeople and other professions in order to supplement "The Bishop's New Appeal". The Appeal was designed to raise funds

9 Broad overviews of the relationships between the different Christian organisations in England can be found in Hastings, *A History of English Christianity*, and Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*.

10 Norman, "Notes on Church and State", 9.

11 Chandler, *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century*, 96-104.

for building new churches in the Manchester Diocese and, as a result, fourteen new churches were constructed.[12] Many denominations launched their own funds for rebuilding: the Methodist Church, for example, raised 250,000 pounds nationally with contributions from interested Methodists.[13] In the Roman Catholic Church, loans could be taken out to finance buildings, and many local parishioners donated time, money and other resources to ensure that the buildings were free of debt.[14] Further funding sources in the post-1945 period, such as war damage compensation payments, emerged from the national policy debates to which we now turn.

Devolving Decision Making at National Level

Negotiations between the various religious organisations and the state, along with newly developing planning arrangements, had the potential to undermine the privileged position of the churches, particularly the Church of England, in identifying and purchasing prime sites. Across all of the religious organisations, the problem of population migration and rebuilding in the new housing areas posed a challenge.[15] However, the same religious organisations also thought that they had a moral and spiritual duty to not only physically build in the new areas, but also offer guidance with regard to the new planning arrangements. When Sir Montague Barlow (1868-1951) was commissioned by the Church of England's Church Assembly to lead a report into *The Church and the Planning of Britain* in 1944, he pointed out that new housing units in interwar estates "have been spread like a red belt round so many of our cities and towns" without the necessary amenities.[16] Their cause had been hampered by the speculative developments where:

> [private] builders were covering whole areas of the land to the last yard so that when churches and schools were found to be needed, the cost was prohibitive, and the wrong sites had to be chosen, and often inadequate ones as well.[17]

12 Dobb, *Like a Mighty Tortoise*, 200-202. The Bishop's New Appeal fell short of the targeted amount. Thus, new churches were required to pay back twenty-five per cent of the capital cost, with further sums for churches that sat over two hundred fifty people, over a twenty-year interest free period.
13 Manchester, The Methodist Church Property Office, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Committees on Plan and Design", Minutes of the Department of Chapel Affairs, 13 October 1942.
14 Proctor, *Building the Modern Church*, 268-269.
15 Chandler, *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century*, 96. For the Methodists, see Perkins, *So Appointed*, 111.
16 Church Assembly, *The Church and the Planning of Britain*, 4.
17 Ibid., 22.

The report was written against the backdrop of fears over ribbon development, as popularly characterised in the architect Clough Williams-Ellis' (1883-1978) *England and the Octopus* published in 1928, which demonstrates the way in which the churches absorbed wider secular insights into their thinking on urban development.[18] As we shall see later, this analysis dovetailed with local planning recommendations concerning community life in newly developed neighbourhoods.

The Church of England's concerns went beyond the mere provision of church buildings: it sought to influence the development of "communities". A detailed section in the report on its moral duty in helping to create community life argued that:

> The responsibility has fallen on us of giving physical expression to our real beliefs on man and society in the homes and towns which we build. What we build will inevitably help to make or mar the social and personal lives of many generations to come.[19]

However, the inflexibility that hampered the Church of England's expansion in cities during the industrial revolution remained, and it was again slow to respond to population shifts post-1945.[20] A Church of England commission was set up to look specifically into post-1945 church building and was comprised of senior figures from the Church Assembly, as well as their trusted interwar architects.[21] Their report, published in 1946, discouraged temporary buildings, building in stages or having any relaxation in building standards imposed by the Church Commissioners:

18 Williams-Ellis, *England and the Octopus*.

19 Church Assembly, *The Church and the Planning of Britain*, 21.

20 The Church of England was particularly strong in rural English villages and towns, which were often built around a church or cathedral. As cities expanded rapidly in the nineteenth century, the Church of England struggled to keep up with population movements. This was partly due to the legal requirements that surrounded the creation of a new parish. The nonconformist churches were able to capitalise on the stasis and expanded in cities and towns where the Church of England was weak. See Gregory and Chamberlain, "National and Local Perspectives on the Church of England".

21 The architects were William Henry Ansell as vice chair, Romilly B. Craze, Edward Maufe, Nugent Francis Cachemaille-Day and Bernard Miller. Maufe, for example, was the first principal architect in the United Kingdom from 1943 and was noted for his churches, cathedrals and war memorials, including Guildford Cathedral (1936-1961), which he won the competition for in 1932. Craze exclusively worked on church design and became well-known for his work on the renewal of war-damaged churches. Cachemaille-Day was, even in the interwar period, regarded as the most innovative church designer in England and had two notable examples in Manchester: Saint Nicholas, Burnage (1930-1932), and Saint Michael and All Angels, Northern Moor (1936-1937).

> The general public expects qualities in its Church buildings, as in its civic buildings, in advance of those it is often compelled to accept in its own domestic life. This same high standard should be applied to all fittings and articles of furniture, so that the completed structure, ready for worship, should present one homogenous body of excellence.[22]

As well as such internal discussions, the major religious denominations began to formally discuss planning matters with one another in what was a sign of growing inter-denominational collaboration during the twentieth century.[23] In 1941, the Anglican Bishop of London, Geoffrey Fisher (1887-1972), established the Churches Main Committee as an "ecumenical body" that included clerical and lay representation from the major Christian denominations, and later Jewish organisations, with a high proportion of architects, surveyors and lawyers represented.[24] The Committee's first major task was to negotiate the terms of compensation for war-damaged places of worship.

Religious buildings received special consideration under the terms of the 1941 War Damage Act. The chancellor responsible for this, Sir Kingsley Wood (1891-1943), was the son of a Methodist minister and himself a Methodist. He gave an audience to two leading members of the Methodist Church during which they advanced their case for "sympathetic interest and understanding".[25] Compensation for damaged buildings was paid at their 1939 asset value, as recommended by the Uthwatt Report (1942), a document drafted by the Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment chaired by Justice Augustus Uthwatt (1879-1949).[26] This was not straightforward in the case of church buildings, however, because of their recognised social worth. Over several meetings each month, and in close communication with the government, the Churches Main Committee worked out a specific form of payment for church buildings. There were three significant elements: all denominations were to be accorded equal treatment; assessed payments were to be portable, so that churches did not have to be rebuilt on the same site, whereby proposed redevelopment options would be indicated in local authority plans; and new premises were to be plain.[27] While disregarding the market value of churches, the guiding principle was:

22 Post-war Church Building: Report to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners by an Advisory Panel (London: The Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 1946), 6.
23 Green, *The Passing of Protestant England*, 54-55.
24 Perkins, *So Appointed*, 112-113. This body continues as the Churches Legal Advisory Service (CLAS), conveying to the government the views of the churches on legislation and matters such as heritage grants, planning and building regulations. See <http://www.churcheslegislation.org.uk> (accessed 24 June 2018).
25 Perkins, *So Appointed*, 111.
26 Uthwatt, *Final Report*.
27 The Department for Chapel Affairs, *Serving the Church*, 83-85.

> the sort of building in type and size which might reasonably be erected on the site of the damaged building by the denomination if it were paying the bill from their own fund and were neither financially embarrassed nor unduly rich.[28]

As a body comprising all the major faiths, the Churches Main Committee soon took on a wider role. The government accepted the views of the committee "on matters of policy without having to face the complication of dealing with each separate denomination".[29] Consequently, a series of delegations from the Churches Main Committee were sent to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning to negotiate the terms of the draft Town and Country Planning Bill. Here, there were two primary concerns. The first was the proposal for a one hundred per cent development charge to be imposed on all developments, with the intention of ensuring that land values remained a public good and not for private exploitation.[30] However the religious organisations, particularly the Church of England, regarded themselves as charitable organisations working for the public good and felt they should be exempt from the charge.[31] Second, the churches sought assurances on the acquisition of sites in new housing areas and the expectation that those sites be obtained on freehold.

The freehold issue was particularly contentious. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act gave local authorities the right to compulsory purchase of areas of land for redevelopment. Once that land came into public ownership, local authorities were advised that it should only be:

> disposed of by way of lease only and not by way of sale, and the authority should have the power to impose such covenants in the lease as planning requirements make desirable.[32]

The Minister for Town and Country Planning, Lewis Silkin (1889-1972), met with the Bishop of London, Reverend W. J. Anderson (1926-2006), representing the Roman Catholic Church, Reverend E. Benson Perkins (1881-1974) of the Methodist Church and members of the Church of England's Church Commis-

28 "War-Damaged Churches: Basis of Payment Accepted by the Commission", *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1944, 3; Department for Chapel Affairs, *Serving the Church,* 83.

29 Perkins, *So Appointed*, 113.

30 The one hundred per cent development charge was a contentious piece of policy introduced in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act that was intended as a "tax on betterment". It was designed to ensure that land would change hands at the existing price, so that developers did not profit out of rising land values associated with post-1945 planning proposals. See Corkindale, "Land Development in the United Kingdom", 2061.

31 The Church of England had particular interests here because it also owned land and acted as developers; however, it argued that its development was in the interests of the public. See Chandler, *The Church of England in the Twentieth Century*, 97.

32 Uthwatt, *Final Report*, 158.

sioners to discuss their views on the draft bill. The Church of England pointed out that, legally, they were unable to consecrate a church unless it was freehold, yet the proposed planning act instructed local authorities that land should be given over as leasehold, not freehold. The Roman Catholics held similar concerns, albeit consecrated Catholic churches were, it was conceded, only recognised under Roman canon law and could thus be disregarded by the state. The Methodists, unconstrained by the issue of consecration, nevertheless pointed to the vast sums they had raised for new church buildings through public subscription; surely they "could not expect the public to contribute such large sums if the churches were to pass out of their control after so short a period as 99 years".[33]

Silkin "was not unsympathetic to the needs of the churches" but was nevertheless "tied by the Act", which said that only in "exceptional circumstances" could a minister give consent to the sale of land by a local planning authority on freehold or to a lease of longer than ninety-nine years.[34] Exceptional circumstances were interpreted by Silkin to be "where full use could not be made of the land except by way of freehold".[35] Clearly, under the terms of ecclesiastical law, this applied to the Church of England; however, Silkin could not see how leaseholds would prevent other denominations from making full use of the land. Silkin was concerned not to expose the ministry to accusations from other parties that provided a public benefit. He observed that:

> Such claims as they [religious organisations] had made could equally apply to cinemas or public houses. They too wanted security of tenure and served the needs of the community.[36]

In this case, the minister was keen to treat both sacred and secular organisations in the same way. However, later that year, he conceded that religious organisations could be considered to be subject to "exceptional circumstances" and that this should apply to all of them, not just the Church of England. Nevertheless, the exceptional circumstances would only cover places of worship and not ancillary buildings such as clerical housing or Sunday schools. All of this was on the condition that if the nonconformist organisations were given a freehold and they ceased to use the site as a place of worship, the freehold should immediately become available for re-purchase by the local authority.[37] Clearly, there were some reservations over the longevity of nonconformist buildings.

33 London, CERO, ECE/SEC/LEGN/4/2. Notes on the Deputation from the Churches Committee Received by the Minister of Town and Country Planning on 17 May 1946.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 London, CERO, ECE/SEC/LEGN/4/2. Letter from Lewis Silkin to the Lord Bishop of London, 16 October 1946.

Other deputations and letters from the Churches Main Committee to the Ministry for Town and Country Planning sought assurances over the allocation of sites in any newly planned housing area. As far as the ministry was concerned, local authority plans indicated broad zoning of uses and did not designate specific building uses. Therefore, Silkin argued that:

> It is expected that the Churches Main Committee or other organisation would have consulted the local planning authority beforehand to ensure inclusion. In addition, there will be a sketch plan which (...) will be available for inspection.[38]

The Churches Main Committee was keen to avoid infighting between denominations and thought it better that deliberation occur at a local level through interdenominational "area" committees, to the extent that "it is the view of the Churches Committee that where an Area Committee do not already exist steps should be taken to establish them".[39] Therefore, whilst strategic direction was provided at the national level, it was at the more local level that awkward decisions would have to be taken, and preferably not by local authority planners, but by the churches themselves in a collaborative fashion.

By 1946 the Churches Main Committee was strongly urging its members to set up local interdenominational committees in order to negotiate with local planning authorities.[40] Questionnaires were sent by the Churches Main Committee to its local interdenominational committees for them to indicate the extent of their building programmes within the next five years, and it was thought that "it would clearly be an advantage to the Churches that their needs should be included in the review and any allocations of materials and labour that may be found possible".[41] The only injunction was that inclusion should imply a definite and genuine intention to undertake building when permitted, with regard to disposable funds and the availability of sites.[42]

So, at the national level, the Churches Main Committee had regular access to civil servants and politicians, who were reluctant to offer too many concessions and preferred to leave the thorny decisions to the local authorities. The churches managed to band together to show that many of their interests were in common, but again, it was at the local level that major decisions were made. The next section thus turns to how such national-level debates played out in practice at the municipality level through a case study of Manchester. That city had a strong area interdenominational committee that engaged

38 London, NA, HLG-71-1486. Letter from the Ministry of Town and Country Planning to G. E. Holder, the Churches Main Committee, 22 December 1947.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Manchester, MALS, Churches Main Committee, M196/10/4/4/1. Circular, 5 March 1947.
42 Ibid.

closely with local authority planners, who, arguably, perceived a strong role for church buildings in developing community spirit in the early formulations of the city's post-1945 redevelopment plans, particularly on the Wythenshawe estate.

Spiritual and Architectural Focal Points

Wythenshawe lies approximately six miles south of Manchester city centre and was conceived during the interwar period to relieve the city of its cramped conditions. Originally located in the neighbouring local authority of Cheshire, Wythenshawe was incorporated into the City of Manchester in 1930. Around 5,500 acres of land was acquired in order to house 100,000 people in 25,000 new houses, with Manchester Corporation retaining control of the land and property.[43] The renowned town planner and architect Barry Parker (1867-1947) was contracted to draw up an overall plan for the estate, which was to include a substantial amount of agricultural green belt, open spaces and housing at a density of twelve to the acre. Influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, Parker's vision incorporated the then fashionable Radburn road layouts with simple and plain housing. The two main features governing the plan were the introduction of a "parkway" for through traffic and the notion of neighbourhood units as self-contained areas for 5,000 to 10,000 people — two ideas imported from American town planning.[44] By 1934, just over 4,500 houses had been constructed in two neighbourhood units.[45]

Prior to the Second World War, church building had occurred in Wythenshawe as soon as the first "pioneer" residents moved in. Indeed, the Congregationalists constructed a small church on what would become Brownley Road before the houses and roads had yet been built.[46] Other churches were of particularly high quality, and their placement, close to the housing rather than the shops, seems to be in line with picturesque ideals. Nugent Francis Cachemaille-Day's (1896-1976) Saint Michael and All Angels (1937), located in the northern neighbourhood now known as Northern Moor, was an early example of the fan-shaped seating arrangement which became favoured post-Vatican II after experimentations with centralised altars.

The Second World War delayed the further development of Wythenshawe, but efforts were revived in the simultaneous publications of the 1945 City of Manchester Plan and the Manchester and District Regional Planning

43 Simon and Simon, "Wythenshawe", 6.
44 Miller, *English Garden Cities*, 80.
45 Simon and Simon, "Wythenshawe", 46.
46 "Wythenshawe's New Church: The Congregationalists", *The Manchester Guardian,* 14 November 1936.

Proposals.[47] Together, these two documents dealt with the problems of housing renewal and standards, as well as the adoption of the neighbourhood unit as a planning principal.[48] The 1945 City of Manchester Plan was based on accumulated evidence, such as surveys of buildings and quantitative analyses of the population, but was also underpinned by the "spirit of idealism" germane to its main author: the city surveyor Rowland Nicholas (life dates unknown).[49] Generously illustrated, the plan could be regarded as a "seductive" document that heralded a brighter future; it was a blueprint for how things *might* be.[50] In common with many major conurbations at the time, a primary objective was to move the population to new settlements outside of the core city to ease density issues.[51]

An entire chapter of the 1945 City of Manchester Plan was devoted to a two-tiered arrangement of neighbourhoods and district centres to provide a social life for the domestic arrangements. The narrative demonstrates an admiration of the spirit of communality displayed through the Second World War, and the Plan showed a keenness to avoid reverting to the perceived pre-1945 trajectory of individualism. The answer lay in providing enough spaces for leisure and cultural activities within the urban layout. Neighbourhood units — for roughly 10,000 people — were considered to be akin to a "modernised, urbanised version of the traditional village".[52] Indeed, the renewed focus on the neighbourhood unit concept was integral to Wythenshawe's post-1945 development, in order to rectify the perceived inadequacies of the sections of the estate that were completed before 1939. The City of Manchester Plan pointed to Wythenshawe's "anaemic social atmosphere — a lack of a robust community life — attributable in part to its newness, but more particularly to the absence

47 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*; Nicholas, *Manchester and District Regional Planning Proposals*. The central government did not accept the plan until 1961.

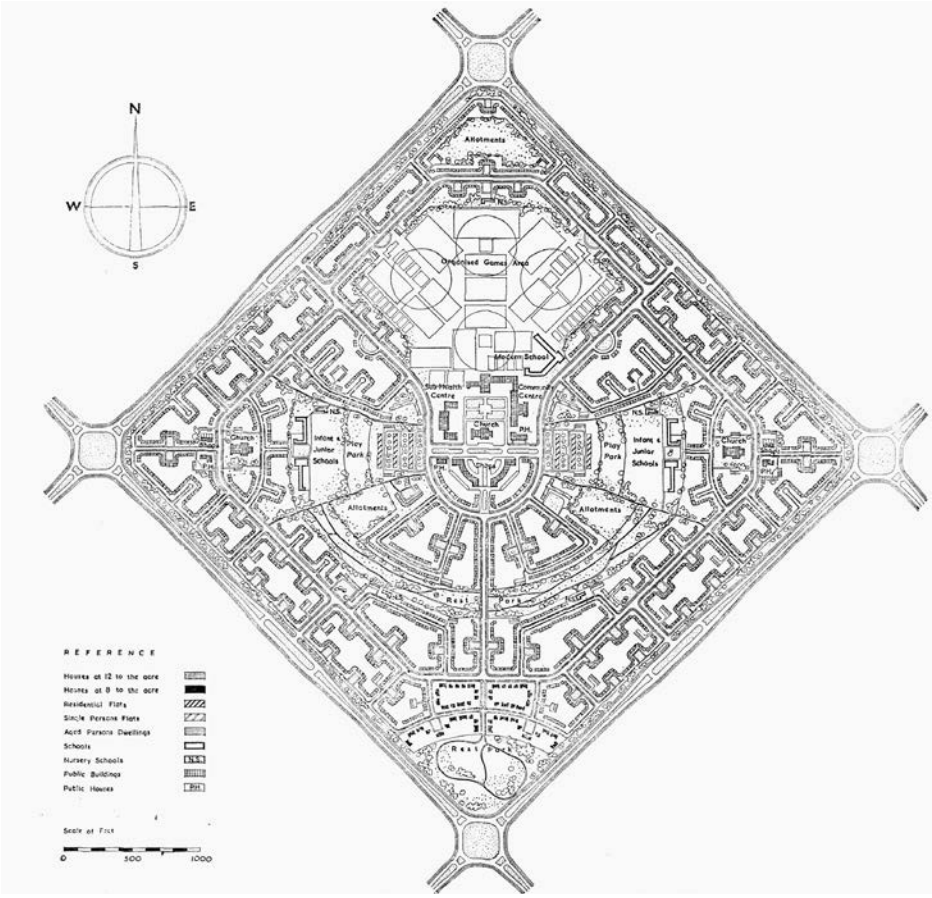
48 Williams, "Manchester: City Profile", 207.

49 Ibid., p.v.

50 Perkins and Dodge, "Mapping the Imagined Future", 248. The images were collated over a long period of time and, whilst Wythenshawe was laid out to the designs of Barry Parker, the City of Manchester Plan drew on visual materials drawn by various individuals in the city's Architect's Office.

51 Kitchen, "The Future of Development Plans", 337.

52 By 1944, the neighbourhood unit principle had become UK government policy and had been anticipated in Wythenshawe with subsequent modifications. Arguably, the adoption of the neighbourhood unit in the post-1945 period differed from a pre-1945 conception with its origins in the work of Clarence Perry in New York in the late 1920s. After 1945, there was an identifiable move away from mainly aesthetic and infrastructural considerations to a belief that the neighbourhood unit could, in a spatially deterministic fashion, drive sociability and community spirit. See Greenhalgh, "Consuming Communities", 161. See also Johnson, "The Origin of the Neighbourhood Unit".

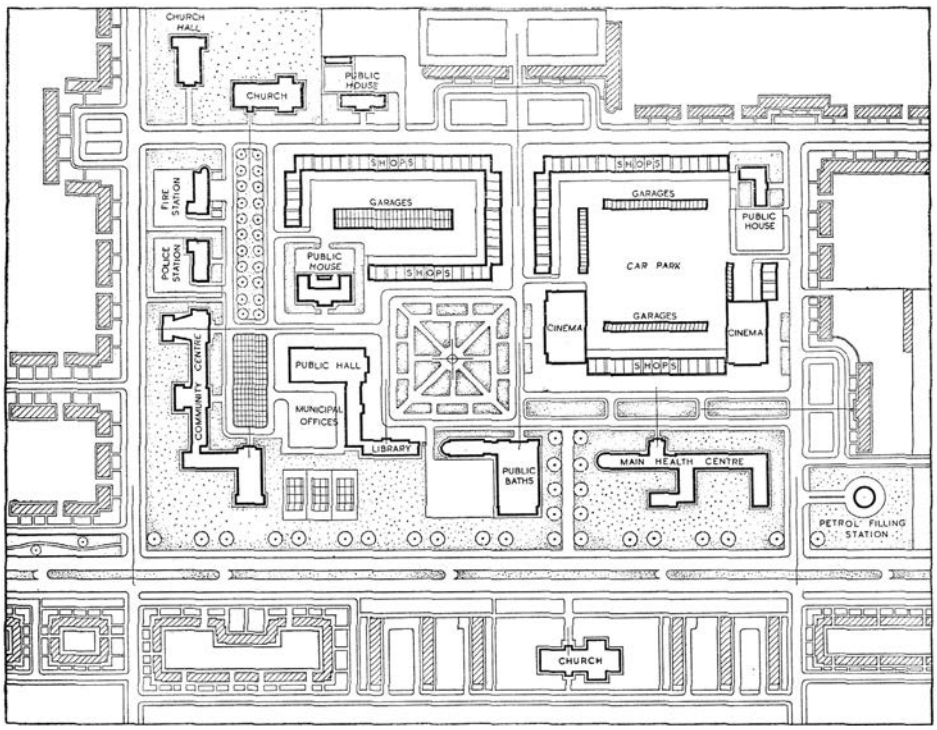


1.1 Theoretical layout for a neighbourhood centre.
[Reproduced from Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, 140]

of good communal facilities".[53] The traditional village green, in this case, was to incorporate a range of such facilities, including the community centre, local shops, churches, public houses and a library. So, how were churches treated within these neighbourhood units?

In agreement with the analysis undertaken by Barlow, the 1945 City of Manchester Plan also noted the tendency of interwar estates to provide insufficient provision for churches, leading to awkwardly planned sites. Consequently, the Plan sets out a number of ideals on religious provision. Churches erected in neighbourhoods should be "their spiritual and architectural focal points, and sites in keeping with their significance should be reserved in new

53 Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, 145. The 1945 plan foresaw Wythenshawe to consist of ten neighbourhoods, although in reality, Brooklands and Northenden were existing settlements that, in the end, resisted being absorbed into Wythenshawe.



1.2 Theoretical layout for a "typical" district centre.
[Reproduced from Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, 143]

development".[54] Religious life here continued to be central to community life, and idealised drawings of the neighbourhood plan showed the church directly at the centre. [Ill. 1.1] Housing areas at the extremity of the neighbourhood boundaries were further furnished with an additional public house, shops and a church. It was these buildings, where face-to-face social interaction would occur, which, it was thought, would help to develop community life in a new estate.[55] Even though the planners did not anticipate that the model neighbourhood layout could be put into practice, it served as a visual reminder of the ideals that underpinned the overall rationale and approach.

This can be contrasted with the district centre plan, which served a number of neighbourhoods, where the emphasis was on providing a wider array of shopping and entertainment facilities and ample car parking. [Ill. 1.2] Whilst it is crucial to acknowledge their idealistic nature, it seems that the municipality's visualisations of the neighbourhood and the district centre plan are at

54 Ibid., 138.

55 Greenhalgh, "Consuming Communities", 174. The concept was intended to concretise immeasurable qualities such as community and neighbourliness, although the extent to which this was ever achieved has been questioned; the blueprint provided by the municipality was contested in practice through, for example, the shopping habits that confounded the carefully worked out figures of the Manchester planners.

odds with one another in terms of planning traditions.[56] In addition, whilst it may be argued that the district centre plan shows the primacy given to commerce, it is arguable that with churches placed in neighbourhoods, close to the residents, it would be unlikely that churches would want to obtain a site in a less residential area where functions may have overlapped.[57]

In the post-1945 period, urban planning increasingly moved away from its roots in design and architecture in order to absorb thinking from quantitative social sciences, which had an impact on the allocation of sites in Manchester.[58] Typically used to identify industrial, residential and commercial needs, the same approach was applied to religious provision in the City of Manchester Plan. Nicholas undertook an analysis of the current number of churches, the number of people that each church served and the amount of land given to each church within the Manchester boundary in order to identify how many churches would be needed. He calculated that every neighbourhood unit ought to have provision for one Anglican church and one nonconformist church, whilst the Roman Catholic Church should have one place of worship for every three neighbourhoods.[59]

The question then became where to site these churches and how to allocate them to the denominations. Manchester was one of a handful of areas where the Churches Main Committee succeeded in setting up a local interdenominational committee. Once plans for Wythenshawe's north-western neighbourhood were set, in 1948, Nicholas sent the plans with potential sites indicated for churches, with the proviso that the interdenominational committee undertake the negotiations between the churches in order to decide sites.[60] [Ill. 1.3] In those neighbourhoods that were already laid out, churches

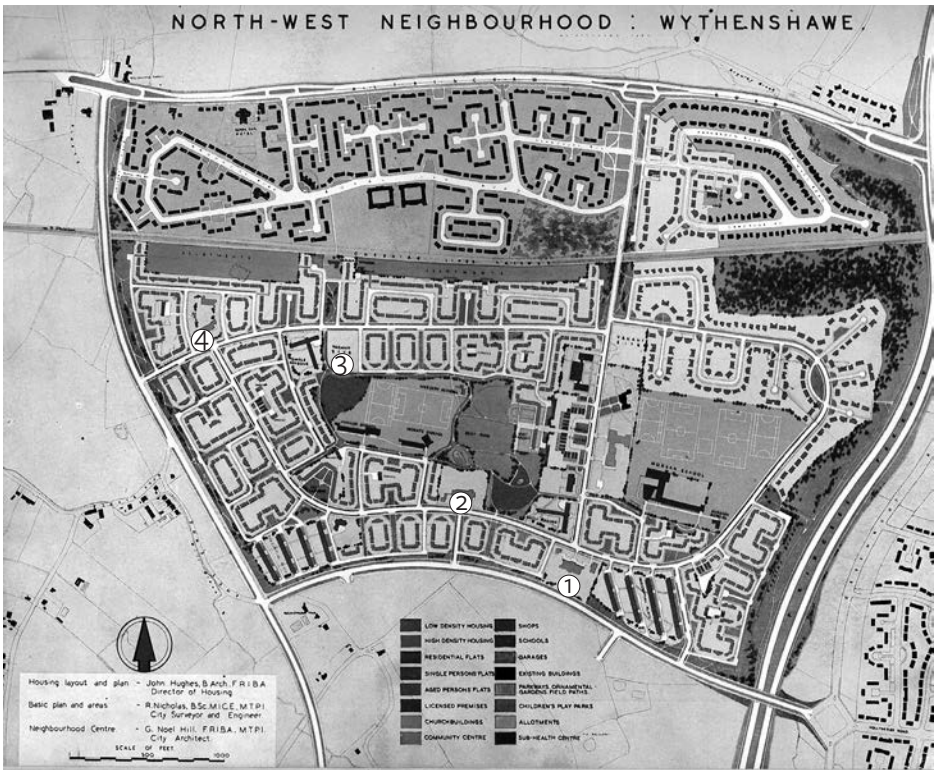
56 The City of Manchester Plan, 1945, was a composite document written over many years with different inputs from different people. It displays many of the incongruences and inconsistencies that have been identified in approaches to town planning in the UK in the mid-twentieth century. See Foley, "British Town Planning", 211.

57 Connelly, forthcoming.

58 Ward, *Planning in the Twentieth Century City*, 189. Michael Hebbert demonstrates that the openness to the quantitative approach in England comes from a disillusionment with land use planning, particularly on social and ecological grounds. Whilst there were a host of protagonists, the approach can be associated with planners such as Patrick Abercrombie and F. J. Osbourne. From the mid-twentieth century, collaborations (or a somewhat "unholy alliance") between traditional planners and social scientists strengthened and were formalised in policy. It may be argued that the quantitative approach gave succour to social and physical determinism in the design of new settlements. See Hebbert, "The Daring Experiment".

59 Nicholas, *The City of Manchester Plan*, 250-251. District, para 207. 0.75 acres were allocated per 1,000 people in new development areas and 0.5 acres per 1,000 people in redevelopment areas. Thoughts as to whether the churches believed this to be sufficient provision have not come to light. The figures were calculated on the basis of the number of members per denomination at the time of counting.

60 Manchester, MALS, Churches Main Committee, M196/10/4/4/1.



1.3 Layout of the north-western neighbourhood with indication of the sites chosen for the churches: 1) Saint Martin's Parish Church; 2) Baguley Methodist Church; 3) Baguley United Reform Church; 4) Sacred Heart and Saint Peter's Church (Catholic)
[Reproduced from Nicholas, *City of Manchester*, plate 52]

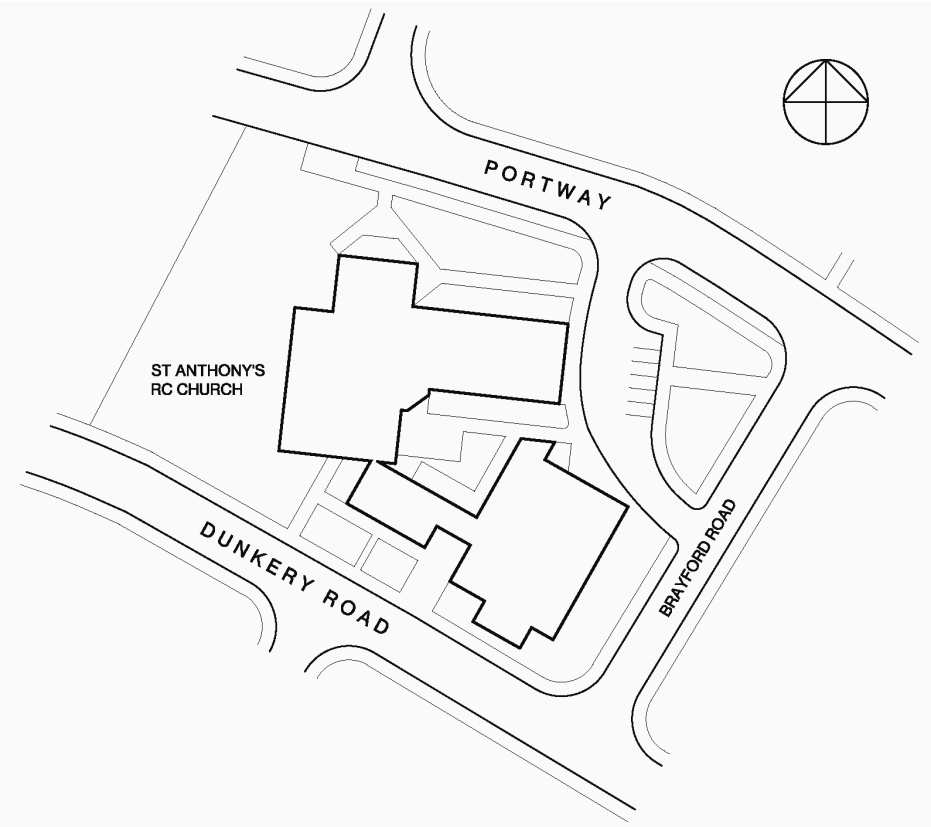
were intended to be "terminal features" — therefore given the most prominent site at the end of a long, straight road.[61] Saint Martin's Parish Church (1958), by Harry S. Fairhurst & Son, is typical in this regard by its location on an elevated site at one end of a main approach road. The other identified site, the city planners were informed, was to be taken by the Methodist Church — this was Baguley Methodist Church, which is less well-placed in terms of providing a landmark building but is set back from the housing estate and backs onto a park, lending a picturesque feel. The initial plan has one further identified site and a vacant site. Since the Roman Catholics were proposing to switch sites, the Planning Committee agreed that the Congregationalists should have the first choice of unallocated sites in that neighbourhood.[62] This became the Baguley United Reform Church to the north of the park.

61 Nicholas, *The City of Manchester Plan*, 152.
62 Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Churches Main Committee, M196/10/4/4/1.

1.4 Model of Wythenshawe Civic Centre. The main church is located on the right-hand side of the model.
[Reproduced from Nicholas, *City of Manchester Plan*, plate 50]

It was, however, the civic centre that was the most important section of the Wythenshawe plan, and its evolution demonstrates how the plans moved from a "garden satellite town" to a full new town. The pre-1945 Parker plan had initially envisaged a town square to the right of Princess Parkway. By 1945, the civic centre site was enlarged to include 72 acres and shifted to the south, where a busy road could not dissect it from residential areas.[63] These 1945 plans show a civic centre with a range of classical public buildings, including shops and two theatres. Here, a parish church is shown at the end of the site, again to make a distinctive "terminal feature". [Ill. 1.4] Although plans were finessed over the 1950s, it was not until 1964, once the majority of housing was completed, that the civic centre site could be developed. By this time, the thinking envisaged a more centralised development comprising many functions, including a library and theatre, in one central complex "so that the whole Centre is seen as an obvious entity rather than a collection of individual buildings".[64] However, most churches had already been allocated sites in the neighbourhoods and district centres during the 1950s, which makes their style and siting seem incongruent with the civic centre that was eventually constructed. The churches, rather than feeding into the secular civic hub, seemed to be excluded from the centre and, in the end, addressed the neighbourhood context rather than the district centres. It is illuminating to zoom in to see how the planning debates at various scales played out in terms of the architectural concerns surrounding a Roman Catholic church in one Wythenshawe neighbourhood.

63 Deakin, *Wythenshawe*, 148.
64 Manchester, MALS, Wythenshawe Civic Centre Committee, GB127. Council Minutes/ Wythenshawe Civic Centre Committee Minutes.

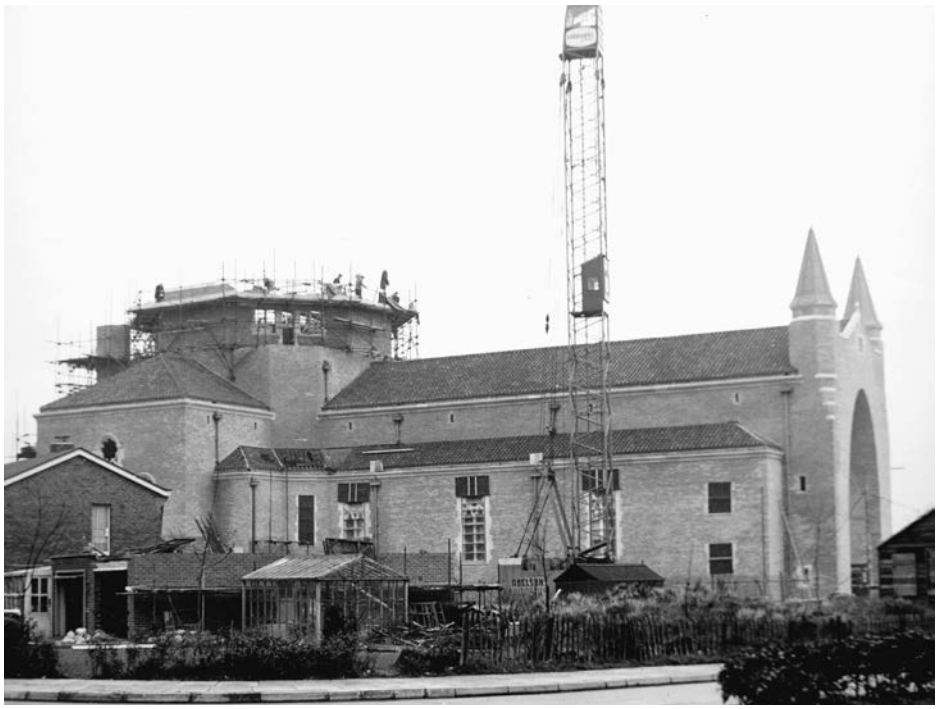


1.5: Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church (1960) on the map, contours of the church and the later parish centre are in bold, Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe.
[Courtesy of Matthew Steele]

An "Out of the Ordinary" Church

The planning debates at the national and municipal levels are only one part of the story when considering the multitude of actors and negotiations that impact on church building. We will now focus our analysis on Saint Anthony's (1960), which was the closest Roman Catholic church to the civic centre site. Designed by Adrian Gilbert Scott (1882-1963), it is a landmark building placed in the neighbourhood of Woodhouse Park where three roads meet.[65] [Ill. 1.5] Two sites closer to the civic centre were reserved for the Church of England and the Methodist Church; the latter constructed their largest post-1945 church building in Saint Andrew's. The Church of England site soon housed the William Temple Memorial Church (1965) designed by George Gaze Pace (1915-1975). Whilst Pace's design departed from the Church of England's more

65 Proctor, *Building the Modern Church*, 280.



1.6 Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church (1960) under construction, Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe.
[Reproduced by permission from Manchester, MALS]

traditional liturgical preferences, Gilbert Scott's proposal for Saint Anthony's harked back to traditional values even in the midst of great liturgical change within the Roman Catholic Church. [Ill. 1.6] The resultant building therefore responds to a site that addresses the mainly residential neighbourhood, but it is also indicative of a more conservative liturgical approach by the Diocese of Shrewsbury, of which Saint Anthony's was a part.[66] An exploration of Saint Anthony's is, therefore, an instructive way to view the multifarious connections between the actors involved in the final form of a church building.

The Saint Anthony's site, close to the Woodhouse Park neighbourhood centre and public house, was allocated by the city surveyors and, following an application by the incumbent parish priest, a formal licence to build was granted in 1951.[67] Saint Anthony's was one of six sites in the area and cost 2035

66 This argument is put forward by Robert Proctor in relation to the Roman Catholic churches in Manchester that were designed by the firm Reynolds and Scott. Proctor, "Designing the Suburban Church", 113-133.

67 A building licence was necessary in this period because of continuing rationing of building supplies and materials following the Second World War. This was intended to ration scarce building resources and ensure that priority buildings — such as housing and schools — could be built. The need for building licences was revoked in 1954.

pounds. The Manchester Corporation included road charges in the total cost of the site on a principle that had been agreed by the Manchester branch of the Churches Main Committee, whereby the total cost of the six sites was divided equally so that sites with a shorter road frontage subsidised sites, such as Saint Anthony's, with extensive frontages onto the road.[68]

By April 1951, Mass was formally held in a temporary construction that was informally known as "the Green Hut", which comprised two adjoined prefabricated steel Nissen huts.[69] At the time, the incumbent priest, Father Martin Kehoe (life dates unknown), had his attention attuned to the building of a parish primary school, which opened in 1954. However, he was keen to press the Bishop of Shrewsbury, John A. Murphy (1905-1995), on timings for a new church building by 1957, emphasizing that 2200 people were attending mass every Sunday, from whom sufficient funds could be raised.[70] The Green Hut itself, in a time before the public civic centre was built, was being used for a range of Catholic and non-Catholic purposes, such as a cinema and a food distribution centre.[71] This might suggest that a dual-purpose church with a community focus would have been desirable. Instead, Gilbert Scott's design for Saint Anthony's is highly traditional in liturgical arrangements and was primarily meant for worshipping; a separate parish centre did not open until 1971. This allowed for a monumental building to be designed, one that was singularly and utterly identifiable as a church and one of the largest Roman Catholic churches that had ever been built in Manchester, perhaps as a show of strength and prestige. It must be remembered that, at the time, the Roman Catholic Church in England was in a period of ascendancy in terms of rising congregations.[72]

The Bishop of Shrewsbury wanted to make use of the ample and prominent site that had been provided in the neighbourhood plans, particularly given the size of the parish and the lack of other churches in the neighbourhood. Saint Anthony's, the Bishop advised, had to be "out of the ordinary".[73] Gilbert Scott was selected as the architect who could "do justice to such a site with a noble and dignified church", with the specific suggestion that the "Gothic Revival" style exemplified in his earlier example of Saint Joseph in Upton (1954), also in the Diocese of Shrewsbury, would be appropriate for Saint Anthony's.[74]

68 Woodchurch, DSA. Letter from J. S. Montgomery to the Right Reverend J. A. Murphy, 29 April 1959.
69 Once the primary school had opened in 1954, Mass was held in the school. The Green Hut was demolished in 1958 to make way for the permanent building.
70 Woodchurch, DSA. Letter from Father Martin Kehoe to Bishop J. A. Murphy, Bishop of Shrewsbury, 20 March 1957.
71 The New Saint Anthony's Church, Woodhouse Park, Manchester. Souvenir of Solemn Opening, 3 November 1960 (Manchester: J. E. Mulligan & Co. Ltd, 1960), 14.
72 Proctor, *Building the Modern Church*, 2.
73 Woodchurch, DSA. "Summary of Bishop's Remarks on the New Church Project", c 1957, 1.
74 Ibid.

1.7. Front view of Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic Church (1960), current situation, Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe.
[Photograph by Robert Proctor]

The Bishop even went so far as to suggest the placement of the church diagonally across the site in order to dominate both approach roads: Portway and Rudpark Road. This is the eventual form that the building took, with the main entrance towards Portway, but an equally dominant part of the building, the altar, placed towards the west to form a monumental side entrance with a tower facing Rudpark Road. In his extensive notes, the Bishop also specified that the church should not be octagonal. This could reflect a conservative approach to design but, in the Bishop's words, the expanse of the site meant that an octagonal church "might give too heavy an appearance".[75]

The allocation of a large site, close to major access roads, therefore shaped the eventual form of the building and can be considered to be another actor in the narrative. Whilst Gilbert Scott noted that "the large and open site left one exceptionally free to plan Saint Anthony's to any shape desired", a wish to interact with all of the main roads, with the feature towards Rudpark Road in addition to the main entrance, "determined the traditional Roman Cross plan, with a large open central space".[76] Saint Anthony's, whilst in very eclectic style, seems to conform to the original ideal set out in the City of Manchester Plan for a spiritual and architectural focal point to the Woodhouse Park neighbourhood. Yet this also, pragmatically, suited the needs and re-

75 Ibid.
76 Woodchurch, DSA. "The New St Anthony's Church, Woodhouse Park, Manchester". Souvenir of Solemn Opening, 3 November 1960 (Manchester: J. E. Mulligan & Co. Ltd, 1960), 7.

quirements of the parish and the Bishop of Shrewsbury for Saint Anthony's to "look like a church and to be as devotional as possible".[77] [Ill. 1.7]

There is virtually no mention of Saint Anthony's in the wider architectural press of the time, which might be considered unusual given the national prominence of Gilbert Scott's work but could simply be a result of the London-dominated architectural scene. Even so, the building was of symbolic importance to the local Roman Catholic community. The opening ceremonies were attended by 125 priests, and the 800-seat church was full for the celebrations. However, in his opening sermon, Father Kehoe was keen to impress upon the audience that the monumental church should not give the suggestion that the Diocese of Shrewsbury had disposable income:

> When you see a magnificent church like this, you might think that we are rolling in money; we are not, we are rolling in debt all over the diocese.[78]

Debt was a problem that bedevilled Saint Anthony's for many years, but the parishioners and clergy pushed on with their work. At the silver jubilee, held in 1978, it was observed that "we have a local community, almost as close-knit as a village community, in a large conurbation", which of course represented the realisation of the initial aims of the parish to have a building that was a focal point for its members in which much activity took place.[79] However, the problem of trying to maintain such a large building eventually presented itself as congregational numbers began to dwindle in the latter part of the twentieth century. Whereas the first twenty-five years of parish life could be characterised as a period of "optimism", the next twenty-five years witnessed the twin problems of a declining congregation that was also aging.[80] Today, the parish centre, which remains well used, helps to provide an income for the now Grade II listed church.[81]

Saint Anthony's construction is instructive for the myriad of actors involved in the design of one church building and the impact of wider urban planning concerns. The church's siting was the result of negotiations between the Churches Main Committee and the Manchester Corporation surveyors, including the final sum for the price of the site, which was divided up between parishes. The actual design also reflected the influences of many actors beyond the architect, particularly through the keen oversight of the Bishop of Shrewsbury. Undoubtedly, the conversations between architect and bishop were also

77 Ibid.
78 "Opening of St Anthony's, Woodhouse Park", *The Catholic Guardian*, 5 November 1960, 1.
79 Woodchurch, DSA. "St Anthony's Woodhouse Park, Silver Jubilee Brochure", 1978, 5.
80 Woodchurch, DSA. "Golden Jubilee Brochure, St Anthony's Woodhouse Park", 2003, 7.
81 The National Heritage List for England provides details of all of the protected buildings and landscapes in the country. Each building is graded according to its importance: Grade I denotes exceptional interest, whilst Grade II is of special interest.

shaped by the prominent siting at the intersection of three road frontages that seemed to demand a monumental response, one that conformed to the more picturesque ideals envisioned for the Wythenshawe estate in the 1945 City of Manchester Plan.

Conclusion

Clearly, there was much pragmatism to be found in the approach of religious organisations in obtaining and keeping key sites in the Wythenshawe estate that departed from their initial aspirations. Recognition of religious concerns was widely accepted within the national government and within Manchester. There were nevertheless problems around not only ensuring favouritism to particular denominations, but also balancing the competing concerns of secular organisations that could make equal arguments about the value of their public function. The way that the major religious organisations came together to present a coherent face to government, and to call on sympathetic ministers and civil servants, meant that they could exploit existing connections and the perceived importance of religion, even though there was a growing sense that church attendance was in decline. In addition, it could be argued that the need for prominent church sites displays an idealistic tendency towards social and physical determinism in the neighbourhood planning concept, as adopted in post-1945 English planning. The church, in this case, was a harbinger of good community spirit, even if consumer preferences would repudiate this in the late twentieth century. Here, the planners and the churches were singing from the same hymn sheet.

Various factors beyond human resources impacted on the selection and allocation of sites. Most notably, the shortage of materials and labour in the immediate post-1945 period saw some organisations constructing temporary halls, or building in stages, in order to secure the site before a permanent building could be constructed. In addition, the instrument of ecclesiastical law, which pertained only to the Church of England, was interpreted liberally by the civil servants and expanded to cover other religious organisations, albeit in a qualified way. Consequently, growing collaboration enabled the non-established religious organisations to gain concessions during the drafting of the bill for the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act.

Manchester may be an atypical case, given that the relations between the planners and the religious organisations seemed to be harmonious — except in isolated cases that usually related to compulsory purchase rather than the designation of new sites. In other English new towns, though, such as Stevenage, the interdenominational area committees begun under the Churches Main Committee were also thought to work to good effect. This may be due to

the growing collaboration that was a feature of English church relations over the twentieth century. Future research could begin to compare the differences between areas where the churches worked together and those where there was little collaboration. An appreciation of the wider planning context relating to the site selection for places of worship reveals much about the social and cultural position of the English churches in the eyes of those in authority. Religious organisations seemed to enjoy a privileged role in the limited consultations that embryonic planning authorities undertook. In addition, the site allocations made by the planners could, as was the case in St Anthony's, subtly shape the final building form.

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