INTRODUCTION

The origin of this paper lies in the compilation of a bibliography of British and American literature on urban regeneration between the years 1960 and 1990. During the course of the collection of the material two trends became apparent. The first was that the literature fell broadly into two categories; one having an emphasis on the structural, or macro-level processes which affect and determine regeneration issues; the other reflecting the way in which institutions, organisations and individuals respond and react at both the local and national level. This division of the literature was distinguished in the bibliography as the "structural framework" and the "operational context". The second trend observed was the way in which the literature paralleled contemporary changes in policy and practice relating to city environments.

The period under consideration, 1960-1990, was marked by an accelerating pace of change in urban renewal activity, in which cities more accustomed to a gradual process of adaptation, were plunged into unprecedented and often drastic metamorphosis. Indeed it is only since 1960 that the terms urban regeneration, urban renewal and urban revitalisation have become commonplace. Given the rapidity of developments in the urban field it is not surprising that the causes and consequences of changes in policy and practice have become a subject of interest to academics. There is a growing concern to understand the theory and practice of the ways in which towns and cities respond to the constant need to change and develop as political, social and economic relationships are transformed over time. Such academics are well aware that although the outward face of urban regeneration is represented by the physical form of the built environment it is illusory to consider that this is the whole content of urban regeneration. Equally important are the political, social and economic processes behind it which impact in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most obvious of these impacts is the way in which the spatial order of the built environment is translated into a physical manifestation of the social order. However the situation is more complex than this, for the built environment itself has the power to affect both people and processes, determining both subjective reactions, and the extent to which activities are promoted or inhibited. This process of feedback, with either positive or negative implications, often results in policy decisions and then further adaptations or modifications of urban form. This circularity of the total process suggests a critical interdependence of factors, and, moreover, that a real understanding of the urban situation requires a close analysis and interpretation of their effects.

From a study of the literature it is apparent that the perceptions of these links are rarely specifically elaborated and that what is lacking is a single coherent and objective overview of the urban scene, which at the same time has a capacity to influence policy and practice. Instead there seems to be a systematic and synchronic relationship between developments in the literature on urban regeneration, and the changing nature of the urban processes which affect built form. It appears that there is a change of emphasis over time. Interpretations include perceiving renewal as a physical process, as concerned with human dynamics, as local expressions of change, or
subject to global causes, and as the consequences of the actions of individual agents or of structural forces. Those who write about urban renewal are as much a product of their age as are the processes which they seek to interpret; for the most part they are imprisoned by the ideology and concepts particular to their time. This is not to say that work under any of these rubrics is insignificant; on the contrary much of analytical and interpretative value has been produced. However the predictability of many of these works makes all the more outstanding the appearance of any volume which raises a dissenting voice, challenging the status quo and arguing for a radically different point of view.

The majority of the available literature can be related quite closely to phases of urban regeneration, in which Britain has usually, but not always, copied or adapted approaches taken in the USA. I

The first phase under consideration, around 1960, marked in many ways the beginning of an end. The end of consensus about state involvement, the end of a belief in the possibilities of physical and social engineering, the end of wholesale clearance and renewal, the end of an uncritical acceptance of the rational state. Since World War Two the built environment of urban areas had been subjected to what Ravietz (1980) terms the "clean sweep" approach, in which it was firmly believed that a brave new post-war world could be created with the help of a new style of planning and architecture. Professionals and bureaucrats, committed to furthering what they perceived as the interests of an untutored body of lay people, took decisions which resulted in system built housing schemes, and concrete shopping centres, in their attempts to shepherd in a new sense of community and a new prosperity. Thus, throughout Western Europe and North America, economic expansion, rising public expenditure and increasing standards of living became linked with large scale rationalised projects in housing, institutional and commercial construction. Within the literature of the early 1960s is found only the last remnants of this ideology of enthusiasm for a new order, to be achieved through an uncomplicated rationality and the expertise of professionals. Two examples of this period, which implicitly bear testimony to the benefits of these early urban renewal schemes are those by Burns (1963) and Johnson et al. (1962). Burns, chief planner of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in his book New Towns for Old saw urban renewal very much as a practical and technical problem, reinforced by the necessary political will, but implemented by a professional competence only available to the experts. Johnson et al in Renewing America’s Cities provide a typically straightforward account of the objectives and achievements of urban renewal, without in any real sense challenging the accepted belief in the methods used and the benefits thought to accrue. Descriptive works such as these are typical of an age in which the deeper underlying principles of structural forces were ignored in the euphoria over the conquering of evil and the power to rebuild a new society.

II

However, even in the early 1960s there were pointers towards change, marked by the commencement of a second phase of literature wherein critique was emerging. It was beginning to be acknowledged that there were unintended consequences of the physical reconstruction schemes so popular over the preceding 20 years, and that real human needs remained unaddressed. As early as 1957 a pioneering study by Young and Wilmott had highlighted the cost to individuals of relocation to peripheral estates from the former community of the slum, and over the next ten years or so there followed other works similarly critical of planning and policy decisions. These include the books by Gans (1962, 1968), Muchnik (1970), Daviet (1972), Dennis (1970, 1972), Goodman (1971) and Hartman (1974). In these works it was suggested, often quite forcibly, that whilst planners and policy makers may have been deluding themselves into thinking that they had some special mandate to design for a new era, they were in fact failing to make appropriate decisions. Central to this is that they denied the relevance of the views and preferences of the very
people they were ostensibly designing for - the user. What was identified here was that there was a situation of conflict between planner and user in which the planner, as the professional, had the power. Simmie (1974) and Ambrose and Colenutt (1975) examined more closely the nature of conflict, and the complexity of the ways in which all those with a stake in the development and use of land pursued their interests. Echoing an earlier work by Marriott (1967), Ambrose and Colenutt deployed the power that had begun to accrue ever more strongly to the property market in Britain, and the relative powerlessness of local authorities to pursue more equitable solutions when faced with the driving force of the profit motive. A concern for equitable distribution also marked the theme of some works which addressed a structural level of analysis as to the apparent failures of existing policies to achieve the anticipated brave new world. These included Jacobs (1970) Forrester (1969) and Gale and Moore (1975), all of whom had the capacity to appreciate the complex interrelationship between systems, institutions and outcomes. Outcomes as enshrined in the form of the built environment also attracted criticism in this period, producing a number of works in the urban design field arguing for new ways of conceptualising the spaces of the city (Lynch 1960), for diversity as the essence of the city (Jacobs 1961), for new definitions of the city (Gruen 1965), for an aesthetics of the city (Spreiregen 1965), and for design for defensible space in the city (Newman 1972).

This period of writing, in which the conflicting interests of those involved in urban renewal is exposed as a main reason for its failure, was matched in policy making by attempts to find more effective solutions both to urban malaise and to the sterility of the now discredited urban building forms. These measures included in particular a change from clearance and renewal to rehabilitation, as incorporated in British legislation with the creation of Housing Action Areas and General Improvement Areas, and moves in both Britain and the U.S.A. to tackle poverty, deprivation and ethnic issues through the War on Poverty and the Community Development Programme.

III

An acknowledgement of fallibility and the appearance of writings which challenged the idea of consensus and professional supremacy opened the way for a new type of literature to fill the theoretical vacuum, thus heralding the third phase of urban literature. The positivist paradigm which had resulted in so many empirically based studies was rejected in favour of an approach which was explicitly neo-Marxist, incorporating much more comprehensive political and spatial theories. This was particularly a European movement, with key early works by Harvey (1973) and Castells (1972). Although both writers later accepted that they had been mistaken to believe that the city could be studied in isolation, their work was nonetheless innovative in linking social processes and spatial forms, and in identifying the spread of urbanism to the existence of a social surplus articulated through the state apparatus and class struggle. As these ideas spread and gained credibility structurally based arguments also came to be adopted within the urban literature referring to the more specifically spatial (or geographic) and economic issues - for example the work of Massey and Catalano (1978), Cox (1982), Bourne (1982) and Massey (1984). But it was within the field of social theory that most of this type of work was produced, by for example Pickvance (1976), Harloe (1977) Castells (1978), Tabb and Sawers (1978), Scott (1980), Smith (1980), Saunders (1986), Forrest et al (1982).

At the operational level the literature remained largely one which evaluated and criticised urban decision-making and outcomes, although with a new awareness of the "urban crisis" and a need to save the city from a downward spiral of neglect. However what were beginning to appear and to be catalogued were instances of individuals joining together to fight the forces of capitalism and to retain particular urban spaces for themselves. Examples are in the work of Thornley (1977) Christensen (1979) Wates (1976) and Ferris (1972). Although not urban social movements in the
strict sense of Castells’ (1972) definition, in that structural change was not achieved, these groups did have notable successes at the neighbourhood level. Indeed the concept of “neighbourhood” was of much significance at this time, perhaps as it came to be implicitly recognised that in neighbourhoods, where the inequalities of capitalism were most manifest, there yet existed a power which might overcome those inequalities. Such works, typically American, include Goetz (1967, 1979), Leven et al (1976), Goldstein (1977), Clay (1979), Zeitz (1979), Laska and Spain (1980), Downs (1981) and Henig (1982). This period was characterised in the literature on the nature of urban form by a similar concern with the perceptions of ordinary people and the importance of understanding the structural cultural and symbolic significance of buildings and spaces. Examples here are Smith (1977), Alexander (1977, 1979), Rapoport (1977), Krier (1979), Lynch (1981), Newman (1981), and Rossi (1982). The whole of this rather lengthy period in the literature, from the early 1970s to the early 1980s is characterised by a questioning of the validity of urban practices and the ensuing built form, and a search for deeper structural understandings which can inform better solutions. However there would seem to have been little impact at the level of policy-making where, although a situation of crisis was recognised, solutions remained piecemeal and fragmented, and vision was lacking.

IV

By the early 1980s this situation was changing, first in the U.S.A and then in Britain. In both countries a government with a strong right wing ideology had come to power, emphasising the virtues of market solutions, free enterprise and individualism. Again in both countries the inner city began to dominate the political agenda, encouraged by a series of inner city riots. Solutions were to be dramatic, visible and effective, and, in a climate of retrenchment of public spending, to have minimal cost to the state. In the U.S.A growth coalitions achieved notable results, together with certain policy innovations which were rapidly reproduced in Britain. These included Enterprise Zones, Urban Development Corporations, and specifically (and typically) British, Garden Festivals. All of these measures featured restrictions of traditional local authority power with the relaxation of statutory and administrative controls, the use of public investment to lever in large amounts of private capital, and an emphasis on economic rather than social regeneration. The visibility of such policy instruments reached their apex in Britain with the redevelopment of London Docklands, arguably a white elephant with its acres of unlet office space and unsold prestigious properties. On a smaller scale similar “flagship” redevelopment schemes occurred in many major cities of the U.S.A. and Britain, as property companies seized every opportunity to exploit the possibilities of deregulated areas of land which would attract large public grants. In this period property became all powerful, within a government promoted “public/private partnership” where the public interest was always secondary.

This period marked a fourth phase in the literature wherein for academics there were numerous opportunities to chart the progress of these developments, to provide commentary on the nature of the actions of specific agencies or groups of individuals, and, for the more outspoken, to criticise the achievements. The many works of this type include Friedland (1982), Gibson and Langstaff (1982), Mollenkopf (1983), Feagin (1983), Hartman (1984), Keating and Boyle (1986), Parkinson et al (1988), Suttles (1990), Judd and Parkinson (1990), Butler (1982), Fosler and Berger (1982), Healey et al (1988), Holley et al (1988), Britton and et al (1989), Healey and Nabarro (1990), Lang (1982), Palen (1984), Smith and Williams (1986), Donison and Middleton (1987). Addressing more specifically the nature of the built environment at this time were works which were showing a concern for the physical impact of the market solution and arguing for the salience of the new discipline of urban design, which would concern itself with the nature of the city fabric as it extends through time and over space. Such works include Shirvani (1985), Tugnutt and Robertson (1987), Whitehand (1987), Gosling and Maitland (1984), Barnett (1982), Cutler and Cutler (1982). It is at the structural level of explanation of what is happening to cities that there
remained a critical vein, continuing, albeit in a weaker form, the questionings of the previous
decade. Such is the work of Hicks and Glickman (1983), MacDonald (1984), Pipkin et al (1983),
and Harvey (1985).

V

There has been a trend in the literature of the last few years to be more introspective, to ask more
profound questions about how cities can act to save themselves, and to take a more holistic
perspective within which the city is only a part of the global question. This coincides with a period
of political, economic and social uncertainty, in which everything is "post" what has gone before,
yet with no clear definition of what is now. Post-Reaganism, post- Thatcherism, post-Fordism,
post-industrialism, post-structuralism, all fall under the umbrella of post-modernism, which has
its counterparts in the arts, in architecture, indeed throughout the panoply of social life. Major
world events - the fall of the Berlin wall, the emancipation of Eastern Europe, the possibility of
ecological disaster, have strengthened the belief that the world is inherently the sum of its parts,
each of which must be well-balanced to achieve an ultimate harmony. Within this new era people
are more willing to learn from each other, to break down the artificial barriers of disciplines, to
accept that the past has important lessons for the present and the future, and to acknowledge that
each individual has a right to a voice in the debate. It is too early to say whether this present and
fifth phase of literature on urban issues will be able to offer the structural insights which alone can
lead to new solutions - those which are beginning to point in that direction include only Short
(1989), Relph (1987) and Lozano (1990). Unfortunately what is more likely is that the literature
will merely continue to follow the trends of the day, addressing the effects on urban regeneration
of increasing tourism and heritage promotion (e.g. Bianchini 1990, Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990,
Urry 1990), of information technology (e.g. Castells 1989), of the global/local dichotomy (e.g.
Cooke 1989, Knight and Gappert 1989, King 1990, Harloe 1990, Smith and Feagin 1987), and
the importance of community involvement in the design of responsive environments (e.g. Marris
1987, Hatch 1984, Bentley 1985). As always there will be works which chronicle new initiatives,
such as those in Britain on neighbourhood renewal schemes and the City Challenge.

CONCLUSION
This paper suggests, by the selection of a representative sample from almost 400 entries in a
bibliography of books, that for the most part the literature on urban regeneration has followed
rather than led the prevailing ideologies relating to urban renewal. Since these ideologies are
responsible for the redevelopment of the environment it is has usually been the case that the
perceptions of what is happening have been predicated on the transformations that occurred in
policy and practice. It is a sad truism that the antipathy between academics and policy makers has
meant that the latter are rarely willing to acknowledge and learn from the findings of the former,
who, arguably, more often seek to discredit those who would instruct. For this reason the circle
is not closed. The rare revolutions in academic thought (such as occurred in the adoption of a neo-
Marxist framework to describe social processes and spatial structures) are not followed by
revolutions in policy and practice. In the relationship between these arenas, apparently, new ideas
must be accommodated to practice before innovatory change can occur. Without a grasp of the
complex interrelationships involved in the totality of urban renewal it is unlikely that real advances
can be made. It remains a case of plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.
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