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**THE EUROPEAN CITY MODEL AND ITS CRITICS
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THE EUROPEAN CITY MODEL AND ITS CRITICS

Introduction

This paper is written in response to the recent Urban Age conference (London, November 2005) run by LSE Enterprise Cities in conjunction with Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society. The paper considers the European City Model and its critics in the urban age.

The paper deals with two linked sets of questions:

One set of questions is about spatial form. In the context of the widespread development of urban conurbations, has the traditional city become a theme park of past approaches to urban living or does it have design and planning lessons for the future of urban life? With particular reference to the growth of London, can we still (re)make cities based on the European City Model?

Another, linked set of questions, relates these changes to cities' transforming power relations and attendant management processes in the context of the globalisation of capital and the crisis of legitimacy of the state. Just as we are experiencing spatial change, should we likewise welcome transformations in the management of cities, with the formation of new partnerships and forms of urban governance? Do these urban processes and structures represent moves forward for city regions or are they used to legitimate unequal, unaccountable power relations? Can the European City Model provide a method for confronting these issues into the 21st century?

Hallmarks of the urban age

The context for the critique of the European City Model, (henceforth referred to as ECM), are the profound changes being experienced globally in urban space. Urban space is expanding enormously worldwide. Key trends are towards the rise of huge megalopolitan urban regions covering coastal areas and habitable plains (Gottman, 1978, 1980; Dogan, 1988; Gottdeiner, 1994; OECD, 1996).ⁱ From the huge variety of research material documenting and analysing the rise of post-urban regions one key

conclusion is that these spaces can no longer be conceptualised simply as part of a city/suburb hierarchy as previously configured (Fishman, 1987; Sudjic, 1991; Rowe, 1991; Frost, 1993; Smith, 1996; and Roberts et al, 1999). Spatial reconfiguration has undoubtedly resulted in the construction of spaces unlike the traditional city form of the ECM (Zukin, 1992; Ellin, 1994), with the emergence of spaces in the "non place urban realm" as a developing "supermodernity" (Webber, 1964; Self, 1982; Augé, 1995). Augé pinpoints the emergence of certain new kinds of spaces (airports, supermarkets etc) that vie with more traditional spaces as 'centres' of social life.

At the scale of the city region, Soja (2000) describes these burgeoning urban spaces as "postmetropolitan". Like Hall and Castells (1993), Soja recognises a centripetal resorting of land uses, with the centre of gravity of social and economic activities moving to the peripheries, constructed at lower densities than formerly, and often without traditional centres. Soja stresses the fractured and disjointed nature of this resorting. He argues that having undergone a transforming process of urban restructuring, postmetropolitan regions are now socially fragmented in new ways and extremely uneven in their economic development; with sharpening inequality played out in their spatial arrangements.

The transforming spaces of postmetropolis have been conceptualised in terms of their focus on flows (Roberts et al, 1999), their exclusionary social processes (Vergriete, 1997; Parkinson 1998) and their negative sustainability effects (Stren, White and Whitney, 1992; Hough, 1994; Barton et al, 2000; Rudlin and Falk, 2001; and Haughton and Hunter, 2003). Profound changes to the public realm (Krier, 1979; Jacobs, 1994; Kostof, 1992; Madanipour, 2003) are variously associated with the rise of modernist ideology in city planning (Harvey, 1989; Hall, 1992)ⁱⁱ, more recent post modernism (Harvey, 1989; Wilson, 1991; Garreau, 1991; Zukin, 1992; Ellin, 1996), and in contemporary architectural practice, with a resurgent

modernism that renegotiates its relationship with sprawl (Lotus, 1998; S, M, L, X-L, 1997; de Geyter, 2002). The revival in popularity of the CCM/ECM meanwhile has reflected competing claims about what constitutes the fundamental condition of modernity (Frisby, 2004). Compact city model claims have been in turn reflected in the perceived need to create, recreate or protect existing spaces which reinforce the public domain, through the European City Model, normatively defined as good for cities (Elkin et al, 1991; English Partnerships, 2000; DETR, 2000, 2001). Enrique Peñalosa, ex-Mayor of Bogota compared the competing models of North American style urban development as seen in his city, with examples from the European City Model.³

Elements of the European City Model (ECM)

Burgeoning urban space has provoked a range of design responses, the ECM among them. I suggest that the ECM is fundamentally a subset of the compact city model (CCM) which has developed a strong but by no means universally accepted theoretical basis both in Europe and elsewhere in the course of the 20th and into the current century.⁴ In certain respects the ECM transcends the compact city model's spatial, urban design and planning focus, notably through its emphasis on social and economic processes as well as spatial forms. A certain circularity exists here in that theorising about the compact city model is often derived from direct observation of the spatial structure and social, economic and political functioning of traditional European towns and cities. The European City Model thus draws theoretical strength from this body of research on actual cities, as well as from more normative discussions of its characteristics as held at Urban Age. It is to these discussions and their theoretical underpinnings that the paper now turns.

Common characteristics of the European City Model

The background Bulletin (2005) to the conference describes current policies for London that are in line with the ECM⁵ while Joan Clos, Mayor of Barcelona, noted that a set of common characteristics representing the ECM could be determined.⁶ This notion of a set of shared characteristics mirrors the design elements or principles arguments at the core of the CCM-sympathetic urban design literature referenced above. Clos's list of the common characteristics of such cities is reminiscent of the specific elements that compact cities theorists propose: including fine-grained, mixed-use, walkable, high density, public space-oriented and human-scaled cities (Urban Taskforce, 1999; Barton et al, 2000; DETR, 2000, 2001; Urban Design Compendium, 2000).

Joan Clos calls for "cities that are:

- Compact: grouped around a core rather than sprawling like American cities, thereby preserving the integrity and coherence of their open spaces;
- Suitably dense: favouring mobility on foot or by public transport, bringing services closer, and avoiding an excessive level of greenfield development;
- Used for many purposes in the same area: combining residence, work and leisure to create an urban lifestyle that is diverse and complex;
- Home to people from diverse backgrounds: reducing the tendency towards ghettos caused by income, origin or race, thus encouraging better levels of social integration;
- Based on public spaces: these act as integrating platforms for various activities and for peaceful co-existence of different social groups;
- Places where public transport dominates: the pressure of private cars is limited".⁷

The ECM and its challengers: a London based discussion

The next section of the paper considers key ECM characteristics (and their critics and opponents) with reference to the literature, through the Urban Age conference discussions and background documents. ECM qualities discussed at UA include distinctiveness⁸, diversity⁹, vitality¹⁰, the *genus loci*¹¹, and the civilising role of food¹² and feasting¹³. Ricky Burdett commented that the "intellectual core project of the Urban Age is linking the physical to the social" and I suggest that this nexus provides some of the most interesting challenges to the ECM at both theoretical and practical levels. Some of these physical and social challenges are explored below with reference to the four major "holes" in the London fabric represented by the development sites that were the focus of the conference. The ECM was clearly sketched out as the preferred theoretical model among most mayors, planners, urban designers, and academics. However, other stakeholders, including some city government officials, policy advisors, consultants, architects and property developers challenged the model in various ways in practice¹⁴. The views of the latter (loose) grouping can be seen as influential in their roles as bureaucratic decision makers, urban masterplanners, development consultants and financiers of urban development. I return to this later in the paper. It is argued, by reference to the Urban Age discussions, that a certain lack of clarity was demonstrated in regard to how the proposals for the majority of the sites in question should be approached. This was evident in discussing

whether the ECM provides a practical basis for future development. Thus Kings Cross, the one site that was broadly and explicitly designed to follow the ECM, attracted the most substantial criticism in practice as being “boring”, while sites including White City and the Olympics were seen as more “exciting”. Some of these debates are referenced below.

The next sections review some of the main components and challenges to the ECM. This review begins with physical design aspects; then considers process issues.

Relating to context

Contextualism is fundamental to the ECM.¹⁵ Establishing the urban structure based on detailed examination of context is an early task for ECM master planners.¹⁶ Each of the projects made implicit or explicit reference to the European City Model, with all the project presenters arguing within accepted master planning conventions that the context of the natural and built landscape was a starting point for their master planning work. At the same time there were serious divergences of opinion in relation to the role context should play in shaping master plan design, along a continuum from acceptance to outright rejection.¹⁷

At Kings Cross the response to context appeared to most closely follow an ECM approach of knitting into the fabric, as a matter of urbanist principle rather than unconstrained architectural preference.

Contextualism was seen by Kings Cross designer Graham Morrison as important to address “the problem of massive urban disconnection and blight”. At the same time, Kings Cross was criticised as providing “clichéd” urban design specifically for its contextualism.¹⁸ Similarly, at the Olympics site, Alejandro Zaera Polo described the investigations into context in considerable detail, but then showed a movement plan based on body parts (the knee) with minimal spatial reference to surrounding fabric.¹⁹ Rem Koolhaas meanwhile argued that in White City, the urban context was a very important starting point for the design but then explained that the architects’ original idea was to create a “mega structure with tentacles”. This was rejected not as uncontextual but because it was “not something that in the current development could work”.²⁰ Koolhaas and team “finally” came up with the notion of a grid as a basis for the development²¹ and described his thinking in relation to context in some detail.²²

Connectivity

The ECM generally implies the existence of walkable local neighbourhoods, within a permeable, connected grid (or grid like structure), that favours pedestrians

and public transport modes and intensifies around transport hubs and interchanges.²³ This stands in contrast to the conventional dendritic road hierarchy of modern urban planning that privileges private vehicle use over other modes. These conventional assumptions seemed to inform the views of senior transport managers (but not transport experts) in the discussion of connectivity at Urban Age. Much of the discussion about connectivity was at a macro level. Transport expert Tony Travers pointed to the need to manage demand on an overstrained transport system. It was noted that London’s transport infrastructure is vital to the economy but cannot be commercially provided. Financing issues have halted or delayed much needed major projects like Crossrail and the CRP tram. At the same time congestion and (vehicular) traffic capacity is thought to be getting worse.²⁴ Transport planners pointed out that much of the London conurbation (say three quarters) is not at ECM density and asked what should be done about that more suburban space?²⁵ It was agreed that conventional methods are no longer adequate to resolve these issues. Transport managers emerged as potential - if reluctant - adopters of ECM, perceiving a need to reshape suburban London into a more ECM-sympathetic kind of space.²⁶ In relation to specific sites like Kings Cross, “new approaches”²⁷ from the Netherlands were cited that manage driver behaviour through creating ambiguity. In line with the ECM, Herman Knoflacher suggested that the design would need to find a human scaled grid, Patricia Brown that it would need to be permeable, and Ben Plowden that it should be designed to be a “sticky” place where people come to spend time. Plowden quoted pedestrian advocate Jan Gehl to the effect that “successful cities are those where people stop, not where they keep moving”.²⁸

Approaches to the street and the public realm

In the ECM good quality public spaces are central to city life.²⁹ The ECM gives primacy to the street as a building block of city space and to pedestrians within that space.³⁰ As Peter Bishop commented, it provides public space that is “unambiguously public and actually owned by the public to give the sense of ownership to the citizen”. At least two of the four proposals seemed to underplay this fundamental ECM characteristic, with streets and public spaces appearing to be partly internalised within private or institutional building volumes, or even if remaining as outdoor space, possibly under the management control of site owners and thus not truly public.³¹ Tony Travers suggested that the 1960s development approach at Elephant and Castle (very much non-ECM) had given the area “a serious reputational problem as a not good

place to live and a not good place to spend much time".³² Southwark's police chief linked this car dominated physical design to a disproportionate level of crime both in and around the transport interchange and on the adjoining Haygate estate.³³

In line with ECM principles, Enrique Peñalosa made direct connections between great public spaces, increased human dignity and falling crime rates.³⁴ However, the proposed solutions for actual sites such as Elephant were not in line with the ECM. Instead of natural surveillance in the form of design that encourages "eyes on the street"³⁵, the emphasis was on schemes such as Securing by Design which feature comprehensive CCTV, and inaccurately termed "natural surveillance" by way of patrolling community support officers. Such schemes rely on building-in or retrofitting "defensible space" very much in the Oscar Newman/Alice Coleman mode (Newman, 1972, 1995, 1996; Coleman, 1990) for which Ravetz (1998) among others has provided a damning critique. There was limited agreement about what role public space should play. On the one hand, Julia Thrift of CABE invoked the "good public spaces of the world" as examples to consider. Broadly following the ECM, views included that public space must not be designed as an afterthought, pedestrians should have priority over vehicle traffic, the space must be flexible and have good public infrastructure, it must be well maintained and it should not be privatised. For some participants, public space design was not viewed as central to the approach. Others including Fred Manson argued that the issues were as much about social programmes as about physical design. These divergent positions remained unresolved. What was particularly striking about this discussion was how little explicit analysis there was of the social and political ideologies that led to the design of the plan of Elephant and Castle.³⁶ A more adequate explanation of what shaped post war perspectives and practices in architecture, design and planning, is necessary given the major consequences for cities resulting from such approaches (Brolin, 1976; Relph, 1987; Hall, 1992; Watkin, 2001). I argue that revived interest in the ECM is one of the results of this critique. Specifically, new plans for Elephant may repeat the faults built in by previous approaches unless there is a more profound attempt to understand and learn from the past.

Commodification of space

The ECM tends to produce neighbourhoods with many small land parcels and plots, so there is usually capacity for low value land uses to be included and maintained in the mix (Urban Design Compendium, 2000). In the London situation, where the four sites are very large, undervalued land areas; factors

including the ownership structure, the narrow range of proposed land uses, the conventional development financing processes at play and expectations of high returns, mean that there is considerably less chance of building or retaining low value uses into the redevelopment mix. As Eric Reynolds commented in relation to Spitalfields, in the process of commodification, low value uses are displaced, and areas are "packaged and boxed". To address this problem, in Kings Cross a "collective ownership" structure is being put in place in which "thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of members of the public and other investors will be able to invest".³⁷ While the ECM is based on a spatial structure of public spaces of streets and squares, in the four sites it was acknowledged that public space will be largely commodified; a result of privatisation of the public domain. An unknown speaker at Urban Age suggested that "we're now not only seeing public space being commodified by the private sector as foreign investors plough into London but we're seeing the commodification of movement space and I do think we're losing really the vision of our city as a cohesive entity if we start going down that route."³⁸

Separate versus mixed use

The ECM demonstrates a fine grain of mixed land uses, often characterising individual buildings as well as local neighbourhoods.³⁹ The separation of land uses proposed for projects such as White City and the Olympics (possibly Elephant and to a lesser degree Kings Cross), conversely, represents post war conventions of development planning by which land uses such as sporting facilities, offices, residential, and retail are provided in large, to very large, separate spatial blocks.⁴⁰ Both development economics and sustainability requirements are starting to challenge this normative position. With reference to the economics of White City, for example, Dieter Läßle pointed out the need to mix different kinds and levels of economic activity including space for low value business start ups. He noted the constraints imposed by the development approach in being able to do so. Saskia Sassen also argued for a finer social grain: "there is high quality office space, I know all of that, but it is not the kind of assemblage of multiplicities of different sub-worlds that the city actually is". Spatially separated land uses also assume that there will be few constraints on mobility. Both sustainability and economic considerations make this increasingly untenable. Bridget Rosewall challenged conventional commuting assumptions in terms of the changing nature of work while Frank Duffy pointed out the need to reconceptualise the home/work land use relationship.⁴¹ Duffy also suggested a need to change from the current highly conservative practices of

financial institutions and letting agents that assume unmixed use.⁴²

Density

In the ECM, development is normally shaped into nodes of intensification within the urban fabric, providing walkable centres, interchanges and hubs and linked by public transport connections.⁴³ Each of the four sites provides intensification in different ways but what varies between the ECM and the usual approach in urban London is the way the intensification is designed and the purposes behind the design approach.⁴⁴ One of the inherent problems faced by “big plans” (Kolson, 2002) is getting the densities right. An issue arises in trying to define future communities demographically. It is difficult to model and plan in the appropriate density of development to meet possible needs based on weak demographic profiles. The approach sits in contradiction to the ECM’s more evolutionary method.⁴⁵ Another density issue arising from the approach adopted in most of the four sites seems to derive in part from the requirement to create “exciting architecture”⁴⁶ and to plan the whole space at the same time. This requires development of certain empirically precarious proportions (the designing all at once issue) of object buildings (the exciting architecture aspect). Purpose designed buildings for “family housing” or for some other preordained land use are, due to their very specific design, awkward to retrofit. This approach does not fit easily with the ECM of developing typologies that provide much more flexible, robust and adaptable, but architecturally “invisible”⁴⁷ urban fabric.⁴⁸

Scale and grain

The ECM relies on evolutionary development of human-scaled space providing a size and proportion of urban elements with which people feel physiologically comfortable.⁴⁹ In the London situation, conversely, Ann Power touched on the issues of “the vast scale and short termism” that she said appear to be driving development planning for the conurbation. She noted a lack of focus on sharing the benefits of large urban projects such as the Olympics.⁵⁰ While large scale redevelopment space was seen to provide design opportunities⁵¹ Richard Sennett among others identified the critical relationship of smaller scale to the economic future of London.⁵² The ECM is generally antithetical to the ‘grand project’ as its genus loci is largely generated by the evolution of vernacular, contextual, traditionally built rather than designed city space over the long term. Instead of treating lost brownfield spaces as tabula rasa it has been able to introduce relatively large scale new development using the ECM as a basis. Joan Clos’s list (above) explains

the approach very clearly.⁵³ Similarly the ECM implies a fine grain of development⁵⁴ while the site design proposals demonstrate a substantially coarser grain, with certain economic, social and environmental implications. For example, Bridget Rosewall noted the requirement for proximity for economic reasons while Saskia Sassen worried that master plans like that for White City do not really deal with the “more complex assemblage of fragments that connect cities to other cities”.⁵⁵

Variety and vibrancy

Variety and vibrancy in architecture and land use in the European City Model occurs through the input of many designers and many site owners developing a human scaled urban fabric that builds up layers of use and meaning over a considerable period. Achieving a fine grain of buildings and a ground floor mix of uses at nodes is crucial to this approach.⁵⁶ In the ECM, vibrancy comes from people using space in a wide variety of ways rather than being derived from the iconic quality of architecture itself. Realizing comparable variety and vibrancy poses an inherent, structural problem for single designers master planning major sites.⁵⁷ Constraints for designers include large sites that are held in single ownership, development briefs focusing on single or few land uses, the financial need to complete large scale developments over a comparatively short time frame, and the expectation of quickly realised, maximum returns that drive out low value but ‘vibrant’ land uses. Assumptions that each building should be purpose designed for a single land use (office, retail, housing) can also negatively contribute.⁵⁸ Only Kings Cross stood out as identifying the need to build in ‘dominant uses’ at ground floor level in order to ensure a degree of vibrancy in the new development area.

While the ECM creates variety in part by developing space over time, the rapidity of the proposed approach is likely to create variety issues because of its pace. As Ricky Burdett commented “We are actually looking at four big holes in London and they are about to change...at a pace that is frightening...I think from an architectural and urban design point of view one needs to understand how you manage that pace and how you build within the grain of the city”.

Social exclusion

A characteristic of the European City Model is support for small scale, local social and economic activity.⁵⁹ Conference participants described in some detail London’s complex geography of exclusion, the relationship of social exclusion to continued growth, its ethnic composition, and its apparent intractability in areas abutting London’s extraordinarily rich

financial centres.⁶⁰ Each of the projects has an explicit remit to address social exclusion as part of the redevelopment process and agreed with the need to generate the social and economic inclusion of surrounding deprived communities. However, ECM challengers in particular were unable to demonstrate how this could be achieved through such major redevelopments when the focus is predominantly on sporting facilities, or high-end office accommodation and attendant retail and services for highly skilled employees. Even where there is a component of affordable housing included in the proposals shown, local jobs are, in these circumstances, likely to comprise low paid cleaning and other service functions. These are jobs more likely to be attractive to new immigrants prepared to accept low pay and conditions than are longer established communities. As Peter Bishop noted in relation to White City, this is also a psychological issue. In this case on either side of the redevelopment site lie two of the most excluded housing estates in London. Apart from the problems of mending the physical separation caused by the site's complex relationship to its location, his unanswered question was how to integrate the new areas so that local people felt that they had social and economic opportunities opened up through the site's development.⁶¹

Consultation

While the ECM does not necessarily imply local community engagement, it is likely to emerge within the ECM context given its fine grained spatial, social and economic character. Conversely, large scale projects tend to provoke oppositional social movements, especially where they are allied with master planners who prefer to be unfettered by constraints on their design vision and authority. None of the redevelopment processes rejected local input categorically but it was in most cases seen as reactive rather than determining the form or function of new spaces. It is useful to analyse what the notion of consultation encompassed, where and when consultation fitted into the process, and how views were then taken into account in design development. Some of the four sites noted consultation as part of the process but none seem to have met best practice standards.⁶² Thus the Olympics planning process at Stratford (as an example) appeared to demonstrate some typical shortcomings. No ongoing engagement structures were described or capacity building processes noted, and there seemed to be little relationship between the consultees' expressed long term aspirations and the priorities and proposals set out at Urban Age.⁶³ In terms of design results from consultation, while the need to build communities in from the edges of the existing urban fabric was

acknowledged, this did not seem to be reflected in the drawn programme.

Community

What constitutes 'community' is a tricky topic but Joan Clos's ECM list provides some clues about what might contribute to well functioning neighbourhoods. The ECM suggests that, however defined, communities require walkable, local neighbourhoods with catchments defined for a number of key services and activities.⁶⁴

Urban Age presented challenges to the ECM in relation to notions of community. The most serious criticism at Urban Age was that designers in the ECM mode are attempting to force a cloying version of community on to development sites in order to give them an immediate and positive identity. Proposals which evinced no interest in community were congratulated.⁶⁵ Conversely, design in the ECM mode it was implied conjures up an unrealistically cohesive aesthetic and physical form.⁶⁶ However, it is at least questionable that creating the physical conditions in which walkable neighbourhoods can develop necessarily implies an attendant claustrophobia. Should design that ignores the aspirations of surrounding neighbourhoods be celebrated or condemned? In any case, as Ian Gordon commented, "we shouldn't expect too much from even big and well designed projects. They are not going to produce the great social secret that we need".

Government and governance: new partnerships of power

Large scale urban design and architecture bring to the surface some difficult questions about government and governance. Although the declining role of nation states⁶⁷ and changing forms of urban governance have been identified and analysed at least since the early 1990s, the issues are still live. Most of the areas of debate between the ECM and its challengers covered in this paper relate to aspects of physical form rather than governance processes. But it is worth asking: who benefits and who loses out in design terms from these debates about managing the city? To explore that we need to examine the power relations that lie behind these contestations over urban form.

Tony Travers rightly noted the key role city government must now play in dealing with the new kinds of problems facing cities like London. He argued that these require "mayors and city leaders to think of innovative solutions here and in other cities in advance of their national governments which are often doing things which are significantly at variance to the needs of the cities, creating problems for those cities, which the city leaders then have to cope with".⁶⁸

As Gerard Frug suggested, concerns about social inclusion tend to be overshadowed by the requirements of economic globalisation⁶⁹ and this state of affairs is revealing about the unequal and exclusionary urban decision-making structures being employed.⁷⁰ In particular Frug considered the word partnership to be rather misleading; implying openness and inclusivity but in reality creating public deference toward business decision making.⁷¹ If Frug is right, what role, if any, should architecture play in such debatable partnerships?

The role of architecture

To understand architecture's role it is necessary to avoid confusion between architecture and urban design, or to imply they are the same thing.⁷² Urban design is not concerned with the architectural design of individual buildings nor is architecture concerned with the design of city space. However, the terms (and the practices they refer to) were used interchangeably in discussions throughout Urban Age. Leslie Sklair provides an analysis that may help to make architecture's role clearer. Sklair refers to the transformation in the production, marketing and reception of iconic architecture (he includes city space design in his definition of architecture) as one of the consequences of capitalist globalisation.⁷³ Sklair suggests that pre-1950s most iconic architecture was driven by state or religious interests whereas in the "era of capitalist globalisation the dominant force driving iconic architecture is the transnational capitalist class" (2005: 485). Sklair defines four fractions of this class (the TCC) relevant to architecture including the corporate, state, technical and consumerist fractions.⁷⁴

A relevant point about these TCC fractions in the context of the Urban Age is the degree of "intra-class mobility" at play as members moved from one fraction to another in what Sklair terms the "revolving door" effect. So for example there is substantial mobility between business, academia and the state. Among those managing, and invited to take part in, the Urban Age process, "many leading architects are simultaneously practitioners, professors and agents of the state at various levels" (2005: 486). A telling aspect of Sklair's conceptualisation is that design of urban spaces is defined as part of architecture rather than of urban design or planning. This may reflect the way architectural practice has blurred the distinction between design of buildings and the design of urban space. This extension of the role of architects, from the design of individual buildings however iconic, to "revolving door" appointments as master planners and advisors to political leaders and bureaucrats, is important. Given Sklair's analysis of architecture's role

in global capitalism, its largely uncontested claim for expertise and authority in wider city space design, is a key *governance* process underway in the urban age. It also has consequences for the alternative approach represented by the European City Model.

A future for the European City Model?

The discussions at Urban Age suggest an uncertain future for the European City Model in London, at least in relation to developing large scale, master planned spaces. Although it was argued by John Ellis that there is a need the four sites "to be considered now as part of urban fabric and not as separate enclaves", architects at Urban Age could be seen from their drawings and statements to be largely operating within a Corbusian paradigm of city space.⁷⁵ They appeared generally unsympathetic to the European City Model as a method for form giving. Rather, they seemed interested in composing groupings of object buildings that would represent iconic architecture.⁷⁶ The Kings Cross plan, broadly following the ECM, was strongly criticised for taking another, more contextual approach. Given non-ECM dominance in urban space design, and architects' key roles as master planners and government advisors, their views have significant implications for how major parts of London space is likely to be shaped in future. Thus, the partial or more complete rejection of the European City Model evident at Urban Age has important spatial and governance consequences, which I suggest need to be more carefully examined. This is not to say that the ECM should be applied without thought. In his background paper to the conference, Joan Clos argued that we need to avoid the "unconsidered and standardised repetition" of European City Model characteristics as "some of the features we now value such as density, without quality urban design and a mix of incompatible uses... have led in the past to situations of deep crisis in the city and can do so again in future". Ricky Burdett similarly asked how to maintain the London that is a "messy organic structure... London [as] a glorious mess?"

In my view the answer is not to condone the ECM in theory and reject it in practice. Improved processes are needed to bring clarity to the future urban design of London: both in spatial terms and in relation to urban governance. James Surowiecki (2004) has argued that widening out participation in decision making processes improves the quality of the results. If Gerard Frug is right in arguing the need to revive public decision making processes, then a powerful structure like Urban Age might benefit from becoming more inclusive, open and transparent 'partnership' through broader participation and appraisal to bring in those outside the transnational

capitalist class. Lefebvre (1991) has noted that space is not just an arena for conflict but forms part of the stakes over which conflict takes place. In London these are high stakes indeed. I suggest that the urban theory and policy outcomes of a truly inclusive Urban Age would be at once more democratic, and yield more valuable results, than any differences at the margins among a carefully selected in-group can provide.

Bibliography

ⁱ For example Castells (2000: ix) suggests that in what is fast becoming a predominantly urban world “the predominant form of urbanisation is large scale metropolitan areas that link with their surrounding hinterland over vast territory”.

ⁱⁱ Hall (1992) has documented how public space decline has been represented among other trends, through exclusionary zoning and car dependent design.

³ For Bogota, more than to conserve [its environment] is to avoid our city becoming a city for cars and shopping malls. A city, as [in] all developing countries’ cities, which are becoming cities not of public space but of shopping malls which are means not to get really protection from the weather but a means to exclude the poor from getting close to the upper income people. A city of gated communities and American like suburbs and it’s a very big danger because here we are talking about the European city model but we have 20 daily flights to Miami and only a few eccentrics go to the Netherlands”.

⁴ From urban design and architecture theorists who are broadly sympathetic to the ECM include Sitte (trans. 1945); Zucker (1959); Lynch (1961, 1985); Cullen (1971); Alexander et al (1977, 1987); Krier (1979); Barnett (1992); Bacon (1982); Ashihara (1983); Gosling and Maitland (1984); Greenbie (1984); Hillier and Hanson (1984); Bentley et al (1985); Trancik (1986); Gehl (1987); Broadbent (1990); Tibbalds (1992); Moughtin (1992,1996); Jacobs (1993); Hayward and McGlynn (1993); Hillier (1996); Rowland (1997); Madanipour (1996, 2003), Bentley (1999) and Soloman (2003). From related disciplines such as urban history, morphology, geography and environmental studies, theorists sympathetic to the CCM/ECM include Benevolo (1980); Hough (1984, 1990); Girouard (1985); Hanson (1989); Elkin (1991); Kostof (1991, 1992); Whitehand (1992); Morris (1994); Jenks et al (1996); Kunstler (1996, 2004); and Stren, White and Whitney (2000).

⁵ According the Urban Age London Bulletin (2005), these are “to develop dense and vibrant urban neighbourhoods with a social mix and a variety of housing sizes, building typologies and tenure types”.

⁶ Joan Clos noted the difficulty of speaking of a standard European model of the city “if we take into account the diversity of the continent’s cities, especially in terms of their respective traditions, whether Anglo-Saxon, Central European, Nordic or Mediterranean”. However, he went on to point out that “we can extract a set of common characteristics that are present in all these cities, and which define a similar way of understanding the city”.

⁷ Joan Clos in *London: Europe’s Global City?* (2005).

⁸ On distinctiveness, Simon Jenkins asked: “What is it about their city that is its unique selling proposition? What is it about it’s city, the heritage, the past, the old quarters of the city, the attractive quarters of the city, the red light quarters of the city that see from our experience nowadays to be the things that most attract newcomers to that city, newcomers from abroad and newcomers from the surrounding countryside. These are the qualities that I believe have made London the city that it is”.

⁹ Nicky Gavron suggested a key part of London’s distinctiveness rested in the diversity of its cultures, with over 300 languages spoken.

¹⁰ Simon Jenkins asked: “What was it in London that was the good time? It was not St Paul’s Cathedral, it was not the Tower of London, it was Camden Town, Covent Garden, Brick Lane, Hoxton, it was the nightclubs, the nightlife, the sense of funky... [words missing from transcript] that was rooted in the old buildings of that area. In other words someone sometime had to say we’re not going to destroy Covent Garden. At one point the whole of Covent Garden was going to be flattened so there is a link I think between a good time and planning policy”. Nicky Gavron also suggested that it was an important role for London government “to make sure that [London’s diverse] cultures are able to celebrate their distinctiveness, so more and more festivals, more and more restaurants, more and more different kinds of experiences.” And Tony Travers noted, as part of London’s appeal, “the fact that more than many other cities, there is a slight sense of a carnival on the edge of frenzy about the place.”

¹¹ Joan Clos said that “during the last 400 years we have built up a culture which is proper for Barcelona and nobody else can substitute that. Cities seen from [above], from a satellite, tend to look very similar but when you go to Barcelona you will find out that Catalans do exist, that we have traditions which are ours, like the Feast with Fires, and one of the interesting things with globalisation and changing of the construction of [the] modern city is how the new people who arrive in the city get involved in these ideas that fly around the people of the city”.

¹² A number of speakers commented on the role played by food and feasting in the vitality and conviviality of their cities. Although not explicitly referenced within the discussion, the role of food in reinforcing urban identity and conviviality can be traced back to the sociologist Norbert Elias (1982) and is documented in my previous research on gastronomy and urban form (Parham: 1992, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2005).

¹³ “One specific thing which is very peculiar, at least we feel it is very important for us, is the concept of feasts in public spaces. As a Mediterranean city we have through all the calendar let's say 25/30 times a year where you know all the city is on the street, it can be during the day or during the night it depends on the feast. If you go from the Day of the Rose and the Book, which is Saint Jordi's day you will see all the city outside in the street doing the same thing and that creates a sense of unity which we try to conduct as a way also to integrate people on that but if I would say what is the most important singularity of Barcelona, the most important singularity of Barcelona is that Barcelona is the capital of the Catalan culture”.

¹⁴ Architects emerged as the strongest explicit opponents of the ECM. A variety of sources for their opposition may be suggested. Among these are the focus of architectural education and criticism on the creative design of the object building within the spaces of supermodernity; a fascination with the architectural possibilities perceived within dystopia and urban fracture; the emergence of “Starchitecture”; the modernist ideological underpinnings of the avant garde within a Corbusian model of urban form; and the role of architects as brand providers for cities and international

capital. Foster (2002) has a fascinating discussion of these issues.

¹⁵ See for instance discussion on “appreciating the context” in the Urban Design Compendium (2000).

¹⁶ The Urban Design Compendium (2000: 19) argues for the need to “work with landscape”. Master planners should seek to design “places that strike a balance between the natural and manmade environment and utilise each site's intrinsic resources - the climate, landform, landscape and ecology to maximise energy conservation and amenity”.

¹⁷ So for example contextualism troubled Hashim Sarkis: “my last question has to do with are we able to constantly rely on the externalities of the city as form giver, are they enough to generate the specificity that we seek as designers?”

¹⁸ Nigel Coates commented that “it goes for blocks and boulevards and trees and niceness and tries to knit it into the rest of the city which I think even in itself is not necessarily a good thing. We saw Rem doing it yesterday, you know connect the local roads, make squares and boulevards and all that. I think it should be much more body like, much more layered, much more to do with the fibrous muscular quality of the railway lines and should institute a certain looseness to the way the city is developed so that instead of just being clichéd in its expression of architecture, expecting architecture just to wrap basically indeterminate forms”.

¹⁹ Alejandro Zaera Polo also continued the analogy to the human body in relation to the proposed buildings, saying that: “the buildings are no longer objects sitting on a sanitised platform but on the contrary they are emerging, they are also like those muscles under the skin of the body, bulging out of the landscape”.

²⁰ All comments from transcript of White City discussion.

²¹ Thus: “Perhaps it's shocking for our office to kind of produce such a kind of seamless project and such a kind of urbanistic project. For us it was kind of really interesting to try and to create a section of London that looked fragmented as London does and that has the kind of intricate and eccentric connections that London does and

that actually is divided in two parts, one section which is kind of purely the project, where the project is on its own, so to speak, and on Wood Lane facing the existing city, a series of objects that kind of relate and resonate with the existing situation”.

²² I find it kind of really completely surprising that the project is kind of seen as a contribution to chaos because I think really anyone come seeing the kind of all view must see that there is a kind of simultaneous commitment to rigor and to incident in the whole thing...I think it, the site is charged enough and kind of has a sufficiently compelling context to be, import influence by this context but I think the project and starting with the grid in itself was you know perhaps proof of how we kind of started with sameness and how to project is in our view and quite deliberately an[d] independent statement based on a strong analytical coherence but inflected by context on all sides for kind of reasonably, logical and compelling reasons”.

²³ So for example the Urban Taskforce Report (1999: 54) argues that “to be truly sustainable, the different elements of the town or city - the local community, the neighbourhood and district - ought to be well connected to each other through a network of public routes and streets”.

²⁴ From a ‘conventional’ viewpoint for example Peter Hendy argued: “Congestion is actually getting worse, journey times are getting longer and actually what we're showing is that the traffic capacity of the major roads has actually declined slightly because of interventions like more traffic signals and pedestrian crossings and actually all that traffic is going on the minor road network which we don't measure which accounts for the phenomenon of people wanting traffic calming in their own street but not in anybody's else's because that's how they drive where they're going”.

²⁵ Peter Hendy also proposed some answers: “We need more [bus] priority despite the road space that it takes and that will provide some answer. Management of the road network on a more comprehensive and holistic basis will provide another including the provision of better public space and a bit of public art to humanise things like the A13. A more radical approach is managing travel demand in this age of information technology by better personal

information, personalised travel planning, workplace travel planning, to persuade people to either walk, cycle or use other modes than the car.”

²⁶ Peter Hendy argued that “We actually for a public transport person it may sound perverse, but we need to plan for less movement or at least more local movement, greater density, greater development of public transport nodes, less out of town locations of work places, shopping, schools and hospitals.”

²⁷ Such designs are modelled on traditional spatial arrangements within the ECM street.

²⁸ Ben Plowden also noted the macro “importance of transport in underpinning and driving the pattern and extent of social economic development in cities but also the micro scale in terms of how the infrastructure of and the movement generated by transport interacts with surrounding urban environment, both physically and socially”.

²⁹ The Urban Design Compendium (2000: 86, 99-104) argues for “positive outdoor space” in a “thriving public realm” with design that “contributes to the public domain - encouraging people to meet, talk and linger”.

³⁰ Gehl's (2004) work for TfL on designing pedestrian friendly space in London is a relevant example.

³¹ Such an approach has become ubiquitous in large redevelopment spaces. An Urban Age speaker described being thrown out of Canary Wharf's ‘public space’ by security guards, while the ‘private property’ signs outside City Hall were also mentioned in the discussions. The status of public spaces was at least blurred or ambiguous in the drawings shown of White City and the Olympics site. It was unclear in relation to Elephant and Castle but addressed as an issue by designers speaking about the approach taken at Kings Cross, although whether the actual spaces will match their aspirations is unclear.

³² Transcript of Urban Age's discussion of Elephant and Castle.

³³ Ian Thomas argued that crime was “Very disproportionate to the geographic area that it covers and we would see that the actual environment of the Elephant & Castle, you’ve seen from the photograph two big roundabouts, very focussed on cars, it forces the public to walk in subways under the two roundabouts, fairly poorly lit in some areas and with a main railway station which services London, again which are fairly poor, dark, dingy old environments and again a similar map showing assaults”. Thomas also cited the lack of bus conductors as a contributing factor in increased bus crime at Elephant, a view that sits in contradiction to the assurances by TfL’s Peter Hendy of the increased efficiency of buses in London since Routemasters (with their conductors) were abandoned.

³⁴ Enrique Peñalosa noted that that “it seems that the theme of this talk is the importance of public and pedestrian space and maybe if we could create great public pedestrian space....this [could] stimulate safety”.

³⁵ Richard Sennett commented that “New York City had made a disastrous commitment to housing poor people in elevated serviced apartment buildings with nice lawns around them and the more of these structures they built the more crime friendly the architecture became. In the 80s following a lead from Jane Jacobs we tried first of all to reduce obviously the heights so that no public housing would be serviced by elevators and second and more importantly we tried to restore the street wall so that anybody from looking out of from their apartment could see what was happening on the street, that is we got rid of all setbacks and this proved somewhat successful. I mean it’s not course an effect as you know but the principle of it was that what you call natural surveillance was the most important thing you could do in the poor areas. We don’t have CCTV cameras, it’s not something we have as a technology but this natural surveillance, the moving of buildings forward and lowering them seemed to have a real effect on what was going on in the street”. Sennett, it could be argued, actually described retrofitting a more ECM spatial arrangement from an existing “towers in a green park” Corbusian development form.

³⁶ Julia Thrift: “I would agree with Fred from the little I know, that they weren’t malicious people, they were trying

to make London better and one of them said people will come here to watch the traffic and I think you can sort of think your way back into the Fifties and see where they might have been coming from but if you go to the Elephant now the reason you want to leave is the traffic”.

³⁷ Roger Madelin argued that other areas in London showed what could otherwise go wrong. Covent Garden for example was “becoming very internationalised because the pressure of commerce, individual ownership and strength of leases is bringing in the international names and the sameness”. At Kings Cross he said “Private spaces will not be private, they will be managed in a partnership, sorry to use that word, with the public agencies in a very democratic, open and transparent way”.

³⁸ Nicholas Serota also commented on the privatisation of public space: “the thing that worries me most about King’s Cross is the fact that it appears to be coming in certain senses a private domain rather than any part of the city that belongs to everyone”.

³⁹ *Shaping Neighbourhoods* (2003: 194) argues for mixed use as a way to “reintegrate neighbourhoods sterilised by over half a century of zoning policies”. The *Urban Design Compendium* (2000: 41) notes that compatibility between uses to “maximise synergy, minimise conflict” is important too.

⁴⁰ Joan Clos noted that while “social segregation and specialisation are spontaneous trends that come about with a view to improving efficiency, this gives rise to spatial segregation which is supported by people simply expecting the car to solve all their mobility problems. In the long run, this zoned approach to the city, which for a certain time was useful for production, generally brings about strong restrictions to a city’s economic and social efficiency. Accordingly, we must seek different models of organisation”.

⁴¹ Frank Duffy noted that Taylorist models will become less and less useful in planning work space. In his view, the separation of land uses that is assumed by a ‘commute to the office’ model embedded in projects like White City will not hold in future.

⁴² Frank Duffy argued: “So this situation is not just physical, it is also about the process, the process by which offices have been funded, procured, built, let are also under question at this moment and I think we should take that into account when examining projects of this kind...I am not convinced by the urbanistic proposition, I’m not sure that the building blocks, the towers, the HQs, the doughnuts are, will not somehow degenerate under the pressure from these institutions, these financial institutions, these developers etc into conventional ordinary office buildings separated from other uses in the classical way”.

⁴³ The Compendium (2000: 47-48) suggests varying the density profile within “the higher density levels which sustain urban life” and argues that “in many urban situations, medium rise, high density buildings (of about 3-4 storeys) in general provide an optimum form that maximise density whilst minimising perceived intensity or overcrowding”.

⁴⁴ Tony Travers pointed out that if the outcome of a site like Kings Cross was to look “alien” to the typically London look of the area round it - “It looks very big and very dense and not like the tree lined chaos beyond it” - that was a result of government policy to ramp up densities in order to pay for transport nodes and affordable housing.

⁴⁵ For example many European cities have redeveloped areas using medium rise fabric focusing on nodes (with the occasional ‘object’ building as appropriate) but largely comprising perimeter block/terraced building typologies which are fine grained and flexible enough to be adapted for many kinds of residential and other land uses from houses taking up whole buildings to offices, shops, cafes, duplexes, studio apartments etc within the same spaces. These are able to absorb shifting densities in a robust way.

⁴⁶ Rem Koolhaas described exciting architecture as a requirement of the brief in relation to White City and Nigel Coates referred to it in relation to Kings Cross.

⁴⁷ Peter Drijver, director of Scala Architects in the Netherlands, argues that the aim is to “create architecture that is more invisible as an object” (CEU Berlin Congress Rapporteur’s Report, 2005: 6)

⁴⁸ Jason Prior of the Olympics design team did acknowledge this fundamental uncertainty about the relationship between density and future population in saying that “What I think is essential to this process is to create a mechanism by which we can put the core infrastructure in and then have a method of analysing and modifying the plans as they come forward to respond to the nature of the communities that will develop here over the next 20 years”. However this view was not reflected in the drawings shown for the site’s design.

⁴⁹ In public space this refers for instance to positive and negative space and degrees of enclosure in the outdoor room (Trancik, 1986). As the Urban Design Compendium (2000, 87) argues “Open space should be designed positively with clear definition and enclosure”.

⁵⁰ Ann Power: “you’ll notice in the presentations that you get, very rarely in the big plans, any mention of how you actually bring around and within existing communities”.

⁵¹ In relation to the connection between design opportunities, scale and context Rem Koolhaas suggested on White City: “I think what is beautiful about the site is that it has both an enormous scale but a limited depth and therefore it will always be part of the city, be permeated by the city and kind of related to the city in a very direct and inevitable manner, and I think that that enables us to really think of it and with working within a very abstract repertoire of volumes in ways which I don’t think only optically suggest richness or fragmentation but actually produce a kind of real fragmentation which is perhaps most generated by an engagement with every single remnant or element that its infrastructure need to be or potential does exist there or neighbourhood or neighbourship (sic) such as the BBC”.

⁵² In regard to White City: “I’ve just observed that I think the connection between the visual and the economic here is very provoking because if the world...described is in fact the future of jobs in London then a project like this has to have lots of small scale different sized, different shaped objects, it is the only way that it can intersect with what’s growing in the economy and I think the challenge that Rem’s team faces is how to create more fragmentation when you get a site of this size. Building more big blocks of form doesn’t provide

the kind of architecture that enables London to benefit from what's happening in modern capitalism".

⁵³ It was interesting therefore to hear Rem Koolhaas say about London that: "Its current vitality and it's indestructible authenticity seem to represent the definitive rebuke to the dubious charms of the [grand project] and this was a painful realisation and statement given that we were asked almost two weeks later to do what on any terms accept the language, has to be a [grand project]".

⁵⁴ Grain refers to "the way in which the various different elements of a settlement are mixed together in space" (Lynch, 1981).

⁵⁵ Sassen pointed out that an emerging aspect of urbanity is "made up of the fragments that are located on global surfeits, that can be immigrant communities whose households are defragmented, trans-national but can be financial centres which are deeply connected to other such fragments in other cities".

⁵⁶ Unpublished research findings by Stockholm's Ax:son Johnson Foundation reported on at the symposium "Good Mixed Use for the 21st Century" (2004) suggest that a high degree of connectivity and the availability of small affordable land units at street level are crucial for thriving centres. Space syntax analysis tends to reinforce this view.

⁵⁷ Nigel Coates commented that "in the context of the discussions we're having around these four sites I have to say that I don't really have great hopes for any of them and that's because it seems to me that when dealing with very large parts of the city it is extremely difficult to give it some of the qualities that we expect of the rest of the city. In other words Soho, Covent Garden, these parts of the city are successful because they have stories woven into them, because they have layers of complexity, it seems that architects find it very difficult to actually put there".

⁵⁸ Hashim Sarkis perhaps unintentionally identified this issue of the structural difficulty of one designer building in variety when he commented that: "Not only are we asked as designers to provide forms that have to be amenable to housing, retail, office but also to a mixture and preferably to

several iterations of this mixture over an extended period of time, so if one formula doesn't work another could".

⁵⁹ This can be reflected in public policy at metropolitan scale. In the UK, a recent House of Commons All Party Group on Small Shops report (2006) has predicted that the local shop may become extinct in 10 years. In Paris, the Mayor, Bertrand Delanoë, is providing financial and other support to maintain the viability of small local shops and thus it is argued local economic and social character.

⁶⁰ Tony Travers noted that while London is still growing, this is largely as a result of very high rates of immigration into London of residents from overseas. Meanwhile, Londoners are themselves moving out of London, contributing to a city which remains as one of the dominant global financial centres, but is at once a very rich and very poor place. Tony Travers pointed to the significant, long term and apparently intractable concentration of poverty in London's inner East, paradoxically abutting one of the richest financial centres in the world. Ann Power showed concentrations of ethnicity allied to such deprived areas. Anthony Mayer asked "how can the poor compete in a global, increasingly knowledge based, economy?" Sophie Body-Gendrot meanwhile noted the urban consequences of social exclusion already being played out in France's cities.

⁶¹ Peter Bishop asked "How do we get people to adopt these areas as their own territory, as their own turf and feel comfortable about moving into them? What are the mechanisms to persuade people that apart from the physical barriers, the sense of territory and turf can be overcome?"

⁶² For example it is now accepted among engagement practitioners that 'one off' consultation with stakeholders is not sufficient. Approaches that do not go beyond information provision may even be counterproductive. Consultation should normally be replaced by an ongoing process of stakeholder engagement that begins before design decisions have been made, brings stakeholders into the design process, builds the capacity (ie social capital) of the community, continues over the long term and encourages experts to challenge their own assumptions of superior expertise and decision making authority (CAG Consultants: 2004).

⁶³ Jason Prior noted that he was told by local people “it’s all a very interesting idea and wouldn’t it be wonderful but what happens afterwards, what is it that makes this place special for the existing communities and those that will follow. The prime questions I would also get in those consultation events would be about education, quality of jobs, quality of housing, safe environment”

⁶⁴ The Urban Taskforce Report (1999) includes a model of the spatial structure and size of a well functioning local neighbourhood while work by Barton et al (2000) suggests communities are best able to grow in similarly shaped spaces.

⁶⁵ Hashim Sarkis said in relation to White City for example that “What I found intriguing about the presentation of the project is that there is absolutely no pretension that [the] kind of claustrophobic confines of an interiorised community will happen”.

⁶⁶ Hashim Sarkis said “In many ways and particularly in the United States this [desire to create identity] has led to a misunderstanding by designers that have proliferated different forms of images that show a community, that the people who work there live there, are happy there, are buying things there and flying their balloons there etc”.

⁶⁷ Issues include the crisis of the legitimacy of the state and the so called “democratic deficit”. In fact, lack of confidence is being expressed at all levels of government. For example, Tony Travers noted that new decision making structures such as LSPs (Local Strategic Partnerships) have been created by national government in the UK intentionally to bypass local government.

⁶⁸ These issues are not just UK wide. They were explored in the OECD’s work in the mid 1990s in its project documented in *Innovative Policies for Sustainable Urban Development* (1996) and in *The Reform of Metropolitan Governance* (2000).

⁶⁹ Gerard Frug commented that “there’s always a lot of concern expressed right at the beginning [of guidance documents] about social exclusion, poverty and affordability and equality but given the current decision making structure

building a structure on these concerns takes a back seat to building a globalised building environment”

⁷⁰ As Frug noted, “Nowadays government has gone out of fashion. It’s been replaced with words like governance along with public/private partnerships, stakeholders and urban development corporations”. But partnerships are not equal - who is a stakeholder? who excluded?”

⁷¹ “The word partnership is a big feelgood quality but partnership is a businessman’s word. It suggests a world without politics. In the business world we don’t have local conflict, we have co-operation. We’re all on the same team, working together on our common objectives because we need each other. The government can’t possibly finance the infrastructure and development it needs and the private sector can at best in major projects without the co-operation of the government. This structure produces public deference to business decision making in the hopes that business decision making will become more public spirited. The public becomes more private and the private is expected to be more public. This merger has become attractive because both sides share a common idea of the city’s future. The goal is gentrification. We should say it frankly. If property values and disadvantaged neighbourhoods go up our policy is working”.

⁷² As demonstrated in Gerard Frug’s comment that “I want to talk today about the most significant crisis in current urban design. It lies not in our ability to design innovative buildings but our inability to design a good mechanism for decision making about what to build. The architects are away ahead of the lawyers, political scientists and politicians in their creativity and their ability to think through design problems”.

⁷³ Sklair (2005: 485) defines iconic architecture as the “buildings and spaces that are (1) famous for professional architects and/or the public at large and (2) have special symbolic/aesthetic significance attached to them. Architects can also be iconic in these senses”.

⁷⁴ Sklair (2005: 486) argues that the four class fractions work as follows: “1. Those who own and /or control the major transnational corporations and their local affiliates

(corporate fraction) - this includes major architectural firms whose “importance for the built environment and their cultural importance, especially in cities, far outweigh their relative lack of financial and corporate muscle.

2. Globalising politicians and bureaucrats (state fraction) - those who “decide what gets built where.

3. Globalising professionals (technical fraction) - ranging from those who provide technical services through to educators; and 4. Merchants and media (consumerist fraction) - those who market and consume architectural products”.

⁷⁵ This is often referred to as the towers in green parks approach.

⁷⁶ Simon Jenkins implicitly identified some of the architectural aspects of challenges to the European City model when he said that “it is perhaps symbolic that we've invited you today to probably the place in London which least reflects what I regard as historic London and is on its way to being a series of gigantic glass blobs with a couple of icons, Tower Bridge and Tower of London lost in the middle of them. This to my mind is significant”.

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