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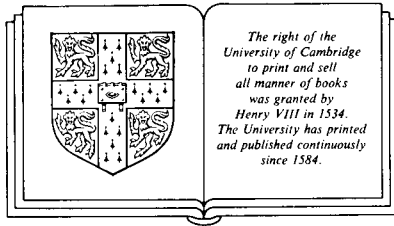
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# LAND USE PLANNING AND THE MEDIATION OF URBAN CHANGE

*The British Planning System in Practice*

PATSY HEALEY, PAUL McNAMARA,  
MARTIN ELSON and ANDREW DOAK



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To Clare, Gill and Mandy  
who also lived with it

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## *Preface*

This book offers an *account* of how the British planning system has been put to work during the period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Through such an account, we seek to examine the way the system operates in relation to specific issues and interests relating to land, buildings, location and environment in particular places at particular times. We also attempt to illustrate how the system has been adapted to the changing priorities of national and local government, and the reconstitution of demands and needs for land and development consequent upon economic and political change.

The need for such an account arises in part from the recognition that the principles which have sustained the planning system since the war have been progressively undermined. Such a loss of confidence, of course, is not merely a problem for the planning system. All areas of public policy in Britain have been subjected to critical questioning in recent years. One reason for this is the shock waves generated throughout the political and administrative arena by the *new right* reforming zeal of the Thatcher administration. But the challenge to the principles and practices of the postwar Welfare State is part of a wider and international political response to major crises in the economic sphere. The restructuring of manufacturing industry has undermined once strong industrial conurbations, while generating demands for new forms of commercial and industrial activity in different locations. The search for profitable investment within the international financial sphere has also had uneven impacts on the flow of investment into land and property in different parts of Britain. Changes in the workplace, combined with changes in family structure and cultural communities, have encouraged new and varied political demands.

Many have argued that the period since the late 1960s has marked the end of the long postwar boom of economic development in the western world. Fuelled by microelectronic technology, a new disposition of economic forces is arising in response to the crises of the previous period (Hall 1985). The political responses to these international changes vary across

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countries, but generally there has been a marked shift from Keynesian demand-side strategies, which focus attention on promoting economic expansion through increasing the capacity to consume, to strategies which are dominated by support for production and capital accumulation in various forms (Harvey 1985).

For land use planning in Britain, this means that the long-established values of amenity, of improving the quality of life as reflected in the design, facilities and spatial arrangement of the environment, co-exist uneasily with pressures for fewer restrictions on the location and design of new commercial, industrial and other projects. We will show, however, that the problem of accommodating economic and environmental interests within the planning system is not a new one. Land use planning has always had to balance the often conflicting demands of economic interests and those concerned with the quality of the environment. An important issue for this book, therefore, is whether the system has the flexibility to adapt to new circumstances and the demands these bring, or whether it acts as a constraint on the spatial transformations demanded by economic and political change.

It is necessary to locate the planning system within the context of the economic and political changes experienced in the current period of economic restructuring, political realignment and pressures for spatial change. In doing this the text is offered as an *interpretation* as well as an account. Central to our interpretation is the identification of land use planning as a programme of state intervention in the management of land use and environmental change. We emphasise the impact of economic forces and socio-cultural values on the construction of both the national programme and policies for land use planning, and the local realisation of the system. We also stress how these affect the politics surrounding the instruments and institutional arrangements for planning, both generally and in the way they operate in different places.

Our key analytical tools are the identification of *interests-in-land*, its use and development, and of the *processes* through which such interests are mediated within the institutional arrangements of the planning system. We also recognise the complex interrelations of policy and action, intention and decision which characterise any policy programme. These warn us against simplistic assumptions that policies are defined in plans and then implemented. Our interpretation is underpinned with an ethical orientation towards the distributive dimensions of the processes and outcomes of the planning system, and towards improving the way policies for the management of land use change are formulated and implemented.

We hope this book will prove useful to several audiences. The social science community should find a more firmly grounded account, both

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conceptually and empirically, than the literature available to date on the planning system. Within the field of policy analysis, we offer an account of land use policy which takes an institutional approach located within a political economy framework. As a contribution to planning theory, we provide a social-theoretical and empirically-based foundation upon which a more robust debate on the nature of planning methods and expertise can be based, and one which explicitly relates context, substance and process. Finally, for planning practice in Britain, an evaluation of how the system has worked should provide a sound basis upon which policy-makers may evaluate ideas for change. For those involved in day-to-day issues in particular places, we provide an approach to understanding the wider significance of locally observed events which we hope will contribute to a more knowledgeable and effective practice.

This study could not have been carried out without the Department of the Environment nor the local authorities with whom we worked on the case studies. We have greatly valued the collaborative way in which both allowed the research to develop. Our several criticisms of central government and the Department in no way detract from our appreciation of the imagination and support given by them to the research upon which this book is founded. Although individual civil servants are normally hidden within the rules of bureaucratic anonymity, we feel Robin Mabey deserves particular recognition. Our thanks also go to the former Greater Manchester and West Midlands County Councils, Staffordshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Counties, and to the following Districts: Manchester, Salford, Bolton, Walsall, Birmingham, Solihull, South Staffordshire, Cherwell, Wokingham and High Wycombe. We would also like to thank all those firms and pressure groups who have spared their members' time to work with us. Liz Hill, Vince Nadin, Sheila Terry, Glenn Watson and Paul White provided invaluable and perceptive assistance in the fieldwork for our case studies. A great many people have contributed through discussion and criticism to the ideas developed in this book, but we would like in particular to mention Sue Barrett, Alan Hooper, Maarten Hajer, Ted Kitchen, Tim Marshall, Luigi Mazza and Glenn Watson for their general interest and comments on draft chapters. Thanks also to Liz Howard who gave us some last minute typing help, and our draughtsperson, W. Irving.

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AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CEE	Commission on Energy and the Environment
CEVO	City Estates and Valuation Officer (Manchester City Council)
CIA	Commercial Improvement Area
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CPOS	County Planning Officers' Society
CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DE	Department of Energy
DLCA	Derelict Land Clearance Areas
DLG	Derelict Land Grant
DoE	Department of the Environment
DoT	Department of Transport
DPOS	District Planning Officers' Society
EIP	Examination-in-Public
EZ	Enterprise Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA	General Improvement Area
GLC	Greater London Council
GMC	Greater Manchester County Council
GMEDC	Greater Manchester Economic Development Corporation
HAA	Housing Action Area
HBF	House Builders' Federation
HIP	Housing Investment Programme
IDC	Industrial Development Certificate
IIA	Industrial Improvement Area
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
MHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
MP	Member of Parliament

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MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NCB	National Coal Board (British Coal Corporation (BCC) since 1986)
NEC	National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NWWA	North West Water Authority
OCE	Opencast Executive (a division of British Coal)
PAG	Planning Advisory Group
PLI	Public Local Inquiry
RICS	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SAGA	Sand and Gravel Association
SDP	Social Democratic Party
Section 52	Agreements under the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act to allow developers to make contributions to overcome planning constraints
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STWA	Severn Trent Water Authority
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
UDG	Urban Development Grant
UP	Urban Programme
WMCC	West Midlands County Council
WMEB	West Midlands Enterprise Board

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- 1945 Location of Industry Act
- 1946 New Towns Act
- 1947 Town and Country Planning Act
- 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act
- 1953 Town and Country Planning Act
- 1958 Opencast Coal Act
- 1959 Town and Country Planning Act
- 1963 Local Authorities (Land) Act
- 1965 Control of Office and Industrial Development Act
- 1966 Local Government Act
- 1966 Industrial Development Act
- 1967 Land Commission Act
- 1967 Civic Amenities Act
- 1968 Countryside Act
- 1968 Town and Country Planning Act
- 1969 Housing Act
- 1971 Town and Country Planning Act (consolidating Act)
- 1972 Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act
- 1972 Local Government Act
- 1975 Community Land Act
- 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act
- 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act
- 1981 Town and Country Planning (Minerals) Act
- 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act
- 1985 Local Government Act
- 1986 Housing and Planning Act