# Urban Reconstruction in the Twentieth Century: The Postwar Deconstruction of Beirut, Lebanon

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## ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of the succession of abortive planning schemes and the indiscriminate destruction of war (1975-1991), it is the self-inflicted pattern of destruction that has caused the most damage to the urban fabric of Beirut, Lebanon: the reconstruction process itself. Through the examination of pre- and postwar plans and strategies, this study establishes destruction as a framework in the urban history of Beirut. The eradication of cultural heritage and urban memory is evident in the demolition of half the city fabric and the privatization of reconstruction, and continues through the implementation of the proposed market-led rebuilding strategy.

This thesis frames the reconstruction of Beirut within comparative methodologies of urban rebuilding in the twentieth century, namely those of post-W.W.II Europe (as manifested in Warsaw and Rotterdam) and those of contemporary market-led urban regeneration (as exemplified by London Docklands). As a critique of the proposed rebuilding of Beirut, it contributes to the re-negotiation of the process and policy of urban reconstruction at the national and international levels.

## RESUME

Suite à la succesion des plans abortifs et la destruction aveugle de la guerre (1975-1991), c'est le modèle de destruction volontaire qui a infligé le plus de dommages à la structure urbaine de Beyrouth, Liban: celui de la reconstruction. Par l'examen critique des plans et des stratégies d'avant et d'après guerre, cette étude établit la destruction comme élément structurant de l'histoire urbaine de Beyrouth. La destruction du patrimoine culturel et de la mémoire urbaine se manifeste dans la demolition de la moitié du tissu urbain et dans la privatisation de la reconstruction. En plus, celle-ci continue dans l'implimantation de la stratégie de reconstruction proposée qui est dirigée par les forces du marché (*market-led urbanism*).

Dans un effort d'assister au discours de la récupération urbaine, cette thèse encadre la reconstuction de Beyrouth dans les mèthodologies comparatives de la reconstruction urbaine au vingtième siècle; celle d'après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale en Europe (comme se manifeste à Varsovie et Rotterdam) et celle de la regénération urbaine contemporaine qui est dirigée par la spéculation foncière (comme éxemplifié à London Docklands). Comme une critique de la reconstruction proposée de Beyrouth, il contribue à la renégociation de la politique et le processus de la reconstruction urbaine aux niveaux nationaux et internationaux.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 4.14. Royal Albert Dock: Plan and model of the master scheme of a commercial and business park designed by Richard Rogers Partnership, 1989. Sources: *London Docklands: Past Present and future*, 54, and *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 128.

Figure 4.15. The main features of market-led urbanism in the Docklands development: The dominance of private transportation and of fortified private developments, and the resulting lack of urbanity. Source: *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 169.

# INTRODUCTION

> Change and recurrence are the sense of being alive - things gone by, death to come, and present awareness. The world around us, so much of it our own creation, shifts continually and often bewilders us. We reach out to that world to preserve or to change it and so to make visible our desire. The arguments of planning all come down to the management of change.[1]

Transformation and change in cities have been, for the most part, incremental, occurring gradually over long periods of time. As such, the impact of time on the built environment has been cushioned by some form of continuity which has allowed the inhabitants to negotiate and re-negotiate change, whether political, social, or physical. Architectural historian Spiro Kostof labelled this inherent quality of cities "urban longevity," whereby "cities are long-lived artifacts. Their tendency is to continue. Unattended, the artifact decays and disintegrates."[2] Through the ages, this long-term commitment to the city, or to that which is urbane, is manifest in the layering of history in the physical landscape, which presents the city of today as the latest phase of a morphology of minor and major readjustments over centuries and generations. Beirut is no exception.

The layers of destruction and reconstruction that have haunted the city of Beirut, Lebanon, throughout its 5000-year history remain to this day an intrinsic feature of this ancient seaport. Destruction has been manifold: social, economic, cultural, and political. It is the destruction of the physical landscape, however, that is the focus of this thesis.

For decades, even centuries, destruction was at the hands of conquerors who demolished the city in parts and implemented their own grandiose schemes. Since Lebanon's independence in 1943, Beirut has fallen prey to a succession of abortive planning schemes that further contributed to the uncontrolled agglomeration and

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[1] Lynch, K. *What Time is this Place?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 1.
[2] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 250.

destruction of the city. From 1975 to 1991, war indiscriminately destroyed, playing the role of an urban catalyst that provided an opportunity to re-think the planning of the whole country. However, within the current reconstruction framework, such an opportunity has been sacrificed to planning strategies that have adopted demolition as a device of city making and market-led urbanism as its tool.

The two waves of peacetime demolition have corresponded to the two main sporadic peace eras of the 16-year war. The first took place in 1983 when the cleaning of rubble from the streets evolved into the bulldozing of the entire medieval sector of the city. The second clean-up started in 1992 when, in the name of public safety, the same bulldozers brought down what was left of the medieval sector along with 300 other buildings. Not only has the destruction of Beirut intensified in times of peace by the dynamiting and bulldozing of half the city fabric in the name of reconstruction, but this destruction continues today through the implementation of the proposed market-led strategy in rebuilding and its corresponding economically-inspired architectural imagery.

The focus of this thesis is the rebuilding of Beirut Central District. This area is currently undergoing major transformations according to the latest state-sponsored plan for rehabilitation, based on the most recent revision of February 1994 of the redevelopment scheme presented in 1991 by Dar Al-Handasah (Shair & Partners), a leading middle-eastern planning and development bureau (fig. 1.1). Planned in three phases over a 22-year period, this US$ 12 billion comprehensive plan deals with a range of issues from the development of 4.69 million square meters of mixed-use space and the installation of a modern infrastructure, to the reclamation of 608,000 square meters from the sea. However, like previous versions, the plan has caused a growing amount of controversy and has drawn criticism from both professionals and the general public, both locally and at the international level. It has also inspired scholarly research in the

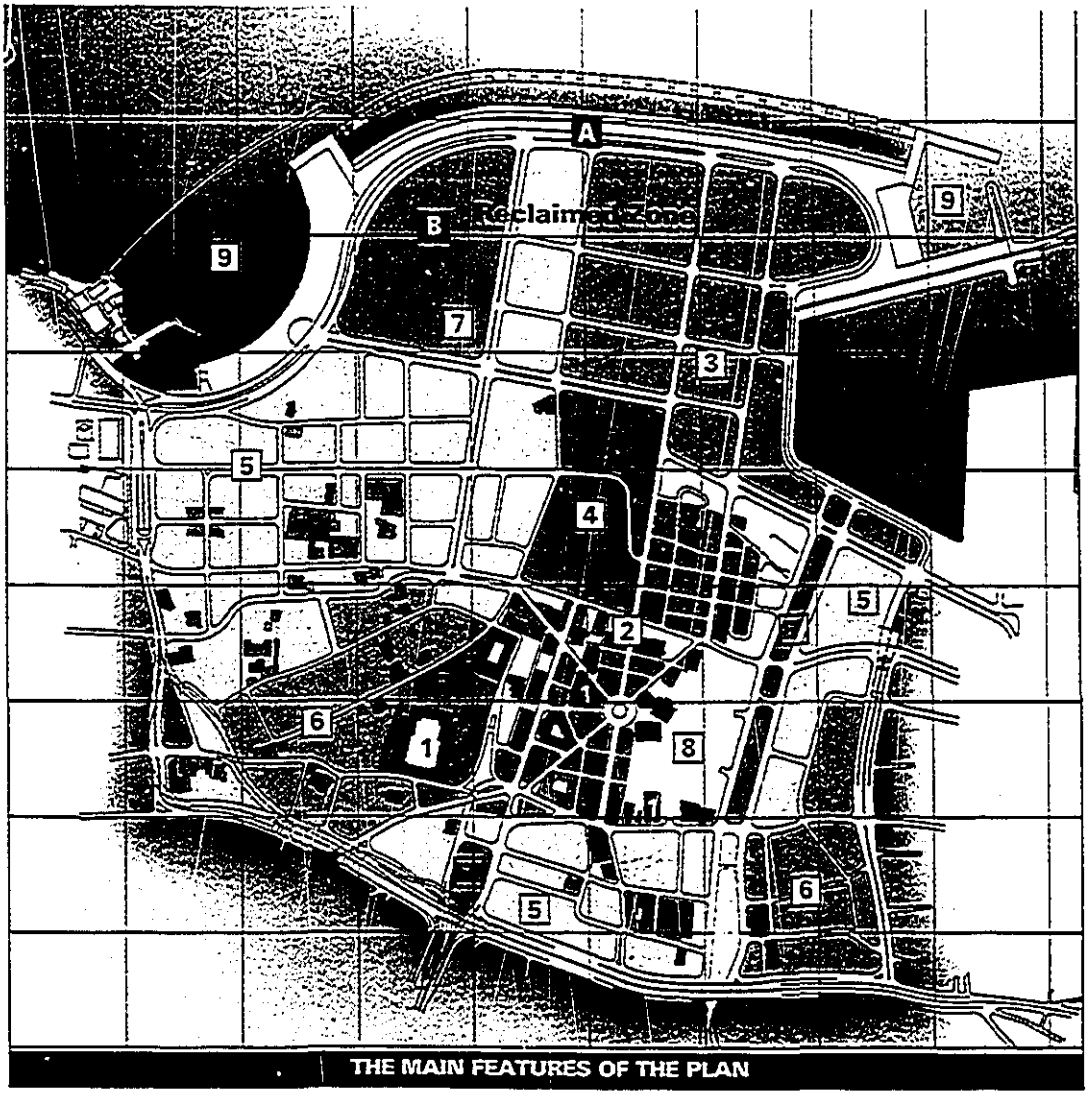


Figure 1.1. Beirut: The Dar Al-Handasah Reconstruction Plan, 1994. Source: *The Reconstruction of BCD Information Booklet*, 14.

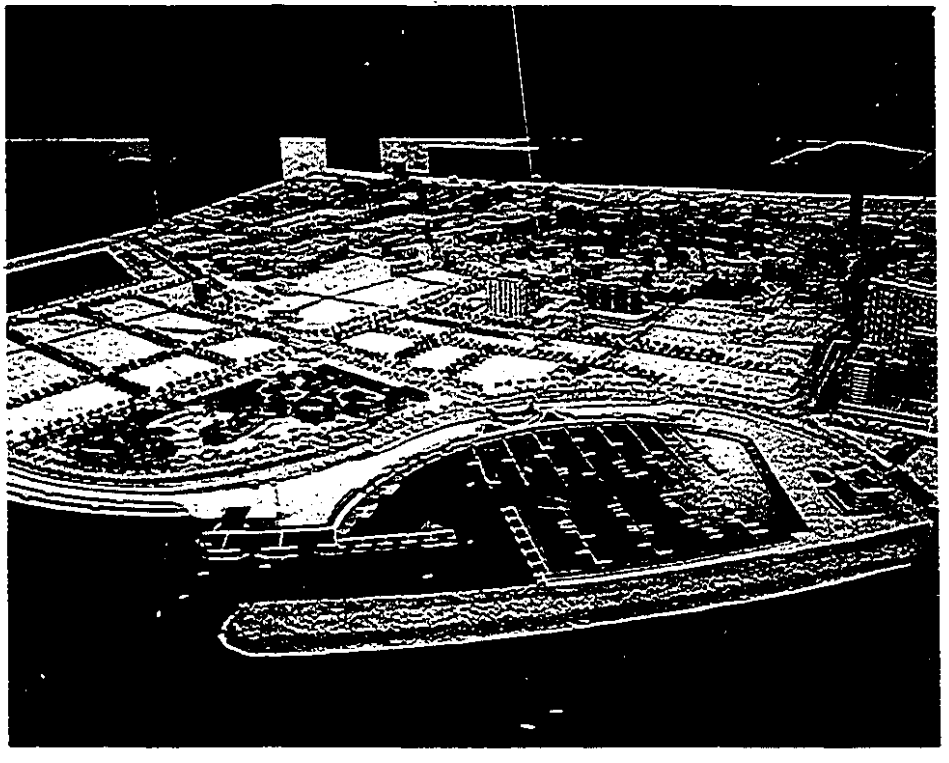

Figure 1.1. (contd.) Model of the city centre, 1994. Source: Author.

theoretical and practical dimensions of postwar reconstruction in Beirut.[3] Described as being "devoid of memory," a crusade has been initiated by many leading professionals in Lebanon, such as the renowned Lebanese architect Assem Salaam, who are arguing for the rethinking of the whole reconstruction strategy in terms of memory, tradition, and context.[4] Despite the recent revisions to the master plan intended to address the criticism, the adversaries remain unconvinced. The arbitrary boundaries of the envisioned business island isolate it spatially, visually, and socially from metropolitan Beirut and ignore the war-born urban agglomerations in the outskirts. Moreover, the preservation of detached fragments of the architectural and archaeological heritage of the city remain subsidiary to the development of a corporate identity of the future Beirut, as depicted in the proposed imagery.

This ongoing criticism is not limited to the planning scheme, however, but extends to the framework within which the rebuilding of Beirut was conceived. Central to this controversy is the establishment of the real-estate company Solidere to redevelop the war damaged city centre. The strategy behind this concept of a real-estate company was to shelter the redevelopment of war-torn areas from political polarization, to isolate the project from governmental corruption and inefficient bureaucracy, and to provide proper management to attract private investment.[5] Entrusted with the promotion, marketing, and sale of properties to individual or corporate developers, Solidere is an association of

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[3] Among the most recent publications of the multi-disciplinary scholarly interest in the rebuilding of Beirut is that of the workshop held at MIT in 1991 entitled *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. Samir Khalaf and Philip S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993).

[4] Salaam, A. "The Reconstruction of Beirut: A Lost Opportunity." *AA Files*, No. 27, Summer 1994, 11-13 and "Town Planning Problems in Beirut and its Outskirts" in *Planning for Urban Growth: British Perspectives on the Planning Process*, ed. John L. Taylor (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 109-119. A renowned architect and an active member in the Lebanese public sector, Assem Salaam has served as a Member of the Higher Council of Planning (1961-77), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (1977-82), and the Committee for the Reconstruction of Beirut Central District (1977-86). He is currently the President of the Order of Engineers and Architects.

[5] Kabbani, O. "The Reconstruction of Beirut" in *Prospects for Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), 8.

property right holders and private investors; the former by mandatory exchange of title deeds for shares in the real-estate company, and the latter by cash subscriptions.

As such, with the demolition of half the city fabric, the eviction of the local population, the dissolution of property rights, and the reduction of the state to an investor in a private venture, the city centre of Beirut presented itself as an empty field open to the commercial interests and speculative ambitions of private developers. The resulting tendency to privatize reconstruction to the detriment of public good highlights the intrinsic weakness of the reconstruction process of Beirut and the whole history of planning in Lebanon. In this context, private property and individual initiative, the hallmarks of the liberal economic enterprise in Lebanon, have reduced the city of Beirut, yet again, to an instrument of capitalist production where private investors and the dynamics of the real-estate market provide the parameters for urban change.

As a member of the so-called war generation of Lebanon and one of the three million expatriates, I feel I have suffered a recurrent loss and deprivation: first the loss of war, and now that of peace, both of which I have witnessed destroy Beirut. My personal involvement has been coupled by an opportunity to gain work experience in the rebuilding of Beirut Central District at the architectural office of Samir Khairallah & Partners during the summers of 1994 and 1995. Exposure to client meetings, government documents, design guidelines, and building regulations, all furnished additional insights and primary sources to carry out this study as well as a unique view of the inner workings of the rebuilding process. Projects in which I participated included the damage assessment and restoration proposals for the bank district along Riad al-Solh Street. This area constituted some 30 buildings mostly dating back to the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and is one of three conservation zones in the historic core (fig. 1.2). Another project was the design development of the infrastructure and the four-storey underground parking for 2500 cars in the Souks of Beirut, the traditional market area (fig. 1.3).

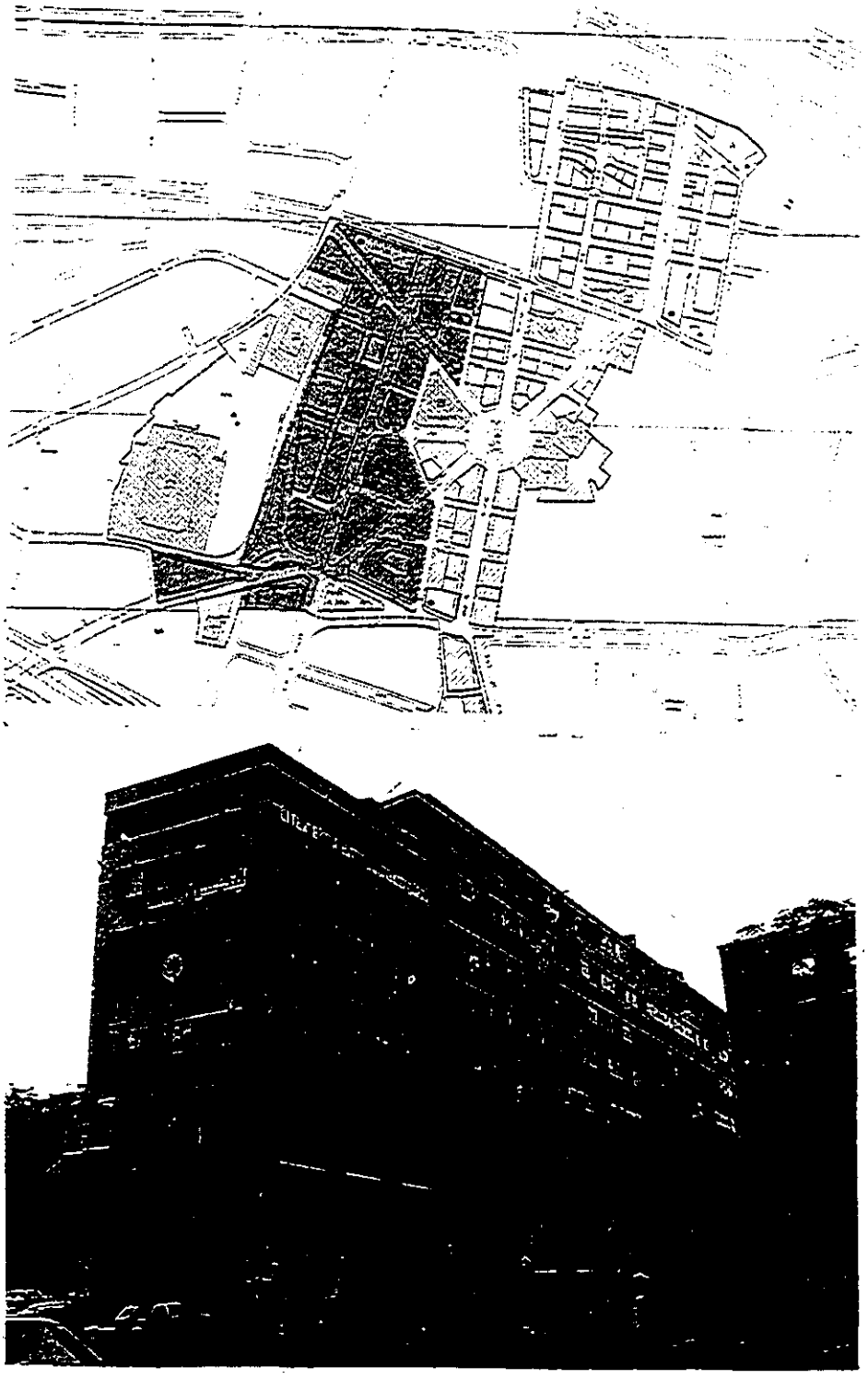

Figure 1.2. Beirut: Plan of the historic zone to be preserved with the bank district along Riad al-Solh Street. Source: Council for Development and Reconstruction, reproduced from the architectural archives of the office of Samir Khairallah & Partners. An example of the buildings in the bank district. Source: Author.

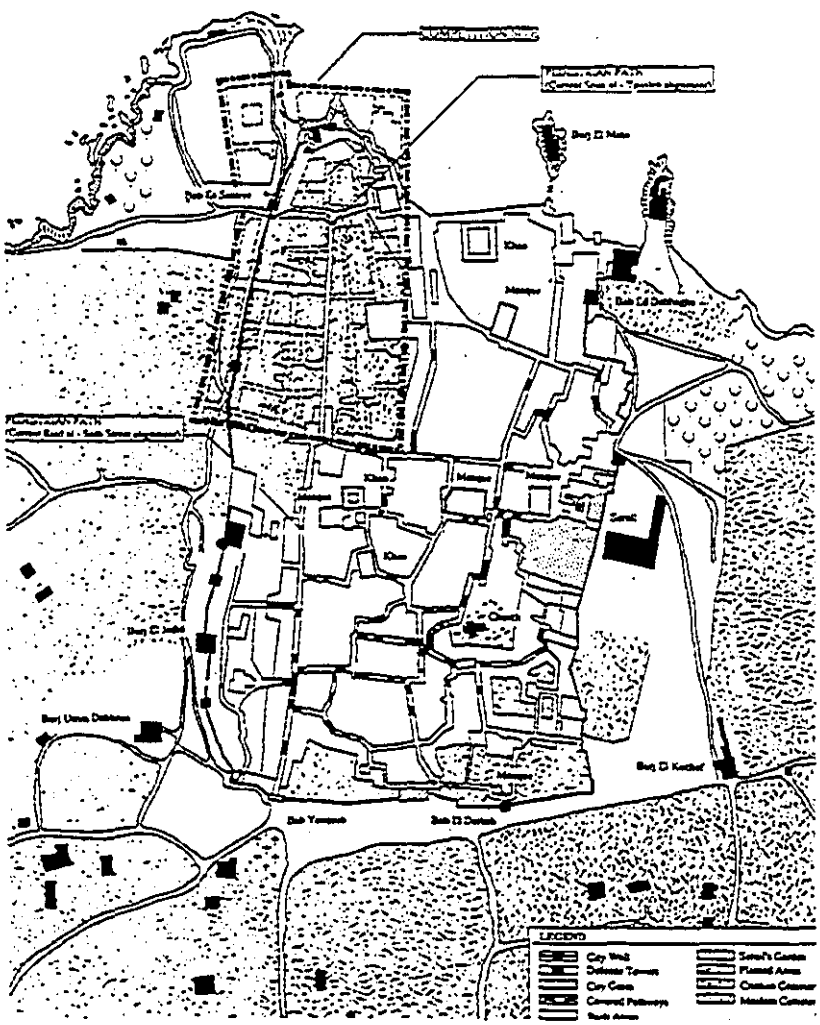

Figure 1.3. Beirut, 1841: Site of the 1994 Souks competition in the historic core. Source: *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: Visual Survey Kit*, 6.

Based on field research to document the landscape of Beirut, and also on my work experience, this study was grounded on a time-space evaluation of the urban environment in function of war. It has entailed first a brief examination of the urban history of Beirut and then a critical overview of the succession of reconstruction schemes with an emphasis on the one currently under implementation at the dawn of peace. Focusing on the interface between past and future, old and new, and in an attempt to intervene positively and to contribute to the rebuilding process of the war-ravaged city of Beirut, the objective of this thesis is to frame the reconstruction of Beirut within comparative methodologies of urban rebuilding in the twentieth century; namely those of post-World War II Europe and those of contemporary market-led strategies of urban regeneration in London. This critical re-assessment of the rebuilding of Beirut will, in turn, contribute to the re-negotiation of the policies and process of postwar reconstruction.

The study has adopted cities as the primary documents for the examination of comparative methods of the continuous management and maintenance of the built world. This thesis has explored the following alternative models of urban reconstruction in the twentieth century: Warsaw, a city that completely rebuilt its past; Rotterdam, where the past was completely erased; Beirut, where the battle between the past and the future is currently being fought on the fields of reconstruction; and the London Docklands development, where the future has been shaped by market-led urbanism which has, in turn, given birth to the first "deconstructed city" of this century. Since in every city there is a momentum of change independent of war and disaster, this examination of Beirut, therefore, encompasses the literature on war and reconstruction, yet seeks the critical analysis of theories and strategies of city making in times of peace, namely those of market-led urbanism.

Even from a limited sample of the literature on war, urban reconstruction, and the city, it is evident that the scope of research covers a wide range of disciplines and subjects. The first layer that can be identified in reconstruction theory and practice is that pertaining

to the rebuilding of Europe after World War II, where the cities stand witness to the greatest experimentation and manifestation of the continuous struggle between various theories of urban rebuilding. The study of historical precedents is of great significance to the understanding of how change, at such a vast and destructive scale, has been accommodated. Research since the mid-twentieth century has been by no means limited to the built environment, but also included other aspects vital to a comprehensive reconstruction strategy.[6] In fact, most literature has dealt with the political, economic, and social rebuilding of nations and with designing a postwar world.[7] Half a century later, with the advantage of hindsight and newly available material, it is today possible to draw, more objectively, new perspectives and insights on the rebuilding of European cities.[8] Thus, the seeds of reconstruction theory and practice which were planted in the first half of this century are only now ready to be sewn.

However, there remains an area of reconstruction that scholars are only starting to study, especially in places like Lebanon. This research is exemplified by the work underway in the latest of war-inflicted areas, the former Yugoslavia. With the augmenting

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[6] Taking postwar London as an example, a collection of works prepared and published towards the end of W.W.II and entitled *Building Britain Series* (London: Faber and Faber, 1941-43) is representative of this line of research. Through its multi-disciplinary participants, this set of booklets reflects the contemporary efforts to write, read, think about, and discuss the postwar rebuilding of cities, societies, politics, and economies.

[7] The first generation of literature on the rebuilding of post-W.W.II Europe was impregnated with prescriptive literature and descriptive anecdotes of the reconstruction of individual cities. Usually written by the authors of the reconstruction plans themselves, books and articles emerged of "now and then," "before and after," and applied to almost every city in Europe. The illustrated documentation of the rebuilding of Warsaw, for example, was published under titles such as *Warsaw Rebuilt, Warsaw 1945 and Today*, and *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow*, all of which were written by the likes of Adolf Ciborowski and Stanislaw Jankowski who had witnessed first-hand the destruction of their city and were also among the authors of its reconstruction.

[8] As the historian Jeffry Diefendorf remarks, the revival of the interest in postwar reconstruction can be partially attributed to the Western European celebration in 1975 of a year devoted to the furtherance of historic preservation. Diefendorf, J.M., ed. *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 14, and "Urban Reconstruction in Europe After World War II," in *Urban Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, February 1989, 129. His most recent book entitled *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) is a rare example of a comprehensive and comparative study of the physical rebuilding of one country. All these recent publications are main contributions to the rather under-researched topic of postwar reconstruction, and provide the ground for a cross-European, comparative analysis of post-W.W.II rebuilding.

concern of groups of scholars and world organizations, there is now a deliberate and conscientious effort to preserve the historic culture of the war-torn country, even though in many instances the destruction is still in process.[9] In other words, based on an architectural understanding, evaluation, and reconstruction of the built environment, and consequently society and culture at large, a methodology of reconstruction is being investigated through the preservation of the cultural heritage and urban memory in the built form *during* war. However, in Beirut, as previously mentioned, the premise for postwar reconstruction has, so far, been based on the destruction of the above dimensions, and has focused instead on market-led strategies in urban recovery. As such, this thesis explores another dimension to rebuilding cities, as exemplified in Beirut. That dimension is the cultural genocide of the city *after* war and *within* the reconstruction framework.

Against such a background, the corresponding thematic division of the thesis is as follows: The first chapter explores the urban reconstruction of Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War and looks at two distinct platforms for rebuilding, the traditional and the modern, and their manifestations in Warsaw and Rotterdam, respectively. This comparative study provides a perspective for the analysis of issues which are very much alive in the debate over the shape of the future Beirut, and situates its rebuilding within the context of urban reconstruction in the twentieth century. Chapter Two briefly examines the urban evolution of Beirut and attempts to establish destruction as a framework in the history of the city and to trace the pattern of this destruction in both pre- and postwar planning schemes. By examining the succession of reconstruction schemes with an emphasis on the one under execution, this chapter demonstrates how postwar rebuilding in

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[9] Zaknic, I. "The Pains of Ruins: Croatian Architecture under Siege." *Journal of Architectural Education*. Vol. 46, No. 2, November 1992, 115-124. Bogdanovic, B. "L'Urbicide Ritualise: Restera-t-il dans ces Pays un Peu d'Urbanite?" *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. No. 290, December 1993, 9-10. Both authors argue against the reduction of the cultural heritage of an entire people to rubble as a military strategy in the war in the former Yugoslavia. Bogdanovic, a Serb architect, goes further to condemn this intentional destruction of cities since it could only be interpreted as a threat and infringement to all that is urbane, which he defines as all that evokes refinement, articulation, and coordination between the human race and the built environment.

Beirut has been as destructive as the war. Finally, the thesis explores the second dimension to the postwar destruction of Beirut: the privatization of rebuilding and the emerging landscape of speculation. The third chapter places the rebuilding of Beirut within the context of market-led urbanism and focuses on the destructive potential of the planning-as-marketing strategy adopted in Beirut in the light of the deconstruction of London Docklands. Both developments are models of an urban policy founded on the privatization of inner city regeneration where, by means of financial incentives, private capital dictates the urban and architectural imagery of the city.

Although the focus of this thesis is the Central District of Beirut, this single case study serves as a model for the identification and analysis of strategies in urban reconstruction that could cause unwarranted damage to the many war-ravaged areas in Lebanon, and other parts of the world, in the aftermath of war. Hence, this study belongs in a wider context of the history of urban planning of Beirut, of postwar reconstruction, and of urban rebuilding in the twentieth century. If, as Kostof claimed, "all cities are caught in a balancing act between destruction and preservation," it is the management of this balance that is crucial in defining the parameters of change.[10] Indeed, the prevailing imbalance in the postwar reconstruction of Beirut threatens the survival of the city.

[10] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 290.

## CHAPTER 1

### In the Aftermath of World War II: The Urban Reconstruction of Warsaw and Rotterdam

> In cities only change endures. Patterns of habitation are provisional, transformed by the ebb and swell of residency and subject to forces that work with the sluggishness of the millennial erosion of stone, or with the speed of a stray spark.[1]

In the wake of World War II, many European cities lay in complete ruins. Until then, no previous armed conflict had inflicted such extensive damage on the physical, natural, or human resources of the world. Based on unparalleled methods of a "technology of devastation," civilian settlements were razed to the ground by air raids within hours, even minutes. Since military strategies attempted to paralyze the economic, social, and moral will of the people, urban agglomerations were the main targets. The destruction of the "true soul of the city" translated into the annihilation of the identity of the enemy, and a step closer to winning the war. Thus, the old inner cities of Europe, the *Alstades*, which embodied the unique urban history and culture of many nations, were to endure the most devastation. It was these urban centres that presented postwar planners with the biggest challenge.

Working within the severe constraints of a disabled infrastructure and a lack of skilled labour, finance, and building materials, post-W.W.II reconstruction in Europe constituted an unparalleled period of re-urbanization, of expansion, and of transformation.[2] Dramatic changes to the urban environment were wrought equally by the

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[1] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 280.

[2] Diefendorf, J.M. "Urban Reconstruction in Europe After World War II." *Urban Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 1, February 1989, 130. Kostof, S. "Urban Process" in *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992). Common to scholarly thought on postwar reconstruction in the second half of the twentieth century is that to speak of "postwar reconstruction" is misleading on two accounts. On the one hand, the process of reconstruction was, and still is, a continuous affair *during* the war involving the day to day clearance of rubble and the temporary restoration of the living environment. On the other hand, planning for reconstruction was underway while the cities were being devastated, and did not wait till *after* the war had ended.

accidents of war and by the deliberate actions of postwar planners. Today, European cities are a testimonial to the forces of this urban change, and given their large contribution to the history of urban reconstruction in the twentieth century, they provide a rich ground for the comparative analysis of postwar urban policies and their implementation, and also new perspectives for discussion.

The experience of almost half a century of building and rebuilding war-torn cities and the shift in the 1970s toward preservation, argued on economic as well as historical grounds, have resulted in a revival of the debate over postwar urban reconstruction and in a re-evaluation of rebuilding after the Second World War. Although a consensus of the various views on the shape and methods of postwar reconstruction has not been reached, the critical assessment of post-W.W.II rebuilding provides a valuable set of lessons. This has, in turn, generated an increasing awareness for the preservation of cultural heritage, urban memory, and identity within the framework of postwar rebuilding. Nevertheless, the scope of violation of this awareness remains wide-ranging as explicitly manifested in the postwar reconstruction of Beirut.

The enormous complexity of reconstruction issues that faced the post-W.W.II planners have not lost their relevance in the process of the urban reconstruction of war-torn cities today. Certainly, the debate over how to "incorporate the legacy of an urban past into postwar planning," is very much alive in the rebuilding of Beirut, as in other war-inflicted areas at the *fin de siècle*.[3] However, the essential components of the general framework that guided the rebuilding of Europe after World War II have been overlooked in the rebuilding of Beirut today.

Firstly, the premise of postwar intervention in Beirut is neither conceived nor executed as a public venture. The idea of a strong, centralized, public planning agency to initiate and motorize reconstruction, as in the case of the rebuilding of almost all European

[3] Diefendorf, J.M. *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 106.

cities, is absent in the postwar context of Beirut. Instead, the historical reliance of the government on the private development sector, together with the increasing distrust of the general public in the executive, professional, and financial capabilities of the public sector, have rendered the rebuilding of Beirut yet another private, large-scale building project. With minimal state intervention and the exclusion of the public from the rebuilding process, the two driving forces behind the rebuilding of Europe have failed to play the same vital role in Beirut. In fact, there is hardly anything "public" about the rebuilding of Beirut; there is no public participation, no public transportation, no public housing, and almost no public funding.

At a second level, the scale and extent of war damage that permitted the negotiation of the concept to convert post-W.W.II Europe to a new urban order are incomparable to the war damage in Beirut. This is not to undermine the horrific devastation of the war on the physical, human, and material resources of Beirut and the whole of Lebanon. However, through the *postwar* demolition of half the city fabric, the rebuilding of Beirut was artificially impregnated with a scale of destruction that could permit and justify the adoption of a planning strategy based on the erasure of the cultural heritage and urban memory of the city, as is currently being implemented. While similar plans for the rebuilding of European cities like Rotterdam and Coventry involved, to different degrees, the continuation in a more precise fashion of what the bombs had already started, in Beirut, postwar demolition has dominated the reconstruction scene and has over-shadowed the devastation caused by war.

This misconception of the scale of war damage in Beirut is misleading on two accounts. Firstly, the damage in the city centre, which was mostly inflicted during the first two years of the war from 1975 to 1977, was caused by shelling and street fighting. Inevitably, such methods of destruction took their toll on the physical environment but they were not aimed at deliberately destroying the city fabric, and therefore did not result

in the "mounds of rubble" of the blitzed cities of Europe.[4] Secondly, while the central district was a deserted, war-torn area inhabited mostly by militiamen and squatters, the evicted local population found refuge in various parts of metropolitan Beirut. With the development of several war-born urban agglomerations, the rebuilding of Beirut, like that of Europe, called for comprehensive planning and an integration of efforts at the local and the national scales, and supplemented by reform at all levels of postwar reconstruction; be they political, economic, social, or cultural. However, the proposed plan for Beirut denies its interdependence on the surrounding region, let alone the rest of the country, and remains an isolated effort in the rebuilding of a nation.

Having established the essential divisions between the foundations of the rebuilding of Beirut in the light of post-W.W.II reconstruction in Europe, the common grounds remain the issues of the unsettled debate over the shape and strategies of postwar urban reconstruction. Although the damage of postwar rebuilding has already stamped the future Beirut, the architectural design of the city is yet to emerge. Since intervention is crucial to redirect strategies and to re-set priorities, a contribution to the debate over the form and framework of the rebuilding of Beirut within comparative methodologies of postwar urban reconstruction is significant.

With that intention, this chapter aims at examining the main two themes of post-W.W.II reconstruction, the traditional and modern platforms, to underline their strategies and critique. Since a comprehensive analysis of postwar reconstruction in Europe is outside the bounds of this study, this chapter explores the experiences of two *Alstades* which best illustrate the two processes of destruction and reconstruction in post-W.W.II Europe, and also embody their criticism: the city of Warsaw in Poland and that of Rotterdam in the Netherlands. While Rotterdam best represents cities that rebuilt with an

[4] However, this does not apply to the countless villages in Lebanon razed to the ground during the 16-year war, which recalled the barbaric conscious annihilation of cities like Warsaw by the Nazis during the Second World War. "Blitz," or terror raid, refers to the military technique first used by the Third Reich during W.W.II to shock a whole country into submission.

eye to the future more than to the past, Warsaw exemplifies the group of cities that sought the future in their past.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, destruction provided planners with open urban space, and consequently, the opportunity to develop and implement theories of rebuilding cities in the twentieth century. Since postwar planners agreed that, even before the war, many cities were candidates for urban regeneration, the reconstruction process was seen largely as a tool to heal the "unhealthy" metropolis inherited from the industrial blight of the second half of the nineteenth century. Hard-core advocates of this view argued that the industrial city, infested with pollution, over-crowding, poor housing, and inadequate transportation, was already a dead social entity that had nothing worth reviving, and was therefore impossible to remedy even through miraculous urban intervention. From that point of view, the task of postwar planners was not of *re*building an obsolete historic structure, but that of building a *new* city on the site of its predecessor. As such, in post-W.W.II Europe, "rebuilders of bombed cities could go beyond what Haussmann had done for nineteenth-century Paris" in the sense that the opportunity to implement urban surgery presented itself "naturally," so to speak, and was not enforced artificially by a single authority.[5] Hence, the damage of the Second World War directly stimulated planning based on prewar criticism of the European city, and was in turn seen as a catalyst. As such, the shape of reconstruction in Europe was directly affected by continuities in prewar architecture, planning, and preservation concepts and practices, intertwined with unique postwar conditions.

In the rebuilding of Europe, it is important to stress that several planning issues generated little argument, and were, to various degrees, common denominators in almost all rebuilt cities. Firstly, given the scale and complexity of damage, comprehensive reconstruction at the physical, political, social, and economic levels could have only been undertaken by governments, whether central, provincial, or local. In fact, the authority of

[5] Diefendorf, J.M., ed. *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 5.

public agencies in steering reconstruction had been established long before the end of the war (for example, the French Ministry for Reconstruction and Town Planning had its roots in the public agencies of Vichy France, and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning was established in England in 1943), and was reinforced by citizens' participation and support during and after the war.[6] This public-private cooperation was a key to the success of the rebuilding of Europe, since after years of disintegration, reconstruction transcended the literal rebuilding of the physical, and aimed instead at the rebuilding of nations and the reconstitution of identities.

Secondly, as previously mentioned, almost all authors of the reconstruction plans -- traditionalist and modernists, planners and citizens -- advocated a "modernization," in the larger sense of the word, of the urban core. Given the poor performance of its predecessor, the industrial city, the pure duplication of the old model was unacceptable. So the underlying aims of this modernization process were the decrease in density and the provision of modern amenities for housing, infrastructure, and transportation. Moreover, in principle, the preservation and restoration of major historic monuments of "authentic and cultural value," although restricted to the shell of these buildings, were considered vital components of this modernization process.[7]

However, in spite of the overwhelming consensus on the general issues of modernization and preservation, the varying degrees of their application in the *Alstades* of Europe was to become the source of conflict and debate in postwar reconstruction. This

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[6] Diefendorf, J.M. "Urban Reconstruction in Europe After World War II." *Urban Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 1, February 1989. Public participation and reconstruction planning during the war was carried on even in occupied France, Belgium, Holland, and Norway under the supervision of the Germans. The exception was Warsaw, where the Germans, in their efforts to annihilate the city, issued a ban on reconstruction. That did not stop public reconstruction efforts, however, which were simply taken underground.

[7] As Jeffry Diefendorf remarks in the chapter entitled "The Face of Reconstruction: The Role of Historic Preservation" in *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), these "aesthetic and cultural" values applied mostly to religious and government buildings predating 1830, while those built after that date, including early twentieth-century modern architecture, were not esteemed worthy of preservation. This controversial and somehow arbitrary classification of "historical" resulted in the demolition of repairable, even undamaged, "lesser" buildings such as private houses and small-scale commercial buildings.

conflict between the desire for historic reconstruction, on the one hand, and the impulse to modernize, on the other, marked the recurrent theme in rebuilding and divided reconstruction strategies into two main platforms: the traditional and the modern ones.

The "traditional" platform refers to the somewhat conventional approach to reconstruction concerned with the revival of historic ambiance and the urban memory of the postwar European city, and was thus mainly concerned with design aesthetics: height, scale, volume, surface, and material. The conservation of inner cities' character was also based on planning principles which revolved around the retention of the basic street layout (except for minor adjustments to the existing street pattern to improve future traffic flow), and the routing of major thoroughfares around the inner core, rather than through it. This balancing of the integration of a historic street layout with a modern traffic infrastructure could be seen in the planning of the East-West thoroughfare in Warsaw, as will be discussed in detail, which necessitated the delicate maneuvering of a tunnel through the historic city centre (fig. 2.1).

Arguing for historical continuity (thus pertaining mostly to the urban centres which were most representative of the historic environment), the traditionalists campaigned for maximal rebuilding in the old form. The reconstruction of the Dutch city of Middelburg, for example, was planned and executed by the city designers during the war who sought to restore the atmosphere, if not the exact structure, of the historic city centre by recreating the "typical Middelburg style."[8] In fact, the traditionalists sought not only to preserve individual structures, but rather the whole character of a historic landscape. The symbolic importance of Castle Hill, the former citadel hill in Budapest with a surrounding residential district, for instance, was reconstructed on the premise of the whole landscape being an

[8] Bosma, J.E. "Planning the Impossible: History as the Fundament of the Future - The Reconstruction of Middelburg, 1940-4" in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. J.M. Diefendorf (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 64-76. While the Germans interpreted the adoption of a traditionalist scenario as a model for the reconstruction of other "German" bombed cities, to the Dutch, the revival of the vernacular was a gesture of resistance.

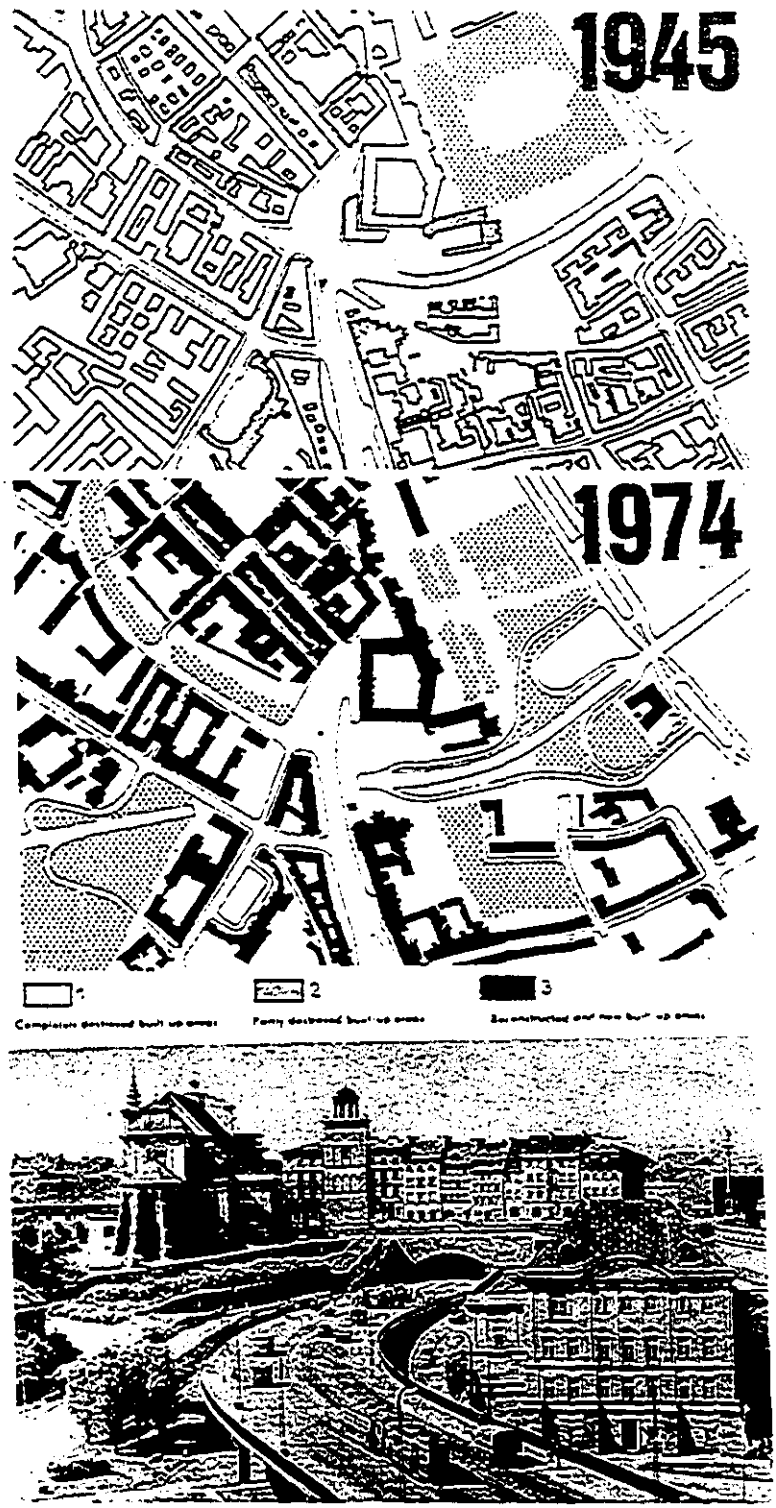


Figure 2.1. Warsaw: Plan of the destroyed Old Town in 1945, and in 1974 after the insertion of the East-West thoroughfare. Source: *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 226. Eastern entrance of the tunnel, 1960. Source: *Warszawa: O Zniszczeniu i Odbudowie Miasta*, 99.

"architectural diary of important events in Hungarian history" (fig. 2.2).[9] The importance of Buda Castle Hill lay in its unity rather than in the architectural or historic value of the individual buildings.[10]

As for the preservation and restoration of damaged historic buildings, the process of modernization that the traditionalists adopted applied exclusively to the shell of these buildings and included the replication of the facades, roof lines, and basic structure, whereas the interiors underwent significant alterations to remedy the inadequate lighting, ventilation, and plumbing of the prewar state. The Stare Miasto in Warsaw, the medieval walled city centre, became a showcase of the traditionalist strategy of reproducing a historic landscape by the articulation of the building facades through the use of local building materials, colors, and forms, while the interiors were gutted and replaced by modern amenities (fig. 2.3).

The main criticism of the traditional platform came not from their modern counterpart, but from professionals involved in the historic preservation movement. Although the traditional approach to reconstruction was hailed by its advocates as preservation and conservation, it was highly criticized by the "pure" preservationists, and labelled as mere replication.[11] On the one hand, the underlying aims and philosophy of historic preservationists were the saving of the authentic and the prototypical elements of the city, rather than the purely imitative reproductions of its past.[12] With such an approach to reconstruction, historicism is never a question of recreating vanished buildings. Rather, rebuilding is on a scale similar to that of the historic precedent, where details, proportions, structural systems, and materials are used simply to evoke, rather than to reconstruct the

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[9] Diefendorf, J.M. "Urban Reconstruction in Europe After World War II." *Urban Studies*. Vol. 26, No. 1, February 1989, 133.
[10] Harrach, E.C. "The Reconstruction of Buda Castle Hill After 1945" in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. J.M. Diefendorf (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 155-169.
[11] Diefendorf, J.M. *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 71.
[12] Fitch, J.M. *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990).

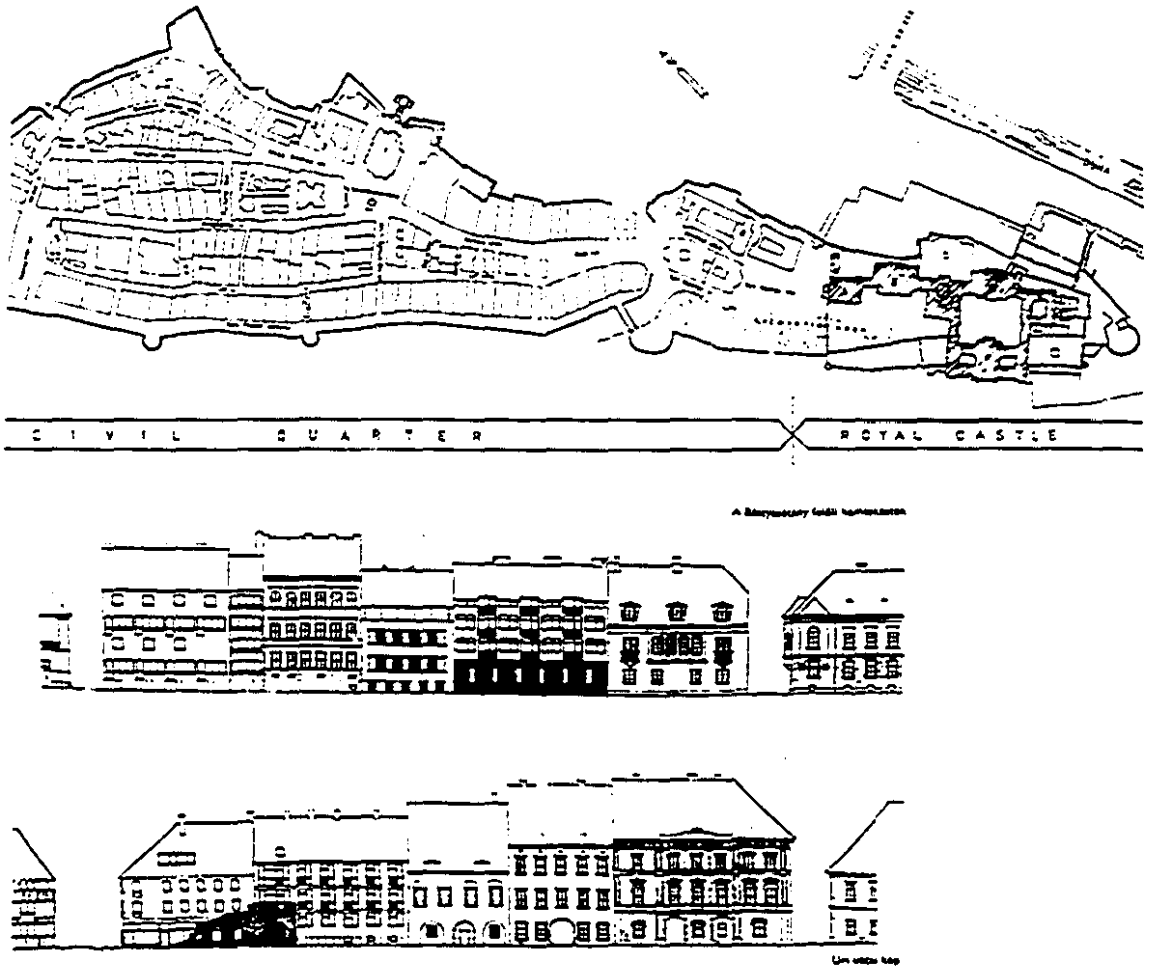


Figure 2.2. Budapest: Post-W.W.II plan of Buda Castle Hill and its reconstructed facades.
Source: *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities.*

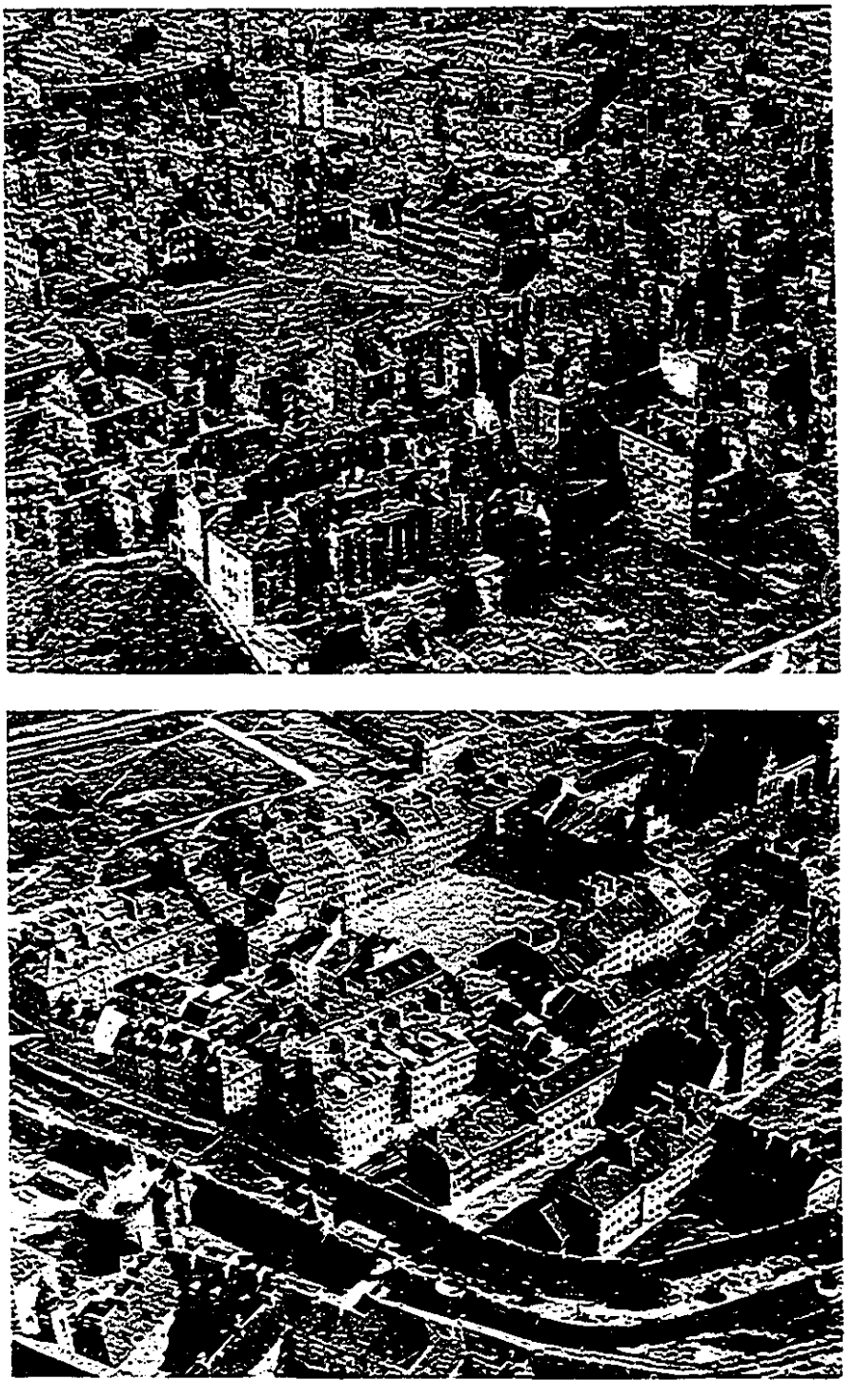

Figure 2.3. Warsaw: Stare Miasto in 1945 and in 1962. Source: *Warsaw Rebuilt*, 48, 49.

historic urban landscape. Thus, the total reconstruction of vanished buildings was unacceptable by both historic preservationists and modernists since only the original was considered the true artifact.

Nevertheless, in cities that opted for the complete recreation of their historic landscapes, and despite all the ideological controversies evoked, popular will prevailed over the professional opinions of the opposing planning authorities. The reconstruction of familiar streetscapes and landmarks in cities like Warsaw and Dresden, destroyed beyond recognition by the war, was promoted by its authors as more than a simplistic, nostalgic attachment to the past (fig. 2.4).[13] In their quest for identity, a sense of belonging, and continuities in urban memory, war-torn societies sought psychological security in these historic landscapes, which proved to be a vital strategy of the traditional platform in nurturing postwar social cohesion and unity.[14] By contrast, the modernist platform opted to rid itself deliberately of the past and all its memory. This was where the two platforms for reconstruction differed.

As previously mentioned, the advocates of the "modern" platform for reconstruction deemed the industrial city obsolete and campaigned for the conversion of Europe to a new urban order. The rationale behind this new urban order was the belief in decentralization, on the one hand, and the broad functional needs of the city and its inhabitants, on the other. These needs were defined as primarily technical in nature: infrastructure, traffic flow, building standards, land use, and economic feasibility.[15] While accepting the need to restore individual buildings, from the modernist point of view, "concentrating on rebuilding old buildings might only inhibit the growth of new

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[13] Paul, J. "Reconstruction of the City of Dresden: Planning and Building during the 1950s" in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. J.M. Diefendorf (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 170-189.
[14] Diefendorf, J.M. *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 281.
[15] Diefendorf, J.M. "Urban Reconstruction and Traffic Planning in Postwar Germany." *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 15, No. 2, February 1989, 132.

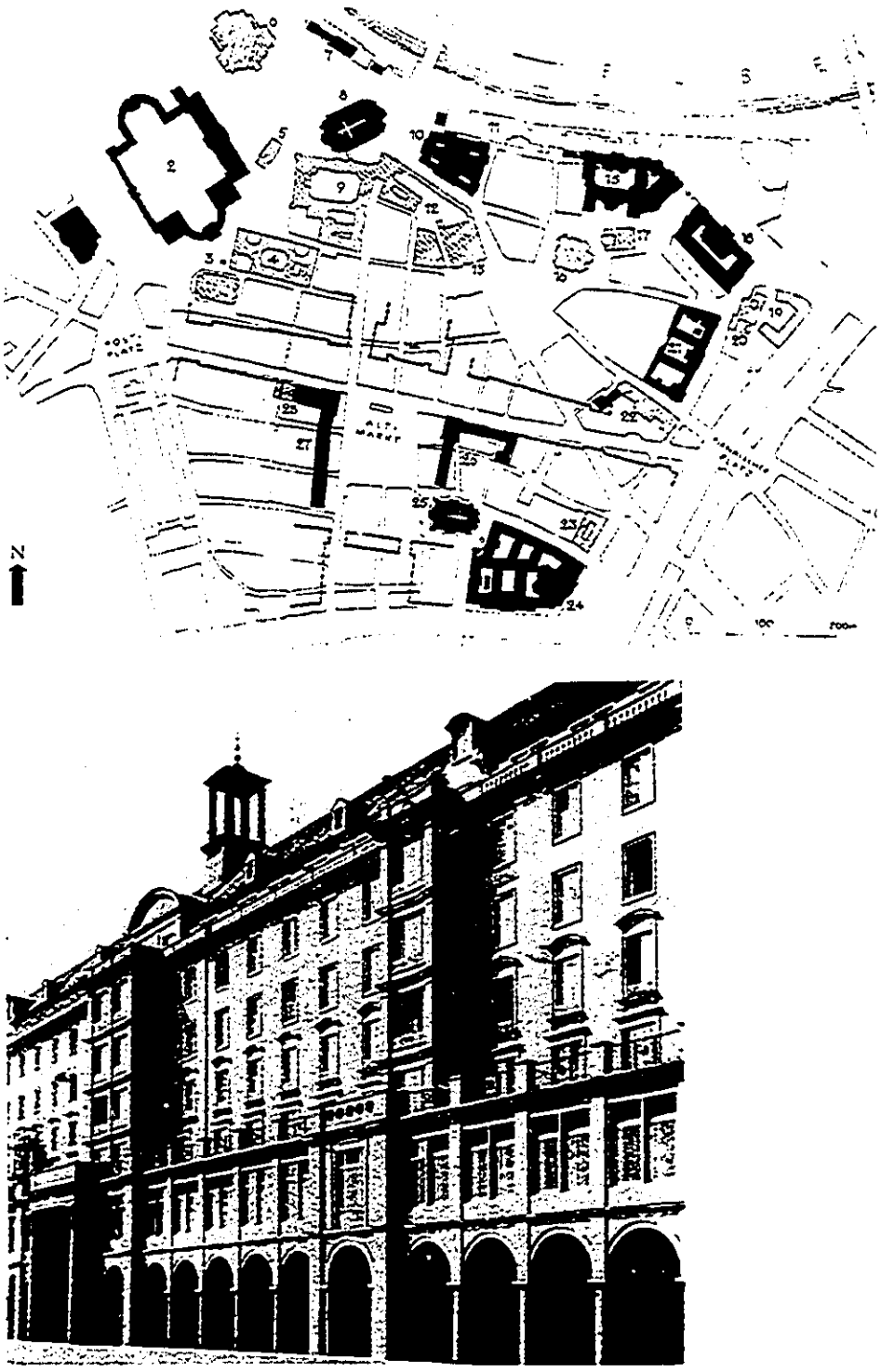

Figure 2.4. Dresden: The new urban outline drawn over the street plan before destruction, and the reconstructed urban streetscape. Source: *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities.*

architectural ideas really in tune with the modern age."[16] Needless to say, the destroyed urban fabric presented itself as the ideal terrain for implementation and completely accommodated the modern urban theories. European cities that chose modernization without devoting too much attention to historic preservation, such as Rotterdam, Hamburg and West Berlin, opted to ignore the basic spatial structure of the historic *Alstade* altogether. The destroyed old quarters were replaced by a loose spatial order bounded by traffic arteries, and the old spatial structure of streets and squares by strictly zoned districts. On such principles, the whole character of the historic city of Cologne, for example, originally derived from its small streets and single-family homes, was completely altered.[17] The medieval churches, a few secular monuments, and old burgher houses were reconstructed as isolated memories surrounded by a sea of modernity (fig. 2.5).

Furthermore, the dismissal of the historic structure of the city allowed little or no room for the recreation of the traditional mixed-used urban space, and the rebuilding of cities like Coventry was based on a two-dimensional plan dividing the city into separate zones of residential, industrial, and commercial uses (fig. 2.6).[18] Where a relatively modern street system did not exist before the war, planners continued what the bombing had begun and sacrificed damaged but restorable buildings to street widening and large, "modern" commercial complexes. In short, in the modernist vision for reconstruction, no negotiation or conciliation with history was provided for in the reconstruction plans, whose existence relied on their imposition, rather than their superposition, on the existing war-torn urban order.[19] The modernist platform flourished in its concept to erase centuries of urban life, a concept that, ironically, was the source and basis of its criticism.

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[16] Diefendorf, J.M. *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 71.

[17] Diefendorf, J.M. *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 94-100.

[18] Johnson-Marshall, P. "Coventry" in *Rebuilding Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 291-318.

[19] This approach reflected the optimism of the Modern Movement as outlined in the International Congresses for Modern Architecture (CIAM). Founded in 1928 and dedicated to the promotion of new styles, this movement represented a "fresh start" in the quest of the urban salvation of the West.

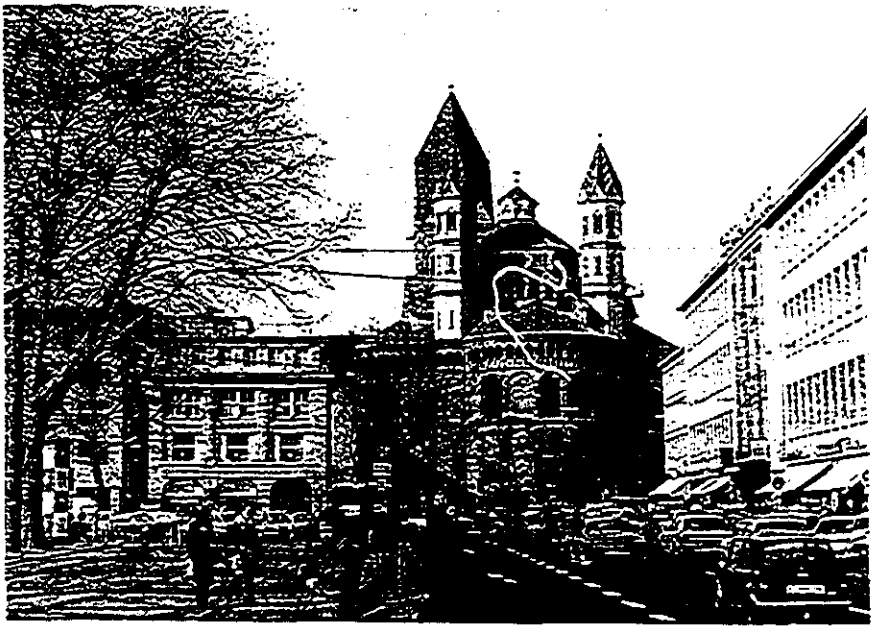

Figure 2.5. Cologne: The restored Romanesque church of St. Aposteln, built in 1021, at a corner of a busy traffic artery, contrasts with the "modern" context. Source: *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II*, 97.

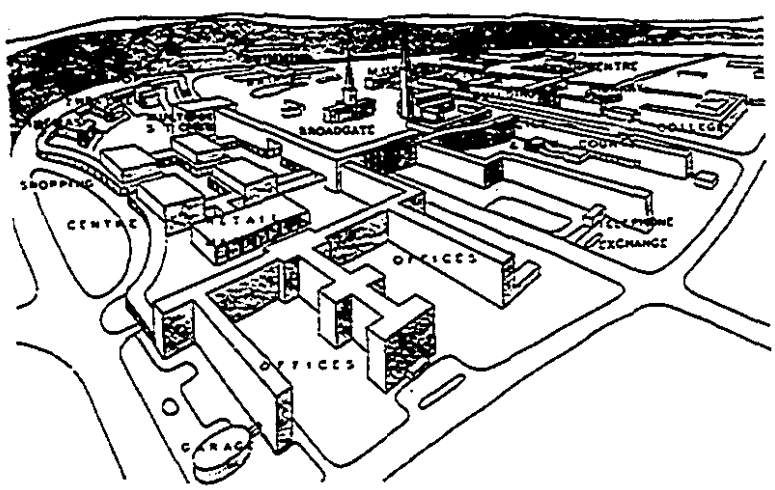


Figure 2.6. Coventry: An aerial view of the extent of bomb damage in the city centre, and a diagrammatic scheme for the functional zoning of the city, 1941. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 304, 305.

Against such a background, the rebuilding of European cities was, in essence, a continuous struggle between traditional and modern platforms, where cities experienced uneven, controversial attempts to combine modernization with historic preservation. So, as unique as the process of rebuilding each European city was -- a function of both its prewar physical structure and the degree of war damage -- so was the individualism and wide range of corresponding reconstruction plans. Just as there was no city in Europe rebuilt as an exact copy of its predecessor, each city also had its share of preserved buildings. However, there remained a striking difference in the *framework* and *spirit* of reconstruction, which was most intense in its extreme applications. Few cities, however, were willing to choose between the traditional and modern paths so clearly as Warsaw and Rotterdam.

The city of Warsaw, Poland, takes a special place among European cities destroyed during the Second World War, both in terms of the extent and methods of its destruction and of the ideology of its reconstruction. Although the larger part of Greater Warsaw was developed along modern planning principles, with wide streets, modern buildings, and highway systems, the reconstruction of the historic core of Warsaw was designed by "determined preservationism," and thus exemplified the traditionalist platform for reconstruction.[20]

Throughout history, the geographic position of Warsaw at the crossroads of the ancient European north-south and east-west routes lay at the root of its urban, economic, and cultural development, advancing from a small fishing village to become the seat of a provincial municipality, and later, the capital of a nation (fig. 2.7).[21] However, it was this same location, along routes where European wars have traditionally broken out, that also caused the city's devastation, only to be rebuilt just as many times; a price many other

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[20] Term borrowed from Jeffry Diefendorf from *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 83.

[21] For a detailed history of the urban agglomeration of Warsaw, see Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1978).

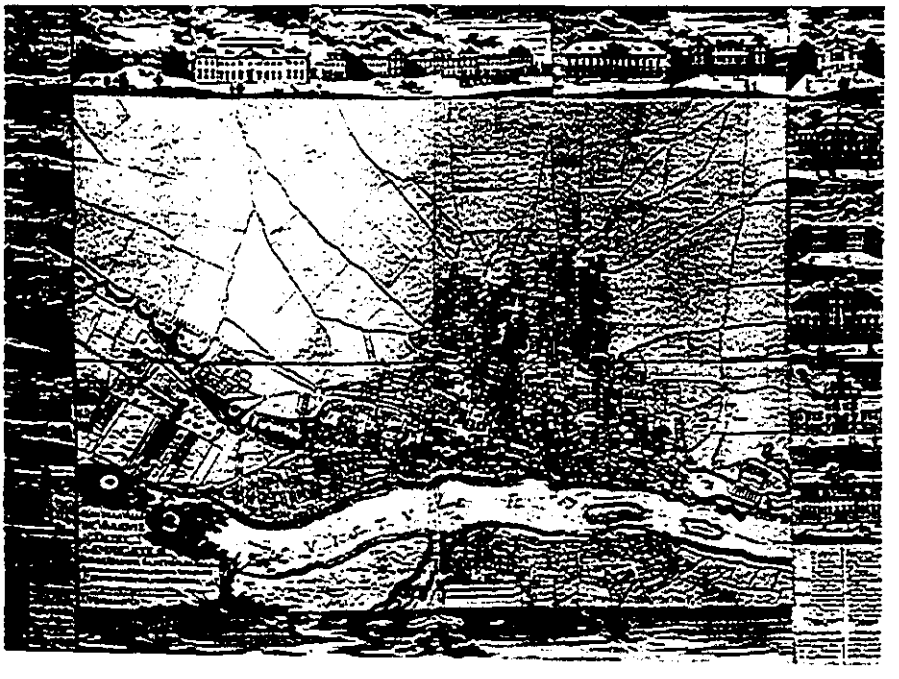

Figure 2.7. Warsaw, 1762. Source: *Warszawa: O Zniszczeniu i Odbudowie Miasta*, 17.

cities across the world have had to pay for their locale. The latest chapter of such destruction of Warsaw began on September 1, 1939, and lasted for almost six years, to be followed by 30 years of reconstruction.

The urban destruction of Warsaw at the hands of the Nazi Third Reich during World War II was unprecedented in history and has been compared to the total destruction of the city of Carthage in 146 BC by the Romans (fig. 2.8).[22] In order to appreciate this latest urban transformation of Warsaw, the destruction should be understood as an intrinsic feature of reconstruction since

> the reconstruction of the historic districts, buildings and monuments of Warsaw was carried out for the very same reasons for which they had been destroyed by the Nazis; namely their value for Polish culture.[23]

The destruction of Warsaw during the Second World War (1939-45) may be divided into three main chapters: the 1939 siege, the destruction of the Jewish Ghetto between 1942 and 1943, and the 1944 uprising. Warsaw experienced the first phase of its destruction, the siege, on the eve of the German invasion. Without warning or even officially declaring war, and despite the presence of over a million inhabitants, the German military proclaimed Warsaw a *Festung Warschau*, a fortress, in order to justify the merciless and arbitrary bombing of the city which was carried out relentlessly for almost a month. On October 1, 1939, Nazi troops marched on the besieged city, a mound of rubble on fire; 12% of all buildings were destroyed and 6,000 people were killed.[24] The German campaign to demolish the capital of Poland, to render Warsaw "no more than a geographical term on the map of Europe," however, was not only physical.[25] One of the first decrees of the occupying forces was the degradation of Warsaw to the rank of a provincial town and the bestowing on Krakow the role of the capital and the seat of the

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[22] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 257.
[23] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1978), 86.
[24] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 and Today* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1971), 19.
[25] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw Rebuilt* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1962), 9.

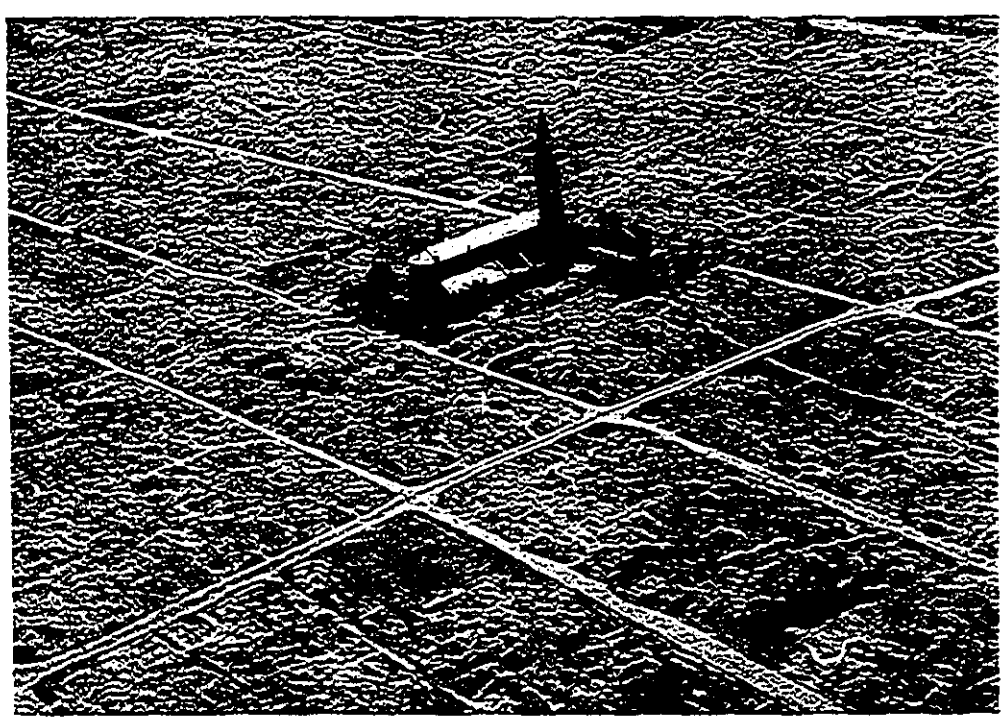

Figure 2.8. Warsaw: Muranow residential district, 1945. Source: "Varsovie ... Ville Nouvelle," 70.

German authorities. Moreover, the reconstruction of damaged buildings was prohibited and an order to destroy the Royal Castle was issued.[26]

While Varsovians were anxiously gathering the remains of their destroyed city, salvaging and secretly hiding artifacts and archives, in the faith that one day soon they could begin to reconstruct their capital, the Nazi town planning authorities were preparing designs of their own. While for centuries the task of planners was to build cities, in 1940 the German town planners were planning the destruction of a city and the extermination of its people. The so-called Pabst Portfolio, found in 1945, contained the blueprint of "A New German City" (fig. 2.9). On one-twentieth of the area of Warsaw, which in 1939 had had a population of 1,300,000, a city of 100- to 300,000 inhabitants was to be founded. A small portion of historic Warsaw on the left bank was to be preserved since the Germans classified it as an example of "German town planning," while the right bank, Praga, was to become the residential camp of 80,000 Poles reduced to serfdom.[27] Ironically, the discovery of this Nazi plan, although destructive in essence, was to play a vital, constructive role in the reconstruction of Warsaw; as much ideological, as architectural or urban. Today, this plan hangs in the Historical Museum of Warsaw.

The second wave of the destruction of Warsaw was executed between 1942 and 1943. The burning and destruction of the "Jewish Residential District," a walled area of about two square kilometers in the western part of the city centre with a population reaching 460,000 in 1941, was an integral strategy of the campaign to carry out genocide (fig. 2.10).[28] After the whole community of the Jewish Ghetto was either killed or

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[26] Baldyga, J.A., trans. *The Old Town and the Royal Castle in Warsaw* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1988). The Royal Castle, dating back to the 14th century, forms the south side of an important square in the Stare Miasto, the medieval walled centre. The more than 10,000 items saved from the interiors of the Royal Castle by civilians and staff members was later to constitute vital information on which the reconstruction of the Castle was based. The reconstruction was, however, postponed till January 1971 for economic reasons.

[27] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 and Today* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1971), 23.

[28] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 and Today* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1971), 25. Upon the request of Himler, the so-called Stroop Report was prepared in 1943 by Jurgen Stroop, SS brigade-commander and major general of the police, to undertake the destruction and burning of the ghetto.

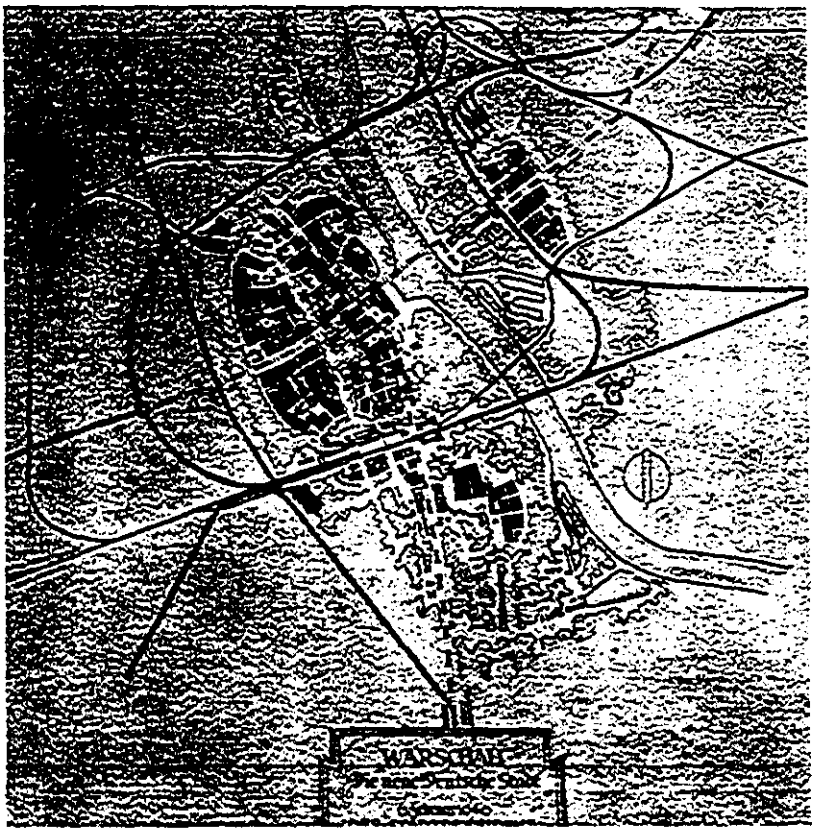


Figure 2.9. Pabst Plan for "A New German City." Source: *Warsaw 1945 and Today*, 22.

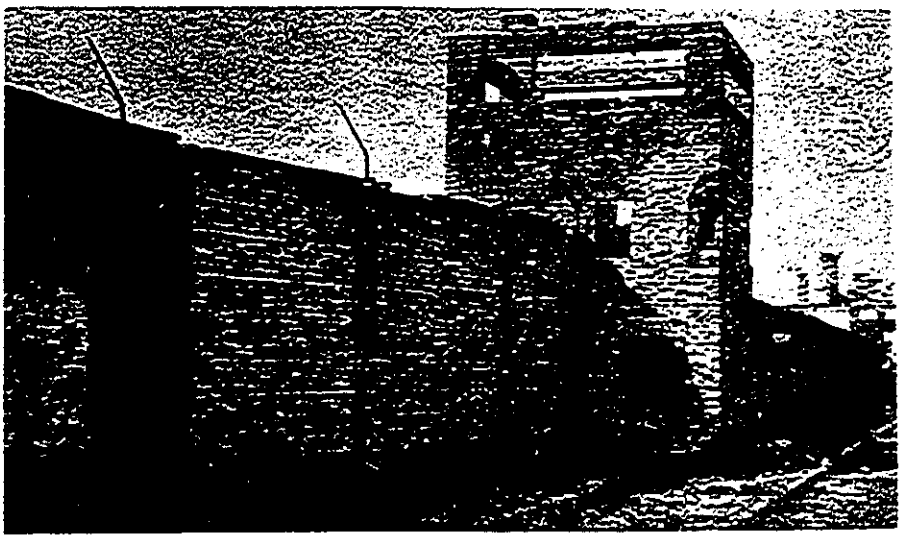

Figure 2.10. Walled Jewish residential district, 1945. Source: *Warsaw 1945 and Today*, 24.

deported, home after home, street after street, were first burned and then blown up by special destroyer detachments. After the "clean up," only four buildings were left standing, basically to house the German administration. As such, the ghetto was reduced to an open field covered with bodies and debris.

The third and last drastic chapter of the destruction of Warsaw began on August 1, 1944, with the Warsaw Uprising. After five years of German aggression, the ill-equipped Polish underground detachments took-up arms against the German army for 63 days of battle. The final and decisive attack on the uprising, however, went beyond the conventional strategies of war. On October 11, 1944, Hitler ordered the complete evacuation of the city, so that Warsaw would be pacified, that is razed to the ground while the fighting was still going on, and so as to deprive the insurgents of their hide-outs.[29] After all the material valuables of the city were shipped to Germany, special units consisting of "incendiaries" and "annihilators" went about the meticulous implementation of the plan to destroy Warsaw.

The target of this brutal attack was the historic town on the left bank of the Vistula River; the district on the right bank, Praga, escaped destruction since it housed old slums and workers' districts which were not deemed worth the effort or cost of destruction. Thus, the Old Town was divided into districts and quarters. Buildings and blocks were marked with numbers indicating the proposed order and date of destruction. Thereafter, for three months, with the help of combustible liquids and flame throwers, buildings were systematically burned and their structures were blown up (fig. 2.11).[30] Out of the 957 historic buildings, 782 were totally destroyed, and 141 partly destroyed. Only because the

[29] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw Rebuilt* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1962), 15-17. This methodical way in which the built environment was destroyed was also applied to destroy the infrastructure and open spaces. For example, tanks were used to rip out the electric and telephone cables from the earth, while special units were given the task of felling trees and destroying parks.

[30] For that purpose, technical manuals were issued on the most efficient and least costly methods of setting fires and blowing up buildings, such as the Mensebach File, found by accident in March 1945. The author, architect Alfred Mensebach, belonged to the Third Reich institution of people working in the fine arts, whose expertise and advice provided the necessary information on buildings, collections, and monuments of historical, artistic, and cultural value so that they could be destroyed first.

Figure 2.11. German destroyer units during the Warsaw Uprising, 1944. Source: *Warszawa: O Zniszczeniu i Odbudowie Miasta*, 60.

Germans ran out of time before they surrendered, did 34 buildings survive. Nevertheless, on January 16, literally on the eve of the liberation of Warsaw, the German army managed to destroy part of the Church of St. Carlo Borromeo and also burn the collection of the public library. With the destruction of approximately 85% of the building stock, the death of 22% of the population, and the loss of 38% of the national wealth, the great economic and cultural prosperity, accumulated over centuries in Warsaw since 1596, lay buried under 20 million cubic meters of rubble (fig. 2.12).[31]

As previously mentioned, this unique, premeditated, and planned destruction of Warsaw provided the very same grounds for the reconstruction campaign where "the reconstruction of historic buildings in Warsaw, irrespective of their degree of preservation, became an historical, political, emotional and moral necessity."[32] Therefore, for ideological, political, and patriotic reasons, the Varsovians chose to resurrect their capital.

In the reconstruction of Warsaw, two events were of vital importance. The first event was the spontaneous mass migration of the people of Warsaw to their city within days of the liberation.[33] Although premature -- there were 35,000 mines left by the Germans and also a severe lack of accommodation -- this movement nourished the dynamics of the reconstruction process.[34]

The second event was the issuing of two decrees in 1945, the first of which reinforced the earlier decision taken by the Polish government, even before the liberation of the left bank, to maintain Warsaw as the capital of Poland. Consequently, the Bureau for the Reconstruction of the Capital and the Reconstruction Committee were established, whose individual tasks revolved around financing, coordinating, and managing the

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[31] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 and Today* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1971), 38, 42.
[32] Baldyga, J.A., trans. *The Old Town and the Royal Castle in Warsaw* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1988), 15.
[33] Albrecht, S. and Czerwinski, A. "A Plan for a New Warsaw." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*. Vol. 12, Spring 1946, 6. The figures of this mass movement are impressive: 400,000 people returned to Warsaw within the first three months.
[34] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1962), 46.

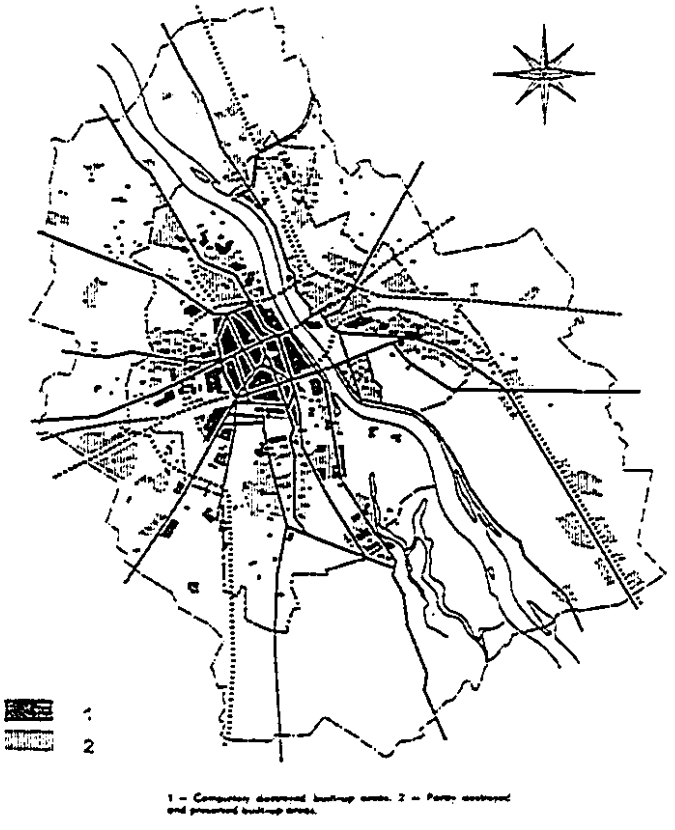


Figure 2.12. Warsaw: Destruction map, 1939-45. Source: *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 223.

rebuilding process. This first decree officially placed the rebuilding of Warsaw among the highest priorities of the Polish nation and state. Moreover, a second decree concerning property rights declared all land as communal property, except for those buildings left standing which remained the property of their previous owners. Thus, the indispensable ideal conditions of economic and legal grounds, and patriotic drive for implementing the reconstruction plan, were provided for.[35]

Like almost all postwar planning schemes in Europe, the point of departure of the reconstruction plan of Warsaw was carried out underground during the occupation and was, in turn, based on prewar planning studies.[36] The reconstruction plan itself, like that for most Polish cities, was based on a strategy of restoring the historical core and of creating a ring of new micro-communities around the periphery (fig. 2.13). The city proper, grouped around the reconstructed historical core, was planned as a political, social, economic, and administrative centre, with residential quarters in order to ensure 24-hour activity. Thus, the rebuilt, mixed-use city centre was not envisioned as a museum, nor a theatrical set, but a living part of the New Warsaw.[37] Concerning the inner city centre, the main strategy of the reconstruction plan was the recreation of the old street patterns (especially the dominating streets running either parallel or perpendicular to the Vistula River), the prewar building massing, and the street profiles.

The first era of the reconstruction of Warsaw, from 1945 to 1949, like in all other cities of post-W.W.II Europe, was marked by a desperate effort to bring the city back to life. In Warsaw, this involved liquidating street graves, de-mining streets and buildings,

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[35] Fitch, J. M. *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 400. This legal and economic background also existed in other socialist countries, such as Czechoslovakia, where the private ownership of land was almost completely eliminated, and the control of property, monuments, and sites was largely vested in the nation.

[36] In fact, the Institute for Town Planning of the Department of Architecture of the Warsaw Technical University, with the cooperation of a group of professors, assistants, and students, never ceased to function during the war, but was taken underground. This was not only motivated by the need for intellectual stimuli, but was also seen as a form of resistance and rebellion against the Germans.

[37] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1978), 86.

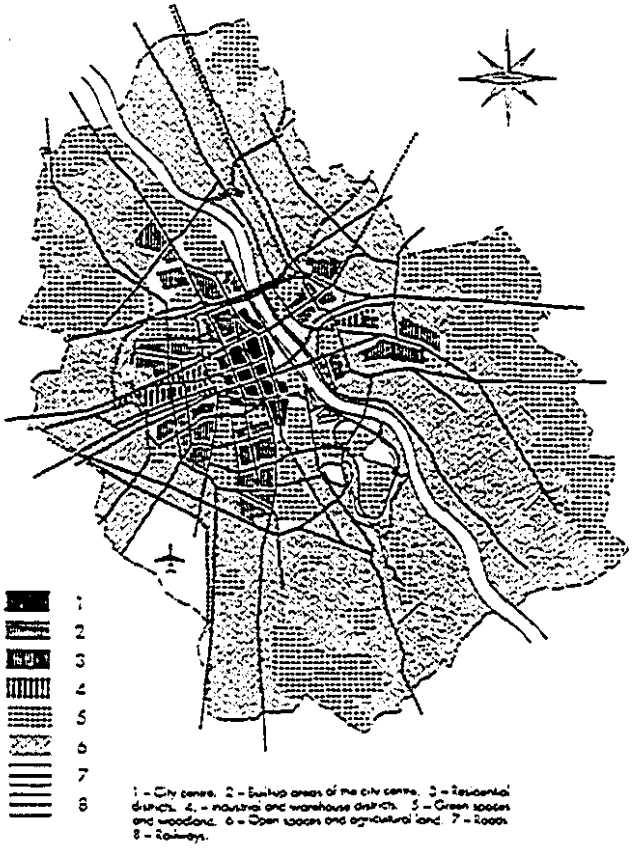


Figure 2.13. Warsaw: The first Reconstruction Plan, 1945. Source: *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, 225.

clearing rubble, and securing structures that threatened to collapse (fig. 2.14). At another level, in the desperate attempt to secure accommodation for the thousands of homeless, the restoration of burned-out skeletons and the reconstruction of partly destroyed houses took priority (fig. 2.15).

The rebuilding of Warsaw was, therefore, more a task of total reconstruction than that of restoration and preservation. Consequently, in the name of historic truth, studies and research were undertaken, not only to determine the most accurate shape of the Old Town, but also to enable the reconstruction to reflect the layers of history and to respond to contemporary needs at the same time. The operation of saving and adapting architectural relics where "every section of burned wall, every architectonic detail dug out from heaps of rubble could convey an answer to the many riddles facing the conservators," was an essential component of reconstruction (fig. 2.16).[38] This quest for archival and iconographic material was not only crucial for the physical reconstruction, but also for the economics of reconstruction.[39]

Like all the other restorations of the *Alstades* across Europe, the identical restorations were largely exterior in character and the main intent was to restore the urban streetscape (fig. 2.17). On the interior, more drastic transformations took place, since an adaptive use strategy was the only way the Poles could justify the large expenditure on reconstructing and restoring historic buildings.[40] As such, unique buildings, many dating back to the medieval and baroque periods, whether of aesthetic or historic importance, were rebuilt with new interior plans and all modern amenities such as heating and sanitary equipment. This compromise between historic shells and modern uses where "noble

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[38] Ciborowski, A. and Jankowski, S. *Warsaw 1945 and Today* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1978), 98.
[39] Kluszewski, S. "Economic Aspects of Reconstruction in Warsaw." *International Conference on Reconstruction of War-Damaged Areas 6-16 March 1986* (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1990), 147-153. Kluszewski argues that, although the precise economical appraisal was not possible at the time, the acute shortage of materials, tools, equipment, and labourers in post-W.W.II Warsaw made it economically more fe. sible to exploit every building element, to recycle debris and rubble, and even to redevelop burnt facades.
[40] Fitch, J.M. *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 384.

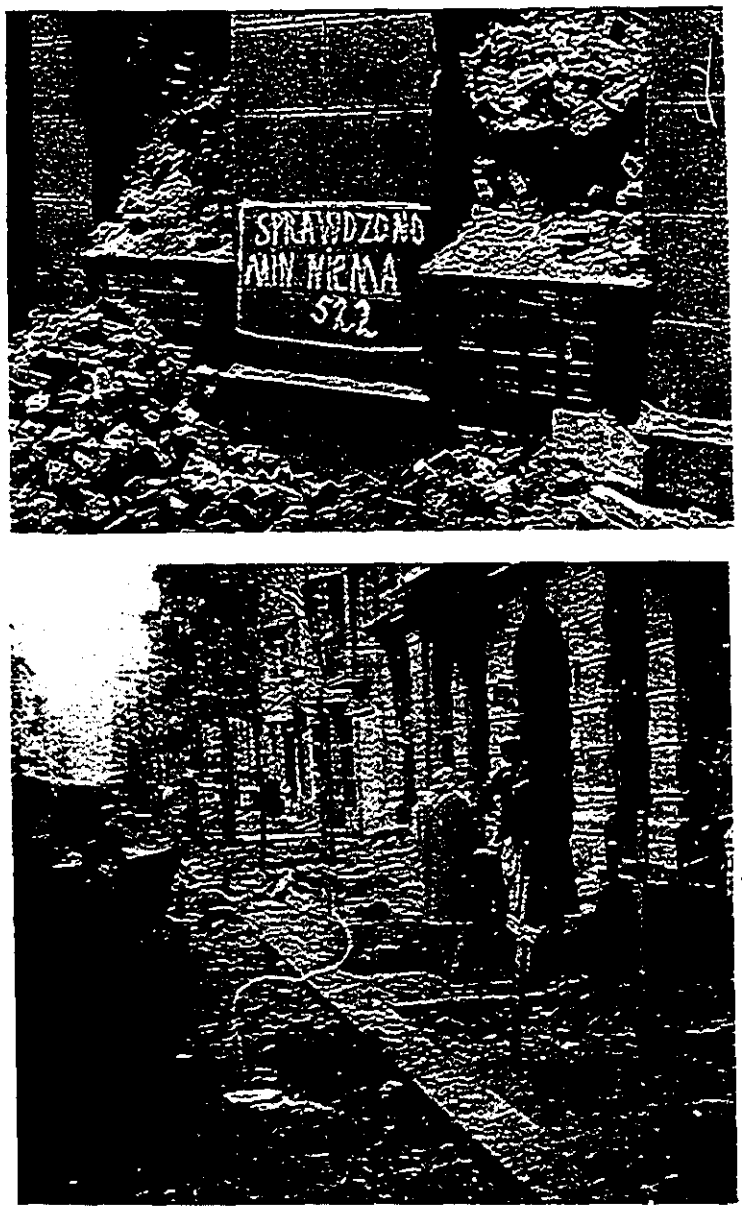


Figure 2.14. Warsaw: Postwar scenes of "de-mined" buildings and street graves. Source: *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow*, 46, 49.

Figure 2.15. Warsaw: A typical residential block in 1939 and after reconstruction in 1956. Source: *The Old Town and the Royal Castle in Warsaw*, 28, 29.

Figure 2.16. Warsaw: The salvaging of architectural relics. Source: *Warszawa Portret Miasta.*

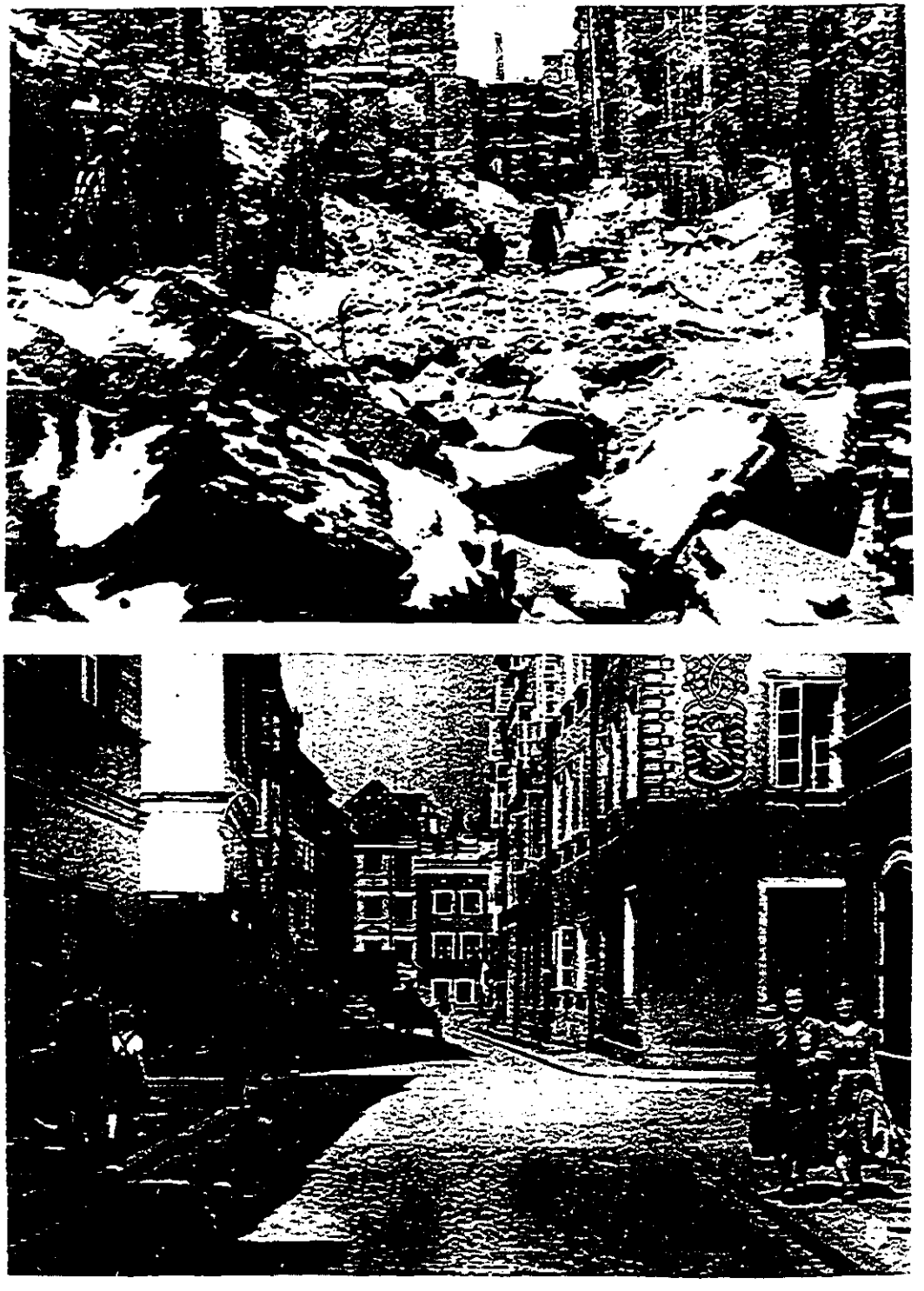

Figure 2.17. Warsaw: Urban streetscape in 1945, and after reconstruction in the early 1960s. Source: *Warszawa: O Zniszczeniu i Odbudowie Miasta*, 87.

palaces became ministries, public offices, and seats of social and cultural organizations; patrician row houses accommodated restaurants, shops, and apartments" is characteristic of the Stare Miasto of Warsaw (fig. 2.3).[41]

The extent of the work of conservationists and their determination to first save relics, then to reconstruct the historic texture of Warsaw, was not a simple venture. The difficult nature of the task of determining the balance between recreating the old city and implementing modern transformations became evident with the construction of the East-West Thoroughfare between 1948 and 1949 (fig. 2.1). With the inner-city street pattern preserved, this project called for a traffic artery that would bridge the Vistula River and tunnel under the Old Town to divert vehicles from the central core. Although the Old Town was nothing but a mound of rubble at that time, it was nevertheless earmarked for reconstruction. Since the thoroughfare cut through the historical system of streets and squares, the preservation of the integrity of the historic structures could be achieved only by the addition of both cost and time to the completion of the project. Similarly, in order to make way for the widening of a street, the baroque church of St. Anne had to be moved 50 yards so it could be saved (fig. 2.18).[42] These few examples are indications of the extent to which the traditionalists were determined, at all costs and hardships, to carry through the resurrection of Warsaw.

A key factor that facilitated the reproduction of historic Warsaw was the availability of extensive reference documentation. The sources for such visual archival material were quite diverse. The survival of the records of the architectural students at the Polytechnic, who for years had been required to make measured drawings of the historic buildings in the Stare Miasto, provided an important reference. This study to document

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[41] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 266.

[42] Fitch, J. M. *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 129. This was accomplished by first pouring the foundations at the new site, then with the help of proper bracing to prevent twisting and bending, rolling the church to its new site and lowering it in place.

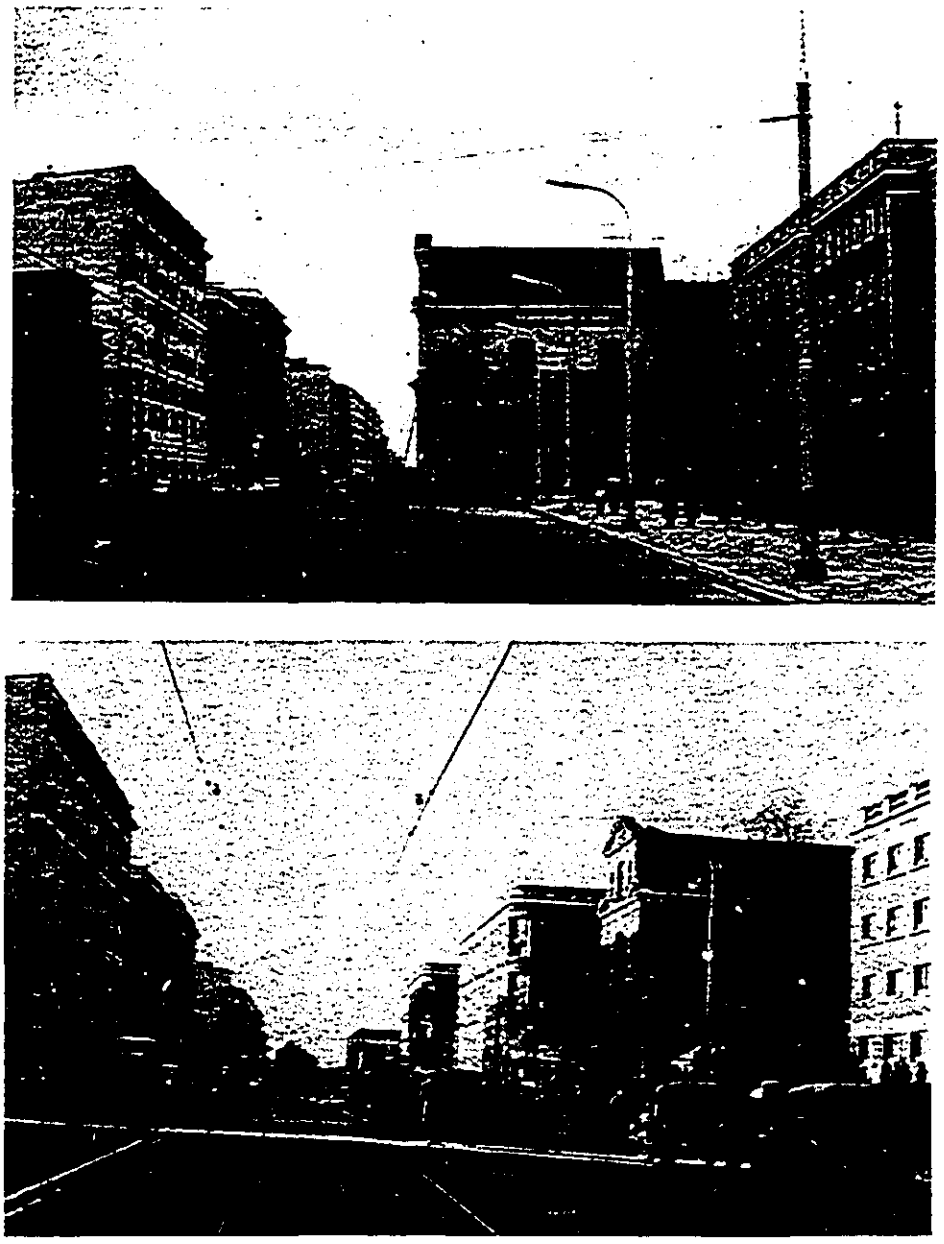

Figure 2.18. Warsaw: The relocation of the baroque Church of St. Anne. Source: *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World*, 129.

the built heritage took on a patriotic edge throughout the occupation, within the efforts of the Underground University. Even during the uprising in 1944, special underground units were assigned the task of saving documentary material of historic buildings. Among the most useful documents in the rebuilding of Warsaw, and also Dresden for that matter, were the paintings of Bernardo Belotto (1720-1780), who had worked in Warsaw in the 1760s and 1770s (fig. 2.19). His views of the various sites and monuments of the city were so detailed that they were used by conservationists as reliable evidence of vanished monuments.[43]

Public participation in these early postwar years also played a key role in reconstruction and did not stop at clearing rubble, laying bricks, or planting trees (fig. 2.20). By law, the completed plan for reconstruction had to be announced and displayed for public criticism and approval.[44] All objections and suggestions had to be either complied with or presented to the higher authorities for revision. This public participation only enhanced the feeling of national cohesiveness and sense of purpose of the people of Warsaw.

In Warsaw, it is evident that "rebuilding (was) an ardent act of self-assertion rather than a detached study in town planning, a work of the heroic rather than the contemplative temper."[45] While fully aware that these historic reproductions were not authentic inasmuch as they had been recreated, the recognition of their importance in reasserting the national pride, confidence, and identity of the Poles was crucial. In this way, on a medieval plan, a new city, partly Baroque and partly late Renaissance, arose.[46] The reconstruction of

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[43] Fitch, J.M. *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 388-389. Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 265.

[44] Albrecht, S. and Czerwinski, A. "The Plan of New Warsaw." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*. Vol. 12, Spring 1946, 6.

[45] G.M.K.? "A Plan for Warsaw." *Architects' Journal*. Vol. 103, No. 2670, March 28, 1946.

[46] Baldyga, J.A., trans. *The Old Town and the Royal Castle in Warsaw* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1988). The detailed inventory during the first year of reconstruction uncovered a majority of surviving medieval urban elements (cellars, pieces of elevations, gable walls, medieval defensive systems) which justified the adoption of a medieval urban structure while reviving the gothic character of construction.

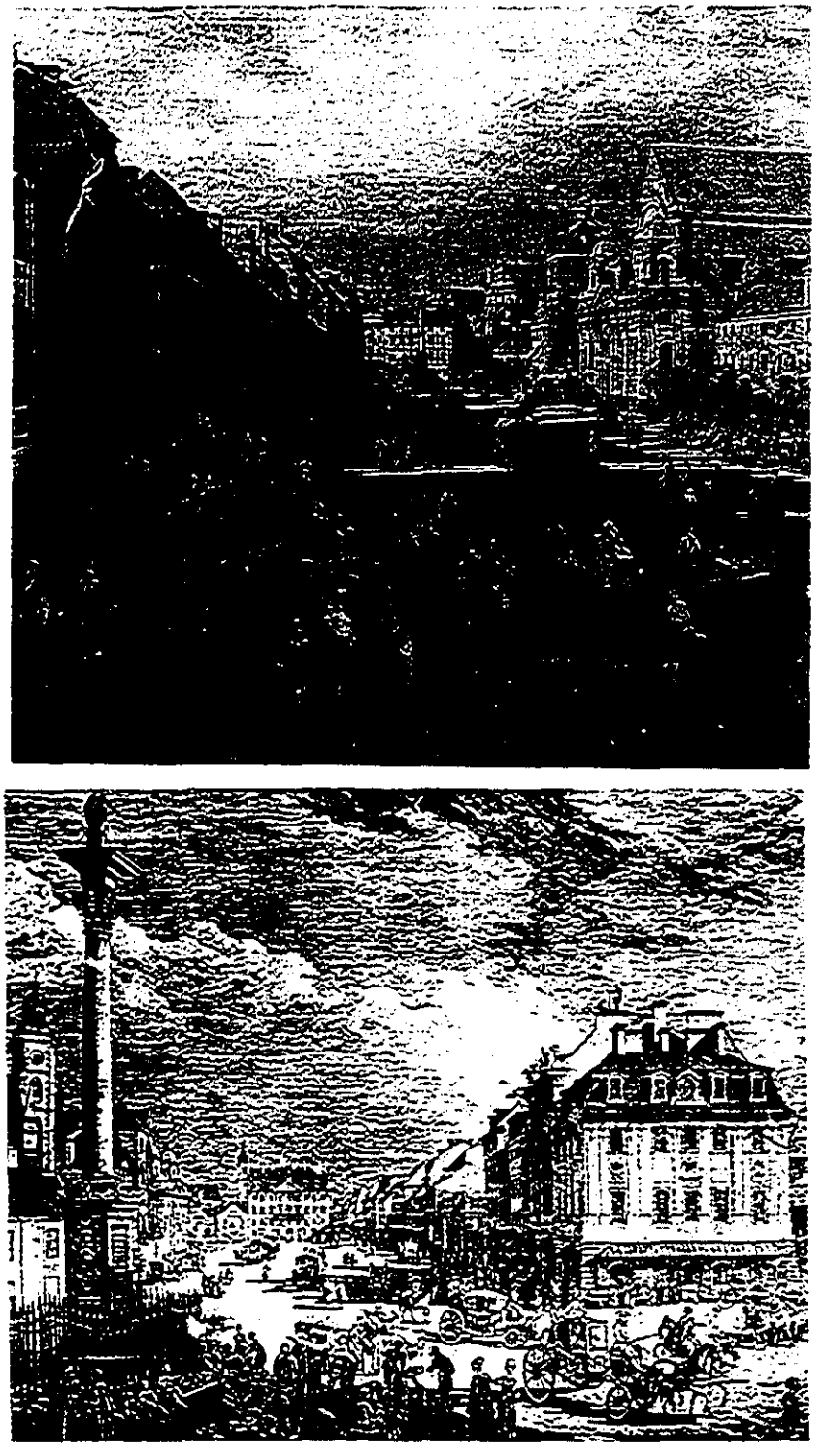

Figure 2.19. Belotto: Views of Warsaw in the 1760s and 1770s. Sources: *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History*, 188, and *Warsaw 1945 and Today*, 16.

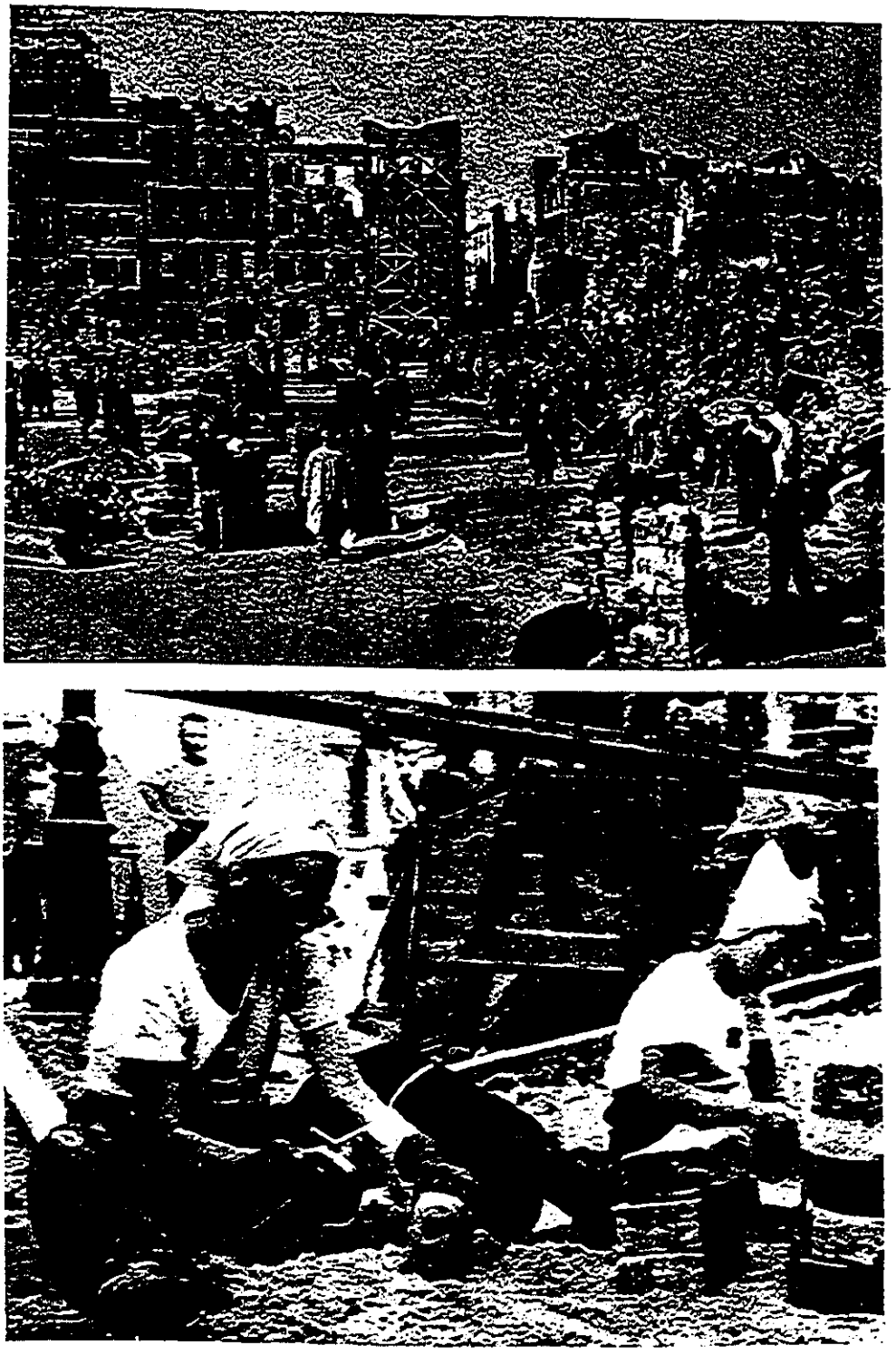

Figure 2.20. Warsaw: Public participation in the rebuilding process. Source: *Warsaw 1945 Today and Tomorrow*, 56. Recycling rubble into building material. Source: *Warszawa Portret Miasta.*

Warsaw, no matter how problematic for ideologists, remains the symbol of the national rebirth of Poland and proof that older complexes can continue to accommodate contemporary needs.[47]

While Warsaw symbolized the traditionalists' aspirations and views on post-W.W.II rebuilding, the city of Rotterdam in the Netherlands emerged as a manifesto of the modernist approach in postwar city planning. Rotterdam was identified as a "laboratory for experimental architecture," in which "the city of the future was not to be sacrificed to the cravings of nostalgia and to the memories of a deprived generation."[48] Although an aberration from its "conventional" development of superimposed historic layers over centuries, this radical urban concept for the new city constituted, nevertheless, the latest state of the continuous urban existence of Rotterdam.

Strategically situated at the mouth of one of Europe's great waterways, Rotterdam developed, through the ages, into a principal exchange between ocean-going traffic and inland industrial markets (fig. 2.21).[49] A main turning point in this development was the completion of a deep waterway to the sea, the *Nieuwe Waterweg*, between 1869 and 1890. Consequently, the harbour witnessed an unprecedented rate of development, which in turn, generated the development of light industry related to shipping and the building of tenement housing for the influx of workers. As such, by the turn of the twentieth century, Rotterdam became a congested industrial city, developing along the lines of its triangular structure, the base of which was an immense dike, with numerous bridges and canals transversing the urban tissue (fig. 2.22).

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[47] Baldyga, J.A, trans. *The Old Town and the Royal Castle in Warsaw* (Warsaw: Arkady Press, 1988), 31. In recognition of the unique role of Warsaw in preserving Polish heritage and in contributing to that of world heritage, the International World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) placed Warsaw on the List of Monuments of the World Heritage in 1981.

[48] Taverne, E.R.M. "The Lijnbaan (Rotterdam): A Prototype of a Postwar Urban Shopping Centre" in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. J.M. Diefendorf (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 146.

[49] For a detailed account of the urban development of Rotterdam, see Gutkind, E.A. *Urban Development in Western Europe: The Netherlands and Great Britain* (New York: Free Press, 1971), 89-92.

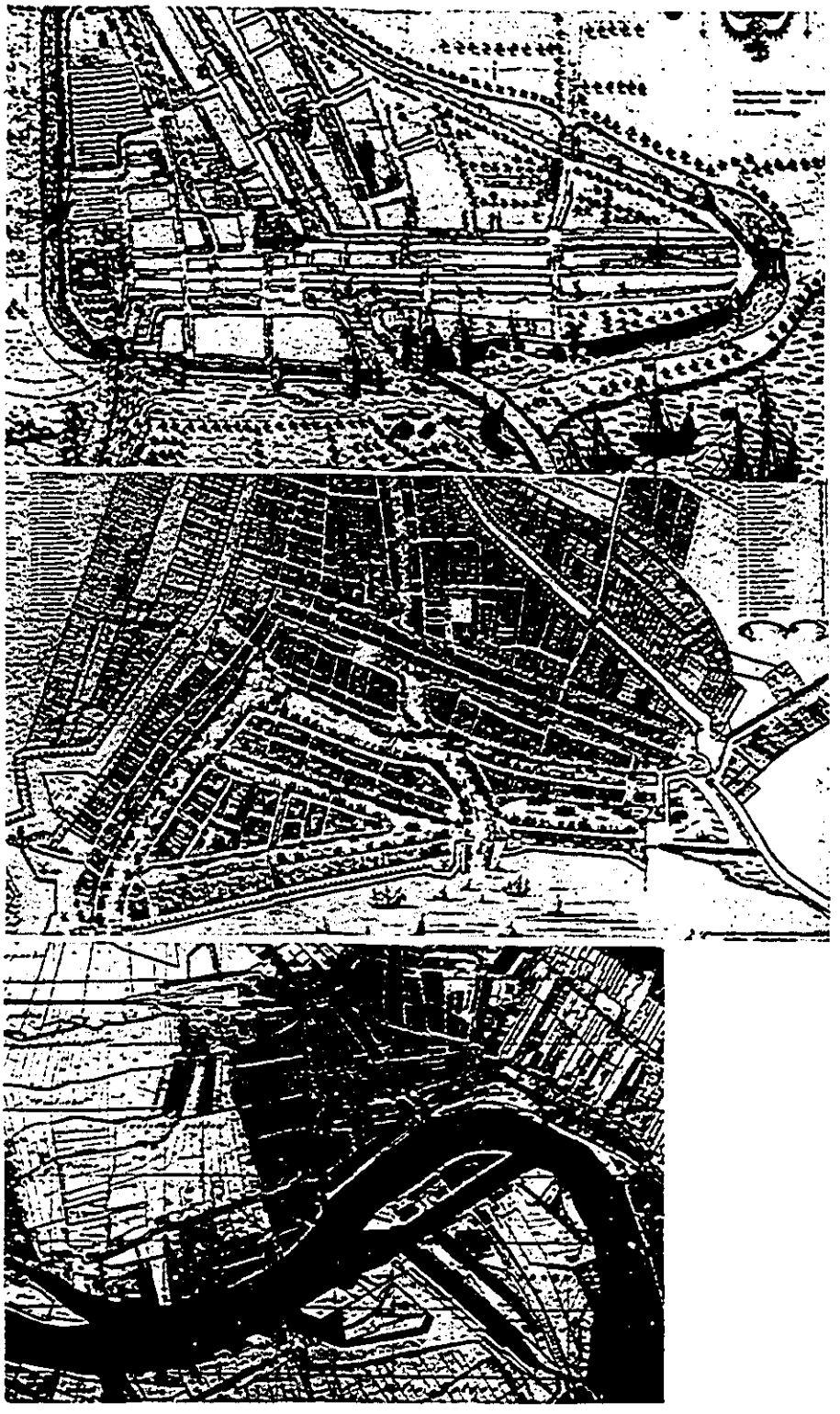

Figure 2.21. The urban evolution of Rotterdam: A modest medieval port surrounded by a wall and a canal moat, 1560; a prosperous seaport, 1649; and a world port with docks, shipyards and a new canal in 1887. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 327, 328.

Figure 2.22. Rotterdam: A typical scene of the prewar city centre with the old street pattern lined by merchants' houses. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 328.

In May 1940, this thriving seaport of 600,000 inhabitants became the first "blitzed" city in the world (fig. 2.23). Rotterdam and its port were obliterated; 11,000 buildings were destroyed, including 27,000 dwellings, leaving only scattered urban fragments.[50] Nevertheless, only four days after the raid, city architect Willem Gerrit Witteveen was commissioned to draw up the plan for reconstruction. Although the first draft of the scheme was presented three weeks later, it was not implemented until the end of the war. In the meantime, planning studies continued under the leadership of Cornelis Van Traa, the head of the newly-formed Town Planning and Reconstruction Department. These studies were conducted underground and only saw the light in May 1946, when a plan known as the "Basic Scheme for the Reconstruction of the City Rotterdam" was approved by the City Council and afterwards endorsed by the government.

Completely levelled by high explosives in just over seven minutes, the square-mile of the city centre of Rotterdam was destined to be rebuilt entirely along modern lines. The city planners called for additional demolition and a radical redesign for the city centre, including a traffic roundabout and wide boulevards to draw people to the redeveloped central area. This comprehensive city planning could have only been implemented with specific provisions for property ownership. For that purpose, the government made a compulsory purchase order by military ordinance over most of the blitzed central area, a system which the Germans had adopted as a legal set-up during their occupation.[51] All properties were thus entitled to war damage compensation, on the condition that the owners spend the equivalent sum on new construction first, so as to prevent the money being used for other purposes. This so-called mechanism of "delayed compensation" was not paid immediately, but was inscribed in the "Great Book of Reconstruction," which

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[50] Johnson-Marshall, P. *Rebuilding Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 329.
[51] Breitling, P. "Lessons from Reconstruction in Europe" in *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, ed. F. Ragette (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983), 59. The German Government had declared that all land was temporarily expropriated, while offering landlords and tenants shares equivalent to their prior holdings.

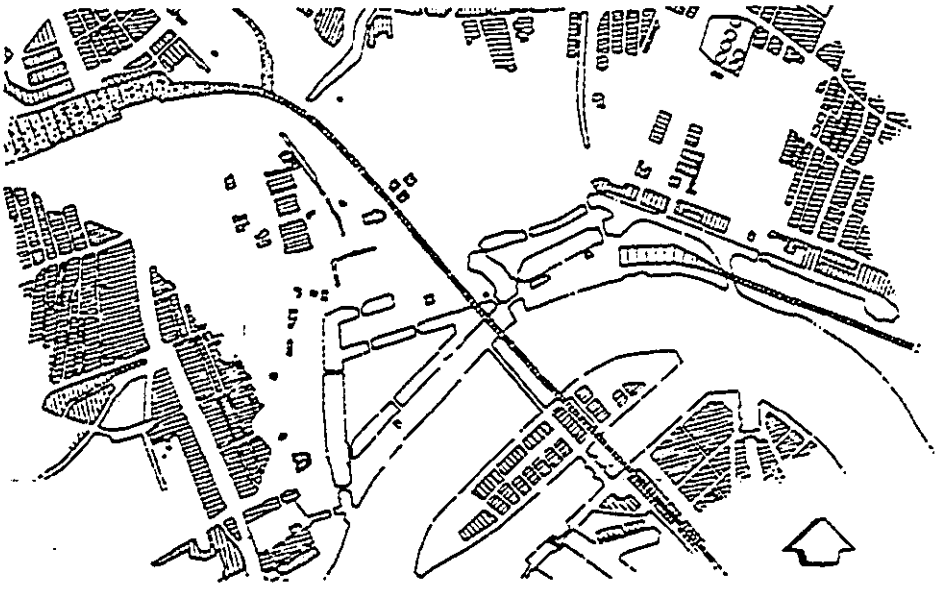

Figure 2.23. Rotterdam: Plan of the blitzed city centre, 1940, and a view from the south showing the surviving Town Hall, Post Office, and Stock Exchange in the foreground. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 332, 329.

became the sole guarantor of the owners' rights.[52] Under such terms, every landlord was to receive a new site equivalent in value to the prewar site (as that value which existed prior to the bombing), but not necessarily in the same location. After acquiring the land, which later extended beyond the city limits to the satellite communities, the city would plan the development, build the roads, and lay the infrastructure, and then lease or sell the land for further development, in compliance with the master scheme.[53] As such, the city of Rotterdam presented itself as a true *tabula rasa*, both physically and economically.

The scope of the plan was the devastated outline of the historic triangle inscribed in the old fortifications (fig. 2.24). Bounded by the River Maas on the south, the raised railway transversed this triangular area diagonally. Although according to Witteveen, "the original, naturally-formed character of the old central city behind the dike with all its vital elements will be retained (and) merely be put into a framework which benefits our time," the actual result was that the old street structure was totally ignored by Van Traa and the new plan was inserted, instead, on a large-scale grid.[54] This grid, which opened up in front of public buildings to provide for public space, comprised a series of multi-level crossings, roundabouts, and highways. Furthermore, a system of secondary roads gave access to the quadrilaterals formed by the intersection of the three east-west and three north-south roads.[55]

After setting the framework of construction, building in the first postwar years remained minimal and mainly included the construction of a group of apartments, a bank, and two stores in the central area.[56] Since the rebuilding of Rotterdam was an act of

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[52] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 263.

[53] For the purposes of widening streets and building modern structures, the city re-plotted property lines since the relatively small parcels of the historic urban structure proved inadequate to cope with the dramatic change of scale.

[54] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 263.

[55] Johnson-Marshall, P. "Rotterdam" in *Rebuilding Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 319-348.

[56] The rebuilding of the port of Rotterdam was to gain prime importance in this phase. Although largely destroyed in the 1940 air raid, the remaining one-third of the piers as well as the remnants of the

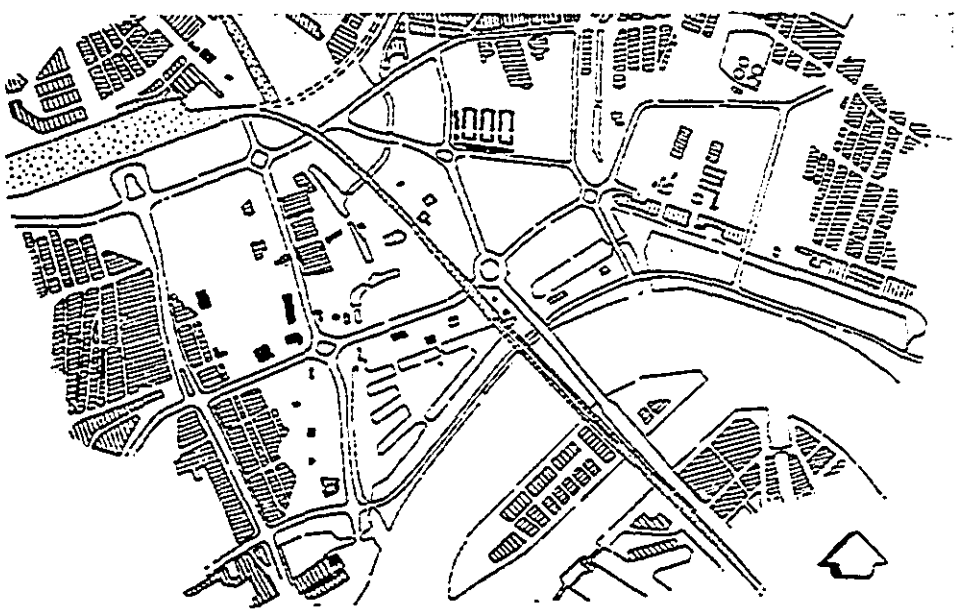

Figure 2.24. Rotterdam: Reconstruction Plan, 1945. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 332.

almost totally new construction, the making of the new city progressed well beyond the first postwar years. The 1950s were marked by the construction of a few projects that highlighted the rebuilding of the whole city (fig. 2.25). The vertical architectural character and scale of construction in postwar Rotterdam was exemplified by the *Groothandelsgebouw*, or the Wholesale Building, built in 1950 (fig. 2.26). A mega-structure enclosing five acres within nine floors of warehouses, showrooms, offices, commercial space, and parking, the Wholesale Building reveals the experimental approach to design common in postwar Rotterdam.

Another project was the *Coolsingel*, the traditional market street of Rotterdam on the site of the historic western moat. While retained as the main shopping street, it was transformed into a traffic artery (fig. 2.27). The only three buildings to survive the blitz, the Town Hall, the Central Post Office, and the Stock Exchange, faced this street (fig. 2.23).[57] Even though the *Coolsingel* reflected the aspirations of the modernist platform to adopt a new urban order, the theory of the rebuilding of Rotterdam was best represented in a single project: the new pedestrian shopping centre known as the *Lijnbaan*.

Designed by the architectural firm of Van den Broek and Bakema, the whole cruciform layout of the *Lijnbaan* was conceived as one mega-shopping centre (fig. 2.28). The height of the buildings immediately aligning this pedestrian complex was restricted to two storeys and consisted of a modular design of 1.1 meter pre-cast reinforced concrete structural grid, for both economic and aesthetic purposes. One of the branches of the *Lijnbaan* gradually increased in width to form the plaza facing the City Hall on the *Coolsingel* to the east (fig. 2.29). The buildings increased in height as they approached the City Hall, thereby creating the transition in scale for the pedestrian from the intimate to the

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equipment were completely blown-up by the German troops in 1944. Nevertheless, reconstruction began in 1945, and by 1949, not only was the port rebuilt and its docks refurbished with the most modern cargo-handling equipment and facilities in Europe at the time, but it was also enlarged.

[57] Johnson-Marshall, P. *Rebuilding Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 329. Although the *Bijenkorf* Store, which also faced the Coolsingel, was only half destroyed, it was subsequently demolished to make way for the new *Bijenkorf*, situated between the *Coolsingel* and the *Lijnbaan*.

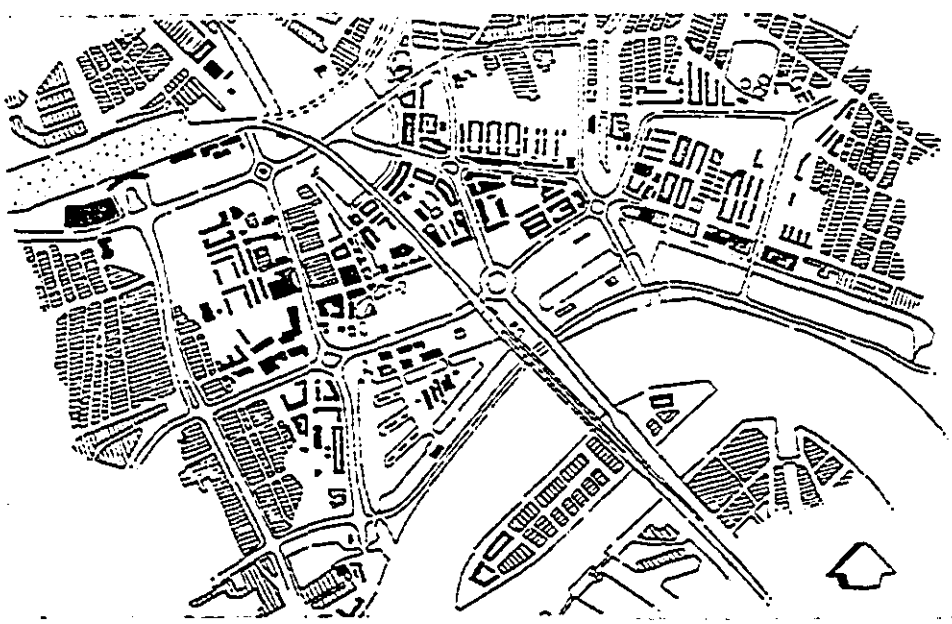

Figure 2.25. Rotterdam: City Plan, 1955. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 333.

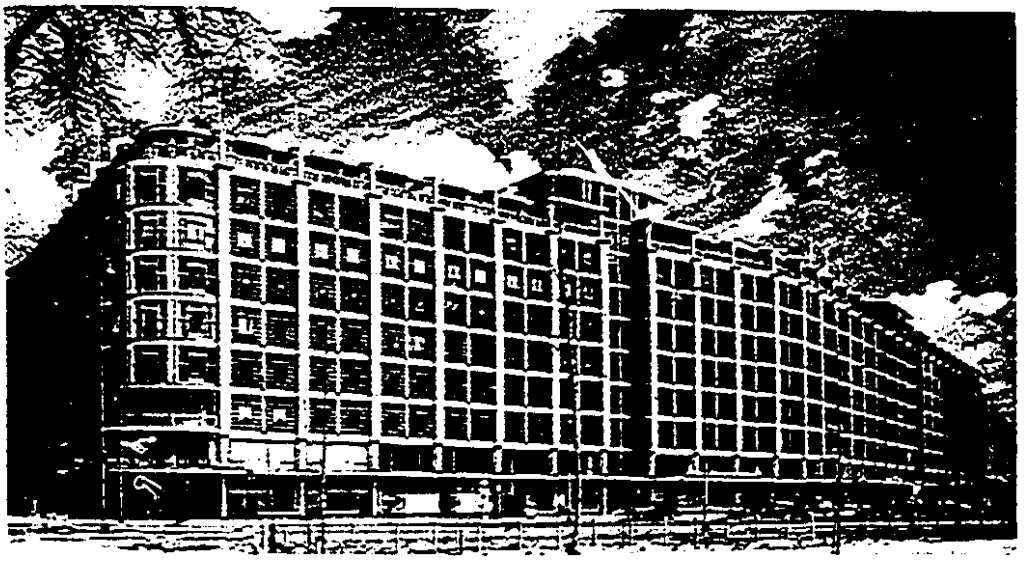

Figure 2.26. Rotterdam: Wholesale Building. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 343.

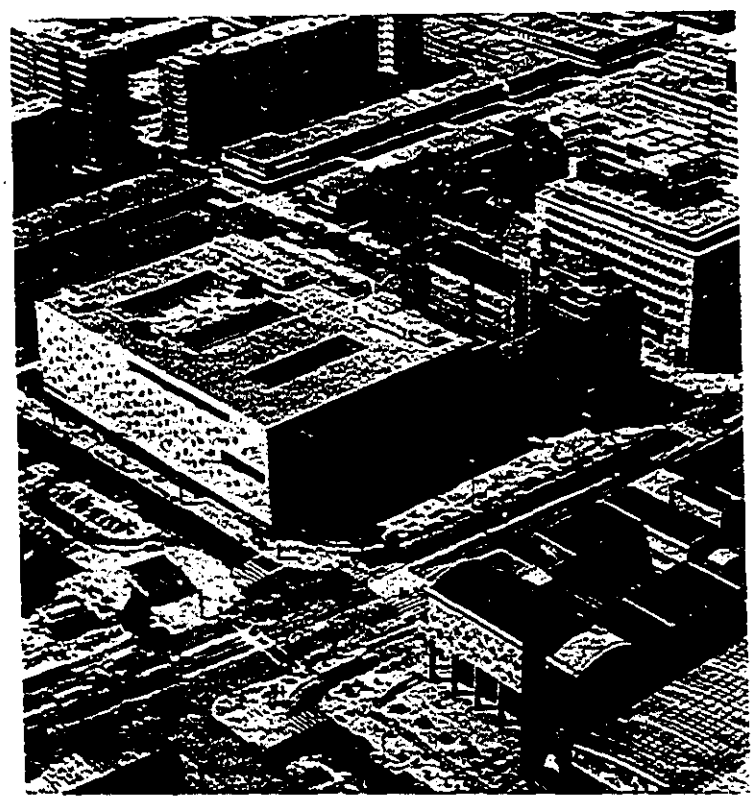

Figure 2.27. Rotterdam: View from the south-east of the Coolsingel (the main commercial street) in the foreground, and the Lijnbaan (the pedestrian shopping centre) in the background. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 336.

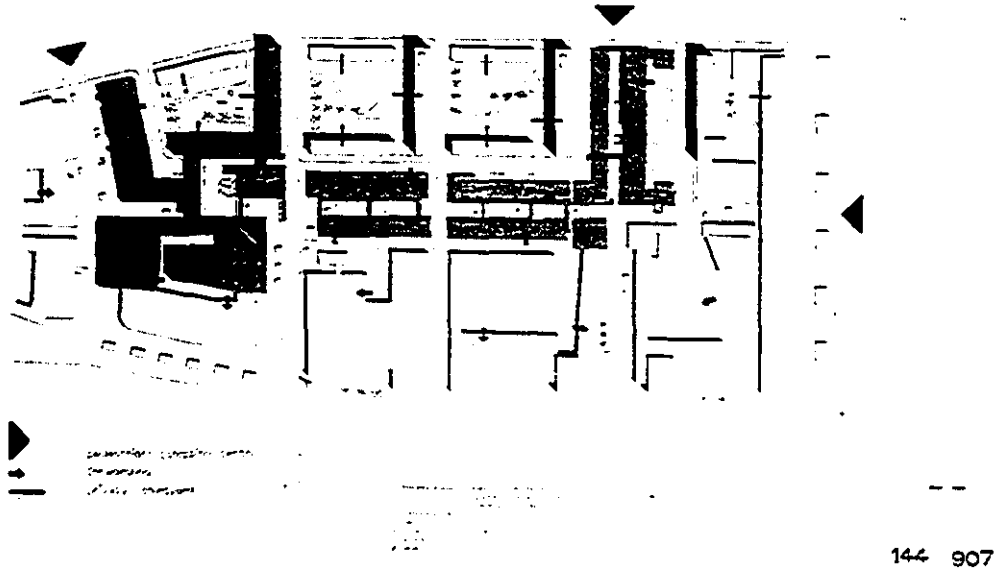


Figure 2.28. Rotterdam: Plan of the Lijnbaan. Source: *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*. The Lijnbaan at ground level. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 73.

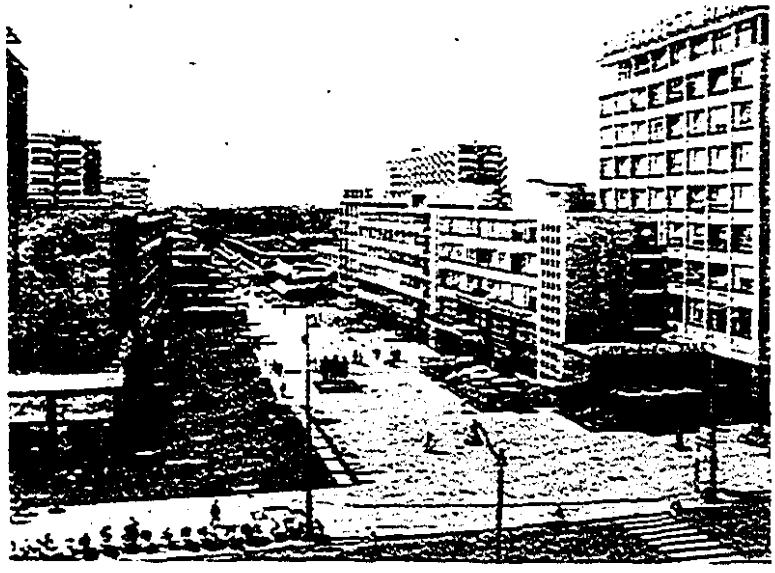

Figure 2.29. Rotterdam: Town Hall Place. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 338.

monumental. Opening in 1953, and given its design and scale, the *Lijnbaan* emerged as the "metaphor for the harmonious city" of the modern Rotterdam.[58]

The full emergence of the modern vision of the city continued well into the 1960s, when the main development focused on filling in the missing elements of the comprehensive urban design (fig. 2.30). One of the concepts of the plan was to open up the city to the river on the south through a transportation infrastructure. This was achieved by building three tunnels; the first, the Mass tunnel, opened in 1962 for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians, the second, the 1300 meter-long Benelux tunnel, opened in 1967 in the west of the city, and a third tunnel for the new subway system opened in 1968 near the city centre.

In retrospect, the destruction and subsequent reconstruction of Rotterdam gave birth to an entirely new, efficient commercial and cultural centre, incorporating all the concepts of the modern planners: a reduction in density, an extensive network of infrastructure and highways, large-scale, economically-feasible buildings, and only three restored historic buildings. Besides these accomplishments, Rotterdam remains the example of a functioning solution, especially concerning the economic and management side of reconstruction. According to the modernist visions, Rotterdam was the ideal modern city, for "here at last is one blitzed city which started on the right foot; which bought all its land first, and then planned boldly and comprehensively."[59]

Both Warsaw and Rotterdam are exemplary manifestations of the two extreme platforms for post-W.W.II reconstruction in Europe not only because of their physical achievements, but because of their contributions to urban continuity. In other words, the chapter of postwar reconstruction in Europe constitutes only a fragment of the continuous process of maintaining and managing the built environment. As such, the first decade or so

[58] Taverne, E.R.M. "The Lijnbaan (Rotterdam): A Prototype of a Postwar Urban Shopping Centre" in *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, ed. J.M. Diefendorf (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 152. Taverne analyses the Lijnbaan in the context of Dutch architecture, and classifies it as an aberration from the form of the prewar Dutch metropolis and as a prototype of the postwar shopping centre.
[59] Johnson-Marshall, P. *Rebuilding Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 323.

Figure 2.30. Rotterdam: City Plan, 1964. Source: *Rebuilding Cities*, 333.

of postwar rebuilding in both cities merged, in time, into the complex course of urban evolution. In this sense, the terminal point of the reconstruction of European cities has not yet been reached and is still in the making.[60]

Given the enormous challenge presented to postwar planners of housing thousands of homeless, of rebuilding schools, hospitals, and basic infrastructure, Europe was re-urbanized in less than a decade and although many scars were yet not healed, in the quantitative sense and in terms of speed, post-W.W.II reconstruction in Europe should be considered a great success. However, it is the *qualitative* dimension of the reconstruction that has generated an ongoing debate, which is still very much alive in the context of urban reconstruction of war-torn cities today.

This qualitative criticism applied to both platforms of architectural design, to the literal reconstruction or restorations and also to the modern constructions. The former was criticized for lack of imagination and the latter for imagination that lacked character. On the one hand, the reconstruction of Warsaw was seen as an "unnatural" attempt to control and regulate the process of change. Kostof underlined this argument against the conservation of cities by stating that

> they (cities) are live, changing things - not hard artifacts in need of prettification and calculated revision. Cities are never still, they resist efforts to make neat sense out of them ... Between conservation and process, process must have the final word.[61]

In his manifesto entitled "War and Architecture (Part I: Meditations and Principles), the architect Lebbeus Woods presents his case against restoration by further arguing that the complex character of the historic city, achieved through innumerable

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[60] "Berlin." *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. No. 297, February 1995, 45-92. After 50 years of physical, social, and political ruptures, the issues of reconstruction are still very much alive today in the city of Berlin, for example. It is a reflection of a post-W.W.II city faced with the dilemma of restructuring its identity, cultural heritage, and memory, in a viable physical, political, and economic environment more than 50 years after the end of the war.

[61] Kostof, S. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1992), 305.

layers over time, can never be replaced by one single gesture of reconstruction.[62] This much-desired urban complexity that the traditionalists sought to recreate can only be *earned* through time since "a town may be planned and built within a few years, but a city is almost inevitably a matter of generations."[63]

On the other hand, the criticism that was most applicable to the modernist platform as manifested in Rotterdam was that modern architecture and urban planning had become purely mechanical and industrial in technique and expression, and lacked the essential components of memory and continuity. In discarding the historic urban traditions of mixed-use, multi-layered, hybrid fabrics, and in sacrificing the built heritage in the name of traffic and technical improvements, modern interventions complemented the drastic efforts and impact of the war to obliterate European cities. Just as the traditionalists sought the impossible in recreating the past, the modernists also sought the impossible in erasing it.

Furthermore, the deficiency of imaginative postwar architecture may be attributed to two main factors: the urgency and haste of reconstruction, and the preoccupation of actually building rather than engaging in an open-ended debate over style and aesthetics. In *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II*, historian Jeffry Diefendorf further argues that the postwar circumstances called for an architecture of humility and modesty, especially in a beaten country like Germany, since

> societies that energetically produced creative, imaginative architecture - such as Renaissance Florence, Amsterdam in Holland's Golden Age, or New York and Chicago in the early twentieth century - were relatively wealthy and dynamic, and both individuals and the society as a whole exuded self-confidence and achievement.[64]

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[62] Woods, L. "War and Architecture (Part I: Meditations and Principles)." *Pamphlet Architecture 15* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 10.

[63] Diefendorf, J.M., ed. *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), 12. According to Diefendorf, not only was the total reconstruction of cities artificial, but so was their rebuilding on a specific ideal image or glorious moment of their past. Moreover, in his chapter entitled "Reconstruction of the City Centre of Dresden: Planning and Building During the 1950s," Jurgen Paul argues that this "freezing" in time is evident in Dresden, a nineteenth-century city destroyed in 1945 which was reconstructed as a baroque city, complete with its aristocratic palaces and churches.

[64] Diefendorf, J.M. *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 278.

Hence, whether the ideal images of the last generation of modernist architects and planners, as manifested in Rotterdam, "have proved, on experiment, aesthetically depressing and socially valueless, despite their sanitary or technical excellence and superficial order," or whether Warsaw has been "unnaturally" recreated to satisfy the whims of the urban tourists and the nostalgic, remains debatable.[65] Since all urban structures, even those untouched by war, evolve, as do aesthetic values and standards, an evaluation of the shape of reconstruction is somehow arbitrary. The value of both Warsaw and Rotterdam, however, is not as an end in themselves, as much as in these cities' experimental approach and contribution to the theory and process of postwar urban reconstruction in the twentieth century.

The experience of the post-W.W.II rebuilding of Europe sheds new light on the reconstruction of Beirut since the issues raised by the comparative analysis of European models for reconstruction has no spatial or temporal limits. Although advocated as an optimal balance between the two previously discussed platforms for reconstruction in post-W.W.II Europe, the rebuilding of Beirut is in fact a stark expression of the modern strategy to erase the memory and physical existence of centuries of urban life.[66] In the case of Beirut, the strategy to modernize the city has involved the installation of a new infrastructure and a road network, and also the preservation of isolated historic buildings in a sea of modernity. The unnecessary demolition of restorable buildings, the re-parceling of land for modern development, the eviction of the local population, and the proposed economically-inspired urban imagery are only examples of how "modernization" has contributed to the destruction of the urban memory and cultural heritage of Beirut.

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[65] Johnson-Marshall, P. *Rebuilding Cities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 3.
[66] MacInnes, K. "The Rebuilding of Beirut." *Architectural Design*. Vol. 63, No. 11/12, November/December 1993, x.

## CHAPTER II

### Beirut: The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of a City

Almost two decades of war, death, and destruction have shown no mercy on the social and physical fabric of the capital of Lebanon. At the dawn of a three-year old peace, Beirut, and the whole of Lebanon as a matter of fact, is now facing the dilemma of how to cater to the layers of its past, in the present, while building for the future. The war drastically altered the urban structure of Beirut. Acute demographic shifts generated new urban centres that have spilled out in all directions, onto the mountains to the east and onto the coastlines to the north and south. The first two years of the war, from 1975 to 1977, caused the most extensive damage. Both fighting and destruction were concentrated in the downtown commercial district (fig. 3.1). The continuous damage of armed conflict, which was to take its toll on Beirut for the next 16 years, took three distinct forms.[1]

The most obvious damage was that caused by the impact of invading forces and local militiamen in rupturing the physical environment (fig. 3.2). Few buildings, let alone the infrastructure and natural sites, remained unaltered by the constant shelling and street fighting. The devastation of human life was tremendous for a country of approximately 10,000 square kilometers and three million inhabitants; 100,000 people were killed, twice as many were wounded or disabled, half a million were displaced, and one million emigrated.[2]

Another form of destruction came as a consequence of the long-term exposure of the deserted, war-ravaged city. The weather and also the invasion of squatters and their lack of maintenance of their surroundings left an impact on the ruined buildings (fig. 3.3). In addition, the abuse of public and private authorities of both the physical and the natural

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[1] Salaam, A. "The Reconstruction of Beirut: A Lost Opportunity." *AA Files*. No. 27. Summer 1994. 11-13.
[2] Khalaf, S. *Beirut Reclaimed: Reflections on Urban Design and the Restoration of Civility* (Beirut: Dar An-Nahar, 1993), 94.

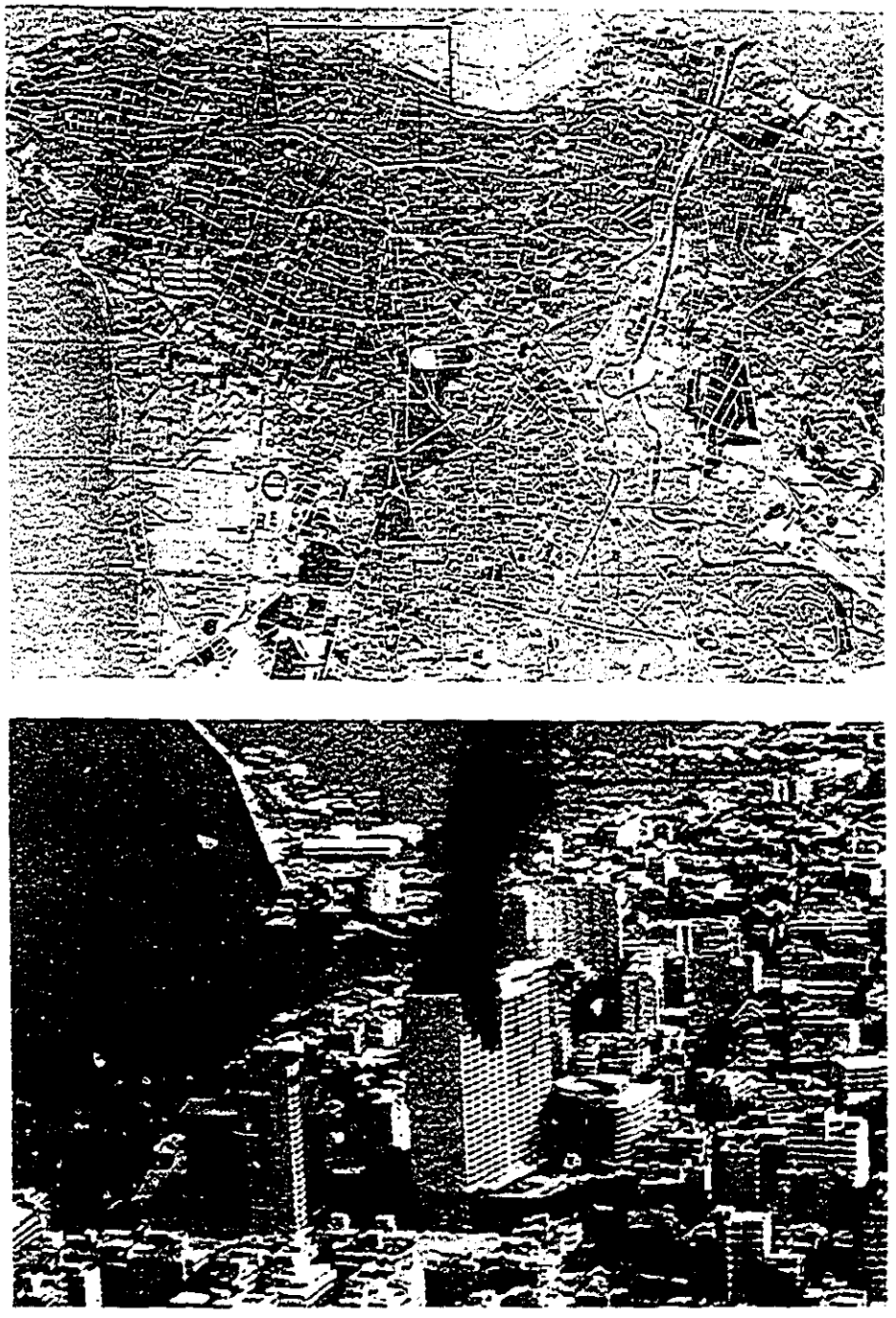


Figure 3.1. Beirut Central District. Source: "Beyrouth: La Reconstruction a Deux Vitesses," 64. The Holiday Inn Hotel, 1975. Source: *Beyrouth: Souvenirs...Realite.*

Figure 3.2. War destruction in Martyrs' Square, early 1980s. Source: *Beyrouth: Souvenirs...Realite*.

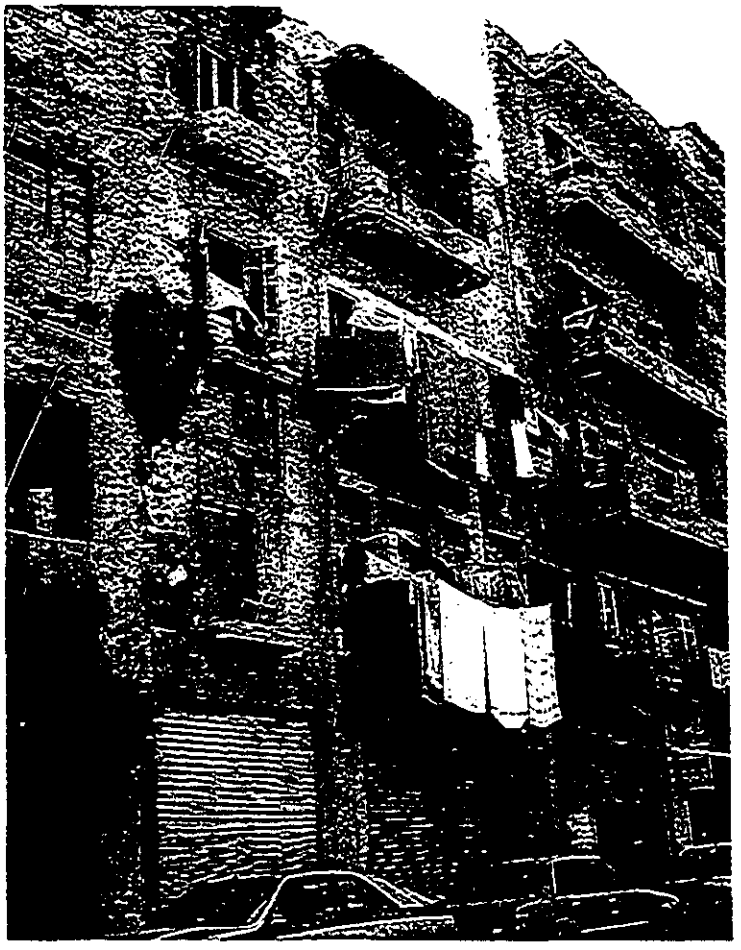


Figure 3.3. Squatters in war-torn buildings, 1995. Source: Author.

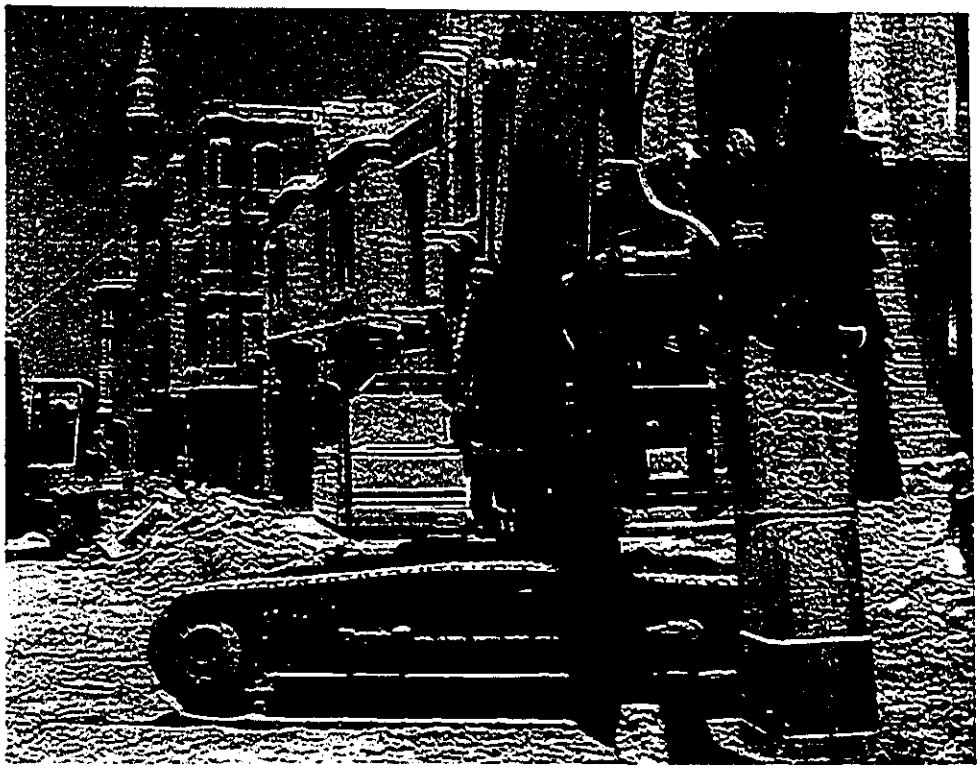
urban landscapes cost the city immeasurable environmental losses which only today are beginning to surface.[3]

However, it is the third indiscriminate and self-inflicted large-scale destruction that has caused the most controversy and grief: the postwar reconstruction process itself (fig. 3.4). The first wave of this destruction took place between 1982 and 1983 in the wake of the Israeli invasion. The clearing of the rubble and the streets evolved into the bulldozing of the entire medieval sector to the west of Martyrs' Square, as well as the nineteenth-century Ottoman district to the east. Souk Sursock-Nourieh, one of the main traditional markets, along with hundreds of other buildings, fell as casualties and open fields unfolded. The second "clean-up" started in 1992, when in the name of public safety, the same bulldozers brought down what was left of the surviving remnants of the medieval district, along with 300 other buildings (fig. 3.5). Only the difficulty of operating bulldozers in a dense urban fabric invaded by squatters prevented the wholesale demolition of Beirut.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the framework of destruction in the postwar rebuilding of the Central Business District of Beirut. In order to appreciate the context of this reconstruction campaign, a brief historical overview is important to underline the layers of destruction and reconstruction of Beirut, and their implication on its postwar rebuilding.

Built on a peninsula on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, this ancient Phoenician seaport was the cradle of both civilization and barbarism. With the founding and expansion of the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD, the town of *Beryte* soon emerged as a Roman colony, a status which contributed to its economic and architectural development. It became the site of the first Roman Law School in the 3rd century and flourished extensively until the whole city was totally destroyed by an earthquake in AD

[3] One of the major environmental problems facing the city today is the Normandy landfill situated at the northern tip of the city centre. During the 16 years of war, the Municipality of Beirut dumped tons of debris and trash, forming a 608,000 square meter environmental hazard awaiting treatment.



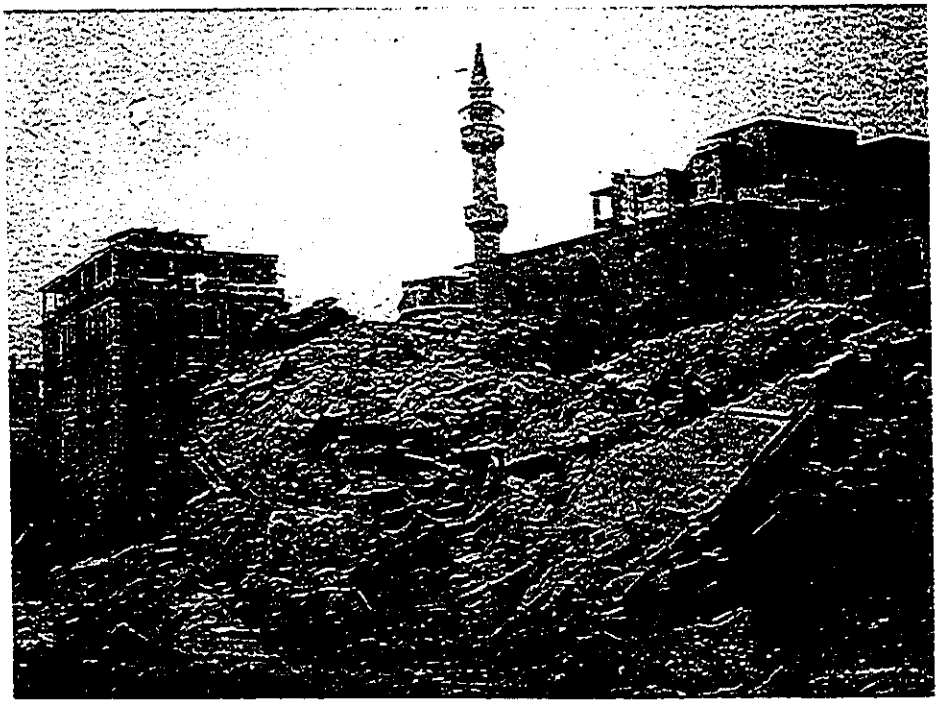


Figure 3.4. Demolition work in the city centre, 1995. Source: *Le Commerce du Levant*, 42. The demolished Fattal Building, summer 1994. Source: Author.

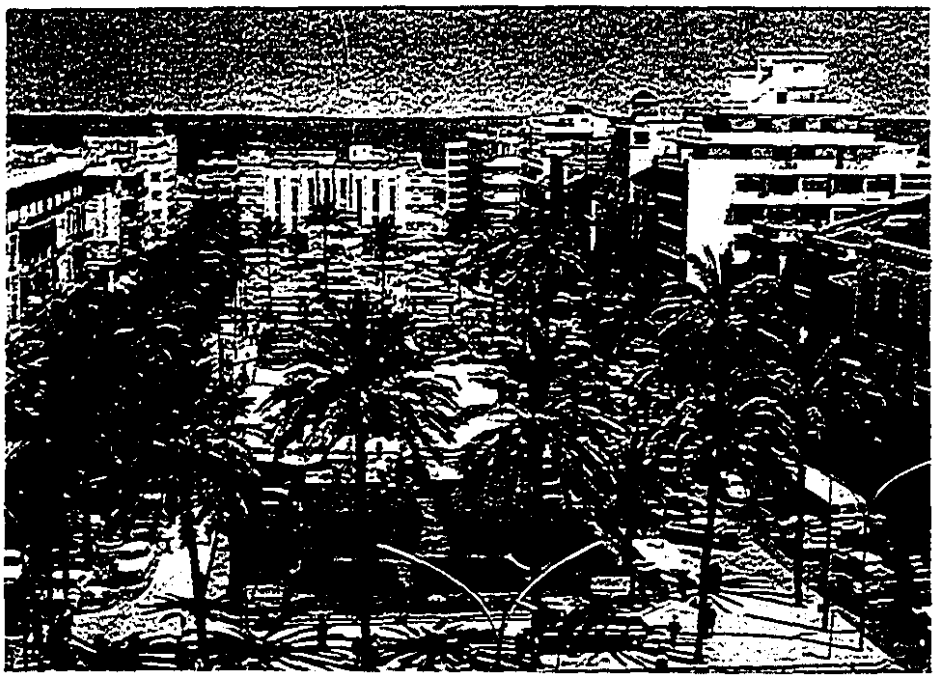
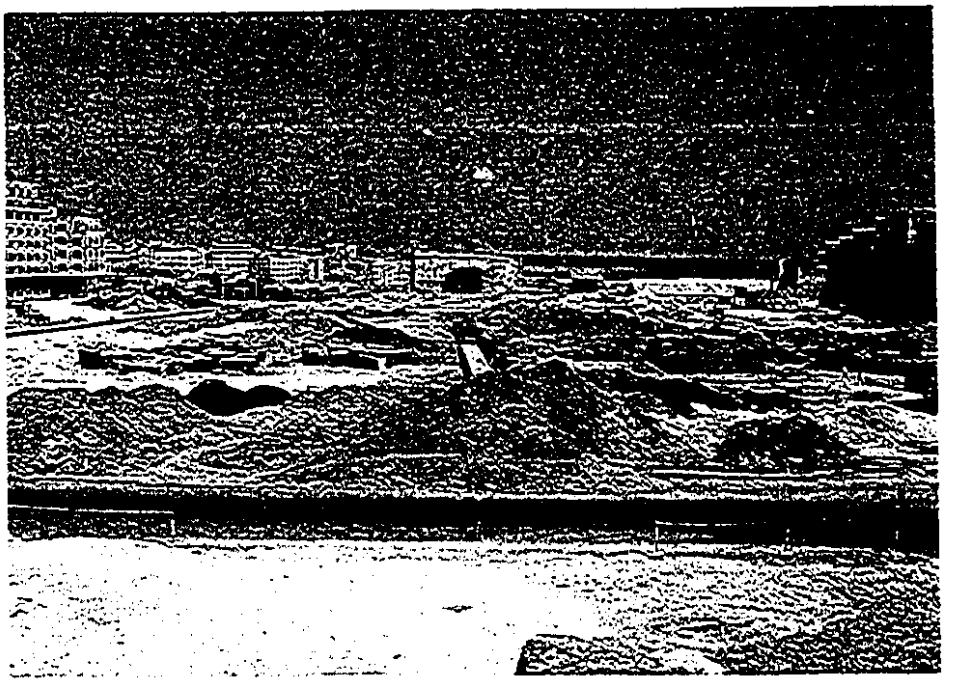


Figure 3.5. Martyrs' Square before the war. Source: Postcard. During the war. Source: *Beyrouth: Souvenirs...Realite*.



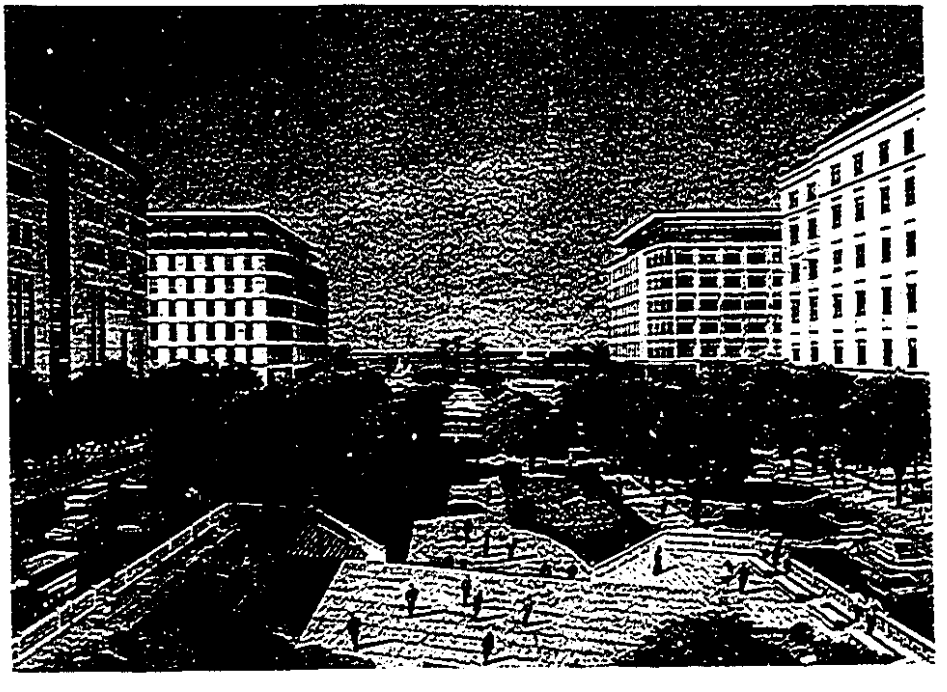


Figure 3.5. (contd.) In the summer of 1995. Source: Author. A future image as proposed by the current master plan. Source: *The Development and Reconstruction of BCD - Information Booklet*, 20.

551.[4] Having lost its power, magnificence, and glory, it fell under the mercy of a succession of invading forces. Consequently, Beirut developed into an important fortified military holding. At the hands of its conquerors, first the Arabs in the 7th century, then the Crusaders towards the end of the 11th, and then the Ottomans in the 16th century, the city suffered recurrent destruction and death, which became an intrinsic feature of its subsequent history.

Until 1853, Beirut, designated as a provincial capital of the Ottoman Empire, was a walled city of about one quarter of a square mile, organized within six main gates and surrounded by gardens (fig. 3.6).[5] Urban agglomeration resulted in expansion to the east and to the west and eventually led to the demolition of the medieval city walls by the Ottomans between 1840 and 1876, which in turn, ignited further expansion on the surrounding hills.[6] With the fall of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, Beirut was occupied by British and Arab forces until it was made the capital of the new Sate of Lebanon under the French Mandate in 1920.[7]

The Frenc· found the ancient city in ruins, due partly to the Italian bombardment during W.W.I and partly to the extensive renewal work which the Turks undertook in 1915 (fig. 3.7). In the name of rehabilitation and extension, though more of a strategic tactic to distract the starving population, the Turks demolished large sections of the medieval fabric of the city. The dense tissue of commercial and residential areas was razed to the ground to make room for 15-meter-wide avenues, all at the expense of the ancient

[4] Badr, L. "The Historic Fabric of Beirut" in *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, ed. F. Ragette (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983), 65-84.
[5] Munro, J. "An Historical Perspective of the City" in *The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World*, ed. A.Y. Saqqaf (New York: Paragon House, 1987), 258-266.
[6] Expansion to the west was mainly sparked by the founding, in 1866, of the Syrian Protestant School, now known as the American University of Beirut. A hundred and thirty years later, the University remains the centre of the multi-cultural, ethnic, and religious community of Ras Beirut.
[7] The detailed accounts of the political and social history of ancient and modern Lebanon in the context of the Middle East are countless. To cite only a few: Hourani, A. *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), Fisk, R. *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), and Salibi, K. *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988). Salibi describes his book not as a history of Lebanon, *per se*, but as a critical study of different views of Lebanese history.

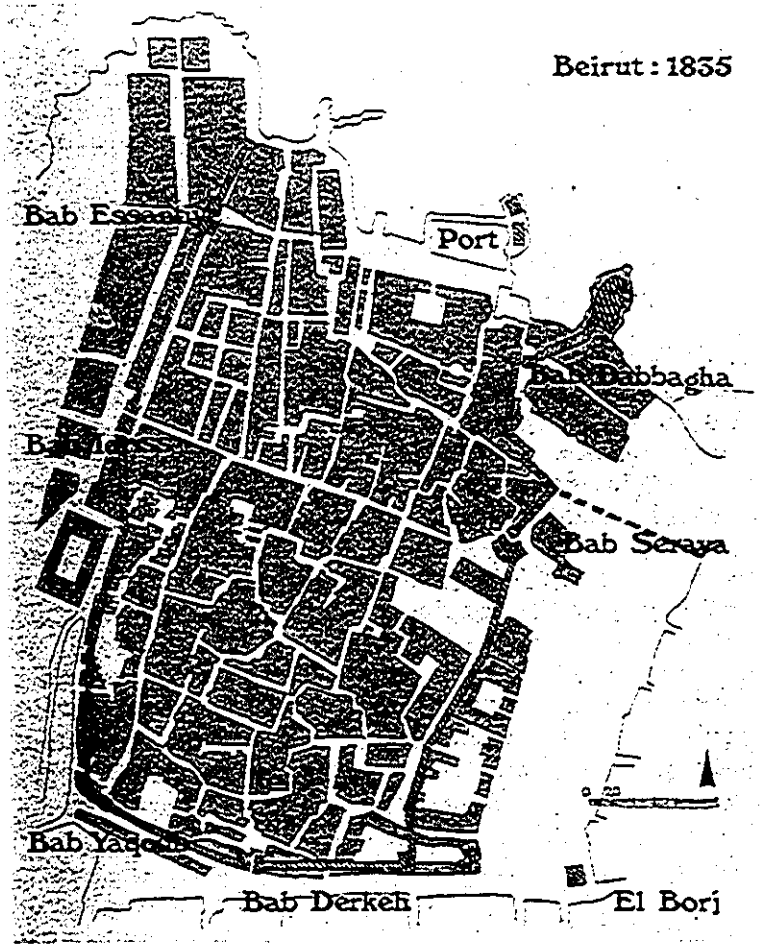



Figure 3.6. Beirut, 1835: A fortified seaport town built on a medieval street pattern.
Source: *The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World*, 284.

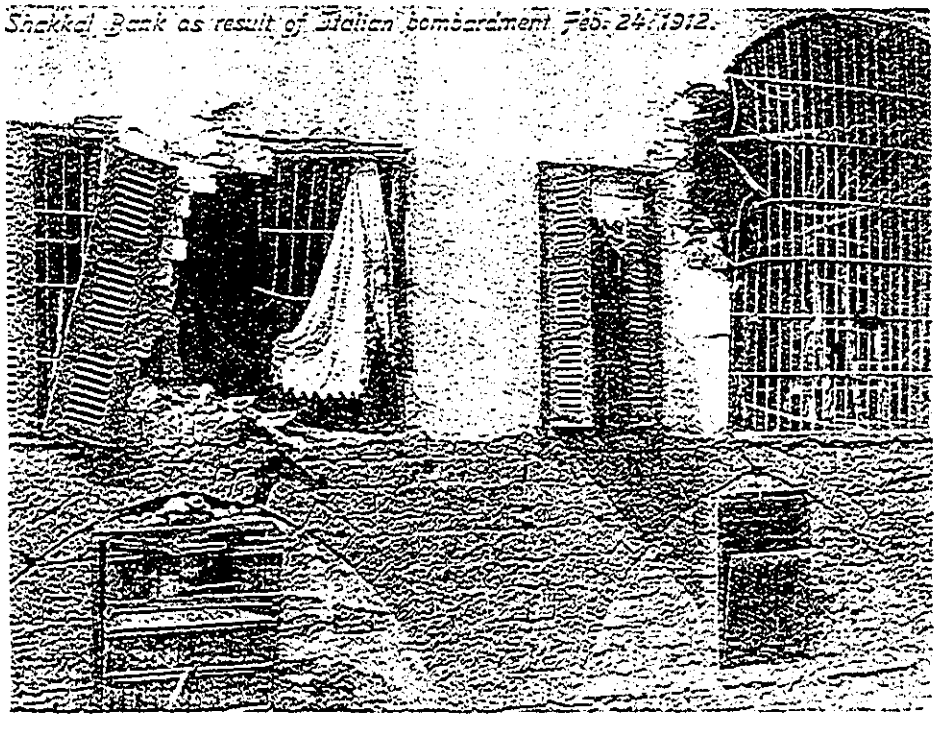



Figure 3.7. Beirut: The effect of Italian bombarding during World War I. Source: *Beirut Our Memory: An Illustrated Tour in the Old City from 1880 to 1930.*

street architecture (fig. 3.8).[8] In the late 1920s, the French continued the task handed to them by the Turks. Their ambitious schemes for the redesign of the city centre featured a series of concentric systems of arteries. These axial roads were named after western European heroes of the time such as Foch, Allenby, and Clemenceau. Not only do such names still echo in the urban structure of Beirut, but so do the urban features such as the Place de l'Etoile from which wide streets emanated in imitation of its Parisian counterparts, Place de l'Opera and Place Charles de Gaulle (fig. 3.9).

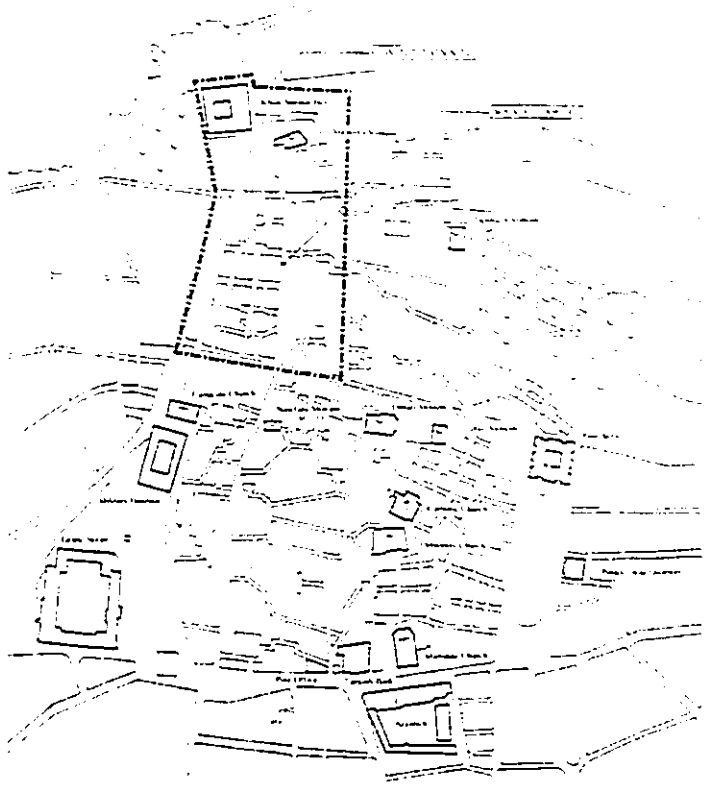
The westernization of the city flourished under the French Mandate, resulting in an imported, alien architecture. By 1930, an architectural environment more in keeping with the south of France vernacular mushroomed in the central area, replacing most of the traditional fabric (fig. 3.10).[9] Only a few of the specialized *souks*, or traditional markets, survived and remained in use until 1975, namely the Tawil-Ayyas and the Sursock-Nourieh markets. But their day, too, was yet to come.

The city growth of the inter-war years between 1926 and 1939 comprised a series of oddly-shaped concentric rings (fig. 3.11). During this era of the French Mandate, and even through the early years of Lebanon's independence, successive teams of French experts drew master plans for the capital: first the Danger Plan in 1932 and later the Ecochard Plan in 1944. These plans, however, which focused primarily on the improvement of traffic arteries and, in the case of Ecochard on zoning, were to remain general schemes that were never approved or implemented.

Independence in 1943 brought with it economic prosperity generated mainly by the flow of capital from the Arab oil boom. Beirut witnessed an unprecedented rate of growth coupled with minimal planning policy to control or manage the urban environment, which consequently led to an unorchestrated over-densification supported by, and in turn

[8] A collection of postcards published in *Beirut Our Memory: An Illustrated Tour in the Old City from 1880-1930* (Paris: Naufal Group, 1986) from the private collection of Fouad Debbas, shows this ancient architectural heritage of Beirut which was lost during the 1915 demolition.

[9] Ironically, it is this very same alien architecture that was least damaged by the most recent civil strife, and which authorities are today struggling to preserve as a sample of the architectural heritage of the city.



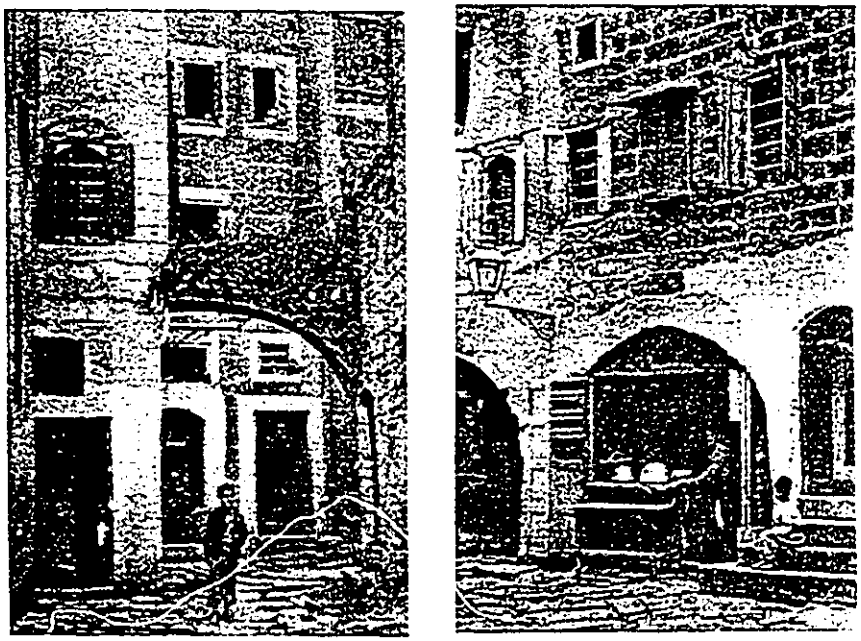


Figure 3.8. Beirut, 1912. Source: *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: Visual Survey Kit*, 8. Ancient street architecture, demolished in 1915. Source: *Beirut Our Memory: An Illustrated Tour in the Old City from 1880 to 1930.*

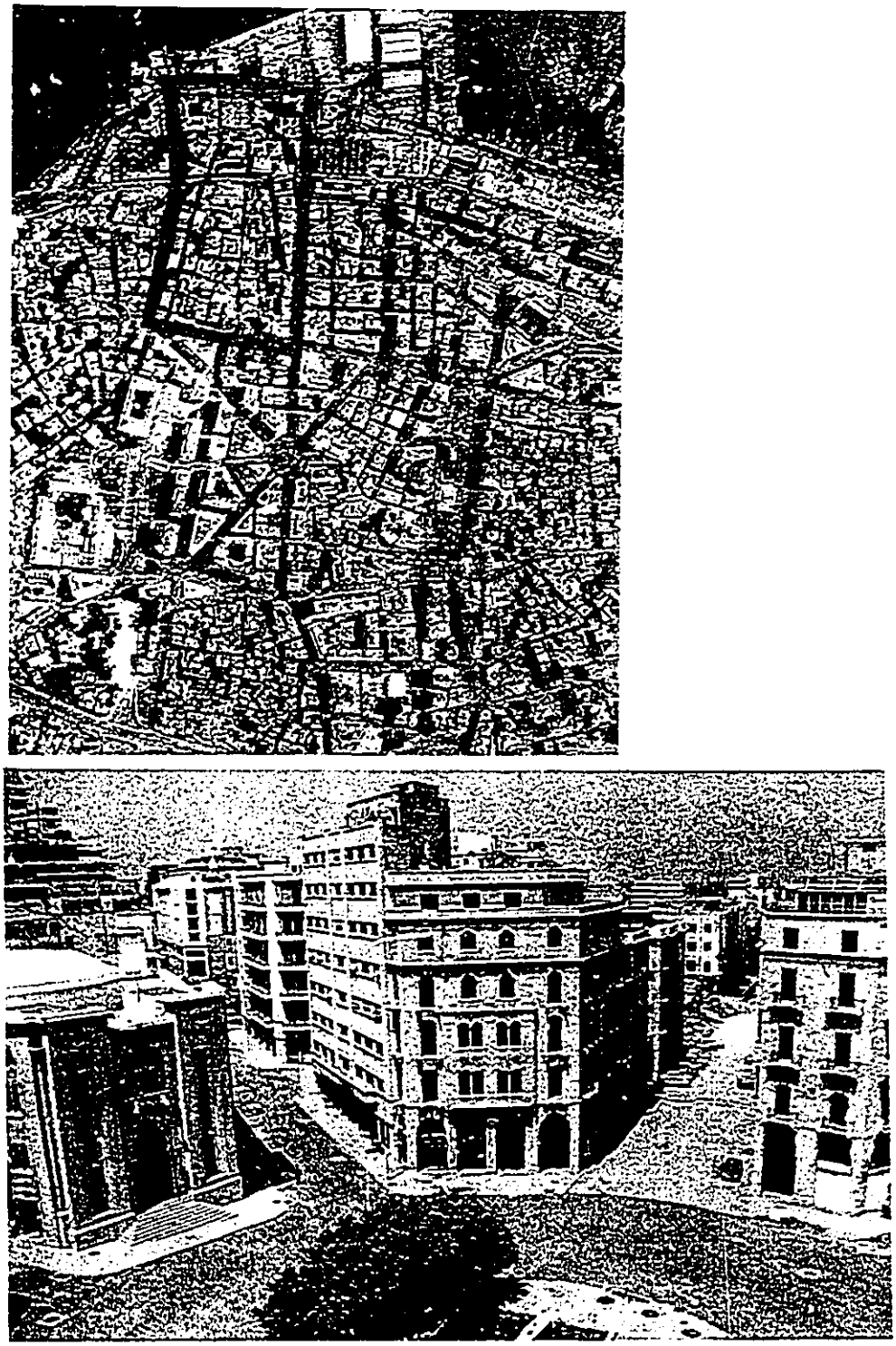


Figure 3.9. Aerial view of Beirut in 1943 during the French Mandate, and the surviving Place de l'Etoile today. Source: *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: Visual Survey Kit*, 9, 115.

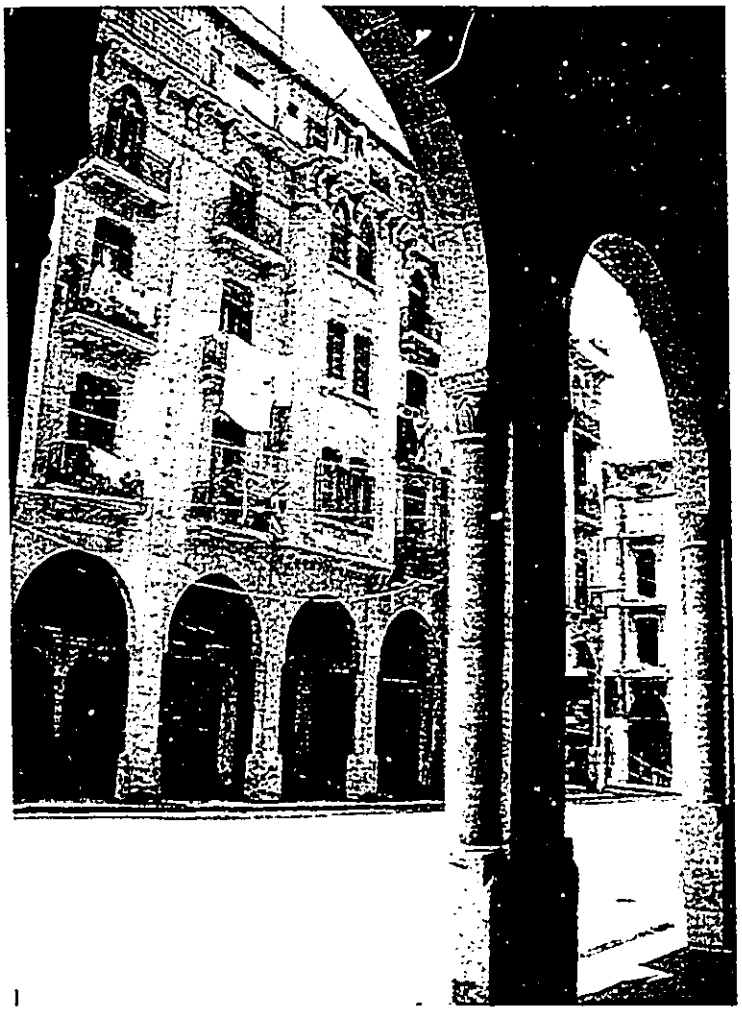


Figure 3.10. French Vernacular in Beirut: Maarad Street flanked by pedestrian colonnades. Source: *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: Visual Survey Kit*, 113.

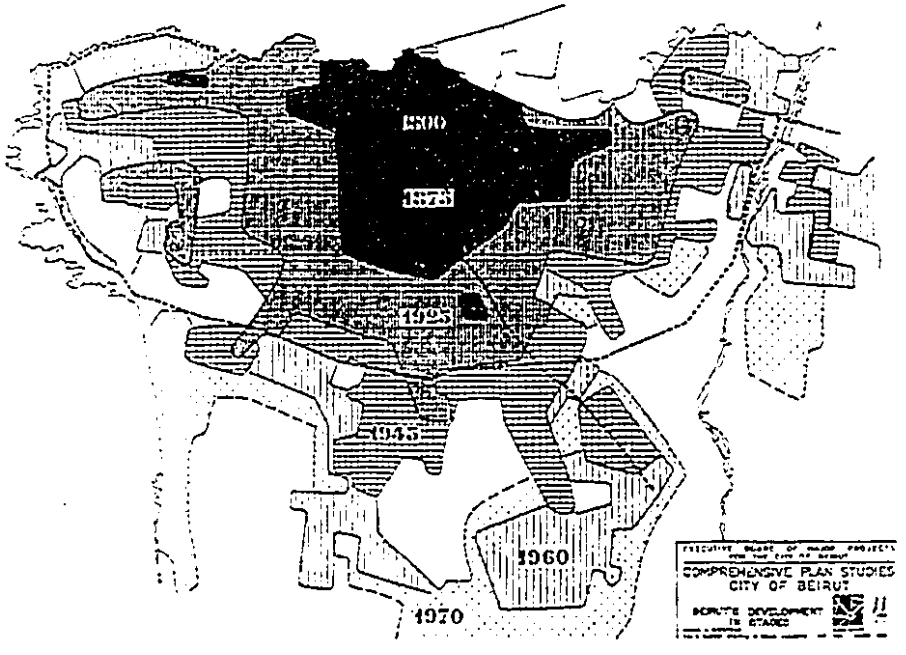



Figure 3.11. The urban agglomeration of Beirut. Source: *Comprehensive Plan Studies for the City of Beirut*, 44.

nurturing, the *laissez-faire* policy of public authorities. The Egli Report, prepared in 1950, was only a revised version of the previous Ecochard Plan; while maintaining the general highway network system, the commercial centre was moved southwards, and the city divided into five zones instead of twelve. This Report set the mandate of the first official General Master Plan for Beirut, adopted in 1952 and still in effect today. Although the Plan tackled issues such as transportation networks, public spaces and buildings, and zoning and building regulations, it boiled down to a network of roads ineffectively dealing with the traffic volume and neglecting to address the critical factors that would affect the future development of metropolitan Beirut.[10]

Since the only other reference was an obsolete building code, adopted in 1933 and superficially amended in 1954 for the first and last time, the scope of violations became a function of the very existence of the code and the various planning schemes. Building and zoning laws, if and when implemented, provided abundant opportunities for land exploitation and speculation, irrespective of scale, material or pattern (fig. 3.12). Rather than having the code and the plan establish the rules of urban development *vis-à-vis* future growth, both adapted themselves to their own deficiencies and fell prey to the *laissez-faire* policy. As beneficial as was the growth in establishing Beirut as an important financial, cultural, educational, and social node in the Middle East, its manifestations in the urban setting revolved around the unpredictable and unplanned agglomeration of Beirut where

> the downtown area was over-built by the addition of supplementary floors on top of the existing buildings and the in-filling of all open spaces, stimulated and sustained by intensive land speculation ... agglomeration spread along the main arteries, swallowing up the beaches and crawling up the scenic mountain slopes.[11]

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[10] For detailed information on all prewar planning schemes and reports, see the *Comprehensive Plan Studies for the City of Beirut*, prepared and published by the Executive Board of Major Projects for the City of Beirut in March 1968. Furthermore, Assem Salaam, in his chapter entitled "Town Planning Problems in Beirut and its Outskirts" in *Planning for Urban Growth*, ed. J.L. Taylor (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), underlines and analyses the main features of each of the prewar attempts at planning, arguing that the successive planning schemes failed at handling the scale of the urban growth of Beirut.

[11] Quoted from Shiber, S.G. "Planning Needs and Obstacles" in *The New Metropolis in the Arab World*, ed. M. Berger (New York: Octagon Books, 1963) by Jad Tabet in "Towards a Master Plan for Post-War

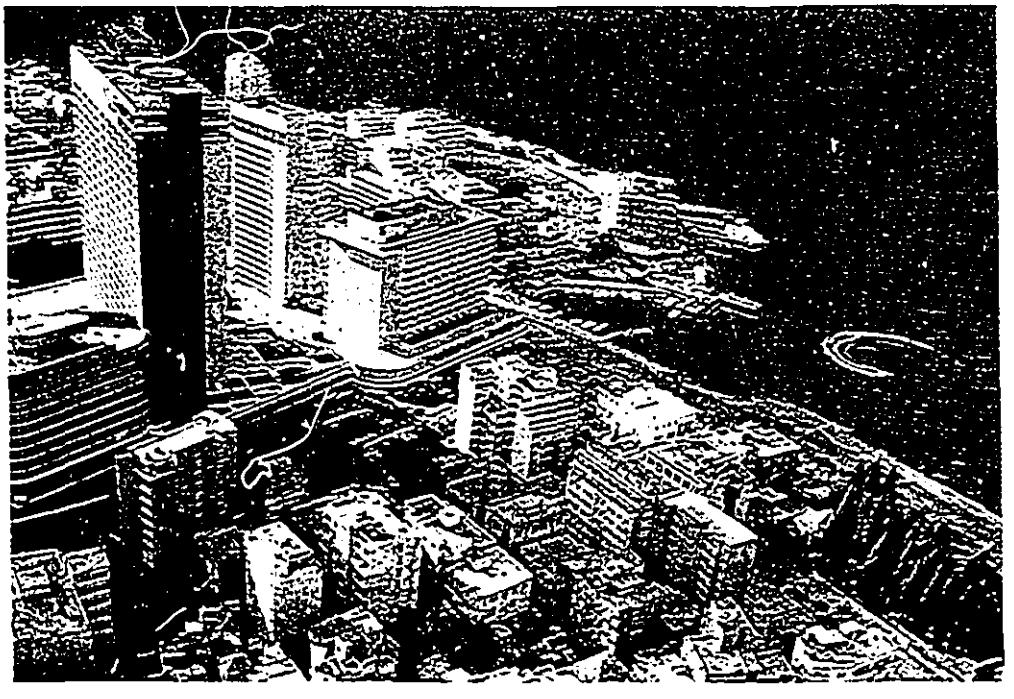

Figure 3.12. Unorchestrated urban agglomeration in Beirut hotel district, 1950s. Source: Postcard.

In this context of little or no concern about planning issues, demolition and construction continued hand in hand. In 1950, for example, the Small Serail, built in the late nineteenth century and the seat of a succession of governments, was razed to the ground to allow for the expansion of Martyrs' Square to the north (fig. 3.13). It later became the site of the Rivoli Cinema, which was demolished in 1994 (fig. 3.14).

The period from the early 1960s until the outbreak of hostilities in 1975 was marked by an effort to develop a modern Lebanese state and society under the leadership of President Fouad Chehab, to make of Beirut the financial, economic, and cultural centre of the Arab World. The new policy aimed at the re-planning and re-structuring of Beirut to cope with the new demands and requirements, and was based on a strategy of strengthening the central authority as a first step in restraining the dominant *laissez-faire* era. In 1963, a team of local professionals under the direction of Michel Ecochard, the author of the 1944 Planning Scheme, was commissioned by the Directorate-General of Town Planning to produce a "Plan Directeur de Beyrouth et sa Banlieu," which was revised a year later. However, the problems at hand soon proved to be beyond the reach of planning and the damage beyond repair. Nevertheless, efforts persisted, and in 1968, the Preliminary Survey Report for the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Beirut was published. Prepared by the Executive Board of Major Projects for the City of Beirut in collaboration with ministries, public and private agencies, firms, and academic institutions, this plan marked the last prewar effort to deal with the modern trends of urbanization, at least at the theoretical level.[12]

These futile efforts in urban planning were only different versions of regional highway networking and zoning regulations, which contributed little to the bettering of the

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Lebanon" in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Planning and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 85.

[12] Republic of Lebanon. Executive Board of Major Projects for the City of Beirut. *Comprehensive Plan Studies for the City of Beirut* (1968). This Survey Report presented the physical, economic, and demographic statistics vital to the production of a Comprehensive Plan at a national level. It also included a Historic Preservation List, which was drawn by the Association for the Protection of Sites and Old Buildings, founded in 1960.

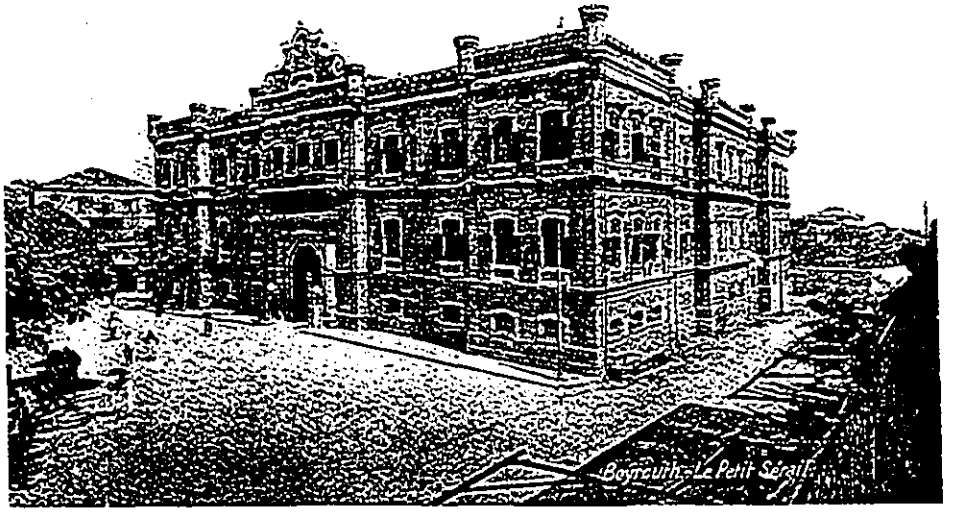


Figure 3.13. Le Petit Serail, early nineteenth century. Source: *Beyrouth: Souvenirs... Realite*.

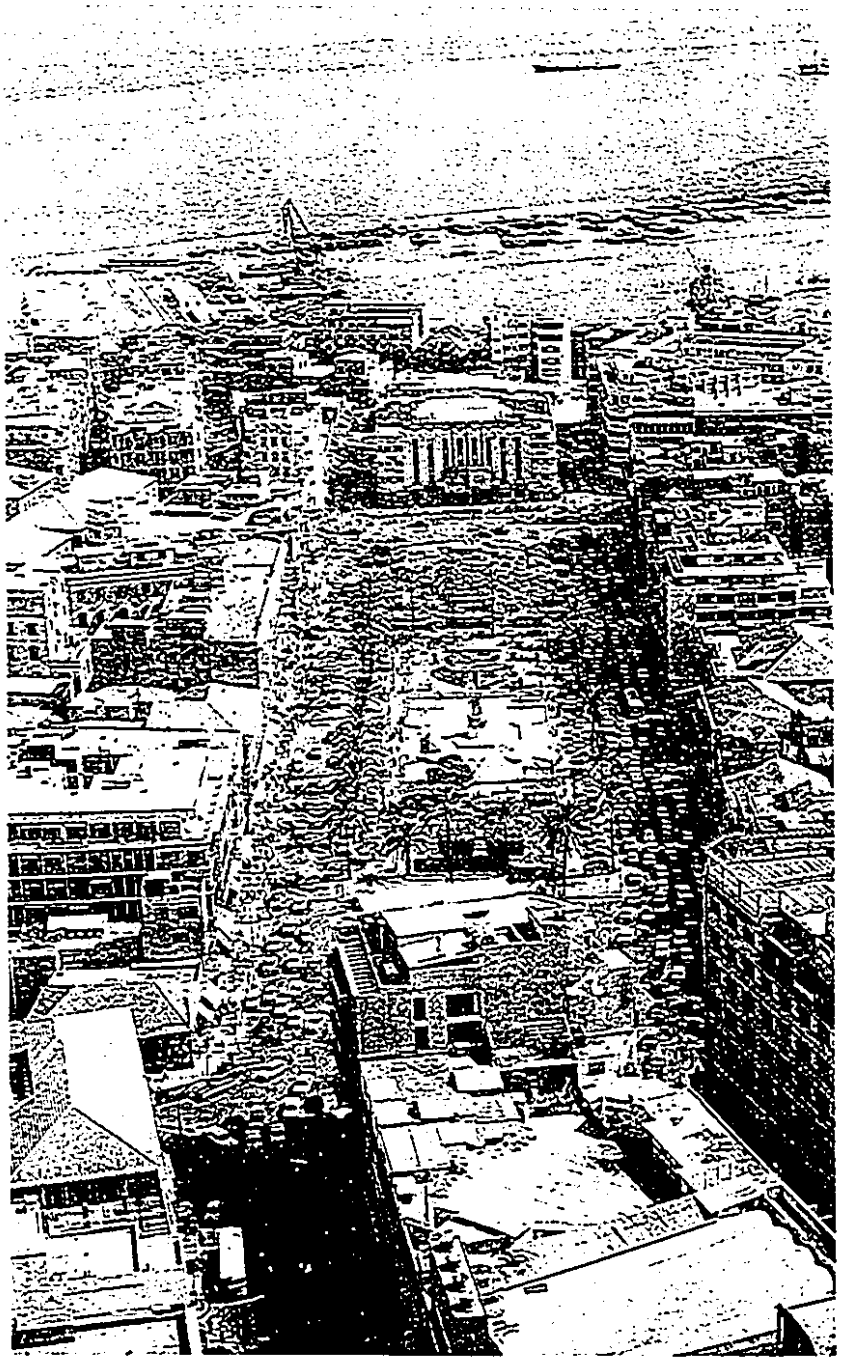

Figure 3.14. A prewar view of Martyrs' Square with the Rivoli Cinema in the centre background. Source: *Beyrouth: Souvenirs...Realite*.

spatial environment, let alone the development of the country. In their failure to address urgent planning issues, the planners further contributed to the destruction of the physical landscape.

Inevitably, Lebanon rapidly became a predominantly urban society, built on socio-economic inequalities, imbalances between urban and suburban communities, and the sprouting of slums and shanty towns.[13] Like many other developing countries in the mid-twentieth century, the uncontrolled growth of Beirut, in the name of progress and modernity and enhanced by the advent of the automobile, destroyed much of the traditional city pattern. This environment paved the way for the invasion of the so-called International Style which, superimposed on the Arab and French Vernacular, constituted the last major architectural layer of the city (fig. 3.15).[14]

Until the advent of war in September 1975, Beirut continued to change, the urban scene gradually reduced to a cacophony of unrelated shapes and forms that reflected the continuous struggle between tradition and modernity. Ironically, this era in the history of the country constituted the peak of its flourishing that bestowed on it the title of "Switzerland of the East."[15] Some even went so far as to argue that it was basically this superficial prosperity and "modernity" that played a major role in triggering the first advances of the war.[16]

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[13] Souheil El Masri discusses the social and economic imbalances between rural and urban societies in his Ph.D. (Arch) dissertation entitled "Reconstruction After Disaster: A Study of War-Damaged Villages in Lebanon, the Case of Al-Burjain" (University of Newcastle upon Tyne, September 1992).

[14] In their chapters on Beirut in *The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World*, ed. A.Y. Saqqaf (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), both Friedrich Ragette and Hana Abu Khadra highlight this transformation in the architectural style(s) of Beirut as a function of the uncontrolled urban agglomeration of the prewar era, and later of the war.

[15] In the 1960s, this title was bestowed on Beirut in the sense that the city boasted a hybrid, cosmopolitan culture relying on a tradition of trade and brokerage, and on a role as an intermediary between the East and the West.

[16] In his chapter entitled "An Historical Perspective of the City" in *The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World*, ed. A.Y. Saqqaf (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), John Munro argues that, given the political and social history of Lebanon, it is the increasing democracy, rather than its absence, that was largely responsible for the civil unrest. In other words, it was the abuse and violation of the so-called "democracy" in Lebanon, left uncontrolled, that caused the destruction of the state and the society.

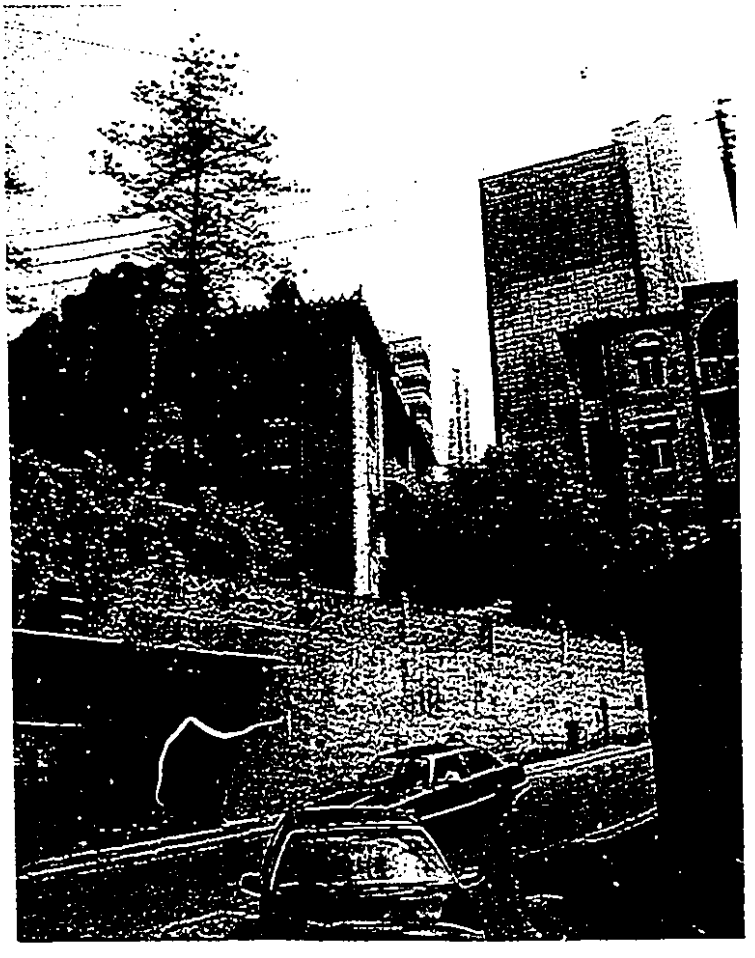

Figure 3.15. The invasion of the traditional fabric by the International Style. Source: Author.

These past five decades of abortive planning did not succeed in addressing the urban agglomeration of Beirut. At a creative level, plans presented propositions that never saw the light and at an executive level, planning was limited to fragmentary projects that solved specific problems on a short-term basis. The frustration of urban planners and politicians was soon answered by an urban catalyst that provided the opportunities to implement urban visions that were deemed unthinkable in the 1960s and early 1970s. That catalyst was war.

During the 16 long years of war, false hopes of political settlement rendered each period of calm susceptible to a plan of reconstruction. This occurred at two levels: public and private. The dynamics of this reconstruction, primarily at the private-sector level, excluded both architects and urban planners.

On an individual level, citizen participation in the reconstruction process throughout the 16 years of war -- whether owners, tenants or illegal refugees -- were mainly cosmetic repair and make-do strategies: holes were filled with whatever material was available, glass panes were fixed or replaced with plastic sheets, balconies were glazed and top storeys were added for extra space (fig. 3.16). Even whole buildings were constructed on other people's properties. Inside war-torn skeletons of concrete which once functioned as office buildings and stripped of cladding material and windows, squatters erected makeshift dwellings out of sheets of polythene or plywood, or of concrete blocks, or of sandbags, gathered from the rubble. This "architecture of war" manifested itself in a "re-invented" space, infinitely malleable through habitation and a mere function of continuous human existence.[17] Thus, when the adaptive strategies of the people were their only means of survival, a dichotomy between the production of the city and the obligation to survive emerged.[18] Spatial design resolved to a physical commodity

[17] Sarkis, H. "Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes Toward the Built Environment" and Yahya, M. "Reconstituting Space: The Aberration of the Urban in Beirut" in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993).
[18] In *Besieged and Silenced: The Muted Anguish of the Lebanese People* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1989), Samir Khalaf argues, from a sociologist's point of view, that although they eased the

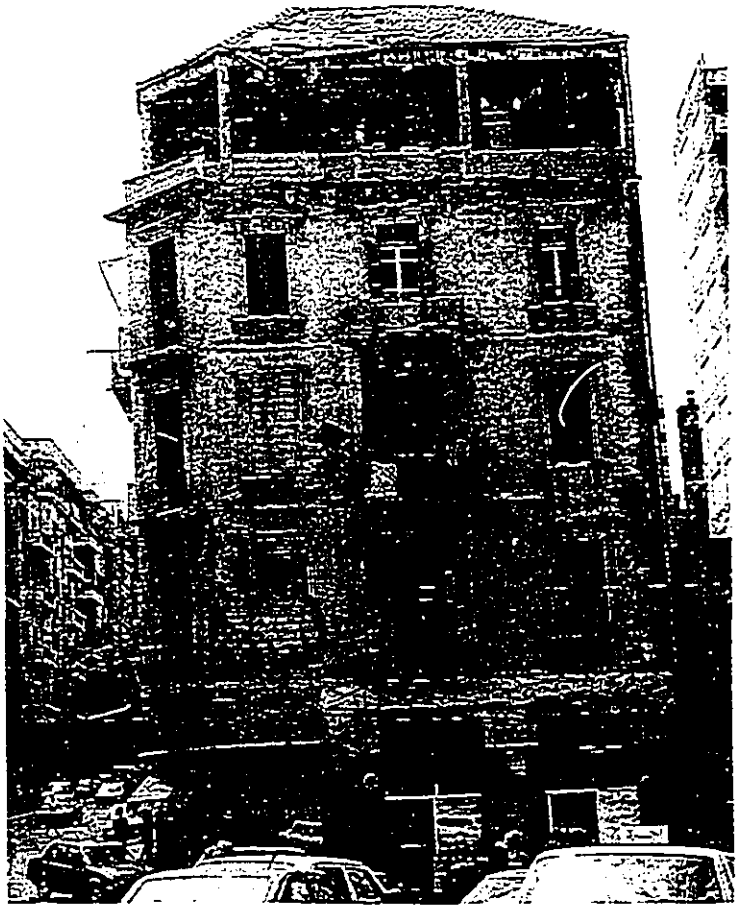

Figure 3.16. Reconstruction at an individual, private scale. Source: Author.

rather than an aesthetic achievement. The city was, therefore, building itself, brick by brick, building by building, driven by the unleashed forces of conflict, chaos, and violation.

Public efforts in reconstruction were a different scene altogether. Major plans for rebuilding focused on the city centre while neglecting the devastation in the provincial towns and rural areas. This campaign to reconstruct the capital was accompanied by a political agenda to reassert the central authority of the government by publicizing Beirut as a unified and neutral zone for all Lebanese. Therefore, each plan for rebuilding had its own package of symbolic significance and idealistic perceptions of the city. Combined with erratic political and military situations, which shortened the life of this forced optimism in peace, plans were lost between the realistic and imaginary worlds and were, consequently, impossible to implement.

Barely two years after the beginning of the hostilities in 1975, Lebanese authorities were eager to launch the reconstruction and restoration of their capital, in an effort to erase quickly the visible evidence of the war experience. In 1977, the Ministry of Planning was abolished and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was created. Relieved from the burden of conventional bureaucracy, this key government agency was expected to oversee the planning, financing, and implementation of the rebuilding process with the efficiency of the private sector, as well as the furnishing of all tender documentation and selecting consultants and contractors for various public projects. Since reconstruction was then considered a passing, impermanent phase in the history of the country, the CDR was given five years to produce a national plan for reconstruction. Today, 19 years later, that national plan is still in the making.

The same year as the founding of the CDR, 1977, the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APUR) along with a team of Lebanese urban planners, was commissioned by the

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hardships of war, these skills of survival and adaptive strategies of the Lebanese have been counter-productive in the sense that if they, as a nation, had displayed the "normal" symptoms of a war-ravaged people and had not adapted so well to their circumstances, the world and their own community might have been more responsive to their agonies and sufferings, which in turn, might have ended the war sooner.

Lebanese government through the CDR to propose the first scheme for the redevelopment of the city centre (fig. 3.17). The plan was limited to the central area that had suffered the most destruction, a 1.5 x 1 square kilometer area. Conceived at a time when attitudes towards planning in Europe were privileging the rehabilitation of existing patrimony and the protection of cultural heritage, the main objectives of the plan reflected minimal intervention and maximal preservation.[19] This philosophy of "soft intervention" denounced the grand gestures characteristic of the French Mandate. In retrospect, such an approach was realistic at the time because of the limited scale of destruction and the availability of financial support, relative to the years to come (fig. 3.18).

Approved in 1978, the APUR plan lived its glory on paper until fighting broke out again in 1980, and the project was suspended until the end of 1982 when the Israeli army's siege of the city was lifted and the multi-national peace-keeping forces moved in. During this period, there was a sense of a new beginning, of relief and belief that the worst was over. The circumstances called for a dose of optimism, and of course, for the revival of the reconstruction plan, which met with both public and private enthusiasm. However, the lack of misconceptions of the APUR plan and its sensitivity towards the preservation of the traditional character of the city marked the end of a "humanist" approach to rebuilding in Beirut, which were sacrificed in future plans to real-estate speculation.

Nevertheless, there was a growing concern at the time for the future of the Lebanese environment at large and specifically the *form* of reconstruction. Such efforts marked the entry of the reconstruction process into the local and international public, professional, and intellectual debating scene. The multi-disciplinary participants in the discussion expressed a wide array of concerns and suggestions to inspire the reconstruction process. George Serof, architect and senior lecturer at the American

[19] Tabet, J. "Towards a Master Plan for Post-War Lebanon" in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993). Tabet provides a detailed account and analyses of the objectives of the APUR Plan, as well as the other postwar planning schemes.

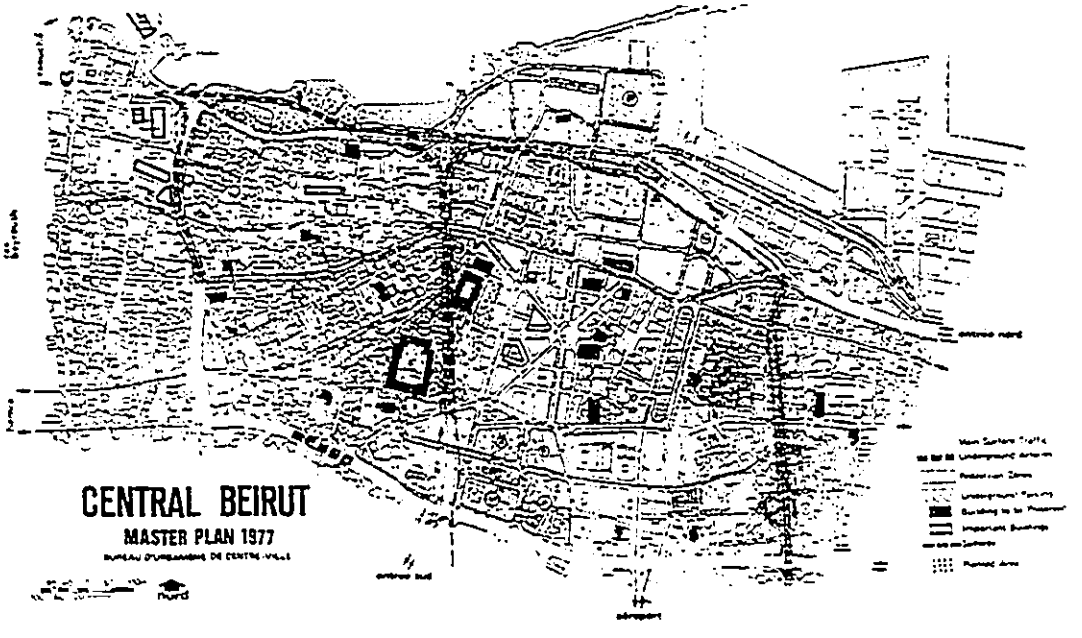


Figure 3.17. The Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APUR) Plan, 1977. Source: *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, back cover.

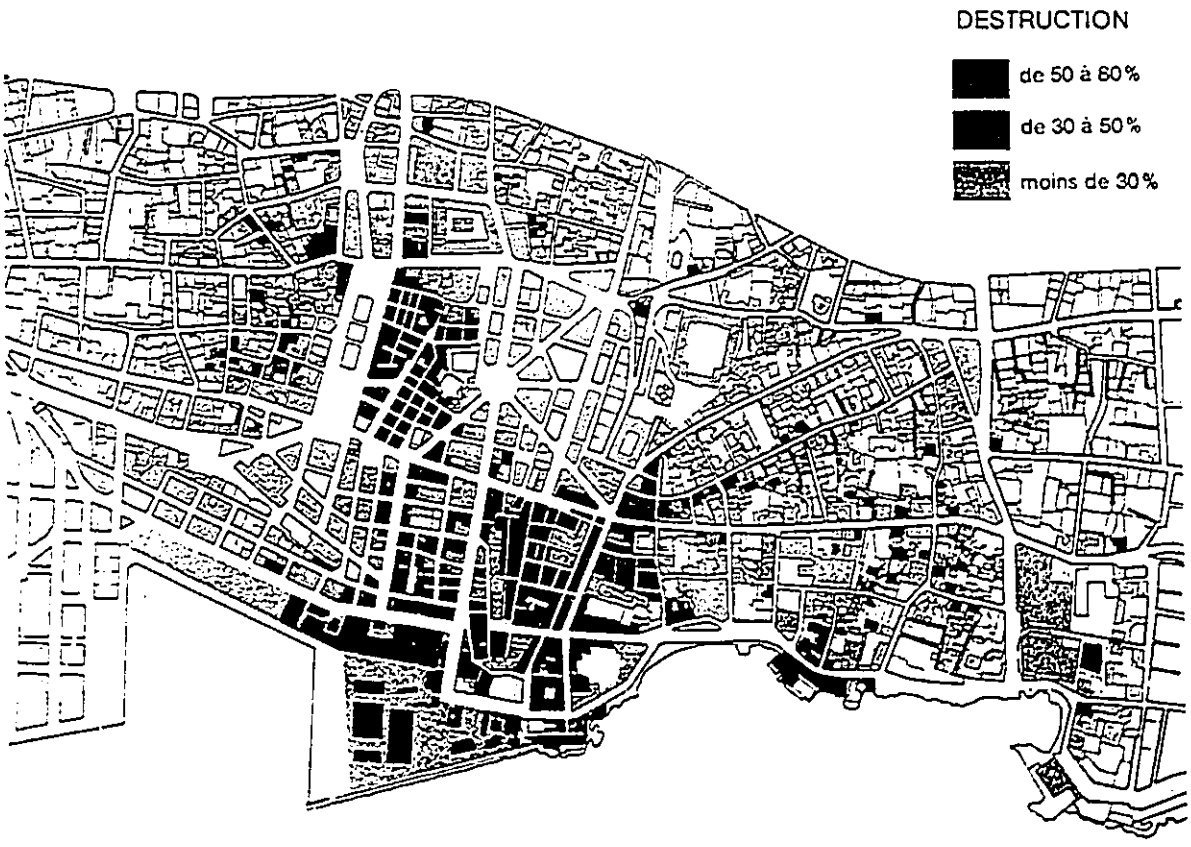


Figure 3.18. Percentage of destruction in 1977. Source: "La Reconstruction de Beyrouth," 7.

University of Beirut at the time, presented his "Visions of the Beirut of Tomorrow" (fig. 3.19).[20] A sketch of the imaginary town centre revealed a utopia built on historical and national symbols such as the Avenue of the Two Worlds (which symbolizes Lebanon's function as a link between the Occident and the Orient), the Phoenician Gate and the outdoor Museum of the Sea, and "Phoenix," the commercial district "that will rise again;" visions that remained rooted in metaphors and aspirations.

One of the greatest dilemmas at that time was whether reconstruction should begin at once, as demanded by politicians, land speculators, and financiers, or whether it should be delayed until a full archaeological survey could be conducted to excavate the historical monuments under the rubble.[21] Faced with the opportunity to uncover evidence of ancient Beirut, to discover its famous School of Law, temples, forums, and hippodromes, archaeologists campaigned to excavate (fig. 3.20). A conflict of interest among the concerned parties remained the main obstacle in reaching a consensus and the public debate was thus rendered futile.

Although intentions were noble and imaginations loaded, planning for postwar reconstruction was to take on a campaign enforced by a "bulldozing" strategy, which did not only apply to the Palestinian refugee camps at the outskirts of the city and to the squatter settlements in the southern suburbs, but also to the urban heart of Beirut (fig. 3.21). Although many of the buildings in the central district were deemed unsafe and damaged beyond repair, the systematic bulldozing of vast areas of urban space gave access to "priceless virgin land which could not have been released by the normal exorbitant and cumbersome processes of expropriation."[22]

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[20] Serof, G. "Visions of the Beirut of Tomorrow" in *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, ed. F. Ragette (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983), 97-101.

[21] In her chapter entitled "The Historic Fabric of Beirut" in *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, ed. F. Ragette (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983), Leila Badr provides a rich account of the history of the city, revealing the great potential of the site as an archaeological mine, and arguing earnestly for the opportunity to document, let alone preserve, the ancient vestige.

[22] Khalaf, S. *Beirut Reclaimed: Reflections on Urban Design and the Restoration of Civility* (Beirut: Dar An-Nahar, 1993), 121.

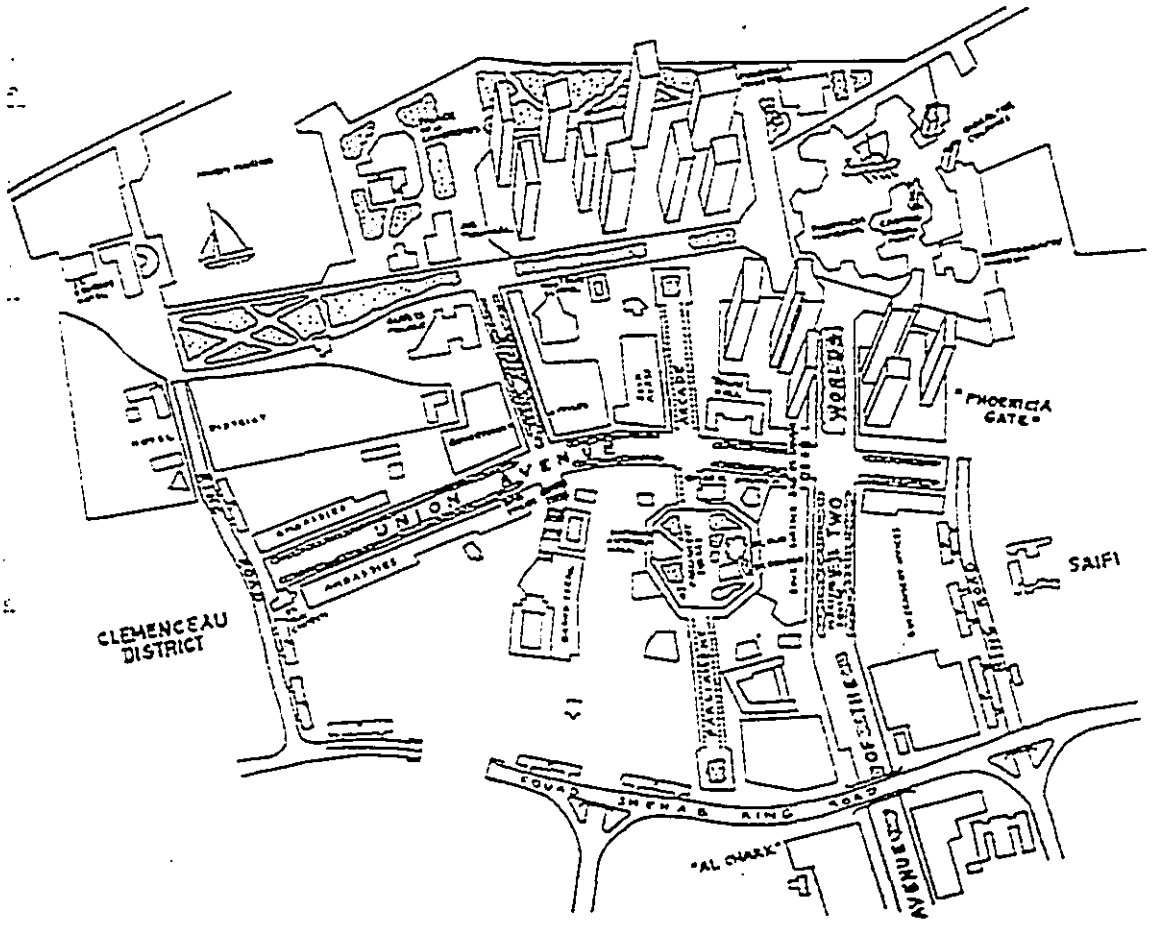


Figure 3.19. The Serof Plan, 1983. Source: *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, 98.

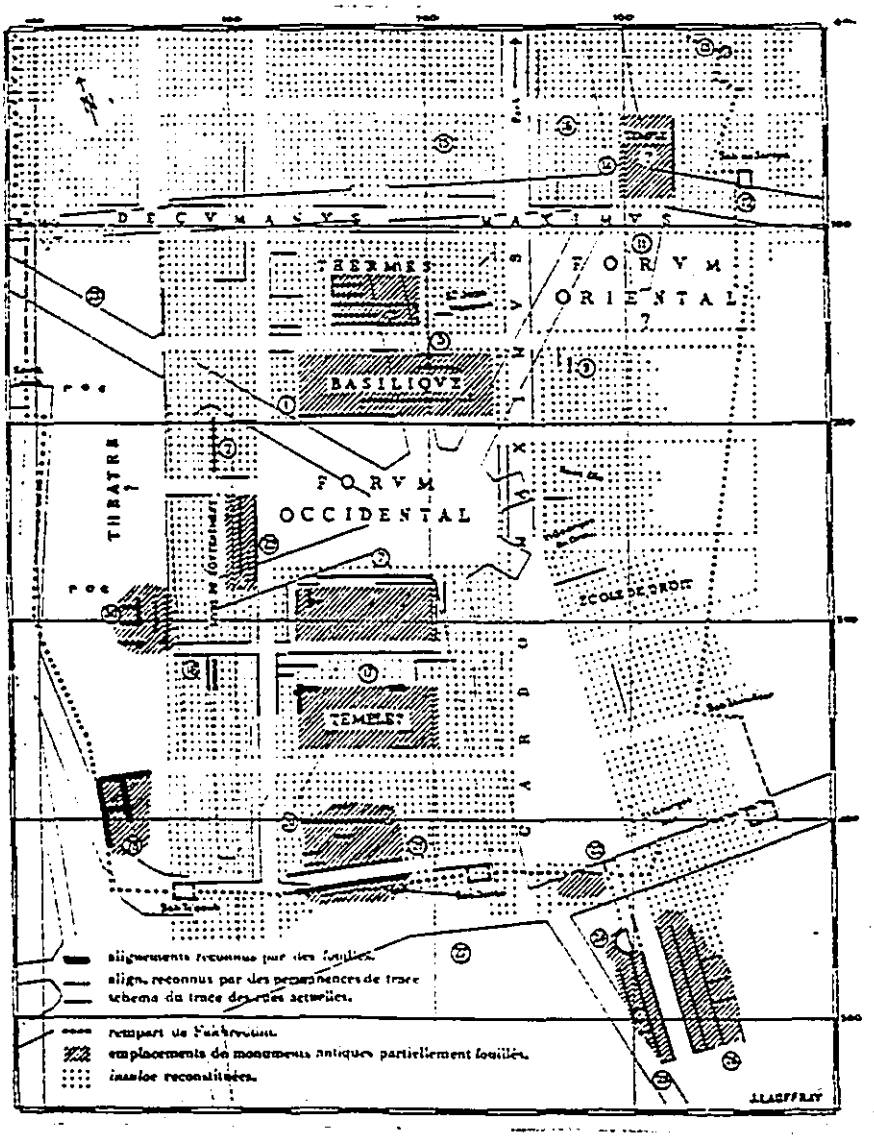


Figure 3.20. Urban plan of Roman Beirut, as reconstructed by Leila Badr. Source: *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, 68.

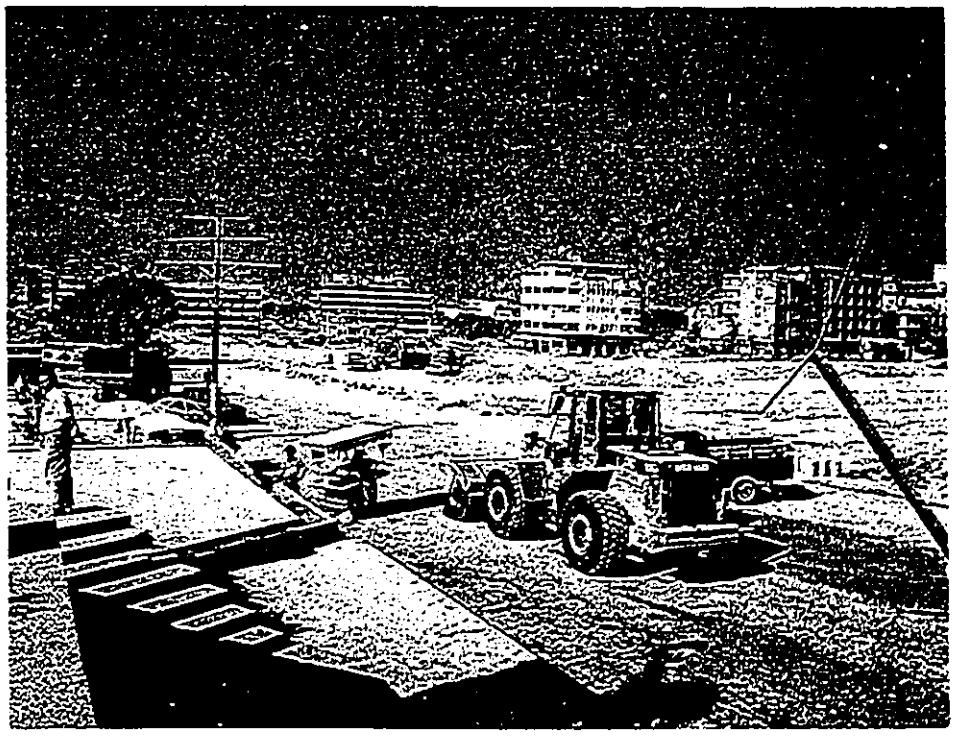

Figure 3.21. Beirut Central District: "Bulldozing strategy" of postwar reconstruction, summer 1994. Source: Author.

While such debates and efforts were taking place on the sidelines during intermittent periods of peace in the early 1980s, a new plan was in the works. The failure of previous postwar central planning in addressing the dynamics of exchange and communication and in stabilizing the imbalances of urbanization, led to the investment in various decentralization strategies. Such strategies only played on the natural de-urbanization process as a result of the war.[23]

Developed by a Franco-Lebanese team with the participation of the Institut d'Amenagement et d'Urbanisme de la Region d'Ile de France (l'IAURIF), the new master scheme was made public in 1986 after three years of elaboration on the 1977 APUR plan. The Schema Directeur de la Region Metropolitaine de Beyrouth, as the name suggests, was the first attempt to deal with the central district in the context of the whole city, even the country. At that time in Lebanese political history, various scenarios were being drawn up regarding the future of Lebanon. Taking the major war-born urban transformations into consideration, the l'IAURIF plan opted not to rethink or reinforce Beirut as a cohesive unity, but saw its future as a set of fragmented religious and political divisions. A hierarchy of four secondary regional centres were envisioned which would act as service poles and generators of activity for the main war developments: Nahr al-Maout to the north, Hazmieh in the centre, Laylakeh in the southern suburb, and that of Khalde further to the south (fig. 3.22). While recognizing the importance of the downtown, the plan revoked the traditional concentric layout of the city, thus reversing the role of the city centre as the sole hub of the metropolitan region. Although it remained ink on paper, the l'IAURIF Plan is further proof of the constructive efforts and rich visions that produced alternatives to the reconstruction process.

The end of the war was officially announced towards the end of 1991 after several years of intense fighting which spread well beyond the city limits of Beirut. However, the

[23] In "Towards a Master Plan for Post-War Lebanon" in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Planning and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), Jad Tabet further discusses the opinions of the advocates of this decentralization strategy in postwar urban planning.

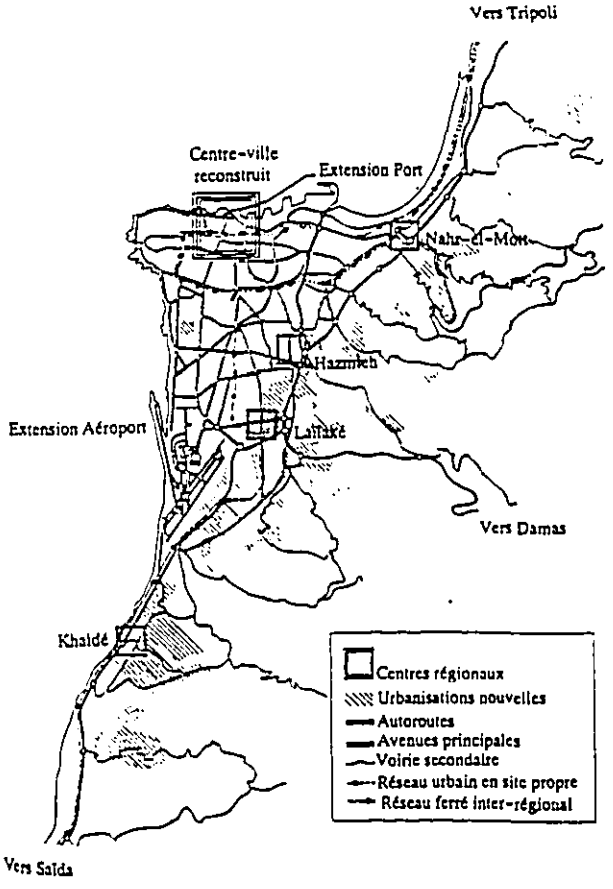


Figure 3.22. The Schema Directeur de la Region Metropolitaine de Beyrouth, 1983-86. Source: *La Reconstruction de Beyrouth et l'Incertitude Politique: Seconde Partie*, 192.

capital once again presented itself as the symbol for the re-unification, reconciliation, and rebuilding of the whole country. Such circumstances permitted the re-negotiation of the reconstruction plan.

Upon the request of the Council for Development and Reconstruction, Dar Al-Handasah (Shair & Partners), a 4000-strong multi-disciplinary consulting firm, was bestowed with the task. Under the direction of architect and urban planner Henri Edde, and in conjunction with the American engineering giant Bechtel International, Dar Al-Handasah was to reconsider and update the Master Reconstruction Plan for Beirut. Understandably, the proposition was to be quite different from its precedents since the 16 years of war had notably altered the very same premise of intervention (fig. 3.23). The substantial increase in destruction and squatting, the disintegration of the state, the lack of finances, as well as the hostile relationship between owners, tenants, lease-holders, and illegal refugees in the central district, were only an indication of the scale and complexity of obstacles to be faced. Nevertheless, the preparation of the national plan for reconstruction was underway.

In what concerned the city centre, Dar Al-Handasah first proposed the creation of a Real Estate Company (REC) that could resolve the problems of property rights and ownership, as a necessary and an inherent part of the successful implementation of any master plan. This development company, set up by the government and enforced by law, would have the power to make compulsory purchases of land and damaged buildings, while compensating the owners with free shares in the new real-estate company. As such, half the stock of the company would be given as shares in exchange for property and the other half would be bought by private investors.[24] Thus, the Lebanese Company for the

[24] In "The Reconstruction of Beirut" in *Prospects for Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), Oussama Kabbani addresses in detail the constitutional aspects of this real-estate company, and its financial, economic, and legal implications. The general provisional laws for establishing a Real Estate Company were, in fact, enacted in 1977 and later modified in 1991 by the Lebanese government to involve the private sector in the reconstruction of war-ravaged areas. This proposition was made a reality with the creation of the first real-estate company for the rebuilding of the city centre, Solidere, in 1994.

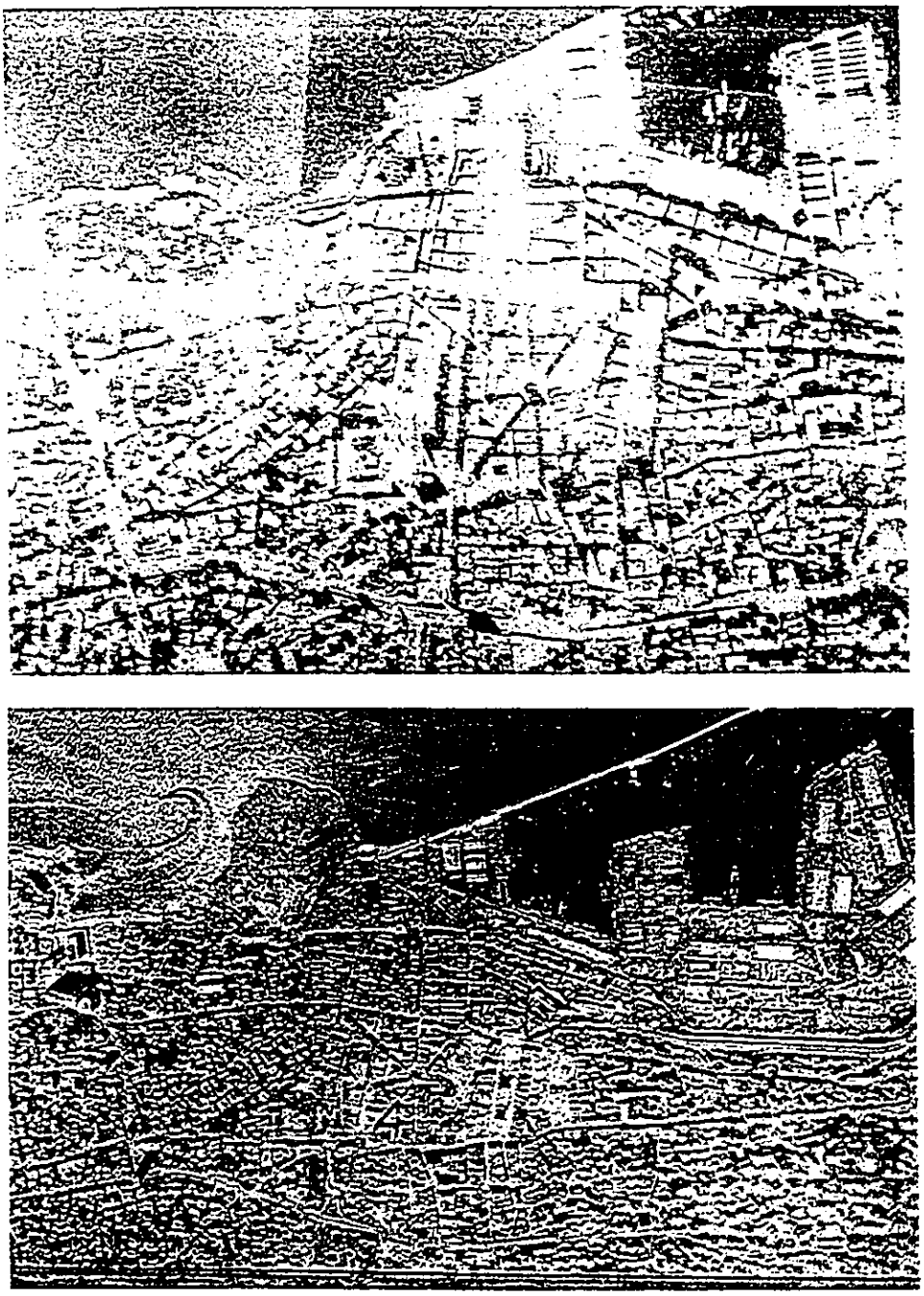

Figure 3.23. Beirut Central District: Aerial views in 1973 and in 1983. Source: *The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World*, 296, 286.

Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District, better known as Solidere, was created in 1991.[25] The company constituted a joint venture for the financing and execution of the above-mentioned urban development.[26]

After the founding of Solidere, the priorities of the plan were divided into three categories: the preservation of the city's heritage, the "modernization" of the city centre, and the development and enhancement of the road networks (fig. 3.24). In theory, the plan should be applauded for both its noble motives and for its mere existence in the given context. However, the multi-functional central district, with its new roads and metro, infrastructure, offices, hotels, parks, shops, and leisure complexes, since referred to as the Edde Plan, was to be the subject of the hottest debate and controversy since its publication. Highly criticized for being "devoid of memory," the image of the new city centre has been described as a "Middle Eastern version of Canary Wharf" (fig. 3.25).[27]

On the one hand, although the preservation of approximately 40% of the built heritage of Beirut is stated as high priority, the existence of the Edde Plan was based primarily on the total demolition of the existing fabric and *not* on the superposition of the plan on the damaged, yet still viable, urban tissue. Except for the limited area developed under the French Mandate (the Ma'arad block, and Allenby and Foch streets), and a selection of cultural, religious, residential, and governmental buildings (the Grand Serail, or government house, and the Municipality of Beirut), as well as a variety of buildings dating back to the 1950s and 1960s (Banks Street), the city centre was seen as a blank page awaiting development. The argument that most buildings were beyond salvage proved to be a weak excuse for wholesale demolition. In other words, the trade-off of preserving a few buildings to the detriment of demolishing the rest and in an obsolete

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[25] The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District was incorporated on the 5th of May 1994 after the completion of the selling and the distribution of its shares.
[26] For details of the legal, financial, and managerial dimensions of Solidere, refer to the *Articles of Incorporation: The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut City District s.a.l.* (Second Edition. Beirut: Solidere, 1993).
[27] Stewart, A. "Healing the Wounds." *Building*. Vol. 256, No. 51, December 20 1991, 14.

Figure 3.24. The Edde Plan, 1991-92. Source: *Beirut Central District*, 3.

Figure 3.25. Canary Wharf development. Source: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, 49.

effort to preserve the memory of the people and of the place, proved futile when the few restored buildings were robbed of their context. As such, the proposed preservation was a superficial one based on the preservation of only some of the tangible elements of the city, thus negating the essence of preservation as a philosophy and an approach to design which aims at preserving the social fabric, the memory, and the spirit of a place.

On the other hand, the project proposed to insert a series of bold implementations in the city fabric, in order to assert the "modern" image of the city. This would be partially achieved by inscribing the plan within a rigid grid of main axes (which would replace the existing complex network of streets that were traditionally the essential generators of city life) and a forest of public and green spaces. These "innovative" features of the scheme were built on a sequence of constructed perspectives centring on symbolic places of political and economic potency and imagery. Firstly, there was the grand perspective from Martyrs' Square towards the sea, culminating in a monumental marina situated on the first basin of the Port of Beirut (fig. 3.26). Surrounding the marina was the so-called "Burj el-Bahr" (Tower of the Sea), a large circular office complex 180 meters in diameter, protruding into the Mediterranean (fig. 3.27). The International Business Centre was located further to the south, where the silhouette of the glazed twin towers of the "World Trade Centre" would dominate the renovated waterfront (fig. 3.28). Opposite this financial centre, an artificial island would be created on the Normandy landfill functioning as a tourist and luxurious residential district, linked to the mainland by three bridges.[28]

The contrast between the above two distinct approaches in city planning, between preservation and modernization, as well as the political vision represented in the colourful perspectives, has led to the violent controversy, which in turn, has permitted the re-

[28] In his chapter entitled "Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes Toward The Built Environment" in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden. Brill, 1993), Hashim Sarkis discusses this "selective memory" in this future city, which borrows from foreign monuments to create a marketable image of Beirut; Paris in the Champs Elysees of Martyrs' Square, Manhattan in the Twin Towers of the financial district, and Venice in the artificial island and bridges.

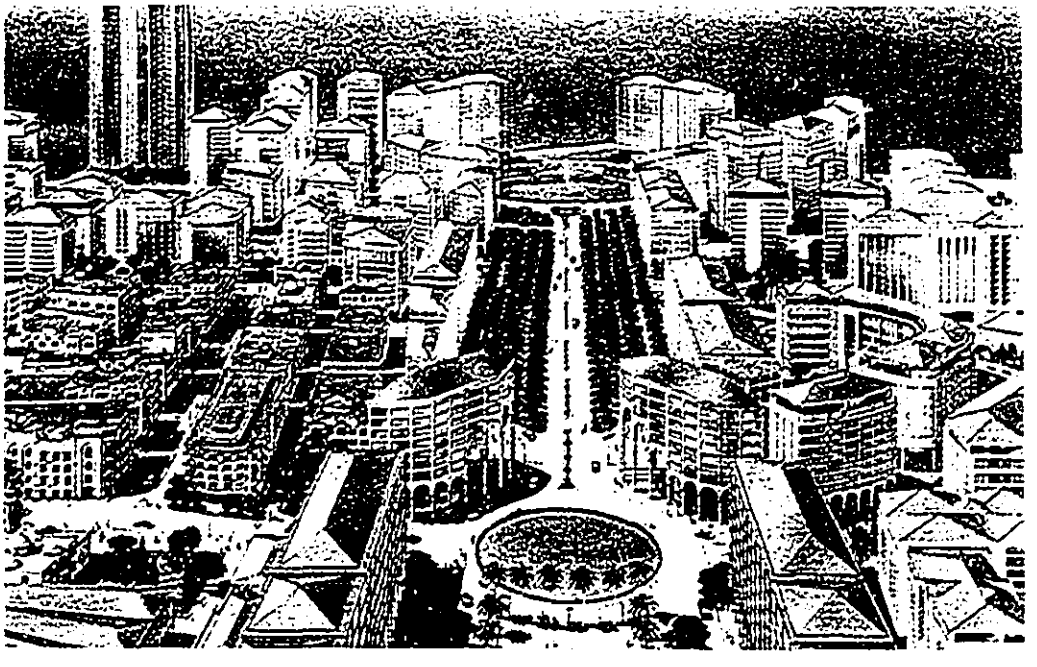

Figure 3.26. An artist's impression of Martyrs' Square as proposed by the Edde Plan, 1991-2. Source: *Beirut Central District*, 10.

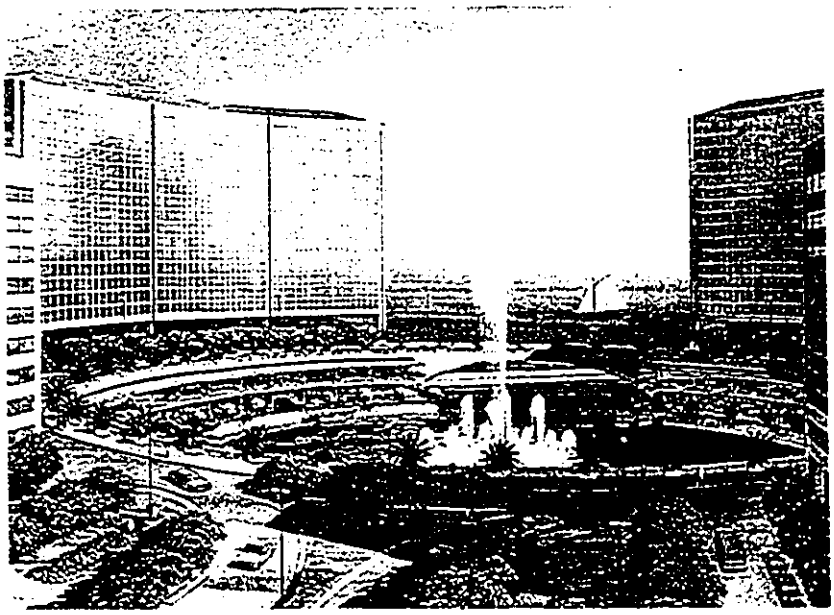

Figure 3.27. Burj el-Bahr. Source: *Beirut Central District*, 8.

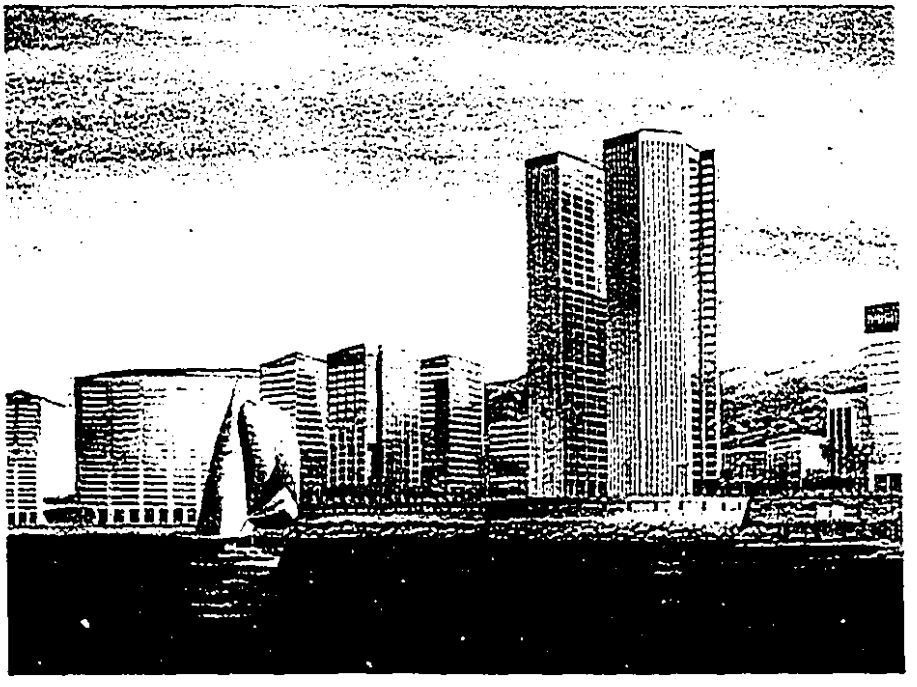

Figure 3.28. The International Business Centre. Source: *Beirut Central District*, 8.

discussion and the re-evaluation of the rebuilding process.[29] Besides the previously mentioned controversies, the criticism also revolved around the following issues.

Unlike the previous Schema Directeur de la Region Metropolitaine de Beyrouth of 1986 which dealt with the whole metropolitan region, the isolation of this regimented and homogeneous island of modernity negated the whole purpose of re-investing in a centralized planning strategy based on notions of re-unification and accessibility. This critique was strengthened by the fact that destruction in Beirut took place at a large scale in two areas: the city centre and the quarters of the Demarcation Line. Although destruction was not as continuous along the Demarcation Line as in the city centre, the latter alone was the subject of a series of reconstruction plans. One of the contradictions of the seclusion of the modernized island was that the two main access roads to the centre pass through the battle-line zone: the first leads to the airport, the other to Damascus.[30] Therefore, the city centre redevelopment denied its dependency on the surroundings and the repercussions that the decision-making within its limits may have had on surrounding areas, and vice versa. Instead, the central district was conceived and presented as a "glossy city of glass and concrete," protected from the invasion of the underprivileged and the undesirables who inhabit the surrounding areas. This segregation was further reinforced by the transformation of the ring road into a major thoroughfare (thus functioning as an electric fence) and was even graphically represented in the isolation of the central district in the plans and perspectives. As such, no indication, graphic or otherwise, of how the city centre would relate to the adjacent districts was represented or even hinted at.

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[29] It is important to note that the overall layout of the 1991-2 plan was clearly presented as a preliminary stage in the development of a master plan, subject to further studies and subsequent modifications. Although the graphics present bold imagery, it is clearly stated that the architectural design of the buildings remains the responsibility of individual architects, who will nevertheless have to abide by the general urban planning regulations and massing directives.

[30] As a consequence of the concern for the development of the battle-line area in conjunction with, and in function of the reconstruction of the city centre, the Council for Development and Reconstruction together with the Direction General de l'Urbanisme du Liban, had previously commissioned the l'IAURIF in 1988 to analyze the integration of the city centre in the metropolitan region, as part of their Schema Directeur de la Region Metropolitaine de Beyrouth. The analysis is described in detail in "Beyrouth: Ligne des Combats a la Veille de la Reconstruction ". *Cahier de l'IAURIF*. No. 104-105, August 1993, 219-227.

This exclusivity of the city centre was also reflected in the treatment of the residential areas within the limits of the scheme. The "sanitization" of the traditional residential quarters of Ghalghoul and Mar Maroun to the south and the ancient Jewish quarter of Wadi Abu Jmil to the west provided a haven for the rich and privileged, while shunning the original inhabitants of the community and sacrificing the qualitative social fabric of Beirut. Except for a few selected urban houses of supposed historical and architectural value, the last relics of the Ottoman era were proposed to be erased. Furthermore, the development of the artificial island into a gentrified tourist and residential zone was yet another indication of the intended concentration of wealth within a belt of poverty.

At the same time, the neglect of the risks of real-estate speculation which, unfortunately, characterizes the mercantile and commercial tendencies of Lebanese society, was yet another sign of the lack of foresight on behalf of the planners. At another level, the concept of rehabilitation of the existing traditional markets through their reconstruction with a *cachet oriental* merely constituted the reproduction of fakes as a compensation for those who lamented the destruction of the original *souks*. The ideology behind such a decision was and remains controversial within the context of conservation in which only the authentic is sought after to be captured and enhanced.

To satisfy the romantic and the nostalgic, traditional, nineteenth-century pitched red roof tile would have been added to both new and traditional buildings alike, to recreate the picturesque homogeneity of the ancient city (fig. 3.26). Such efforts in the reconstruction of Beirut remain simply skin deep, urban decoration *en tromp l'oeil*, where "planning is reduced to the production of images and post-modern clichés that could serve only real estate speculation."[31] Whether intentional or not, the envisioned monumental axis which runs through Martyrs' Square to the so-called Burj el-Bahr retraced the

[31] Tabet, J. "Towards a Master Plan for Post-War Lebanon" in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Planning and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 95.

Demarcation Line which divided the city during the war into the predominantly Christian eastern sector and the Moslem one to the west. Ironically, the monumentalization of this particular axis of the plan echoes the potential emergence of future social, economic, cultural, and surely physical divisions in the city, divisions encouraged by a plan that claims Beirut for all Lebanese.

The debate and criticism did not stop at the plan itself, but also questioned the future economic role of the revived Beirut. The sustainability of the proposed two million square meters of commercial and office space, within the proposed scenario of returning Beirut to its role as an intermediary between the East and the West in the new order of the Middle East, remains to be seen. In short, the planners of the future central district, while completely ignoring the war-born regional centres, promoted a new, alien identity to Beirut, based on a collage of images and representations, which no matter how alluring, lacked the intangible element: a soul.

The hesitation of potential local and foreign investors in the reconstruction process, as well as the public debate generated by the criticism, led to the reconsideration of the scheme in 1993. Subsequent to Edde's resignation, allegedly as a result of the client's speculation of adding 28, 30-storey towers to the scheme, Solidere called upon the French city planner Louis Sato to redesign the city centre (fig. 3.29).[32] Sato first proposed to restore the symbolic function of the centre, through its link to the metropolitan region. This would have been achieved by adopting a circulation strategy where the encircling networks of sunken arteries of the Edde Plan would have been abandoned for a series of urban boulevards, and also by re-integrating the Port of Beirut into the function of the city, which in turn would revive the city's ancient role as a crossroads of exchange.

The four main objectives of the plan were the following. Firstly, the redevelopment of the waterfront into a promenade as a continuation of the existing corniche stretching southwards from the edge of the central district. To enhance further the quality of the

[32] Ego, R. "La Derniere Bataille de Beyrouth." *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, No. 289, October 1993, 54.

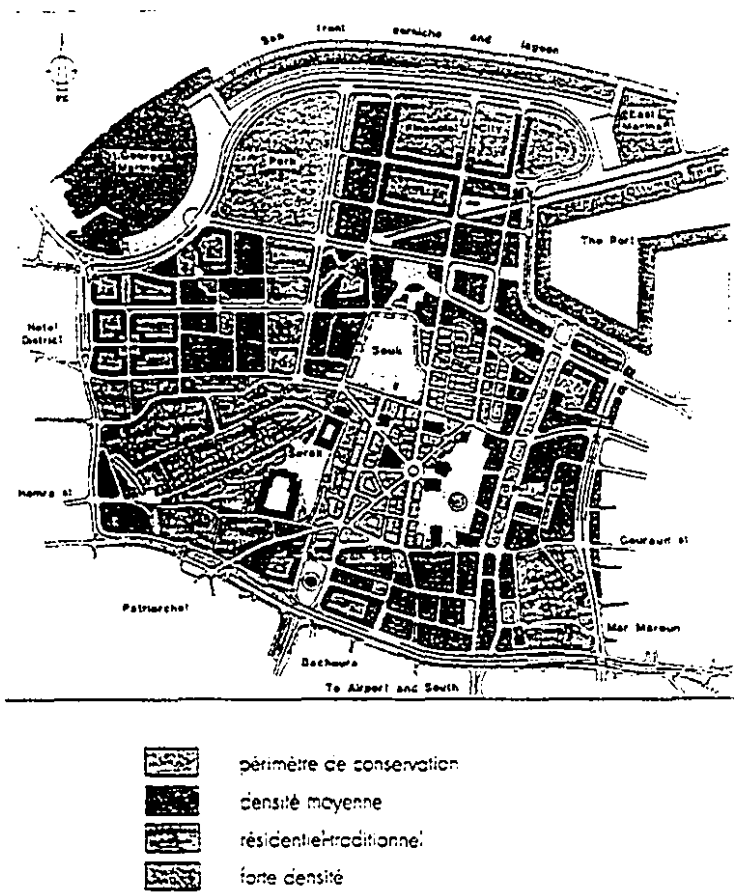


Figure 3.29. The Sato Plan, 1993. Source: "La Derniere Bataille de Beyrouth," 59.

seafront, the 608,000 square meter landfill reclaimed from the sea would be developed into a much needed urban park. Secondly, the preservation of about 400 low-rise buildings would not only be used to retain the traditional fabric, but also as a tool in scaling down the ground occupancy coefficient. Thus, the 400 or so preserved buildings in the surrounding residential areas would act as a transition zone between the city centre and the rest of the metropolis. While the Real Estate Company would remain symbolically in existence to avoid further complications, these preserved buildings would be returned to their owners to be restored and rehabilitated under set conditions. At a third level, the Sato Plan defined with precision the limits and scopes of the intervention zone as regarding the archaeological sites, where excavation would be given priority over rebuilding. Lastly, the Sato Plan proposed the launching of a series of international competitions, the first of which would deal with the reconstruction of the *souks*, the second, with collective habitation, the third, with the development of the corniche, and the fourth, with the development of the axis of the Demarcation Line passing through Martyrs' Square.

The essential contribution of the Sato Plan is that it aspired to change the *spirit* and *philosophy* of the reconstruction framework. It reflected an urge to revive the "soft intervention" approach of the 1977 APUR Plan, marked by a time lapse of 16 years of war and destruction. Again, despite the proposals and the debates, little of the thought process was reflected on site. Dynamited buildings, their relics carted away in trucks, remained the scene well into the summer of 1995 (fig. 3.30). By then, more than half of the built fabric of the city had fallen.

Nevertheless, in December 1993 Solidere launched an International Ideas Competition to reconstruct the *souks*. The competition drew 357 contestants from 51 countries and its results were published in the summer of 1994. The three winning schemes were criticized for being either too academic in nature, or simplistic

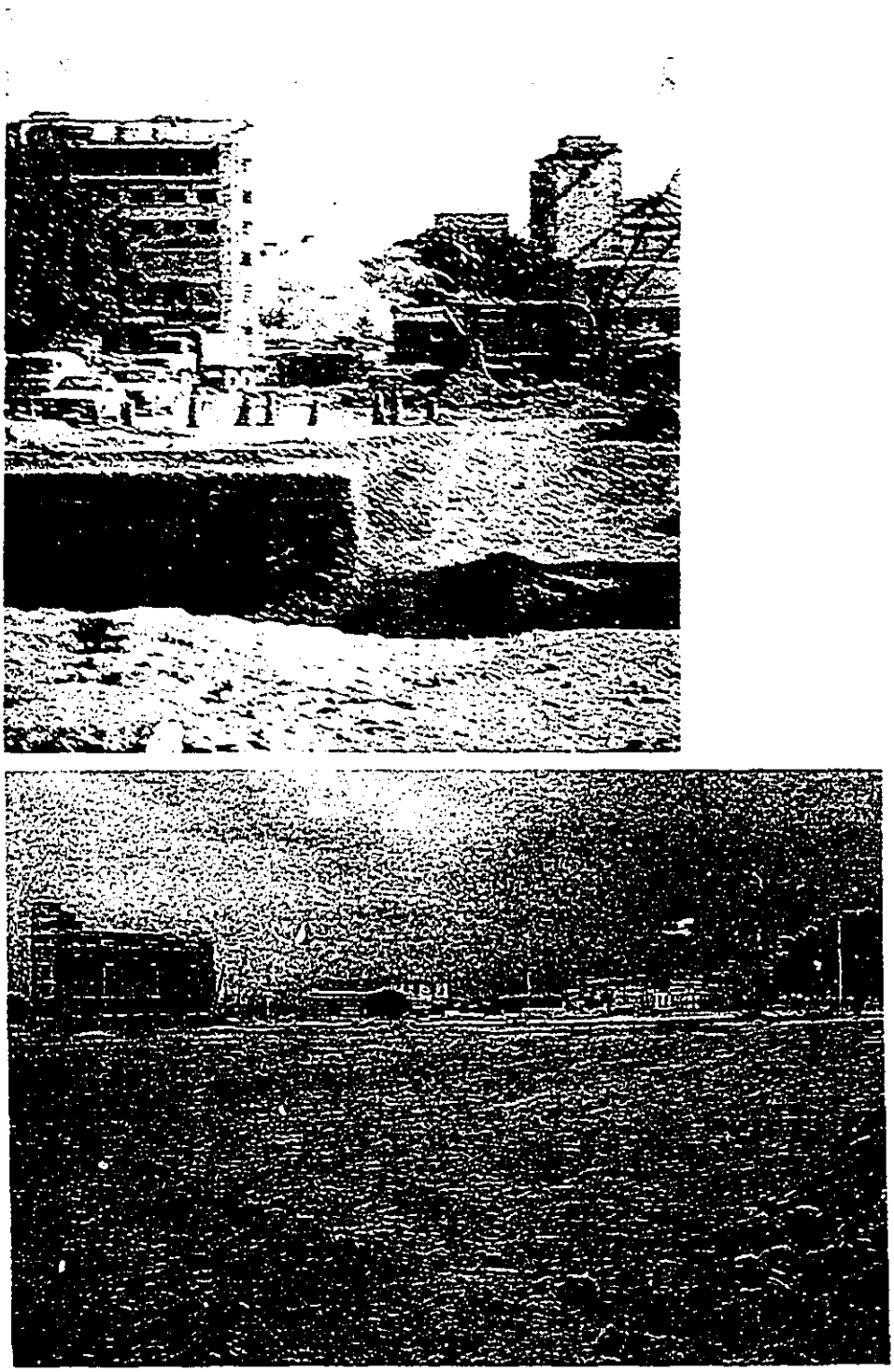

Figure 3.30. Dynamiting buildings around Martyrs' Square, 1994, and the resulting urban landscape, 1995. Source: Author.

reconstructions of the spatial and social characteristics of the traditional markets.[33] This competition was relatively successful in opening the reconstruction process to the public and in encouraging national and international professional involvement. It is, however, unfortunate to think of the whole venture as a publicity stunt and a gesture of diplomacy and politics to delude the potential investors and the public, as well as to secure international recognition.[34]

At a more optimistic level, the number of old buildings to be retained and restored in the city centre has increased over the past year or so, from just over 100 to 266. Nevertheless, it remains a fact and a tragedy that an estimated 300 buildings were dynamited and bulldozed during that same period.[35] In the past decade, the organization of several symposia, workshops, and exhibitions and their subsequent publication has been another result of the controversy.[36] The two waves of scholarly interest, the first in 1983 and the second in 1993, corresponded to the two main sporadic peace eras of the 16-year war. Though a decade apart, both waves, through their multi-disciplinary approach and participants, offered a broad array of research concerned with the social, political, economic, as well as spatial issues of the rebuilding of Beirut. Such publications and events have largely contributed to opening the reconstruction process to further scholarly research and to public inquiry.

Beirut is currently undergoing major transformations in the latest state-sponsored plan for rehabilitation, based on the most recent revision of February 1994 of the

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[33] Solidere. *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: An International Competition for Ideas in Architecture - Exhibition Information Brochure* (Beirut: Solidere, 1994) and "Schneller Wiederaufbau (Quick Reconstruction)?' *Werk, Bauen + Wohnen*. November 1994, 42.

[34] Detailed information on the competition, its conditions, site, objectives, and goals is found in the Competition Kit published by Solidere.

[35] These figures are quoted from "The Modern Face of an Ancient City" by Mark Nicholson. *Financial Times*, October 17 1994?.

[36] The first symposium was held at the American University of Beirut in 1983 and was published under the title *Beirut of Tomorrow: Planning for Reconstruction*, edited by Friedrich Ragette (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983). The other book, *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, co-edited by Samir Khalaf and Philip S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), was the outcome of the Workshop on Lebanon's Reconstruction held at MIT in 1991.

redevelopment scheme presented in 1991 (fig. 1.1). Claimed by its authors to have significantly changed in order to address the criticism, the plan has opened the door to the re-negotiation of some of the issues that have remained dormant throughout the reconstruction process.

For one, the debate over the archaeological excavations has resurfaced in the past two years to reinstate its position in the reconstruction process. Beirut has been declared the largest urban archaeological dig in the modern world. Financed jointly by the United Nations, the Lebanese government and the philanthropic Hariri Foundation, 14 teams of archaeologists of various nationalities are reconstructing, piecemeal, the history of Beirut. However, the nature of urban archaeology presumes that a thorough investigation is impossible at such a city scale given the time provided for the archaeologists to complete their work.[37] As such, the excavations only permit the archaeologists to open, quite literally, "windows" to the past, punctures through the open landscape in order to unravel traces and indicators that could contribute to the rewriting of the history of Beirut.

Although the intentions behind the digs point toward further financial gains in the future, especially from tourism, the reconstruction plan now includes a 30,000 square meter "archaeological park," designed between Martyrs' Square and Place de l'Etoile to the east to integrate these important discoveries (fig. 3.31). The remaining objects and artifacts are to be photographed and documented and then placed in special storage until they can be displayed in public gardens or housed in the National Museum.[38]

So, as the debris of twentieth-century Beirut is carted away, another 5000-year old city is being exposed for a brief interval of time, to satisfy the curiosity of Lebanese

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[37] Archaeological excavations in the city centre, which began in the autumn of 1993, were scheduled by Solidere to last between 24 and 30 months, and are therefore in the phase of completion today.

[38] A detailed account of the archaeological findings, and the controversies related to the urban digs within the context of the reconstruction plan, are underlined by two recent articles: the first, by Nicholas Blanford is entitled "The Past Revealed: The Souk Archaeological Digs" in *Eye on Beirut*, July 1995, 8-13, and the second by Serge Merhi is entitled "Dans l'Intimite d'une Ville" in *Chronique*, July 1995, 26-30.

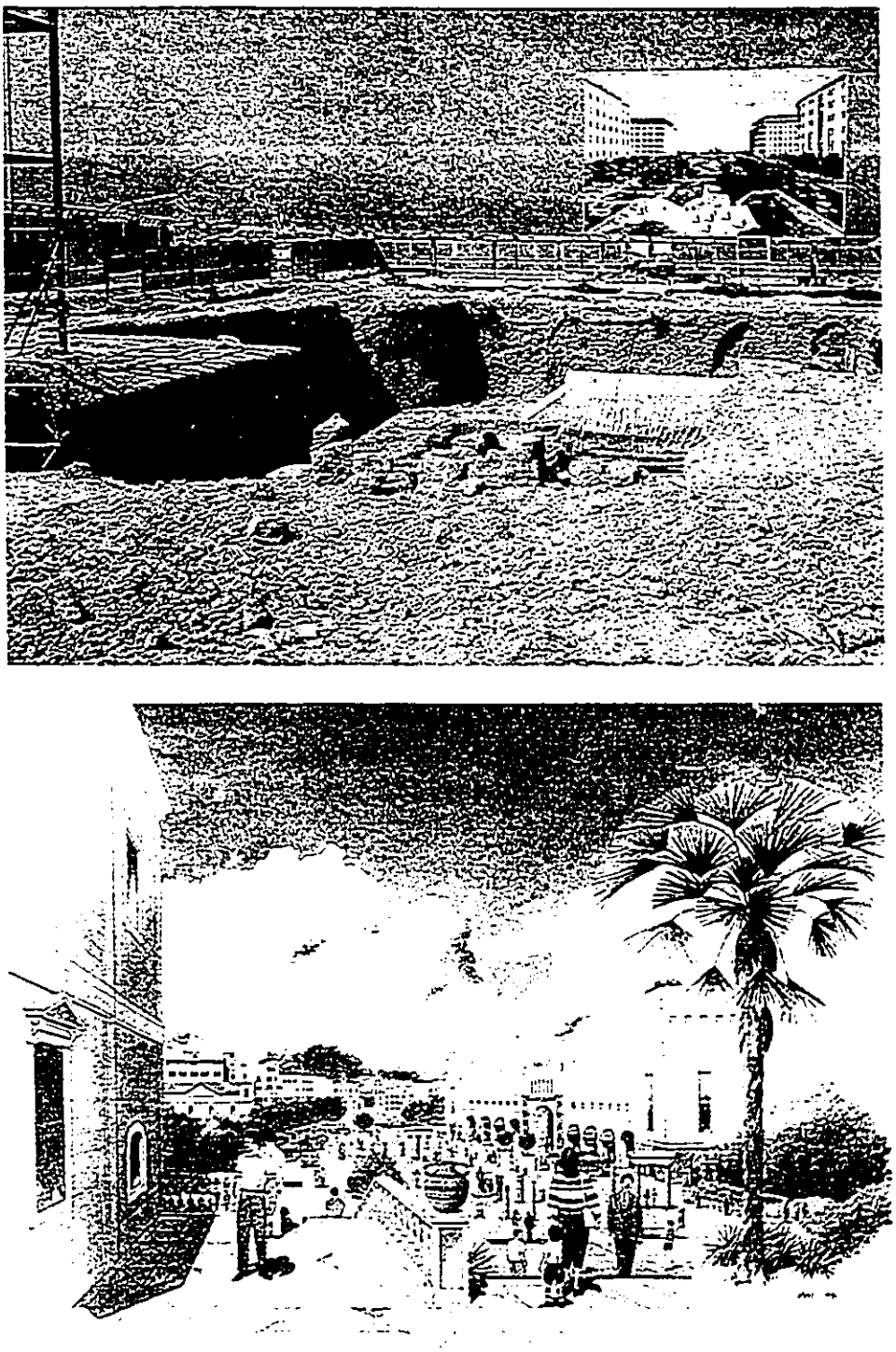

Figure 3.31. Archaeological digs in Martyrs' Square, 1994. Source: Author. The proposed archaeological park. Source: *The Development and Reconstruction of BCD - Information Booklet*, 15.

historians, archaeologists, and the general public, hungry for a consensus on a vision of their past.[39]

At another level, much of the surviving city fabric in the historic core, namely the area stretching from the Serail Citadel in the west to Martyrs' Square in the east, will be retained. In the eyes of the planners, the preservation of these heritage buildings will not only provide a sense of "historical memory," but will also, admittedly, increase the value of the new real-estate development (fig. 3.32). In addition, planning regulations and design guidelines will

> encourage development sympathetic to the vernacular tradition around the core and in areas in existing residential communities. Elsewhere, especially in the new 'Financial Quarter' on the waterfront reclamation area, a bold expression of contemporary architecture will be encouraged.[40]

Despite such efforts to reconcile the reconstruction of Beirut, supported by a rigorous media campaign to promote and to publicize the altered plan as a more "humane" concept catering to the memory and scale of the city, the adversaries of the plan remain unconvinced. Little has really changed and the previous critique that applied to the 1992 version of the plan still holds. The central district remains an isolated area with arbitrary boundaries and weak links to the metropolitan region. The density, while lowered in certain parts, has been largely increased in others, and high-rise buildings are only more in number and higher in storeys.

Granted, there are some improvements. The landfill is proposed to be developed into an urban park, as suggested by the 1993 Sato Plan and the traditional residential areas

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[39] Fisk, R. "Lebanese Recoil as the Demons of their History are Unearthed." *Independent*. March 1 1995, 14. This conflict of interest in archaeological excavations Fisk underlines as the Lebanese unwillingness to deal with their own past, in the sense that the layers of history, from the Phoenician to the Roman to the Arab, lay at the root of the tension between the various communities. Archaeology, he argues, has only recently been given attention due its potential in drawing money from tourism, and not for its potential as a healing medium for a nation at odds in its acceptance of its own past.

[40] Quoted from an interview with Angus Gavin, the head of Solidere's Urban Design team responsible for the reconstruction of the city centre of Beirut. MacInnes, K. "The Rebuilding of Beirut." *Architectural Design*. Vol. 63, No. 11/12, November/December 1993, x. This "encouragement," in my opinion, is contradictory to the freedom allegedly bestowed solely on the individual architects to design the architecture of the rebuilt Beirut. It is more of a restrictive measure, than that of design freedom.

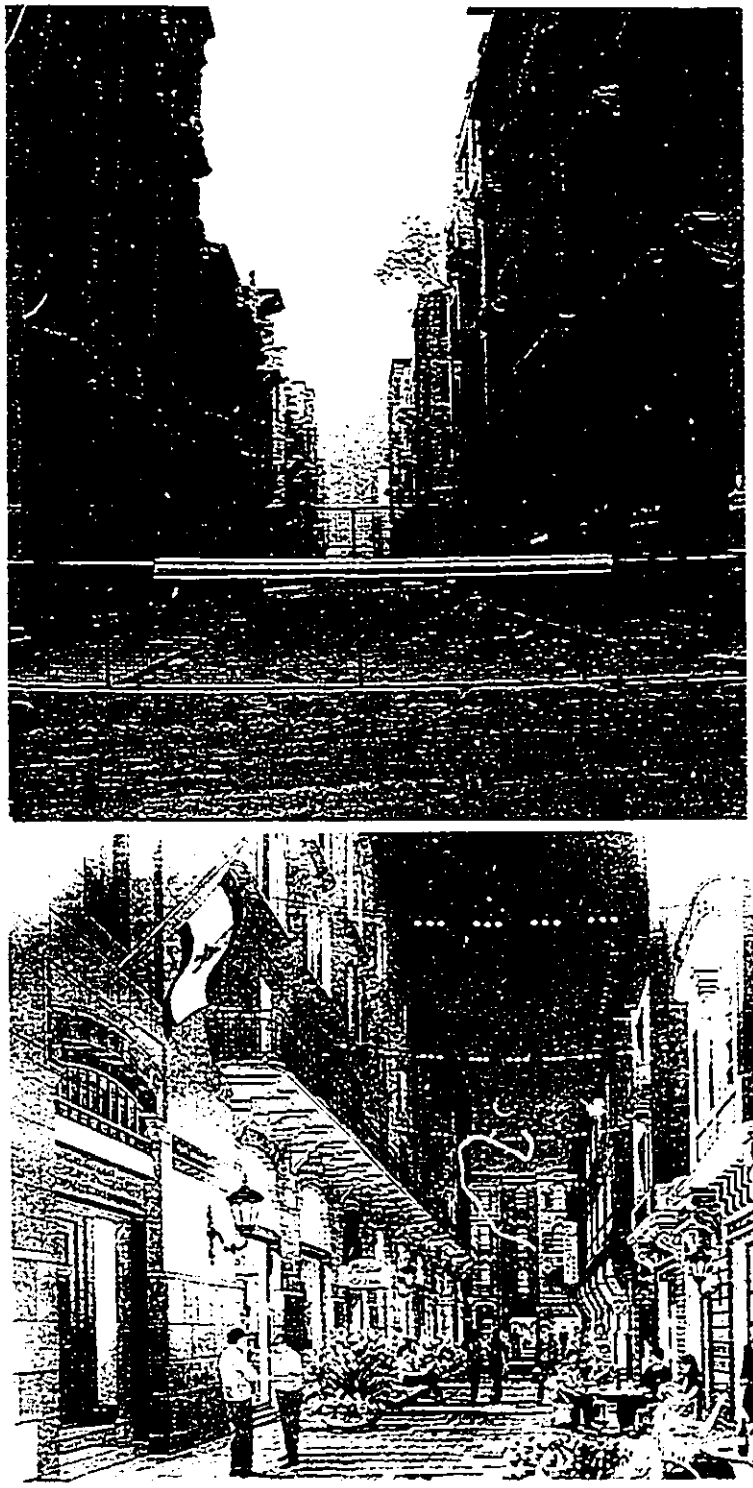

Figure 3.32. A typical residential street, 1995. Source: Author. An artist's rendering of a future pedestrian residential street. Source: *The Development and Reconstruction of BCD - Information Booklet*, 20.

are to be partially restored (fig. 3.33). Furthermore, in what concerns the preservation of natural heritage, several agricultural nurseries have been set up where ancient trees from various parts of the central district are being nurtured back to life (fig. 3.34). Other current developments include the investment in pilot projects to trigger further growth, such as the refurbishment of the Murr Tower, Beirut's tallest building, commissioned to the renowned British architect Norman Foster (fig. 3.35).[41] At another level, the infrastructure works, which began on a massive scale in November 1994, are also in the phase of completion today.

As for the traditional markets, their reconstruction is stated by Solidere as a high priority of Phase I. According to Oussama Kabbani, competition project manager at Solidere, the three winners of the International Ideas Competition, held in 1993, will participate, among other architects, to work within the Master Plan of the 60,000 square meter site, for which the Lebanese architect Jad Tabet was appointed master planner by Solidere.[42] In fact, the rebuilding of the souks is seen as one of the main symbols of the reconstruction of the cosmopolitan environment that once existed. For that purpose, a visual document has been published by Solidere to document the unique landscape and revive the image of these traditional commercial spaces, and to "inspire" future developments (fig. 3.36).

However, such improvements are greatly over-shadowed by the irreversible destruction of the reconstruction process. At the dawn of peace, Beirut is still suffering the abuse of delusions of the reconstruction framework. According to Assem Salaam,

> Beirut will be the victim of the ruthless pursuit of quick profit, the commercial culture which has destroyed, and continues to destroy, the traditions of architecture, or urban life, and of community ...[43]

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[41] Payne, G. "Putting Beirut Back Together." *Building Design*. No. 1230, August 11 1995, 15.
[42] Solidere. *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: Visual Survey Kit*. Beirut: Solidere.
[43] Salaam, A. "The Reconstruction of Beirut: A Lost Opportunity." *AA Files*. Vol. 27, Summer 1994, 13.

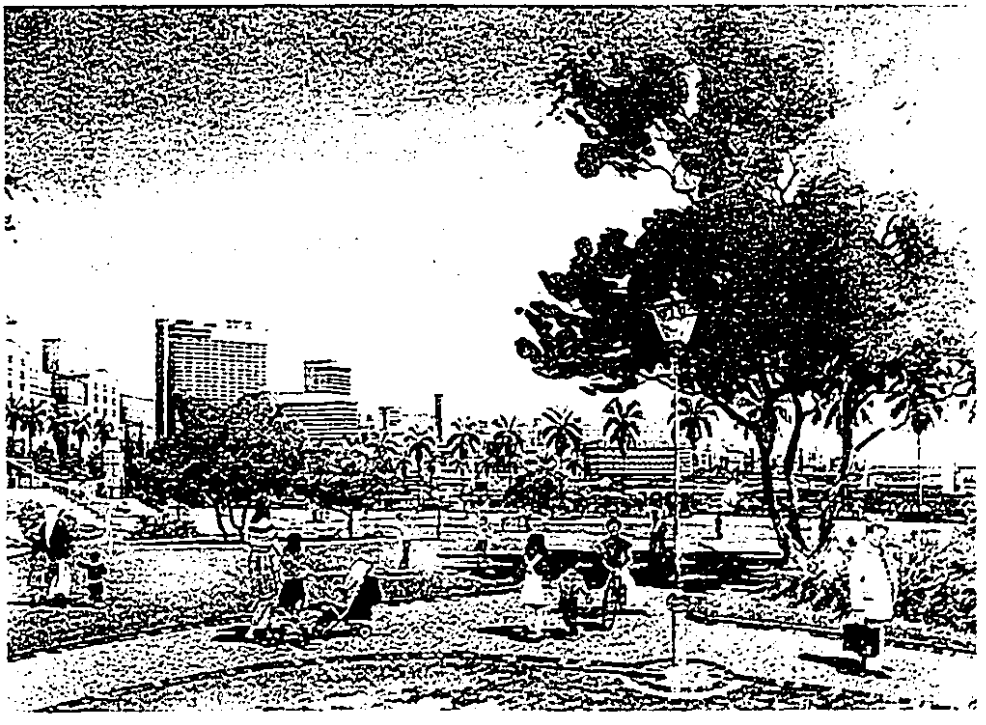

Figure 3.33. The proposed urban park on the Normandy landfill. Source: *The Development and Reconstruction of BCD - Information Booklet*, 15.

Figure 3.34. Tree nursery, summer 1995. Source: Author.

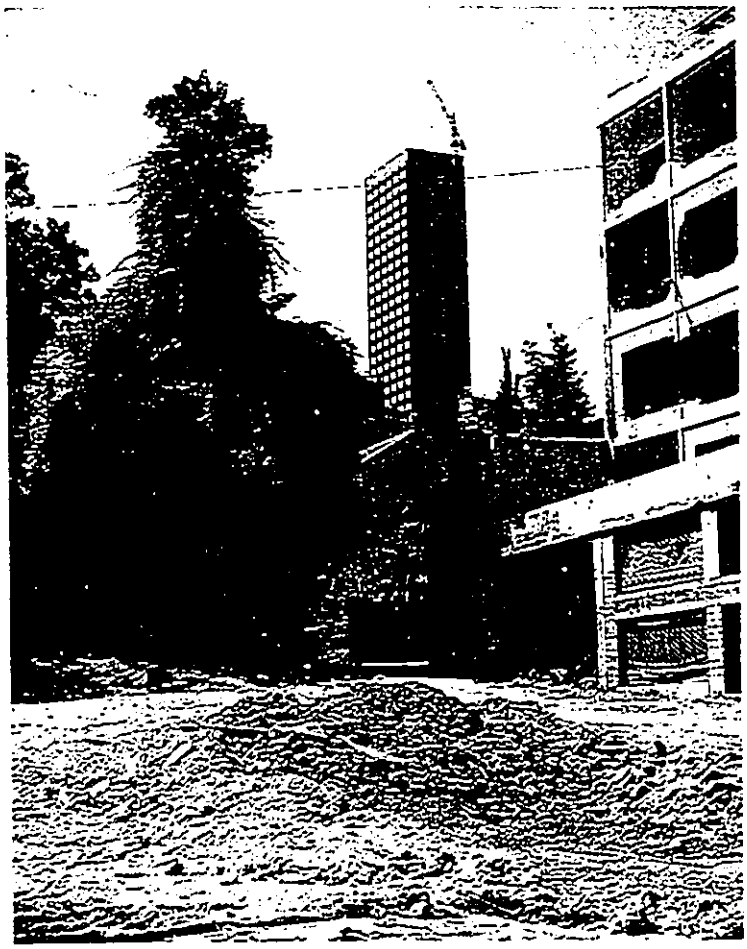

Figure 3.35. A view of the Murr Tower from Wadi Abu Jmil, 1995. Source: Author.

Figure 3.36. Prewar view of the traditional markets as a unique commercial, social, and spatial environment. Source: *Beyrouth: Souvenirs...Realite*.

In conclusion, war, by definition, implies death and destruction, and it is naive to think of war otherwise. War is not meant to spare monuments and heritage, let alone people. Though unacceptable, it is understandable. However, the abuse of the so-called cultural heritage and urban memory of a city and its people is inexcusable in a postwar context. Yet this abuse in Beirut has proved to be more intense in times of peace than of war, and sadly so, because it is self-inflicted. Then again, this abuse may actually also be comprehensible. To quote the sociologist Samir Khalaf from his recent book entitled *Beirut Reclaimed: Reflections on Urban Design and the Restoration of Civility*,

> Obsessed with survival and harassed by all the futilities of an ugly and unfinished war, it is understandable how the moral and esthetic restraints which normally control the growth of cities become dispensable virtues.[44]

In Beirut, what has survived a history of abortive planning and has escaped the ravages of war now faces a new threat. The challenge for the urban existence of Beirut is and will be to resist destruction from the undeclared war of peace.

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[44] Khalaf, S. *Beirut Reclaimed: Reflections on Urban Design and the Restoration of Civility* (Beirut: Dar An-Nahar, 1993), 115. The idea of the "wasteful and futile, ugly and unfinished" war stems from Khalaf's argument that the horrors of the war in Lebanon were not rooted in a comprehensible set of causes to start with, and now that the war is over, the issues which seemingly caused the war, have not been resolved.

## CHAPTER III

### The Myth of Market-led Urbanism: Postwar Beirut in Light of the London Docklands Development

In the quest for the urban longevity, the second half of this century has witnessed a departure from "conventional" planning perspectives, mainly as a reaction to the shortcomings of "blueprint" comprehensive planning, whether traditional or modern, which dominated the post-W.W.II scene in Europe until the early 1970s.[1] Not surprisingly, the disillusionment with planning systems that had been conceived to control, even restrain at times, the growth of urban space in the postwar urban chaos, originated and flourished during the economic recession of the mid-1970s. By then, the desire to generate economic growth and to compensate for public expenditure cutbacks drove planning authorities to alternative concepts and techniques to restructure the process of urban change. As such, the age of regulation gave way to an age of enterprise steered by market-led urbanism.

The concept of market-oriented urban planning focuses primarily on private investment as the motor for urban regeneration. In order to facilitate and to encourage this investment, the intervention of public authorities is in the form of public-private "partnerships." However, the collaboration between public and private authorities has generated a conflict of interests between public good and private gain, and has resolved eventually to deal making and to providing the necessary framework for private profits. The unequal nature of this partnership, reinforced by the trend toward insulating market-

[1] Ashworth, G.J. and Voogd, H. *Selling The City: Marketing Approaches in Public Sector Urban Planning* (London: Belhaven Press, 1990). The authors argue that the necessity of post-W.W.II urban reconstruction, at a scale that could only be handled by public authorities with a strong political and popular backup, led to various planning procedures, laws, and regulations, that characterized planning policies and cities well into the 1970s.

oriented investment from public accountability and public participation, has become a source of the destruction of the urban landscape.[2]

Encouraged by the relaxation of planning controls, or rather their complete dismissal, private market forces wrought dramatic physical restructuring to the city. The physical landscape became an expression of an enterprise culture and of the consumer taste of a service economy, and that of building technologies. Such market-led urban strategies reinforced the emphasis on regeneration as the *quantitative* physical provision of buildings and as the financial accomplishments of private developers, with a far lower priority placed on the *quality* of the physical, social, and economic environments produced.

As such, the attempt to revive and enhance the urbane quality of degenerating cities in the second half of the twentieth century, planning strategies, or the lack thereof, have given birth to a generation of cities stamped by an alien form of urbanism that suffers from enforced order and superimposed aesthetics. The failure of such planning approaches, as manifested in large-scale redevelopment projects such as Battery Park City in New York and the London Docklands development, coupled with and even nourished by the surrender of architectural design and town planning to market forces, has led to the destruction of the city.[3]

Driven by politics and private investment, the London Docklands development is the first "deconstructed city" of this century, "a wasteland of ugly and meretricious

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[2] The unequal nature of public-private partnerships in the regeneration of cities has been extensively analyzed in terms of social, political, and economic repercussions. To name only a few of these works: Squiers, G., ed. *Unequal Partnerships* (London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), Lassar, T.J., ed. *City Deal Making* (The Urban Land Institute, 1990), and Frieden, B.J. and Sagalyn, L.B. *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

[3] London and New York have been the subject of extensive comparative analysis as pertaining to their market-led urban strategies and their impact on the social, economic, and physical urban fabric. Fainstein, S. *The City Builders: Property, Politics, & Planning in London & New York* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994). Fainstein, S., et al., eds. *Divided Cities: New York & London in the Contemporary World* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

building devoid of civic virtue and public domain."[4] In fact, it is arguable whether the end product is a city at all. To quote Colin Davies,

> If cities are about community, democracy, accessibility, public space, and the rich mixture of activities which creates a culture in which all can participate, then Docklands does not deserve to be called a city. It is an incoherent collage of selfish, adolescent dreams.[5]

This concluding chapter is not concerned with the process of urban regeneration as comprehensive of the political, economic, and social dimensions of the city *per se*. Instead, the concentration is on that aspect of regeneration that deals with architectural design and urban planning as the tangible, spatial expressions of the forces at play in shaping this urban landscape of speculation. The analysis of the urban regeneration framework of London Docklands is crucial in understanding the present and future direction of postwar urban reconstruction in Beirut, and in its location within the context of evolving contemporary urban policies and theories of city making. Although the reconstruction process in Beirut is still in its early stages, all signs so far point to yet another planning disaster, similar to London in its omission of the public realm, its physical and social inaccessibility, and also in its market-generated architectural language.

The invasion of a market-led strategy into the postwar reconstruction of Beirut comes as no surprise in the historical context of Lebanon. The disheartening experience of the city and the whole country with urban planning and building regulations, constantly modified to cope with violations and infringements, was one of the two main reasons for adopting marketing as a planning strategy. The other factor was the unrestrained capitalism and the minimal level of state intervention that have long been the economic *raison d'être* of Lebanon. Together, these two aspects have become the foundations of the

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[4] Hatton, B. "The Development of London's Docklands: The Role of the Urban Development Corporation." *Lotus International*. No. 67, 1990, 57. Quoted by Brian Edwards in "Deconstructing the City." *Planner: Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. Vol. 79, No. 2, February 1993, 16.
[5] Davies, C. "Ad Hoc in the Docks." *Architectural Review*. Vol. 181, No. 1080, February 1987, 32.

postwar urban reconstruction of Beirut, ingredients to a recipe that has proved disastrous in the initial phases of development in Docklands.

The postwar context of Beirut found the city as a deserted, war-torn, urban fabric, and the state as a financially and politically bankrupt institution. Needless to say, the economic context and the scale of reconstruction necessitated the intervention of the private sector in providing resources and in collaborating with public authorities to initiate rebuilding. Even at this relatively early stage of the urban reconstruction process, however, the division between the interests of the private sector, public authorities, and the public at large in Beirut is already at the heart of the controversies. In fact, in the words of the architect Hashim Sarkis, in Beirut, "the state is no longer the agency keen on promoting public life, but a group of private entrepreneurs wanting urban life to promote their business."[6] The client of the redevelopment of Beirut, like in all unequal public-private partnerships, has thus shifted from the people, supposedly represented by the government, to private capital, most of which is foreign. This politically and financially powerful new client has, consequently, the upper hand in shaping the image of the future.

To start, as a pre-condition to the implementation of the plan, the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District, Solidere, was conceived to manage the reconstruction process.[7] Incorporated in May 1994, Solidere is an association of property right holders and investors, and is comprised of two types of shares totalling US$ 1.82 billion. The first type, which amounts to US$ 1.17 billion, were issued to property owners in Beirut Central District, in return for the compulsory selling of their property rights. Against such a policy, the previous owners had no choice but to be at the mercy of appraisal committees charged with placing a final figure on their real-estate value. The second type of shares was issued to private investors against their cash

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[6] Sarkis, H. "Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes Toward The Built Environment." *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, eds. S. Khalaf and P.S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 118.

[7] Kabbani, O. "The Reconstruction of Beirut." *Prospects for Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992).

subscriptions in the amount US$ 650 million. Although such a mechanism was conceived to make possible the financing and execution of the required infrastructure, it undoubtedly provided for the unjust transfer of real-estate wealth from the original property right holders to private investors. The city of Beirut thus presents itself as an economic *tabula rasa*, freed from the entangling web of real-estate legalities and public participation.

Solidere's main role is to market the central district of Beirut and to tap local and foreign (mostly Arab) private investors to mobilize reconstruction. Equipped with promotional tools of glossy brochures, deluding images, and snappy slogans, a rigorous advertising campaign has been launched by Solidere to sell the image of the future Beirut.

For that purpose, the real-estate company has three main strategies. The first one is to finance and execute all infrastructure in the central district. Besides treating the Normandy landfill and developing two marinas, these works include "installing roads, public spaces, gardens, all networks, pavements, light posts, a power transformer unit, and parking areas."[8] These are scheduled for completion in 1997. The second strategy of Solidere is to develop 571,000 square meters out of the 1.1 million square meters of land available in the historic central core, and to sell the rest to potential investors. This project also involves the development of the 260 or so restored buildings, which occupy 160,000 square meters of the 571,000. The third responsibility of Solidere, which is inseparable from its second role, is the management of real-estate properties, buildings, and other facilities under its jurisdiction.

Concerning the payment for the infrastructure works, and in compensation for the expropriation of 106,000 square meters by the state for public spaces in the central district, Solidere receives another 292,000 square meters in the reclaimed zone, while the remaining 316,000 go to the state. Although reclaimed land normally belongs entirely to the state, according to the current master plan Solidere will have 608,000 square meters of

[8] Solidere. *The Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District - Information Booklet* (Beirut: Solidere, 1995), 8.

prime land under its jurisdiction to sell or to develop, exactly 10,000 square meters more than what is owned by the state.[9] Thus, the government has been reduced to yet another shareholder in a private development. This was as far as the deal-making in Beirut was equitable.

Another indication of the intertwined motives of reconstruction and private financial gains is the provision of financial incentives to Solidere and other developers. Though intrinsically not a discredited strategy, these financial incentives have nevertheless managed to overshadow the purpose of reconstruction as a comprehensive process of urban regeneration. Firstly, a secondary market, supervised by the Bank of Lebanon and organized by the Societe Financiere du Liban, and allowing for trade in Solidere shares, was put into operation on June 23, 1994.[10] The second main set of financial incentives in Beirut revolve around "tax shelters:" dividends paid by shareholders and capital gains arising from stock exchange are exempt from income tax for the first ten years from the date of incorporation of the real-estate company.

Therefore, Solidere in Beirut not only aims at marketing the city by launching an advertising campaign and by enhancing the infrastructure, but also plays a vital and decisive dual role of developer/promoter and profit maker. An indication of such profits are the US$ 18.1 million made by Solidere on its dealings between May 1994, when the company was incorporated, and the end of that year. Profits were partly due to some US$ 24.2 million in interest income generated by cash displacements.[11]

In this context of market-oriented urbanism, the reconstruction process in Beirut is totally dependent on the availability of private capital and private initiative. At the centre of this dependency is the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafic Hariri, who has been and still is

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[9] These figures are quoted from *The Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District - Information Booklet* (Beirut: Solidere, 1995), 8.

[10] Payne, G. "Putting Beirut Back Together." *Building Design*. No. 1230, August 11 1995, 14. Although owners insist that their property was undervalued, an increase of 30% in the share value during the first six months of trading has played a major role in conciliating the situation and in increasing faith in the commercial feasibility of the project.

[11] The Economist Intelligence Unit. *Country Report: Lebanon*. Third Quarter 1995, 12.

held responsible for catalyzing the reconstruction of Beirut. A Lebanese developer who made his fortune in Saudi Arabia and who allegedly owns 7% of Solidere shares, Hariri has been at the centre of the political controversies regarding the reconstruction, since popular public opinion argues that the success, or even completion of the rebuilding process is a function of the political and financial drive of Hariri himself. Notwithstanding Hariri's extensive philanthropic projects for Lebanon and his vital role in steering mainly Arab financial resources to Beirut, the fear remains that Beirut will be to Hariri what Canary Wharf was to the Reichman family; a speculator's vision gone sour. Moreover, in the absence of any social or economic policy, the private sector in Lebanon has long played a role of reinforcing ailing public administrations and of providing for public amenities.[12] However, the complete and long-term replacement of the collapsed state agencies by private institutions not only undermines the potential role of public authorities but also feeds the public skepticism toward the true intentions of the private sector, which only adds controversy and mistrust in the reconstruction process.

The prevailing tendency to privatize the reconstruction of Beirut and to relax government control has had its spatial impact on the proposed master plan for reconstruction. Prepared and revised by Dar Al-Handasah (Shair & Partners), the latest version of the reconstruction plan has been meticulously reworked in the past few years to adapt to the requirements of development and investor interests, and not as claimed, to the social, economic, and spatial needs of a war-torn society. Sufficiently flexible to respond and to contribute to the economic recovery of Beirut, the plans are thus used as marketing vehicles to lure private capital and to subdue public inquiry.

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[12] Payne, G. "Putting Beirut Back Together." *Building Design*. No. 1230, August 11 1995, 14-15. This is especially the case with housing. While the market in Lebanon is saturated with luxury housing, the building industry is still almost completely at the mercy of private investors and developers to provide for low-cost and affordable housing. Among the efforts to address the postwar housing crisis was the organization of a conference by the Arab University of Beirut on developing a realistic government housing policy for the provision of low-income residences in the summer of 1995.

Borrowing images from western cities, the proposed master plan takes a premature leap in depicting the architectural image of the city, an image subjected primarily to the principles and mechanisms of land speculation and not those of city making. Critics maintain that

> the Dar Al-Handasah Plan is certainly a low point architecturally, with its monumental axes, over-scaled buildings and total disregard for the equilibrium between old and new.[13]

The resulting "corporate placelessness" of the proposed city of Beirut marks the faceless attribute of profit making.[14] The images of the future Beirut suffer from an identity vacuum; the development could be anywhere, everywhere, and worst of all, nowhere! The Lebanese architect and planner Assem Salaam attributes this destruction of the identity of Beirut to two main factors: the elimination of the social fabric of the city through the eviction of the local population, and the discarding of the physical structure through the dissolution of the medieval property patterns and the merging of the lots for large-scale development.[15] Although the historic urban pattern of Beirut has been drastically modified through the layers of demolition and urban surgery executed during the first half of this century, postwar reconstruction has intentionally lost the opportunity to revive the traditional urban structure of intertwined, pedestrian narrow streets and low-scale buildings. Salaam further argues that, as a direct consequence, the cultural heritage and urban memory of Beirut have been lost forever.

The preservation of a selection of the urban heritage of Beirut, while demolishing more than half of the city fabric in the name of reconstruction, has proved futile in preserving the urban memory of Beirut. Nevertheless, this urban heritage was mainly preserved for its merits in raising the value of new real-estate development and in

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[13] Zucchi, B. "Letter from Beirut." *Blueprint*. No. 115, March 1995, 20.
[14] Term borrowed from Brian Edwards in *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinmann, 1992), 169.
[15] Salaam, A. "The Reconstruction of Beirut: A Lost Opportunity." *AA Files*. No. 27, Summer 1994, 11-15.

triggering investment, as admitted by Solidere, and not necessarily for its cultural, architectural, or historical value. Even the archaeological excavations that have dominated the reconstruction scene for the past two years, although financed by both public and private institutions, resolve to luring tourists and to quenching the thirst of archaeologists, historians, and the general public regarding the history of the 5000-year old city.

Thus, archaeology in Beirut, like urban heritage and memory, is reduced to yet another marketing instrument. This attitude toward the historical heritage of Beirut is also a reflection of the planners' failure to appreciate the historic and social responsibilities that the public has entrusted in them. Furthermore, as indicated by the architect Oussama Kabbani, missed opportunities to capitalize on the design strategies and to explore the potential of the relics of the past, in issues such as recycling and adaptive re- use, have not been explored fully in Beirut.[16]

Moreover, the reliance on the vagaries of the market has generated an incremental approach to rebuilding Beirut Central District, which focuses on developing a certain site and specific districts, with no visual, functional, or spatial framework for anticipated growth within or beyond the proposed limits of the central district. In Beirut, over-exploitation is hailed as progress and pilot projects are used to stimulate further investments and development. Therefore, like Canary Wharf *vis-à-vis* the Isle of Dogs and the rest of Docklands, Beirut Central District suffers from fragmentation and denies its dependence on its immediate and national context. Although there is an increasing interest and commitment to urban design and to planning, mostly as a result of the recent controversies, the projected image of Beirut remains a socially, economically, and physically isolated development.

At another level, the absence of any effort in Beirut to address the development of a public transportation network, a vital element in inner-city regeneration, is further proof

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[16] Kabbani, O. "The Reconstruction of Beirut." *Prospects for Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1992), 45.

of the speculative nature of planning that lacks vision, and of the dominance of the private over the public, and the individual over the communal. The high-level provision of wide roads and underground parking facilities in key locations in the proposed reconstruction plan only underlines the reliance on private cars which generates a vicious cycle of unnecessary traffic in an area already congested with traffic. With the absence of an alternative in an efficient public transportation system, the central district is presented as an isolated, segregated haven for the privileged. Even the 1992 proposal of the Edde Plan to develop public transport services in the form of three new bus stations, a railway station, and by reserving the rights of way for the potential installation of a metro system have been completely overlooked by the current reconstruction plan.[17]

Against such a background of speculation, postwar reconstruction in Beirut is understood by its developers as a massive capital investment, and not as an opportunity to rebuild a city, a nation, or a country.[18] Sadly, just as war was seen by various parties and individuals as a means to gain political power and to increase private profits, postwar reconstruction in Beirut is manipulated by similar forces of speculation and is being driven by a profit motive.

Unfortunately, this landscape of speculation has come to epitomize many aspects of city building since the 1980s. The postwar urban reconstruction, or rather deconstruction process of Beirut is currently exposed to the very same seeds of failure as the speculative forces that have proved disastrous in London Docklands. Faced with the same dilemma of how to redevelop an entire sector of the city and replace one historical urban order by another, the framework of reconstruction suffers from the same symptoms of deregulation and profiteering. The gains of market-led urbanism and the privatization of reconstruction, at the cost of the true preservation of cultural and architectural heritage

[17] Dar Al-Handasah (Shair & Partners). *Beirut Central District* (Beirut: Dar Al-Handasah Printing Press, 1992), 13.

[18] The question remains that if the government proves incapable of controlling the redevelopment of one and a half square mile of its capital, then what does the future hold for the rest of the country, and for other dimensions of postwar reconstruction?

(not only in quantity, but also in quality), and urban memory, will inevitably also lead to the destruction of the city of Beirut.

The London Docklands development embodies the very essence of market-led urbanism; its strategies, mechanisms, and failures. The project has endured virtually every urban experiment of speculative regeneration: urban development corporation, enterprise zone, public-private "partnerships," and foreign private investment. Docklands can be divided into four main development zones: Wapping and Limehouse on the north bank of the River Thames, South Bank and Surrey Docks along the south bank, Royal Docks at the eastern end of the development, and the Isle of Dogs occupying a peninsula on the south bank (fig. 4.1). However, this analysis of market-led urbanism will focus on the Isle of Dogs, which remains a true manifestation of the spirit, philosophy, and controversy of market-led urban design in London.

The growth of the riverside area east of London, stimulated by the speculative nature of commercial and industrial activity of eighteenth-century London, transformed an under-populated rural area into an extensive fabric of docks, warehouses, wharves, and public housing. By the mid-nineteenth century, a unique landscape and distinctive way of life flourished in a working-class community and was to become known as the East End, the so-called "backyard" of London (fig. 4.2). Efforts to restore this viable urban sector after the bombing and fires of the Second World War, to alleviate the physical congestion, and to reverse the growing decline were relatively unsuccessful in the face of acute economic and demographic shifts. The shortcomings of such efforts, together with the technological revolution of the shipping industry and that of cargo handling, and also the general decline of world shipping in the mid-twentieth century, culminated in the closures of the docks beginning in the 1960s.[19]

[19] Al Naib, S.K. *London Docklands: Past, Present and Future* (Fifth Edition. London: Ashmead Press, 1994). Al Naib provides a detailed illustrated history of the urban evolution of Docklands in the context of recent regeneration. As for the closures of the docks, they started with the East India Docks in 1967 and ended with the Royal Docks in 1985. The only surviving docks still owned and operated by the Port of London Authority are Tillbury Docks, built in 1884.

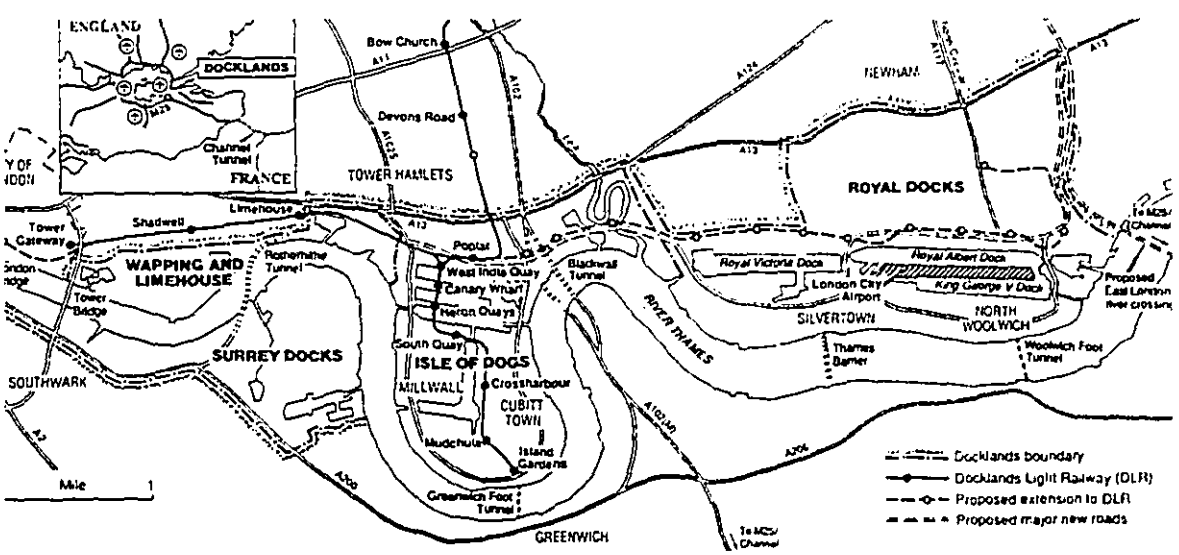


Figure 4.1. Map of the four main development areas in London Docklands. Source: *London Docklands: Past, Present and Future*, 35.

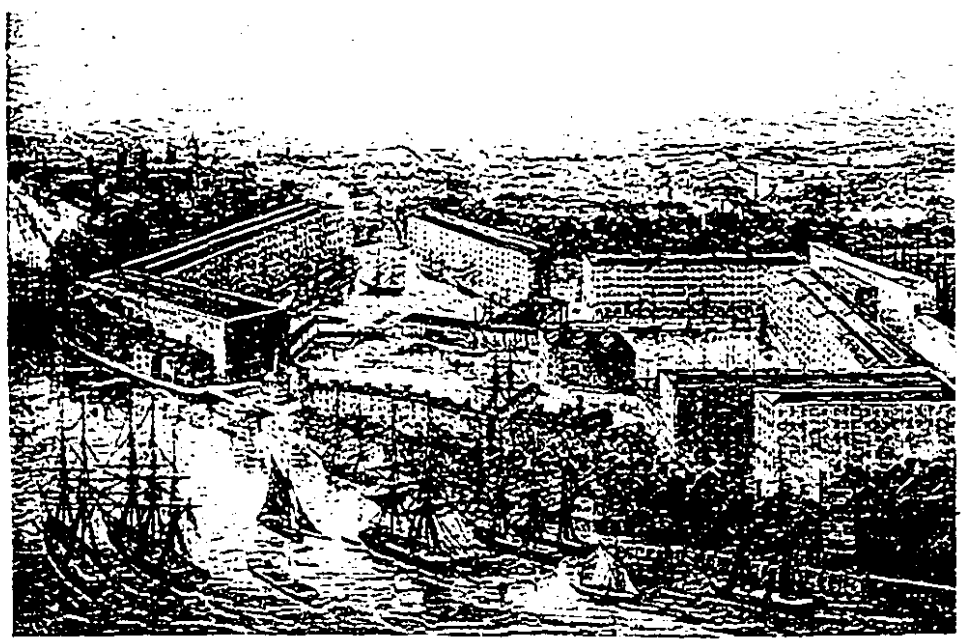

Figure 4.2. St. Katherine Docks in the Port of London, 1845. Source: *London Docklands: Past, Present and Future*, 15.

Cities all over the world faced similar fates, and by the mid 1970s, the reclamation of the derelict wastelands of docklands became a recurrent theme in urban policy. With their proximity to the city centres, docklands in American cities like Baltimore and Boston, and Barcelona and Glasgow in Europe presented themselves as prime land for redevelopment and exploitation.[20] However, nowhere except in London was the transformation of redundant docklands so marked by a free-market philosophy of urban renewal. London Docklands, the most significant and controversial urban experiment of recent years, bares witness to these transformations.

The closures of the major docks in London in the 1960s placed the 22 square kilometers of docklands at the forefront of redevelopment proposals (fig. 4.3). For the next three decades, and in the name of regeneration, London Docklands was to become the battlefield of political, economic, social, and spatial struggles.

As part of the Labour government's efforts, the Greater London Council and Docklands' three boroughs established the Joint Docklands Committee in 1972 to prepare a planning strategy to promote and to control the development of the area. During that decade, the committee produced a comprehensive plan based on the revival of local industries and on the restoration of council housing and community programs.[21] However, the inefficiency and financial disability of public authorities to address the regeneration of Docklands, coupled with the growing power of private investment after its success in transforming St. Katherine Docks into a luxury mixed-use project, were to set the pace and direction of future developments (fig. 4.4).[22] All hopes, if any, of the implementation

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[20] Hoyle, B.S., et al. *Revitalizing the Waterfront: International Dimensions of Dockland Redevelopment* (London: Belhaven Press, 1988).

[21] For details on the pre-1980s redevelopment strategies, refer to "Creating a New Address II: Docklands" in Susan Fainstein's book entitled *The City Builders: Property, Politics & Planning in London and New York* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 189-217.

[22] Al Naib, S.K. *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide* (Fifth Edition, London: Ashmead Press, 1992). In the early 1970s, new construction, refurbishment, and adaptive re-use transformed the derelict St. Katherine Docks into commercial spaces, luxury apartments, and boating facilities. Today, the whole urban complex is known as St. Katherine's Conservation Area and is considered by its advocates as one of the more successful versions of redevelopment in Docklands.

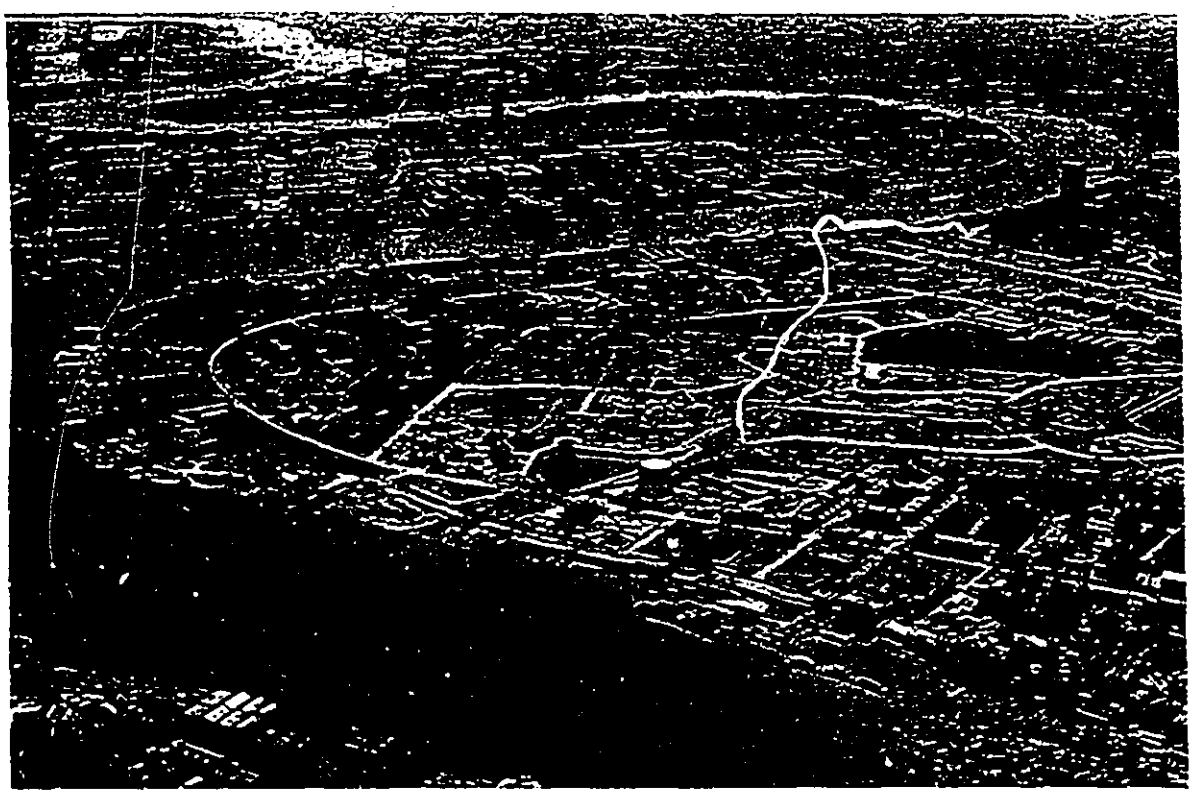
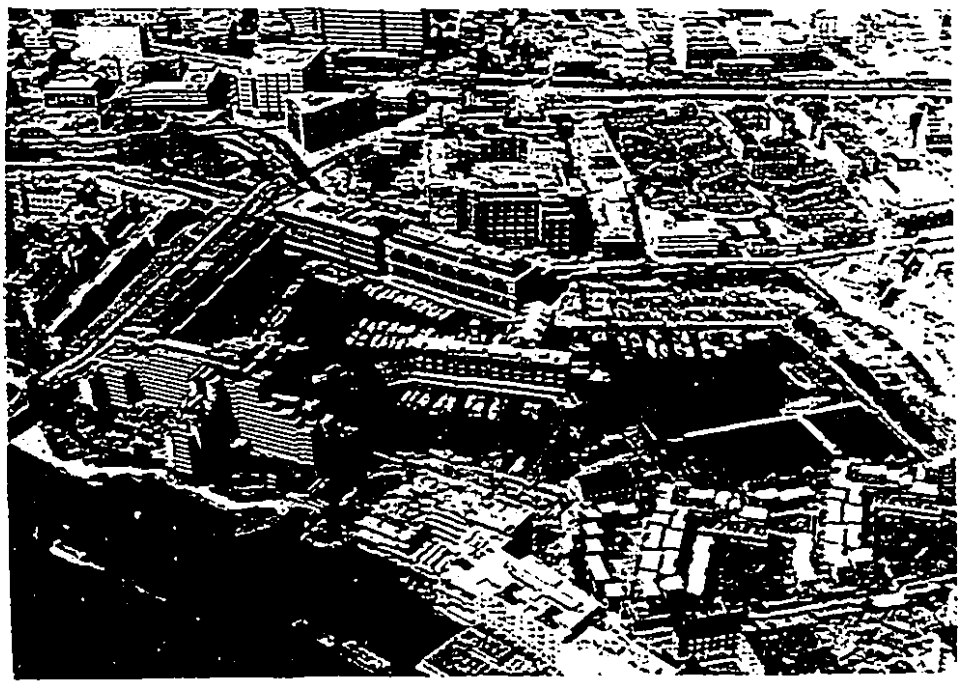


Figure 4.3. The derelict London Docklands, 1960s. Source: *Revitalizing the Waterfront: International Dimensions of Dockland Redevelopment*, 205.



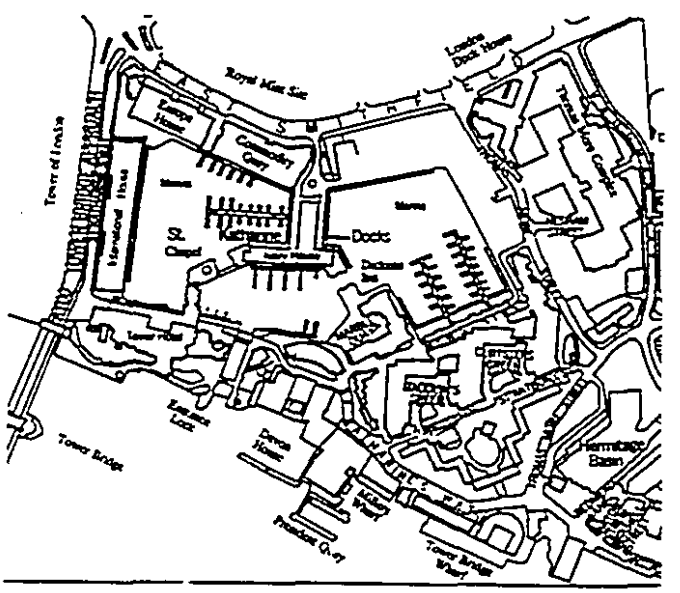



Figure 4.4. St. Katherine Docks, 1988. Source: *London Docklands: Past, Present and Future*, 15. Map of St. Katherine Docks Conservation Area. Source: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, 17.

of the comprehensive plan, dealing equally with the various layers of regeneration, were doomed to fail with the election of a Tory government in 1977, which had a strikingly different agenda for Docklands.

The argument presented by right-wing political parties was that structured planning had inhibited development and had had "a tendency towards over-designing and too much planning in the inner cities."[23] They believed this should be replaced by a strategy where the marketplace could be allowed to shape cities within a flexible planning framework. Against such a background of a nakedly political urban strategy, the key issue for regenerating Docklands became its marketability: the transformation of an undesirable, decaying area into a new vibrant core of London and a "desirable address" for potential private investors and tenants. It was not as much the physical transformation of Docklands that was at stake, however, as much as the *image* and *perception* of the place.

Therefore, while advocating flexible planning policies, the development of Docklands was, in reality, a strategic campaign to lure private money through marketing techniques. This strategy focused on transforming the apparent disabilities of derelict and inaccessible land into major assets for development, which shifted the emphasis from planning to marketing and from design to opportunism. The creation of a marketable image of Docklands revolved around two main mechanisms, each of which played a specific role in the success of the marketing campaign: the founding of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and the application of the Enterprise Zone idea.

Like other Urban Development Corporations (UDC) throughout the United Kingdom, the concept of the LDDC was to equip the redevelopment process with the

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[23] Edwards, B. "Deconstructing the City." *Planner: Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. Vol. 79, No. 2, February 1993, 16-17. The use of urban planning mechanisms such as land-use zoning and aesthetic control were conceived by the Tory government as excess investment in the design of cities, and a cause to decline. The policy of "over-design" was, therefore, "restructured" to fit political and economic objectives, whose legislative and executive powers were provided for by the 1980 Local Government, Planning and Land Act.

efficient entrepreneurial edge of the private sector and to reduce public expenditure through the luring of private capital.[24] Appointed and founded by the central government in 1981, the goals and responsibilities of the LDDC focused on two fronts: land management and infrastructure work. The first step was to take possession of as much land as possible within the corporation's jurisdiction. That was partially achieved by using the substantial public funds allocated to the LDDC to buy land at low prices from public bodies (such as the Port of London Authority, British Rail, British Gas, and local boroughs), and partially by acquiring privately-owned parcels of land through compulsory purchase orders.[25] After procuring land, the LDDC went to great lengths and further expenditures to prepare the sites for development -- cleaning up environmental hazards, strengthening river walls, in-filling docks, and relocating residents. The initial strategy was to dispose of the land to interested private investors below market value simply to increase the confidence of other private investors and to inject artificially an apparent demand for real-estate, both of which would trigger further development.[26]

The second strategy of the LDDC was to overcome the poor accessibility of Docklands, which presented itself as a main obstacle to development. Besides expensive road building projects, two initial transport schemes were invested in: the Dockland Light Railway (DLR) and the London City Airport or STOLPort (short-take-off and landing airport) (fig. 4.5). The DLR linked the City (the historic business core of London) to the Isle of Dogs and beyond to other sections of Docklands, while the London City Airport, built in the Royal Docks, was conceived to link London and Docklands to the rest of the

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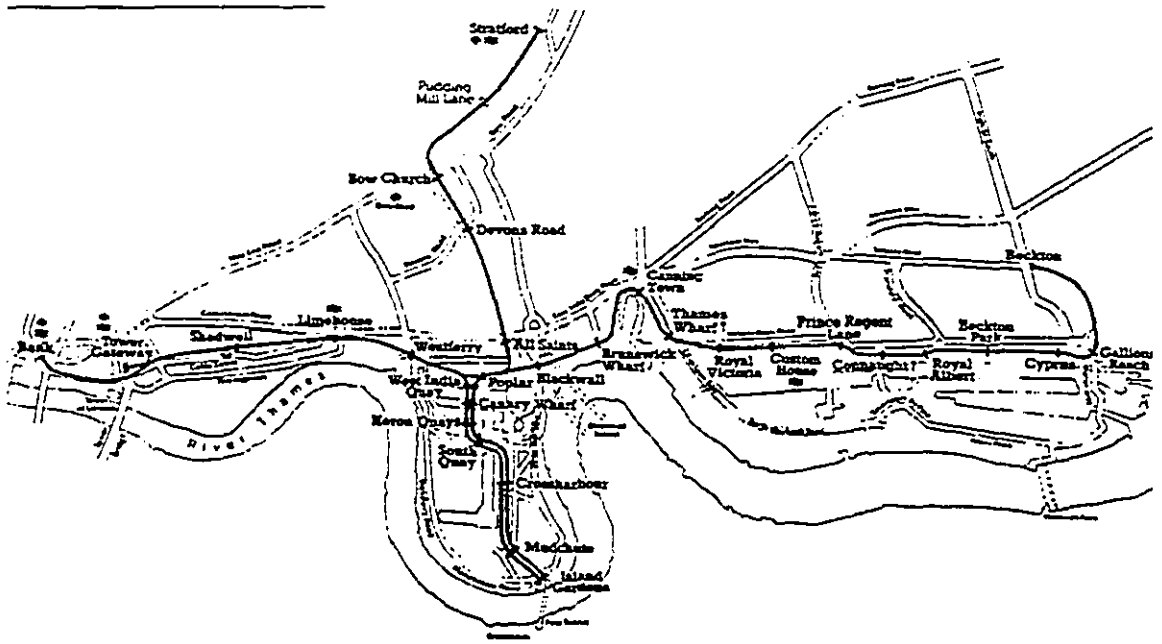
[24] Hatton, B. "The Development of London's Docklands: The Role of the Urban Development Corporation." *Lotus International*. No. 67, 1990, 55-89.

[25] Edwards, B. *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinmann: 1992), 29. As Edwards explains, the LDDC was given the legal power to issue compulsory purchase orders whereby private owners were obliged to sell their land in order to enable the LDDC to assemble sufficient land to allow for and to facilitate large-scale development.

[26] Fainstein, S. *The City Builders: Property, Politics, & Planning in London and New York* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 194. This marketing strategy worked; while the LDDC barely broke even on its land sales in the first stages, it compensated for the initial loss of profits during the speculative boom of the mid-1980s when land on the Isle of Dogs, for example, sold for 40 times its original value.



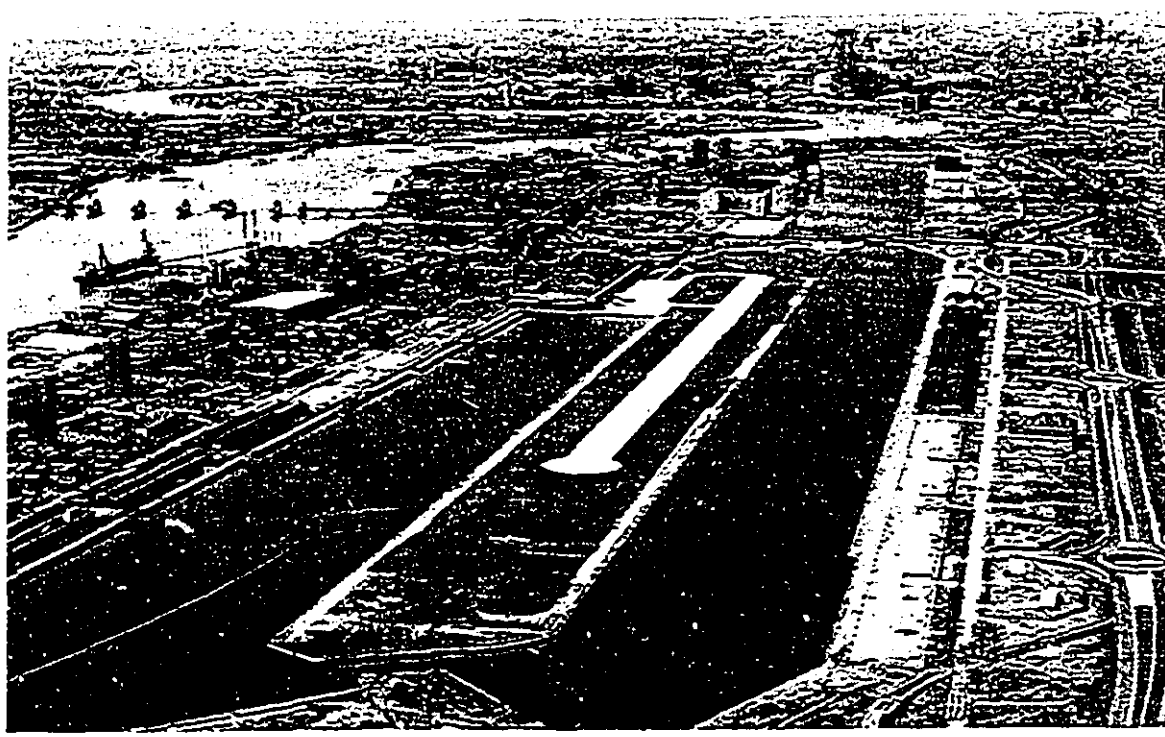



Figure 4.5. Route of Docklands Light Railway, and London City Airport. Source: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, 128, 116.

world. The completion and opening of both schemes in 1987 was more of a symbolic than a physical achievement since transportation was seen by the LDDC as an ingenious marketing tool to bridge both the physical and psychological distance between the City, Docklands, and the rest of the world. The limited public funding for such massive transportation and infrastructure building proved insufficient and remained a prime factor in discouraging private investment and also in relocating residents, both of which contributed to a large extent to the failure of the Docklands development.

The second mechanism of market-led urbanism in Docklands, the Enterprise Zone, revealed the fundamental orientation of the political campaign for urban regeneration.[27] In London, the Enterprise Zone was established in 1982 and relentlessly promoted by the LDDC. The Enterprise Zone was conceived to increase development through offering developers financial incentives that would tempt them to invest in Docklands. As such, the Enterprise Zone was understood as the opposite of a conservation area in the sense that not only was development encouraged rather than constrained or prohibited, but it was *any* form or shape of such development! So within the allocated boundaries of the 8,000 square meter Enterprise Zone on the Isle of Dogs, and for a limited period of ten years, developers were freed from the burdens of most planning and building regulations, and largely exempted from paying property taxes.

Therefore, the master plan of Docklands, though not designed on paper, was nevertheless plotted on financial graphs and based on economic speculations. On the one hand, the LDDC, while epitomizing a *laissez-faire* urban policy and advocating market

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[27] Hatton, B. "The Development of London's Docklands: The Role of the Urban Development Corporation." *Lotus International*. No. 67, 1990, 57. Hatton credits the invention of the Enterprise Zone concept to Professor Peter Hall. In the 1970s, through the suspension of planning permissions, high tax rates, and local laws, Hall's main intention was to provide a mechanism to encourage new, small-scale investment ventures, and not simply to give maneuvering room to large-scale private developers. So, far from the original concept, the application of the Enterprise Zone in Docklands was manipulated on political grounds and used as a mechanism for achieving minimal governmental intervention in private-led developments.

flexibility, was highly interventionist. On the other hand, the Enterprise Zone was nothing but a magnet for private capital.

This market-led strategy of urban regeneration in Docklands has received wide criticism on various social, political, and economic grounds.[28] However, in what concerns the physical landscape, the tensions and contradictions of market-oriented urban strategies generated an incoherent landscape in which architecture and urban design were manipulated by the LDDC as marketing tools to lever maximum private investment and to augment profit margins. The underlying theme of this criticism was that the making of a place in Docklands was largely overshadowed by the making of money.

Evidence of this marketing technique was the shift away from conservation and preservation as the safeguarding of architectural heritage and towards conservation as the private accumulation of wealth and prestige. Although the extent of preservation of the surviving architectural heritage in Docklands was worthy of praise, it was mainly geared at promoting tourism, and in the case of adaptive re-use, was focused on converting viable structures into luxurious housing and commercial space for the gentrifiers (fig. 4.6). Except for the remaining industrial relics of dock structures that ornament the landscape, the architectural heritage of Docklands was robbed of its historical context and urban memory. It became just another marketable commodity.

At another level, despite the value placed by the LDDC on image-making through design and promotion, the resulting urban fabric has drawn widespread criticism not only from urban designers and the general public, but from the private investors themselves. The absence of any sort of design criteria within a planning framework, and the removal of the cumbersome drawbacks of social and economic provision for the local population became, ironically, more of a threat to developers than an advantage.

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[28] The other dimension of the criticism of Docklands pertains to the spatial, economic, and political exclusion of the local residents from the regeneration process. The socio-economic and political controversies are discussed in detail in Sue Brownill's book entitled *Developing London's Docklands: Another Great Planning Disaster?* (London: Paul Chapman Publishers, 1990).

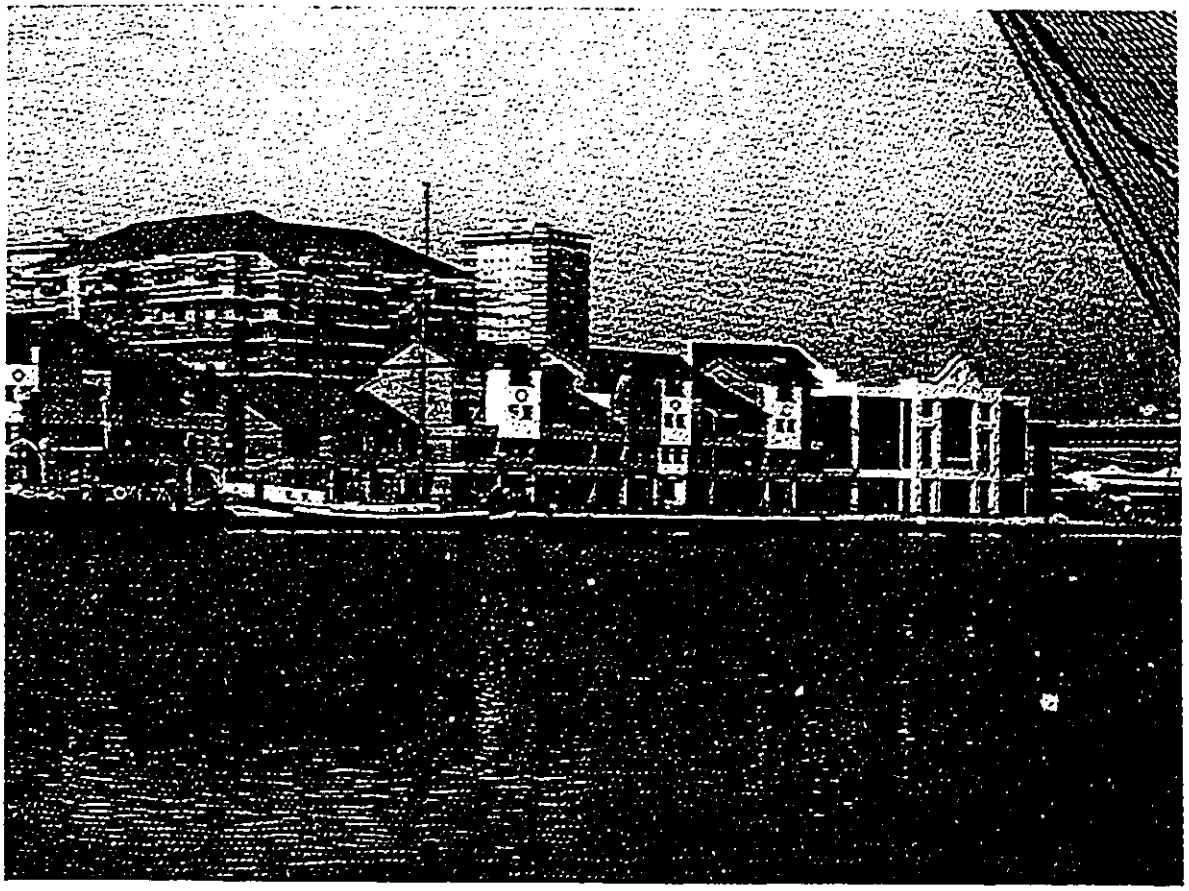

Figure 4.6. Riverside luxury housing with mooring rights on the docks. Source: *London Docklands: Past, Present and Future*, 48.

Firstly, in the name of flexibility, design issues such as scale, context, and zoning, when left unresolved, placed the private investments at various risks in a highly competitive real-estate industry. With no regulatory authority, "undesirable" neighboring developments could, for example, not only cause physical obstruction to a view or access, but more importantly, destroy the image of the development and eventually lead to the devaluation of the property. Moreover, a second concern of private investors was the fear of Docklands becoming an inaccessible island of over-development, simply because the urban transformation had not been complemented by a sufficient provision of public transportation, as promised by the LDDC.

The critique of private investors and developers marks the profound failure of the Docklands urban experiment in so far as the marketing strategy was concerned. Hence, the LDDC failed on its own premise; it failed to provide secure ground for private capital, and it also failed to fulfill the social and economic responsibilities of regeneration toward the revival of the local community.

Urban regeneration as understood in Docklands reflected a short-sighted and short-term boost to an unstable form of development that fell apart just as fast as it had blossomed a decade earlier. As far as its repercussions on the physical environment, the reliance on the vagaries of market forces generated an uneven and piecemeal approach to planning where the governing factor for development was the availability of financial resources and not the local physical, social, or economic needs. This incremental approach to place making was mainly responsible for the ad hoc quality of the urban environment. The contrast between the first pre-1985 generation of developments and more recent ones reveals a landscape of juxtaposed scales and uses characterized by illegibility between monumental and domestic, old and new, private and public (fig. 4.7).

Moreover, the entrepreneurial spirit of Docklands development indirectly promoted the storming of design talent to the scene. Since "good design" was defined by the LDDC as architecture that sells buildings and places, a competitive cacophony of

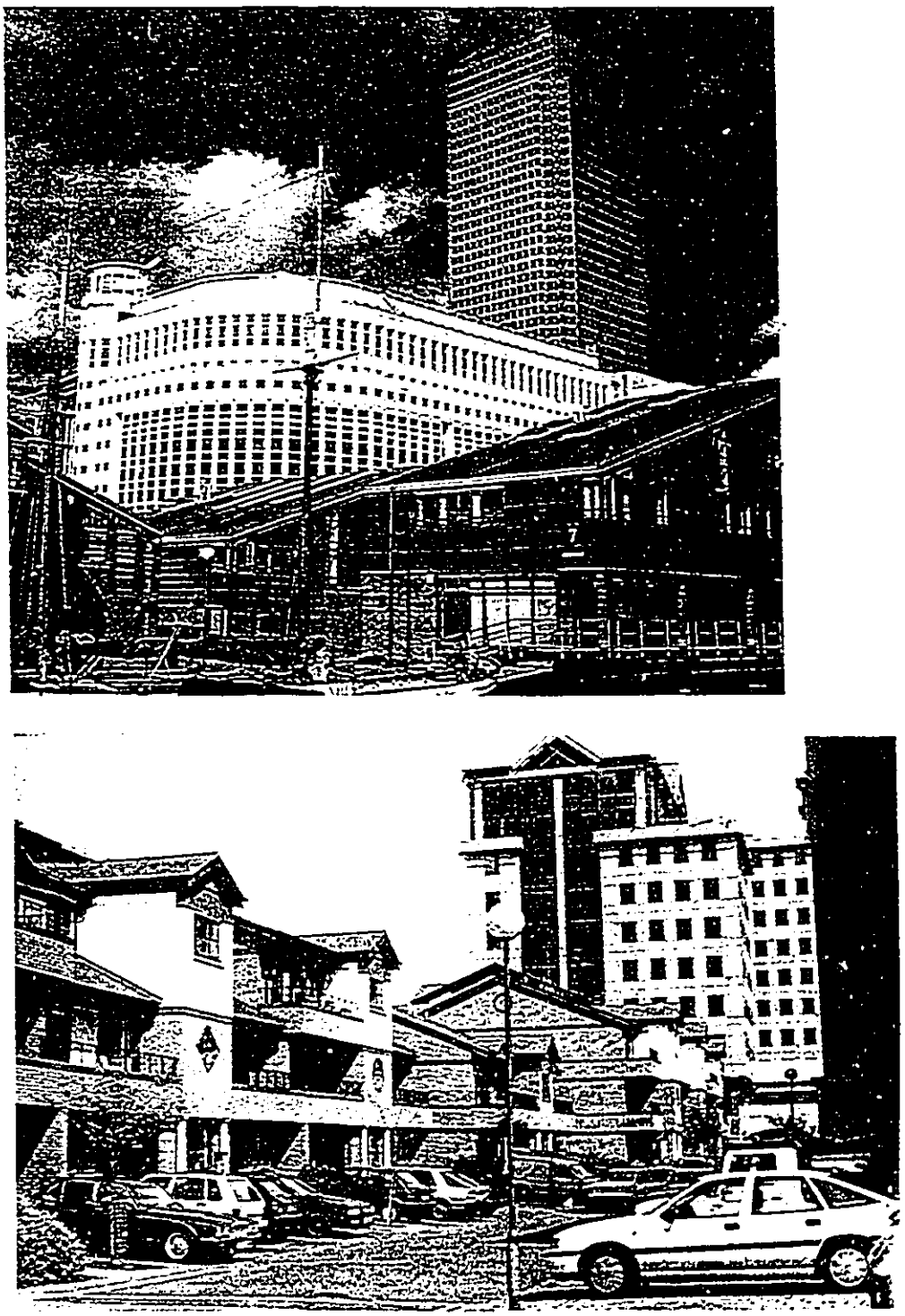

Figure 4.7. Docklands: A landscape of juxtaposed scales and uses. Sources: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, 55, and *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 43.

shapes and forms invaded Docklands (fig. 4.8). To encourage this influx of design, architectural competitions were announced to attract high-profile architects, which in turn drew developers and investors. As such, the parameters of this "healthy design pluralism," according to the architectural critic Brian Edwards,

> appear to have been shaped by a concern for security, corporate identity and functional anonymity, not visual coherence or civic virtue...(which has resulted in) a unique landscape of fragmentation and dislocation (with) islands of development insulated from each other by security fences, stretches of open water, and the remnants of the old derelict docklands landscape.[29]

Although individual buildings may have architectural merit in Docklands, urban design did not give in as easily to market forces as did the aesthetics of buildings. Despite the use of architectural competitions by the LDDC to raise the level of design, the strategy of deregulation and free planning resulted in the loss of urbanity in Docklands, and ultimately to the deconstruction of the city.

First and foremost, Docklands today is starved of public domain; there are no religious buildings, schools, hospitals, town halls, urban parks, or civic squares. Open spaces, which exist mostly within the semi-private domain, are relegated to parking lots or enclosed private courts. With the absence of public spaces and public uses, the gap between the public and the private realm has thus increased. The docks remain as they always have been: private commercial zones. Instead of the dock walls that once protected merchandise and ships, walls of mirror glass "fortresses" guard the exclusive worlds of residences and offices.[30]

At another level, just as the streets, or rather estate roads, fail to provide a unifying urban structure to Docklands, so too is there a loss of connection between the waterside promenades. Even the River Thames has lost its role as the spine of the area. It has been converted into a world of private marinas and luxury riverside flats, an exclusive,

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[29] Edwards, B. "Deconstructing the City." *Planner: Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute*. Vol. 79, No. 2, February 1993, 16.

[30] Brownill, S. *Developing London's Docklands: Another Great Planning Disaster?* (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1990), 146.

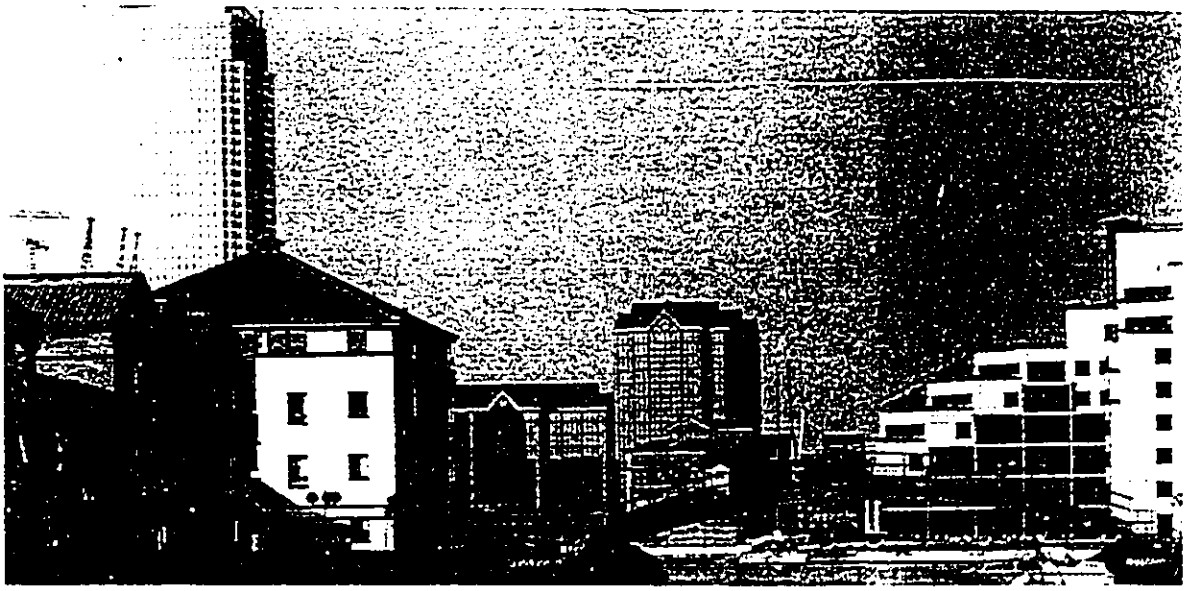

Figure 4.8. The influx of design resulting in disjointedness. Source: *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 25.

inaccessible domain to the local residents and to the general public (fig. 4.9). The inability of the developments to address the street or the river and to coordinate transportation and land use has further enhanced the illegibility of the urban environment. As a result of the dominance of the architectural object over space and of the buildings dictating infrastructure, and not vice versa, London Docklands suffers from urban sprawl. Consequently, urban places are created largely as a by-product of fragmented architectural design, and hence lack a sense of order, hierarchy, and cohesion (fig. 4.10). The limits of city making by architecture alone are all too evident on the Isle of Dogs.

In his article entitled "What City? A Plea for Place in the Public Realm," architectural critic Peter Buchanan refers to the Isle of Dogs, and more specifically to Canary Wharf, as "a super-suburban business park."[31] Originally a peninsula formed by a bend in the River Thames east of the City of London and cut off by a canal dating back to the nineteenth century, the Isle of Dogs is today a peninsula mostly covered by the Enterprise Zone and bristling with mirror glass, tubular steel, and Dutch gable roofs (fig. 4.11). At the heart of Docklands' speculative boom, the Isle of Dogs has become synonymous with Canary Wharf, which dominates not only the skyline of London, but also the criticism and the controversies of market-led urbanism (fig. 4.12).

Developed by the Canadian firm of Olympia & York, Canary Wharf has been described by its promoters as the "Jewel of Docklands Crown," "London's Brightest Beacon," and "Wallstreet on the Water."[32] The scale of Canary Wharf development, situated on more than a 1/4 square kilometer site (a third of which is dedicated to open space), is notorious: over one million square meters of office and commercial space in 24 buildings, a 400-bedroom hotel, and a 260-meter high centerpiece tower of No. 1 Canada Place. Protected by the political and planning shield of the Enterprise Zone and financed

[31] Buchanan, P. "What City? A Plea for Place in the Public Realm." *Architectural Review*. Vol. 184, No. 1101, November 1988, 38.

[32] The history of the design, the development, and the financing of Canary Wharf are described in detail by Susan Fainstein in the chapter entitled "Creating a new Address II: Docklands" in *The City Builders: Property, Politics, & Planning in London and New York* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).

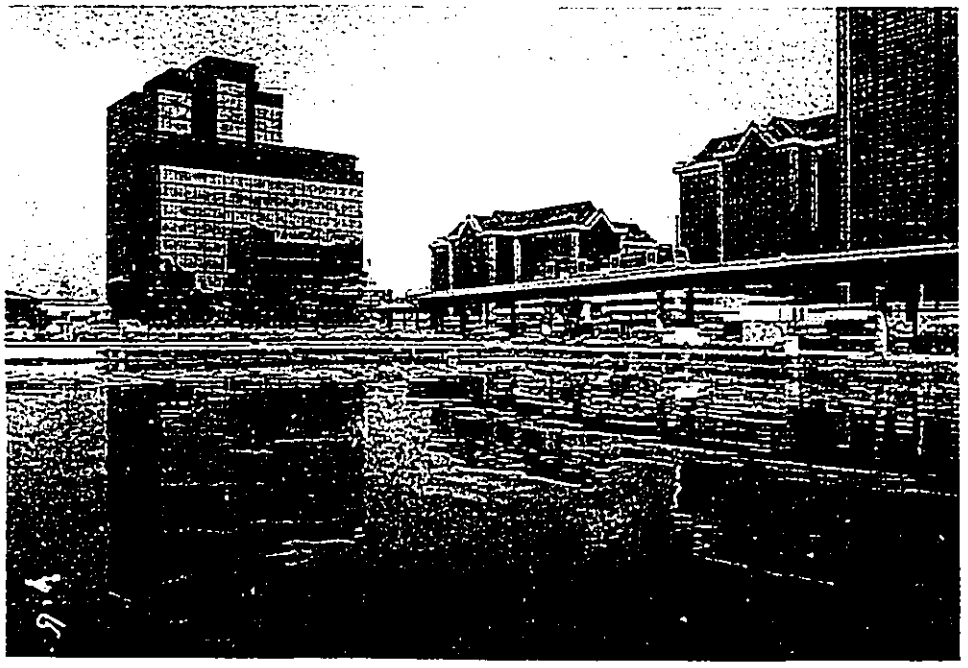

Figure 4.9. The River Thames relegated to the domain of private car parking. Source: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, 57.

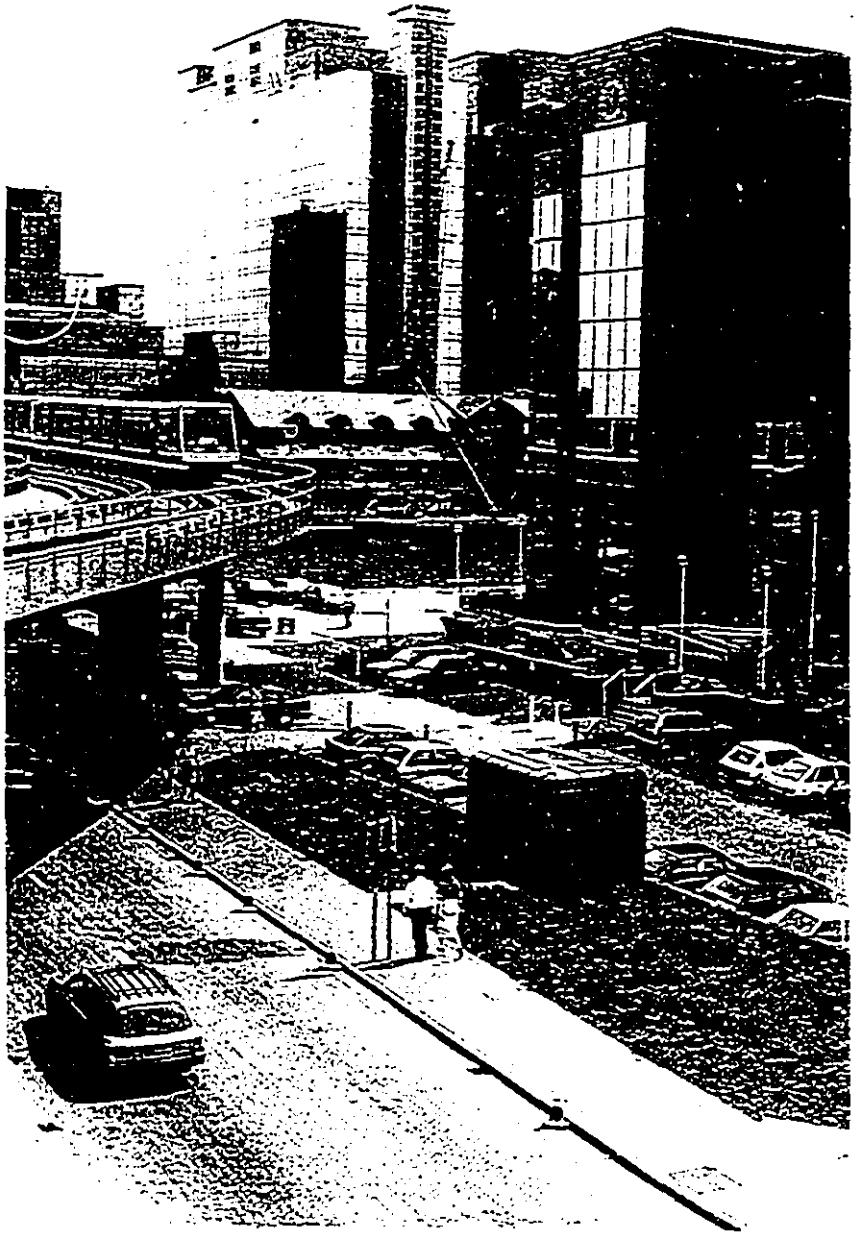

Figure 4.10. An incoherent townscape: The lack of coordination between transportation infrastructure and development. Source: *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 161.

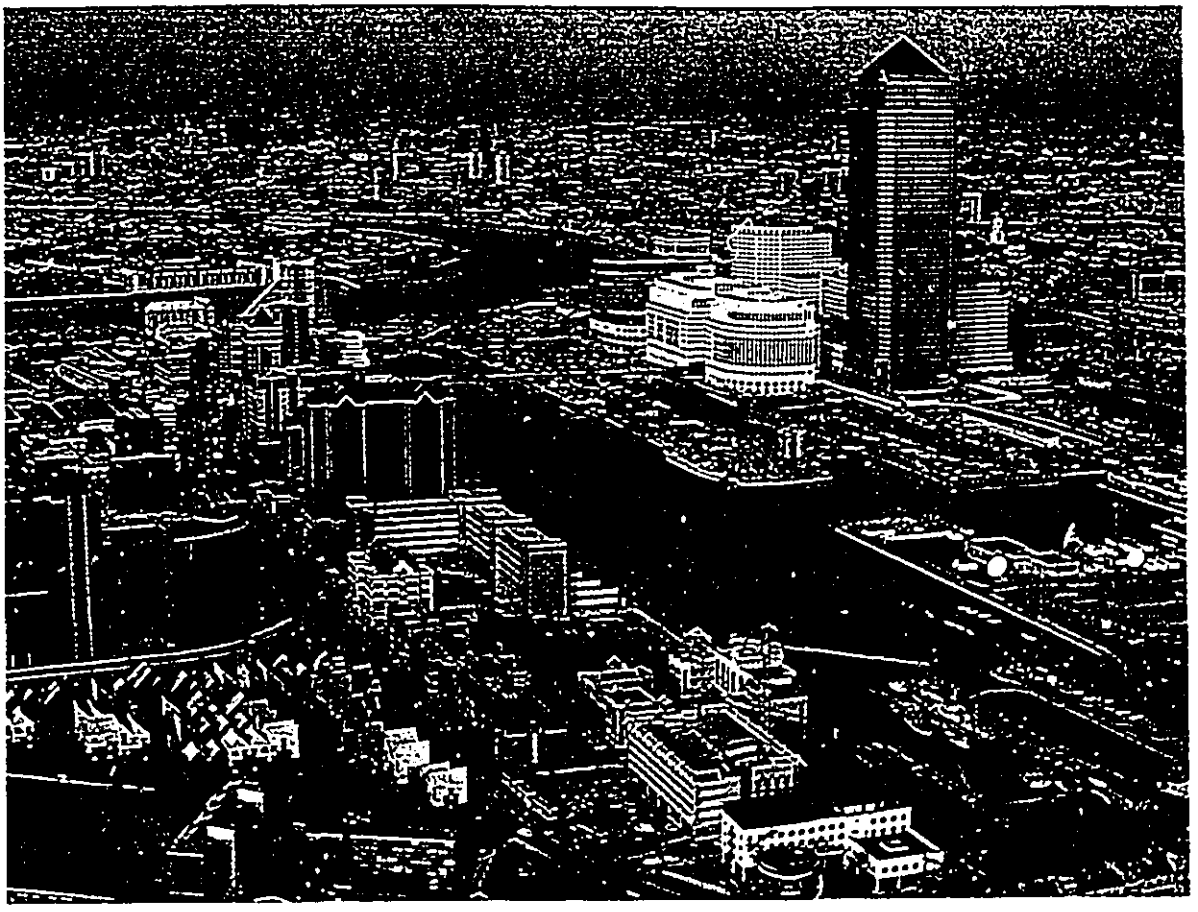

Figure 4.11. The Isle of Dogs. Source: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, back cover.

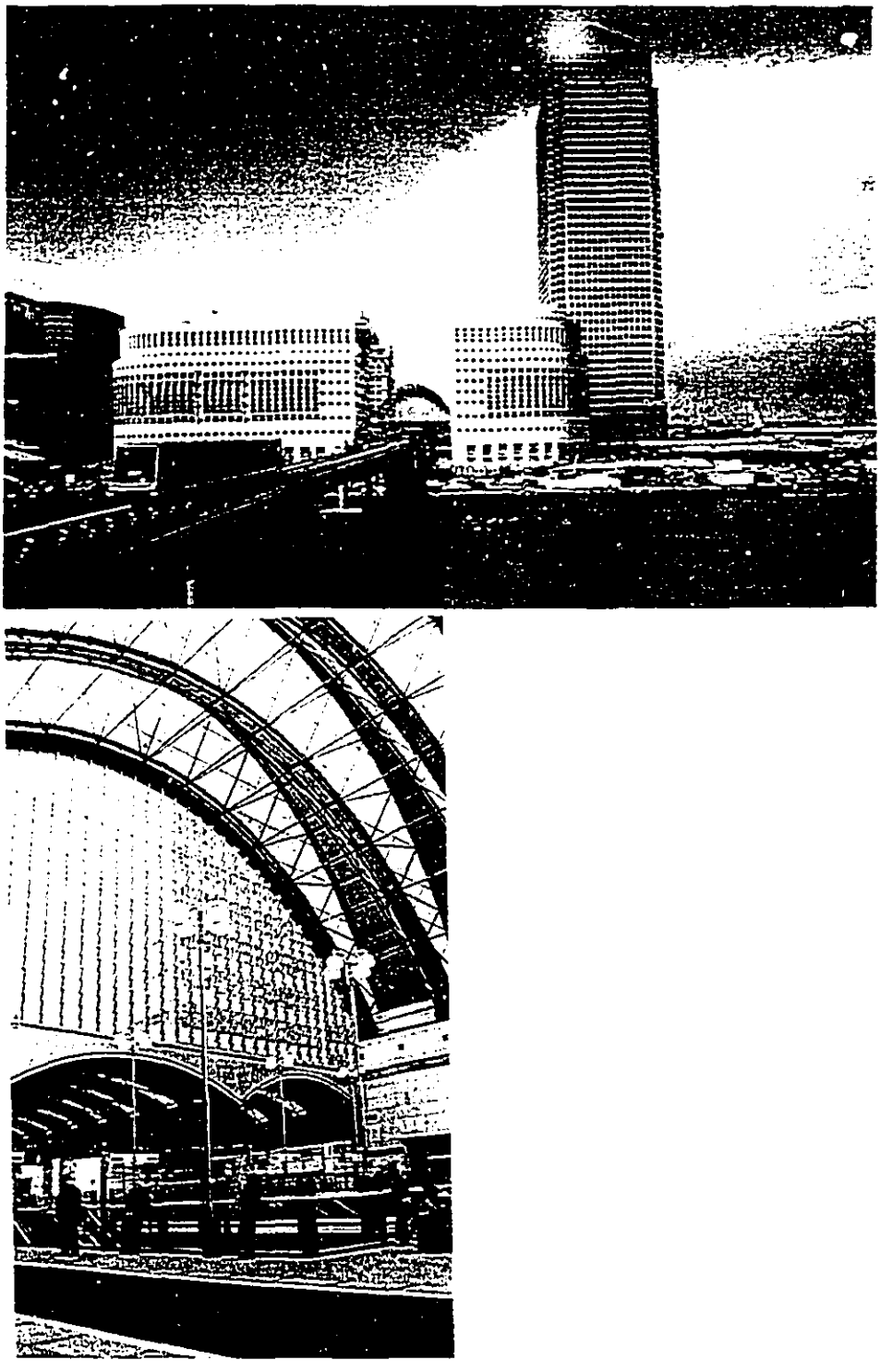

Figure 4.12. Canary Wharf and Heron Quays developments. Source: *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 67. Interior of Docklands Light Railway Station at Canary Wharf. Source: Author.

almost purely by foreign investment, Canary Wharf truly embodies the aspirations of market-oriented planning. The transformative effect of Canary Wharf on subsequent development is further proof of the application of the speculative approach to planning and design. After the completion of the first phase of Canary Wharf in 1991, the Isle of Dogs soon evolved into an extension of sheer walls of glass cladding of projects like Harbour Exchange and South Quay Plaza that kept with the scale and imagery of Canary Wharf.

Behind all the glory and impressive mass, Canary Wharf remains a miniature manifestation of the failure of the Docklands development. The story of the downfall of Canary Wharf, the anti-climax of the speculative boom of the 1980s, may be attributed to two main factors: the failure of marketing skills to generate demand in an era of economic recession and the lack of adequate transportation networks. Both these aspects limited the project's appeal and that of the whole Docklands to both investors and tenants. Ironically, Canary Wharf was one of the few developments on the Isle of Dogs accompanied by a master plan. Designed by the American firm of Skidmore, Owing, and Merrill, it was based on American Beaux-Arts principles of massing and layout such as strict geometry, formal axes, and defined open spaces (fig. 4.13).[33] Within the spatial and elevational restraints of the master plan, the employment of various architects such as Cesar Pelli and I.M. Pei to design the 24 separate blocks was a strategy to bring a degree of individuality to the development. To ensure conformity to the plan, design guidelines were prepared by the LDDC and prescribe colonnades, arcades, courtyards, setbacks, materials, and street wall articulation for the projects. Despite efforts to produce a viable urban environment, Canary Wharf development fails to exploit the elements of architectural diversity which characterizes the rich pluralism of Docklands. Instead,

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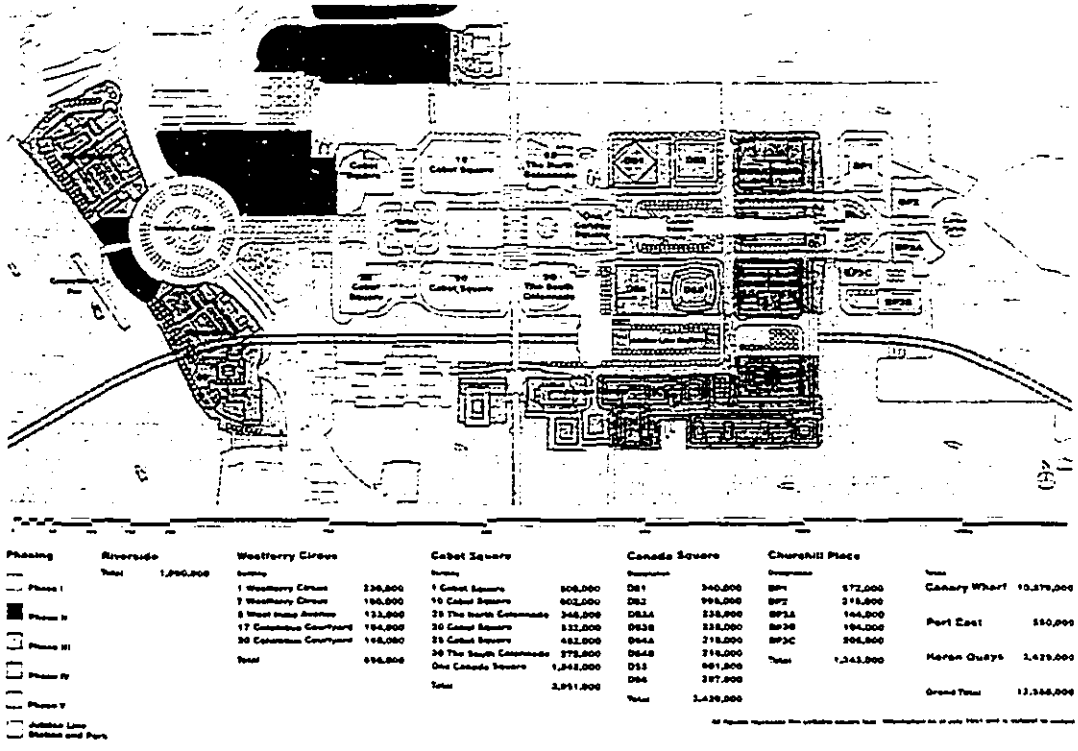
[33] Buchanan, P. "What City? A Plea for Place in the Public Realm." *Architectural Review*. Vol. 184, No. 1101, November 1988, 38-39. Edwards, B. *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1992), 67-76.



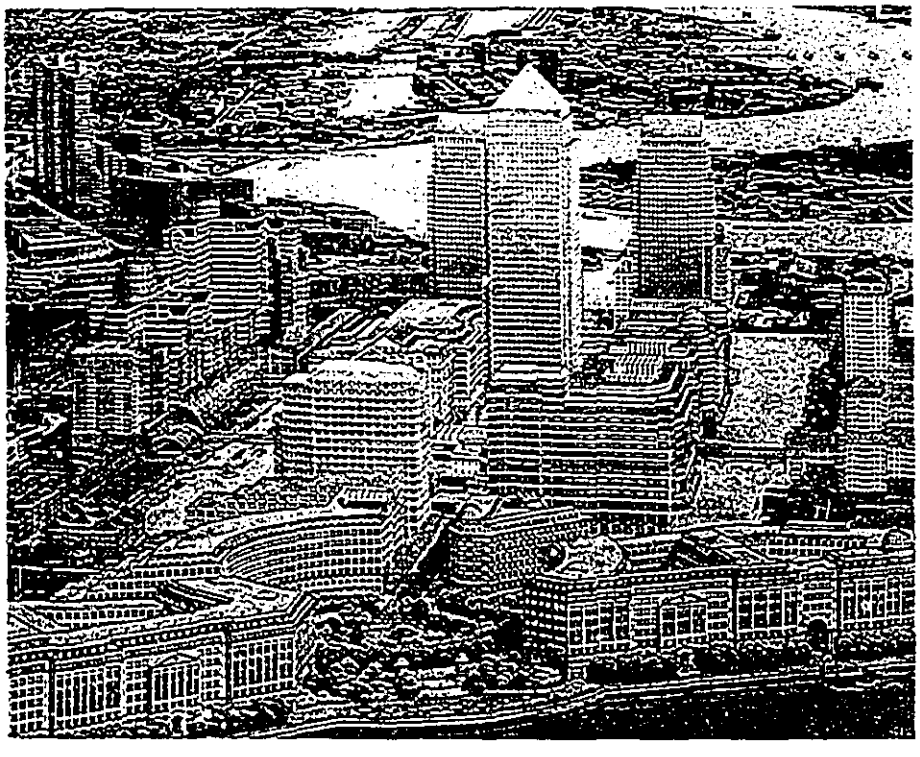


Figure 4.13. Skidmore, Owing and Merrill master plan for Canary Wharf, 1986. Source: *Discover London Docklands: A to Z Illustrated Guide*, 49. An artist's impression of the project from the west. Source: *London Docklands: Past, Present and Future*, 45.

> the architecture of technological advance and of the telecommunications revolution has produced a collection of buildings at Canary Wharf as undistinguished as the glass gridded boxes of corporate wealth the world over.[34]

At the urban level, like other projects in Docklands, Canary Wharf remains a disconnected, individualistic development with little connection to its urban context. In the open spaces, civic interests are protected and controlled by private developers, which brings into question the public dimension of such areas.

Moreover, like the rest of the Docklands urban experiment, Canary Wharf's main weakness was its total dependence on the ebb and flow of the market place, and even worse, on the personal economic empire of the Reichman family.[35] The downfall of the empire of Olympia & York, beginning in the late 1980s, allegedly the world's "largest property company" at the time, further indicates the limits of utilizing mostly private means to achieve public ends.[36]

Perhaps the biggest failure of Docklands development has been in the definition of regeneration. The belated realization of developers in the early 1990s that their long-term profits required a socially and economically healthy local community within a viable physical environment led to the re-evaluation of the market-led urban strategy. The late 1980s and early 1990s have thus been stamped by an effort to "re-urbanize" Docklands

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[34] Edwards, B. *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1992), 72.

[35] The story of the Reichman family within the legacy of the rise and fall of Olympia & York is discussed by Susan Fainstein in *The City Builders: Property, Politics, & Planning in London and New York* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 201-207. Newman, K. "Toweringly Infernal." *EX: Design in Business and Society*. No. 29, February 1996, 28-30. Four years after it was described as "a severe embarrassment for private-sector economics" and as "one of the largest real-estate company failures ever," Canary Wharf today remains a reflection of the fluctuating economics at play in the urban landscape. Under the leadership of the Canadian entrepreneur Paul Reichman of Olympia & York, a consortium of North American, Swiss, and Middle Eastern investors bought Canary Wharf at the end of 1995, and reinstated its potential in rejuvenating Docklands' image and reputation as a distinctive business district.

[36] Brownill, S. *Developing London's Docklands: Another Great Planning Disaster?* (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1990).

and to recognize and reinvest in the local social and economic dimensions of regeneration.[37]

After a decade of work, the LDDC has established political and economic credibility and the priorities of the first years have shifted from simply stimulating development to actually *controlling* it. The revised objectives and strategies of the LDDC are steadily moving, at least as far policies are concerned, toward a commitment to urban design. On the Isle of Dogs, the LDDC has mandated urban design layouts and guidelines for larger developments, such as for Heron Quays, of the type that Skidmore, Owing, and Merrill had devised for Canary Wharf.[38] However, the so-called master plans are confined to the limits of the site and remain, as in Canary Wharf, oblivious to their context. Major streets are still conceived as access roads and as land dividers, and the lack of correspondence between the developments and the transportation system is still all too evident.

Whether the imposition of a master plan to bring forced legibility where ambiguity and chaos presently reign will succeed in reversing the trends of urban deconstruction in the Isle of Dogs remains questionable. The rediscovery of the urban in Docklands depends on reformulating the framework and the political agenda of regeneration, and not only on the stitching together of the spaces created by private developers.

Nevertheless, a glimpse of hope is emerging in the development of the Royal Docks. The involvement of Richard Rogers Partnership, commissioned to master plan the area, has brought some sense of urbanity to the Royal Docks (fig. 4.14).[39] Designed for the developer Stanhope, the retail and business park includes a marina, a science park,

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[37] The ramifications of the revised strategy to place emphasis on social regeneration are examined by Susan Brownill in *Developing London's Docklands: Another Great Planning Disaster?* (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1990). Besides the setting up of a new Community Services Division in 1988, the LDDC has devised the "planning gain" strategy whereby private developers are obliged to provide on- or off-site community facilities in compensation for financial incentives. However, Brownill argues that these and similar strategies are only skin deep and are being manipulated to ensure the profits at any price.
[38] Buchanan, P. "Quays to Design." *Architectural Review*. Vol. 185, No. 1106, April 1989, 40.
[39] Buchanan, P. "Quays to Design." *Architectural Review*. Vol. 185, No. 1106, April 1989, 38-44.

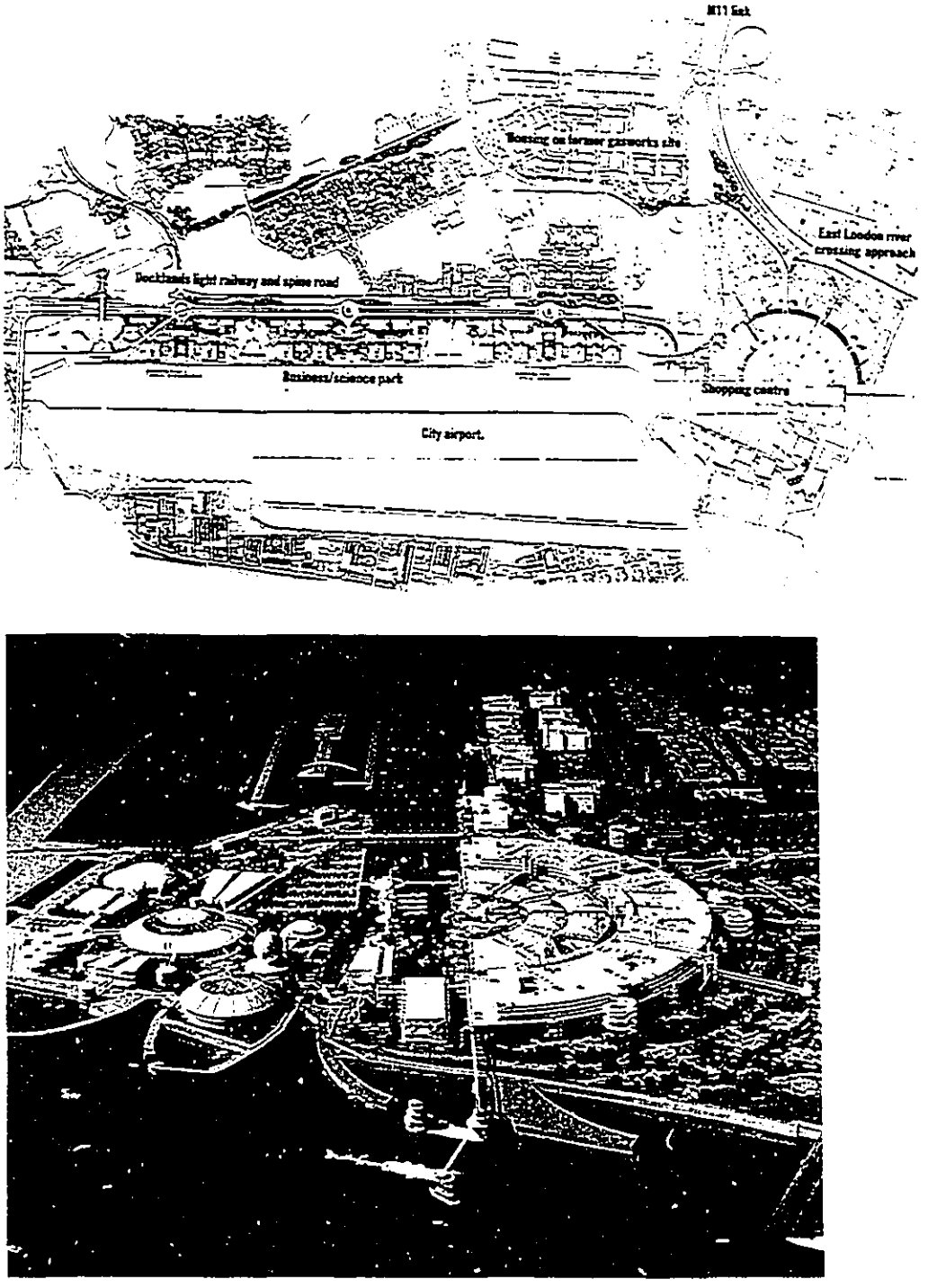


Figure 4.14. Royal Albert Dock: Plan and model of the master scheme of a commercial and business park designed by Richard Rogers Partnership, 1989. Sources: *London Docklands: Past Present and future*, 54, and *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 128.

residences, and a giant shopping centre.[40] The buildings have yet not emerged, but at least a clear framework of urban structure -- a loose network of roads, bridges, and landscaping -- based on an optimal infrastructure system independent of land use is in place.[41] Furthermore, to avoid piecemeal development as in the Isle of Dogs, the LDDC and Richard Rogers Partnership have agreed that land should only be sold in large parcels so that the corresponding developments would have an inherent degree of urbanity. The stakes are high in the Royal Docks. The development of this area which is nearly as large as the whole Docklands is the LDDC's last chance to prove itself capable of building a true city.[42]

Despite all efforts to transform Docklands into a worldly address, today's urban landscape remains a hostile and inaccessible world, not so different from its predecessor of the 1960s: a socially and economically segregated world, physically and psychologically isolated from the rest of London (fig. 4.15). According to Colin Davies, "the change is largely imaginary. It is a matter of perception, of dreams and images, and of confidence. Docklands, like the stock market, is a state of mind."[43] But a state of mind alone in London Docklands has proved impotent to give birth to a city!

Many of the issues raised by the Dockland urban experiment concerning the strategies and ramifications of market-oriented urban regeneration are not limited in time and space. By replacing a few names, a few figures, a few images and plans, the analysis and criticism could apply to many other cities. In the light of the controversies raised by

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[40] Edwards, B. *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinmann, 1992), 128.

[41] Edwards, B. *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinmann, 1992), 163.

[42] Fainstein, S. *The City Builders: Property, Politics & Planning in London and New York* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 210-211. In discussing alternative possibilities to the market-led urban strategy in Docklands, Fainstein draws comparison to La Defense in Paris which represents a more successful example of employing private investment for urban regeneration both in terms of physical form and policy mechanisms. Having first developed the infrastructure and public transportation network, the French public corporation manipulated bylaws to reinforce its urban strategy independent of the fluctuation of the real-estate market.

[43] Davies, C. "Ad Hoc in the Docks." *Architectural Review*, Vol. 181, No. 1080, February 1987, 31.

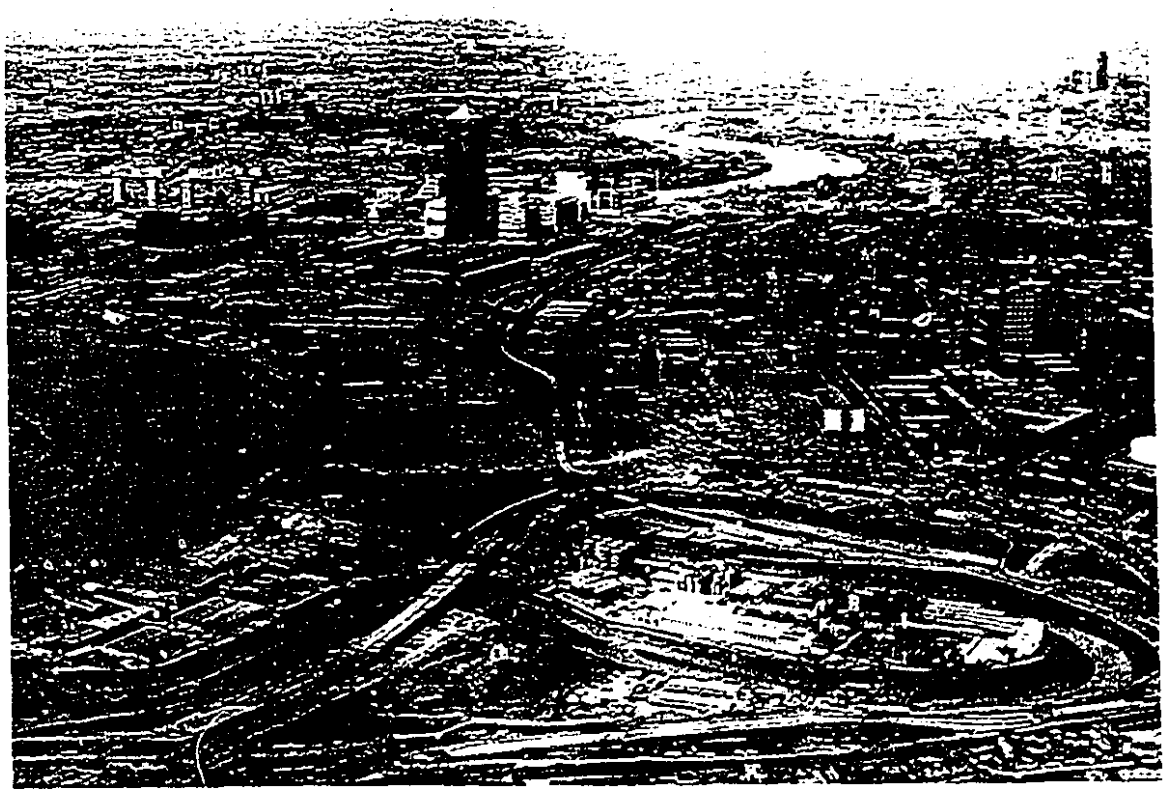

Figure 4.15. The main features of market-led urbanism in the Docklands development: The dominance of private transportation and of fortified private developments, and the resulting lack of urbanity. Source: *London Docklands: Urban Design in an Age of Deregulation*, 169.

Docklands, it is no wonder that the postwar reconstruction of Beirut has been described as the "Middle-Eastern version of Canary Wharf," and the assimilation is not only visual, as is clearly manifested in the framework of the rebuilding process of Beirut.[44] The private acquisition and consumption of space that proved disastrous in Docklands has proved again incapable of generating a viable urban environment in Beirut as depicted so far in the economically-inspired urban imagery on paper.

[44] Stewart, A. "Healing the Wound." *Building*. Vol. 256, No. 51, December 20 1991, 14.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, urban planning is not only about comprehensive design or utopian visions. Nor is planning just about marketing. Planning is about the management of an inherited and a future world. However, without forethought and foresight, and driven solely by a profit motive, the regeneration of any built environment is destined to fail.

Post-W.W.II European cities stand witness today to the most extensive experimentation in urban management and recovery. More than half a century after the war, the case against total erasure, on the one hand, and against complete restoration and duplication on the other (which marked the extreme poles of post-W.W.II reconstruction theory and practice) demonstrate the need for a search for a new agenda for reconstruction on the eve of the twenty-first century. This remains the challenge of future generations with an eye on the past and a vision toward the future.

As a contemporary model of postwar rebuilding, Beirut constitutes a chapter in the history of urban reconstruction in the twentieth century which traces an aberration from rebuilding strategies in Europe after World War II. The reconstruction of Beirut represents fundamental shifts from public to private, and from exploiting war damage as a catalyst for rebuilding to instigating postwar demolition as its strategy. The former has led to the embracing of market-led urbanism, and the latter to the destruction of the cultural heritage and urban memory of Beirut.

In the light of the London Docklands experiment, the postwar urban reconstruction or rather deconstruction of Beirut is suffering today from the same myth of market-led urbanism and delusions of speculation. As such, the economically-inspired urban imagery of the future Beirut, as promoted by its advocates and although still ink on paper, has the great potential to lead to the destruction of the city. Against such a background, Oussama Kabbani has called for a "culture of reconstruction" in Beirut, a cry for the re-integration of tolerance, dialogue, and acceptance within a flexible planning

framework geared at accommodating private and public concerns *equally*.[1] It is a cry that embodies the desperate attempt to re-consider and redirect the rebuilding of Beirut. However, it is clear that the deficiencies in the rebuilding of Beirut are compounded by a more general and more critical crisis in the planning for reconstruction and the management of urban change. Intervention in the reconstruction of Beirut is crucial; two-dimensional images and plans can still be edited with a mere re-evaluation of priorities and strategies. There is no need to lament the past and its memories. The work is in the present and for the future.

Finally, there have been 250 armed conflicts since the end of the Second World War, about 40 of which are currently raging.[2] As the map of destruction broadens, the need to research and discuss postwar reconstruction is pressing. National and international efforts in the latest of war-inflicted areas, the former Yugoslavia, for the protection of historic monuments and cultural treasures during the destruction of war are exemplary of a trend toward the protection of world heritage at large at the *fin de siècle*.[3] While such preventive efforts are theoretically plausible, at the end of the day, the mercy of the assailants alone determines whether the historic heritage will be spared during armed conflict. Tragically, however, the disaster of war (and the effects of colonization and tourism) in many countries, especially in the Middle East, has been followed by a disaster of reconstruction and development.[4] This is mostly due to the misconception, and even the

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[1] Kabbani, O. "The Reconstruction of Beirut". *Prospects for Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies. 1992), 64. Although previously a critique of the framework and plan for reconstruction, Kabbani is today a prominent planner with Solidere.

[2] Cunliffe, R. "Rebuilding War-torn Structures." *Architects' Journal*. Vol. 199, No. 13, March 30 1994, 34.

[3] Chaslin, F. "Sarajevo-Ghetto: Une Ville Soigneusement Torturee." *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. No. 290, December 1993, 4-5. Measures for the protection the built heritage in Sarajevo included, for example, the posting of blue and white flags on historic monuments to remind the assailants that they should respect the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Conventions of La Hague (1954), Amsterdam, Helsinki and other places, which called for the global protection of cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict. For a more detailed account of UNESCO's mandate and conventions for the protection of cultural property, refer to *Dubrovnik 1991-1992* (UNESCO, 1993), 10-11.

[4] University of York. Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies (IoAAS). Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU). *Revival*. Issue 1, July 1994, 2.

obsession of equating change with progress which has had disastrous consequences on the social, economic, political, and physical fabric of countries the world over.

Therefore, just as a legal mandate has been developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the protection of world heritage during war which binds the member parties (at least on paper), the prevention of the destruction of cultural heritage and urban memory *within* a postwar reconstruction framework should be cultivated. Unfortunately, a growing number of scholars, professionals, and citizens agree that "the uncontrolled erosion of peacetime construction threatens to wreak as much damage on the cities of the world as did the mindless violence of war."[5]

Hence, war and reconstruction are very similar. Both emerge from a desire to evoke and to implement change. Both are human inventions and interventions, and when abused, they destroy the city. This paradox is embodied in the slogans scattered in the landscape of ruin which declare "Beirut: The Ancient City of the Future." However, at the eve of the twentieth century, it is the erasure of the past and the speculation about the future that scar the urban existence of Beirut.

[5] Fitch, J.M. *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 375.

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