

Blackfriars Priory | An Architectural Palimpsest
Adam Richards | 13th January 2016



Blackfriars Priory | North Range.

Abstract

This essay explores Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester through the concept of an 'architectural palimpsest', a building that has constantly been adapted to suit a variety of needs throughout the centuries. The Priory is significantly important to Historic England and yet in the past the building has been subjected to a series of drastic alterations. These changing perceptions of value, authenticity and worth will be explored and questioned whilst being accompanied by a written and photographic journey through the building.



Blackfriars Priory | 1950's Restoration of the North Range.

Appendix

- 1 - The Journey. A personal written and photographic account of Blackfriars Priory Gloucester.
- 2 - The Manifesto. A critique of 'The Society For The Protection of Ancient Building' William Morris.
- 3 - History, Context and Timeline of Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester.

Additional Research & Theory Papers:

- 4 - Time, Space and Order: The Making of Medieval Salisbury
- 5 - Creative Cities - Cultural Industries, Urban Development and the Information Society
- 6 - Regeneration Game
- 7 - Cities For People, Not For Profit



Blackfriars Priory | Hidden layers of history revealed.

Introduction

Blackfriars Priory is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 listed building dating back to the early 13th Century. It is considered by Historic England (Formerly English Heritage) to be the most complete Dominican Priory in England and is of national architectural significance. Yet this halo of grandeur and status of seminal importance to our cultural heritage has only existed within the last century. Fear of ruination and our nostalgia of the past is now adding a new chapter to the building's history. This essay will explore whether the restoration of Blackfriars Priory has retained its intrinsic architectural value and maintained the character and authenticity of one of Gloucester's most important ancient buildings.

The Priory has been subject to decades of neglect and disregard for the protection of its heritage. The layers of history the building holds and the stories it can tell have never been documented in the form of an architectural or cultural narrative, only through scientific excavation by archaeologists has the building been forced to reveal itself. Blackfriars is in the midst of further conservation efforts and facing new challenges; the fear is that the building will just become another form of recreational simulacra, adding to the cities long list of re-enactments of historical events.

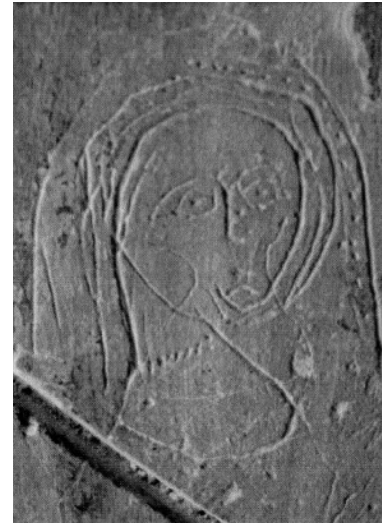
The changing state of the priory will be explored from its religious beginnings through to its industrial heritage, from its status as a ruin to its encapsulation as a monument and now the focus of a concerted conservation programme. This changing identity provides the basis on which to question what we should restore and protect; exploring the arguments about authenticity and historical value and whether Blackfriars layers of history can be stripped away without damaging and losing that value? Appendix 1 adds to the context of the essay by providing a written and photographic journey through building. The narrative and exploration of the building became the instigator for the essay and its investigation of the changing attitudes towards conservation.

Religious

In order to start to analyse the importance that Blackfriars Priory is held with today, a reflection must first take place of how the Priory was viewed at its point of creation. In the 13th Century Blackfriars Priory would have been home to a monastic order at the centre of community life, education, religion, art and healthcare. Its 'Identity' and 'Value' would have been one of influence and of power as the Priory stood as a symbol of religious order within the city of Gloucester. It is within this period that so many traces of the buildings past have survived that leads organisations such as Historic England to 'heritageise' and 'monumentalise' Blackfriars Priory. This is evidenced by its status as a scheduled ancient monument and focal point of regeneration for the wider area of Gloucester.

Reflecting on an interview with Peter Murray (Littlefield, 2007) who discusses ‘memory, consciousness and traces’ held within ruins, a clear comparison can be made to Blackfriars Priory and the traces imprinted on the stone walls and floors by its inhabitants over the centuries.

Murray describes a local abbey as a “*repository of scars and traces, notably from the treatment meted out under Henry VIII’s dissolution*”, an identical fate which Blackfriars was to befall. There is poetry in viewing the building as an ‘Architectural Palimpsest’. The ability of stone to mark and accumulate layers of memory unlike more modern enclosures of steel and glass. Murray admits to his dislike of ruins that have been “*stripped of their humanity and are preserved as mere physical objects*”. Blackfriars has been subject to this stripping out of its layers of history over the course of several generations but what remains is still regarded as one of the best examples of a Dominican Priory in England.



Blackfriars Priory | South Range | 13th Century Graffiti



Blackfriars Priory | South Range Staircase.

Residential + Industrial

Blackfriars most important period in terms of its physical change happened in the mid 16th century with the purchase of the building by Thomas Bell. The Priory underwent serious alteration as it was transformed into a mansion for Bell and his family, the church was reduced by half with its large stone arches and windows either blocked up or removed.

The values of preservation and retention of our historic fabric during this period are of stark contrast to the regard in which the building is placed within today. Little evidence exists to show that during this period of fundamental change, there was any importance placed on retaining Blackfriars identity or historical past, with the building regarded as simply a shell to provide a platform on which to prosper.

Hearn (2003) explores how *“a culture of romanticism had begun to be developed during the mid seventeenth century, and that the impulse to restore wasn't just a cultural whim. In England during the period of Gothic Revival, values of preserving the 'authentic' were impressed upon architects following decades of neglect”*.

If this was the beginning of a change in attitude, it is difficult to find evidence within Blackfriars history during the mid 17th Century. Hearn's statement of a change in cultural values to preserve the 'authentic' appears to have been muted within Gloucester, due to the city experiencing an industrial boom with the creation of the Docks and influx of industry, leading to a continued disregard for the protection of the buildings heritage.



Blackfriars Priory | South Range | Evidence of the buildings industrial past, 13th Century stone cut away to allow for bottling plant machinery.



Ruin

Blackfriars Priory has evolved from religious beginnings, to an industrial past and in the 19th century it was to fall into ruin. On reflection, the Priory could lie in a place more akin to an industrial ruin that 'bears all' in a more honest form of archaeology rather than simply a ruinous shell. Its industrial past adds an additional layer of value, meaning and worth to our nostalgia of this ancient building with its complex web of constant changing identity.

Woodward (2002) believes that *"in order for a ruin to connect with our imagination, it has to converse with nature"*. He also believes that *"a ruin has two values, it has an objective value as an assemblage of brick and stone, and it has a subjective value as an inspiration to artists"*.

Hearn (2003) describes how *"prior to the 19th century, the notion of including principles for the restoration of buildings as an aspect of architectural theory would have been meaningless. Vitruvius, Alberti and even Laugier would have assumed that a damaged building would be repaired in the current manner and a largely ruined building would simply be replaced by a new structure. It was this cultural romanticism that led to the preservation or restoration of buildings by advanced societies such as the English and French, partly to compensate for the neglect and mindless alterations to buildings of their medieval past"*.

Restoration

The initial philosophical approach was to repair the buildings without recourse to reconstruction, but at the same time to strip the building back to the medieval form to reveal the fabric with clarity. This was a well established philosophy within the Ministry Of Works (Historic England) by the mid 1950's, and was not finally abandoned until the late 1980's. It was justified in terms of what would now be regarded as a reading of William Morris's philosophy, as espoused by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (Appendix 2).

The consequences of the original approach of conservation taken by the Ministry of Works lead to the extensive stripping out of the later phases of development from within Blackfriars during the 1960's and 1970's. This approach to return the Priory back to its original state lead to the removal of large sections of its industrial and manufacturing history, but importantly within the North Range lead to the loss of the C16th residential development that had been Thomas Bell's mansion. This removal of valuable layers of history was documented in measured surveys and photographs and was the accepted method of conservation up to the late 1980's.

Where ever possible the 13th century fabric was revealed, for example, mid 16th century ashlar was removed on the north wall to reveal a pier of the 13th century arcade, with remains of polychrome decoration.



Blackfriars Priory | North Range | Evidence of the 1950's Ministry of Works conservation project.

It appears vital for Blackfriars to allow the public to frequent the space in order to breathe new life back into its empty ruinous shell, for if the building is not inhabited, used and enjoyed by the people of Gloucester then where is the value in its restoration? If the existing plans are to cater for the occasional event, is this a missed opportunity to restore a scheduled ancient monument to the past, and point it towards a new future as the new beating heart of the community? Is it possible to introduce a renovation of its sacred space with its ties to the Christian Church apparently severed? Could this building revitalise the area by reconnecting to its original status as a sacred space for the community, for example the Spurriergate Centre in York or Coventry Cathedral? Could it reflect the multicultural, interfaith society it is now standing within?

A critical point which Peter Murray (Littlefield 2007) makes with specific relevance to this work and the wider regeneration at Blackfriars is that, *“the voice of a place is amplified (indeed, only heard at all) if visitors are allowed to imagine their way through to the human histories of the site. A physical and purely visual curating of a space, one which clears away all detritus in an attempt to get to the kernel of a single truth, often has the effect of removing all truths and closing down the role of the senses other than that of sight. If the history of a place is so utterly finished, so completely out of time, devoid of a human presence or of any kind of life, it is of dubious value”*.

The statement has to act as a warning for the second phase of restoration at Blackfriars to adhere to. Where the first attempt in the 1950's sought to strip back centuries of historic development with the goal of returning the Priory to its original state (Appendix 3). There is now a stronger argument with today's understanding, that recognises that a building's value and identity is held within 'every'

layer of its fibre, as an architectural palimpsest. A form of restoration that recalls and utilizes the Priory's past values and historical heritage, whether that be of community, spirituality, hospitality, education, art, healing or of silence, must lead to the creation of a stronger sense of cultural identity for the building?

The question then arises of what is the true authentic state of Blackfriars Priory and how can we really judge 'authenticity'? Have the centuries of neglect of the heritage of the building, and the focus of energy on the past to preserve the Priory in its original form, the stripping away its layers of memory, forced Blackfriars to lose some of its intrinsic architectural and historical value? Has the focus of restoration always been about the physical form, with little regard to its future inhabitants?

Nostalgia is never far away when we talk about the authenticity of romantic ruins. Brian Dillion in 'Ruins' (2011) states that *"especially romanticised ruins appear to guarantee authenticity, immediacy and authority. However, there is a paradox. In the case of historical ruins, what is allegedly present and transparent whenever authenticity is claimed is present only as an absence. It is the imagined present of a past that can now be grasped only in its decay"*.

Judging 'Historical Value' and 'Authenticity', especially of a historical building such as Blackfriars appears subjective, which can only lead to an open and honest reflection of the two clear periods of restoration at the Priory and the philosophical approaches taken. The initial phase completed by the Ministry of Works in 1955 and the present work being undertaken by FCB Architects have stark differences towards their philosophical approaches, and yet they do share some common elements. Both share in their recognition of the historical importance and value of the Priory and its strong sense of identity. Yet within the period of half a century the approach towards restoration has changed drastically, but has the justification used in striving for authenticity changed at all and been any more or less successful?

Conclusion

Blackfriars Priory is a complex architectural palimpsest, scarred by the generations that have inhabited its spaces, yet all the richer for what each has left behind. A web of intertwined narratives encompasses the Priory, a unique structure with a diverse historical past, and of an intrinsic architectural and cultural importance. A building that has suffered neglect, ruination and centuries of change, the question remains however as to whether this new chapter of conservation has retained its identity and value along with its character and sense of authenticity?

In conclusion it is difficult to give a definitive answer, some of the Priory's biggest physical changes have been undertaken in the name of 'restoration' and it remains to be seen whether Blackfriars will become another form of recreational simulacra within the city. I am torn between making judgments on the success or failure of the 1955 period of works, justified as 'revealing the building

with clarity'. The stripping out of early seventeenth century layers of residence and industry strikes me as a huge loss of character and damaging to the identity of the Priory. Yet in contrast the spaces they leave behind with the aim of restoring the building back to its original state such as the North Range, results in the ability to read every mark which has been made, every generation's imprint within a glance of the eye. The walls of each void read as murals or giant canvases waiting to be deciphered. Being able to see medieval stone arches and the tool marks where they were divided in two to allow industry to frequent the space, or to view graffiti centuries old by a study window allows the mind to run with narrative as to what life must have been like at that time. It is this ability to read the building that holds so much meaning and quality, which justifies its status as an ancient monument.



Blackfriars Priory | North Range | Ministry of Works Conservation Project.

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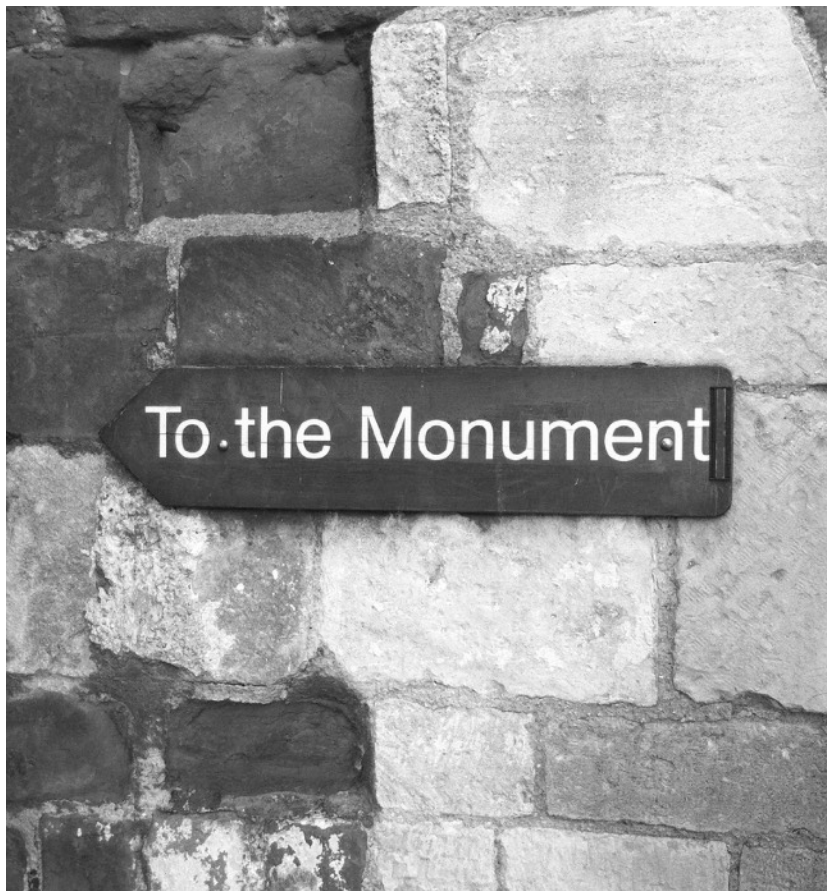
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Blackfriars Priory | An Architectural Palimpsest

Adam Richards | 11733895 | 13th January 2016

Appendix 1 | The Journey



Blackfriars Priory | The Journey

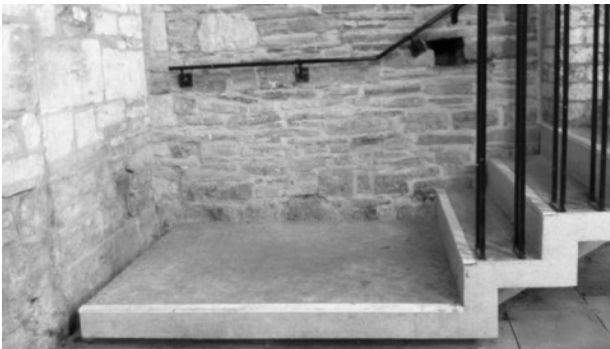
Image References: Personal Photography



Blackfriars Priory is an unequivocal example of an 'Architectural Palimpsest', a building that has survived the centuries, like a parchment that has been partially erased time after time to make room for another text. Blackfriars stands scarred from its original state yet holds countless threads of narrative from the generations who have inhabited the space.



Upon confronting the building and entering the South Range I immediately see the modern interventions and the scars of every generation. The great weight of an imposing concrete stair appears to have been inserted with little consideration for the aesthetics of the space or the historical value of the buildings original stonewalls.



However as I stand in the space and begin to reflect on the shell that stands above me, the intricate details and intrinsic qualities of the space begin to make themselves known. The most modern of interventions pays its respects and refrains from casting its mark on the building. Remnants of the past still bare their marks, large stone arched windows butchered into doorways, imprints of timber beams which once divided the space have been ripped away in the name of authenticity and restoration.



The South Range of the Priory is regarded as one of the oldest recorded libraries in Europe. Its atmospheric and aesthetic values are immediately apparent. Its qualities can be understood on many different levels but it is only during analysis of the stone enclaves that the narratives begin to take form.



The curved stone arches have all been slashed, carving through the space to make way for machinery from a century before, the bow in the floor evidence of the weight that was once exerted upon it.



Evidence exists of how the spaces were once used by the resident Dominican Brothers several centuries before. A thread of a narrative begins to take shape and the poetics of the space begin to unfold when one enclave reveals graffiti thought to date from the 13th Century. A changing social fabric and centuries of use within the space are all adding to create a rich cultural narrative.



However as I journey further into the building some less subtle interventions have been made, all with the intention of making use of the space to allow people to enjoy and use the building once again. I question the authenticity and the value of these marks in comparison to the narratives that exist within the library but quickly find out that even a scheduled ancient monument is not immune from health and safety and the subsequent regulation.



One final space remains and upon entering the North Range of the Priory I find myself in one room that encapsulates the buildings entire history. Fragments of memory line the walls from every century of this buildings existence, what was once a grand church far bigger than the structure now, has changed throughout the centuries from manor house to industrial warehouse, ruin to monument.



Stone stripped back in the name of restoration only finds greater layers of complexity, a slice through the Priory's diverse history, an architectural palimpsest. The intrinsic value of the building is due to its many layers of history on display. Steel and glass, heating and lighting add to the space with as much weight as the ancient stone columns themselves.



Stone arches spanning into the invisible, windows hidden behind ashlar and new openings punching through historic columns reveal centuries of change that thread a complex narrative of human intervention throughout Blackfriars Priory.

Appendix 2 | RESEARCH AND THEORY

Critique: The Society For The Protection of Ancient Buildings. William Morris. 1877.

28th October 2015

S11733895

The Manifesto:

In the mid 19th century there was a growing concern about the lack of protection and adequate preservation of our ancient buildings. The historic fabric of our built environment was being eroded by over zealous restoration work to our ancient buildings, with the growing fear being that these important buildings which were of such artistic, religious or historical importance would fail to be conserved for future generations.

In 1877 William Morris and his supporters created 'The Society For The Protection of Ancient Buildings' to address the growing problems of building conservation within the 19th century. Their manifesto would seek to set out a philosophical basis on which to provide education, guidance and practical knowledge to professionals on how to best preserve our ancient buildings.

In 1896 the SPAB in conjunction with London County Council created a formal register of ancient buildings, in which it was hoped that by informing people as to the importance of preserving these edifices it would reduce the risk of them being subject to damaging alterations or demolition. The register is recognised as a precursor of the 'Listed Building Status' that became law nearly sixty years after its creation. Importantly in the same year the National Trust was created and formally adopted SPAB's approach to conservative repair.

The SPAB manifesto was written by Morris in which he seeks to explain how and why ancient buildings were in need of protection. In the manifesto he describes how within the previous fifty years the society had seen a new interest and perception toward our ancient buildings arise, but proclaims that within this period our ancient buildings have been subject to more destruction than throughout all the previous *"centuries of revolution, violence and contempt."*

Morris writes how the 19th century has no formal architectural style of its own and how architecture is a long decaying practice only striving to recreate the past. This then provided the seed upon which grew the 'fatal idea' of the restoration of ancient buildings, where by buildings would be stripped of all layers of history in search of the original form, to restore the building to its original

state. Morris argues that it is precisely these layers of historical manipulation of the building which provide the complexity and interest, where by a,

“church in the eleventh century might be added to in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, or even seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; but every change, what ever history it destroyed, left history in the gap, and was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning.”

The manifesto describes how restoring a building to ‘*it’s best time in history*’ relies on the individual carrying out the work to judge for himself about what is admirable and contemptible of the building, leaving the imagination to rule of the buildings destruction, this then creates a forgery of a building with only the mere appearance of antiquity and integrity.

Morris concludes by stating his case that our ancient buildings can be conserved in such a way as to retain their ‘living spirit’, that by stripping a building of its layers of history undoubtably removes much of the most interesting features, leaving the building cold and ‘chilling of enthusiasm’ for our future generations. He argues for protection in the place of restoration and states that if asked how to judge a building on whether it is worth protecting answering,

“anything which can be looked on as artistic, picturesque, historical, antique, or substantial: any work, in short, over which educated, artistic people would think it worth whilst to argue at all.”

Appendix 3

Blackfriars Priory | Gloucester | History, Context and Timeline

Blackfriars Priory is located within the historic city of Gloucester on a route midway between Westgate Street and the Docks. The Priory dates from the 13th Century and the standing remains of the cloistral buildings are listed, and along with the surrounding landscape are a scheduled ancient monument. The precincts of the Priory, which once included a cemetery and orchards, have long been built over and now the cloistral buildings are largely hidden by development.

The Blackfriars complex is situated on the South West quadrant of the medieval city of Gloucester, close to the original Southgate entrance to the city. The site is also close to the remains of the Roman city wall and built over the peripheral remains of a Norman castle. The remains of the Priory have been continually adapted and altered throughout their existence, though what remains today is considered by English Heritage to be the finest, most complete surviving example of a Dominican Priory in Britain.

Blackfriars Priory has been influenced throughout its history by the changing character of the city of Gloucester and has a rich historical context that dates back to the early Roman settlement of Glevum. It is this rich heritage that the city is basing its regeneration on today with Blackfriars Priory at its heart.

Although no longer complete the Priory complex retains much of its original fabric and the original ground plan of the four ranges built around the central cloister. The north range was once the Priory church and faces onto Blackfriars Lane. It was heavily reduced in length following the Dissolution when the building was converted into a mansion. The west range was largely rebuilt in the 19th Century and stands today as a terrace of domestically scaled 3 to 4 storied buildings facing onto Ladybellegate Street. The south range is largely intact and is located behind the Commercial Road properties while the east range was heavily demolished and only the northern part of the original range remains alongside an adjoining brick building which is now used as a garage workshop.

Blackfriars Priory today is the most complete survival of a mediaeval Dominican Priory in Britain. However, it has been greatly adapted and altered throughout its lifetime and what remains today is a result of various phases of evolution and change.

Appendix 4 | RESEARCH AND THEORY

Critique: Time, Space and Order: The Making of Medieval Salisbury, Frost Christian, 2009.

14th October 2015

S11733895

Salisbury - The Processional City

The article explores how the city Salisbury was built along side its cathedral in the thirteenth century based upon theories of religious iconography. Ideas of movement and time overlaid with a sense of geometry were combined with the use of Biblical narrative and religious procession in the search to create the perfect urban archetype of a Christian city. The careful ordering of the city was more subtle and complex than simply allowing its religious buildings to dominate the landscape through direct visual connections. Christian philosophy fundamentally underpinned the ordering of the city yet its symbolism and meaning only revealed itself to its inhabitants during specific periods of religious procession.

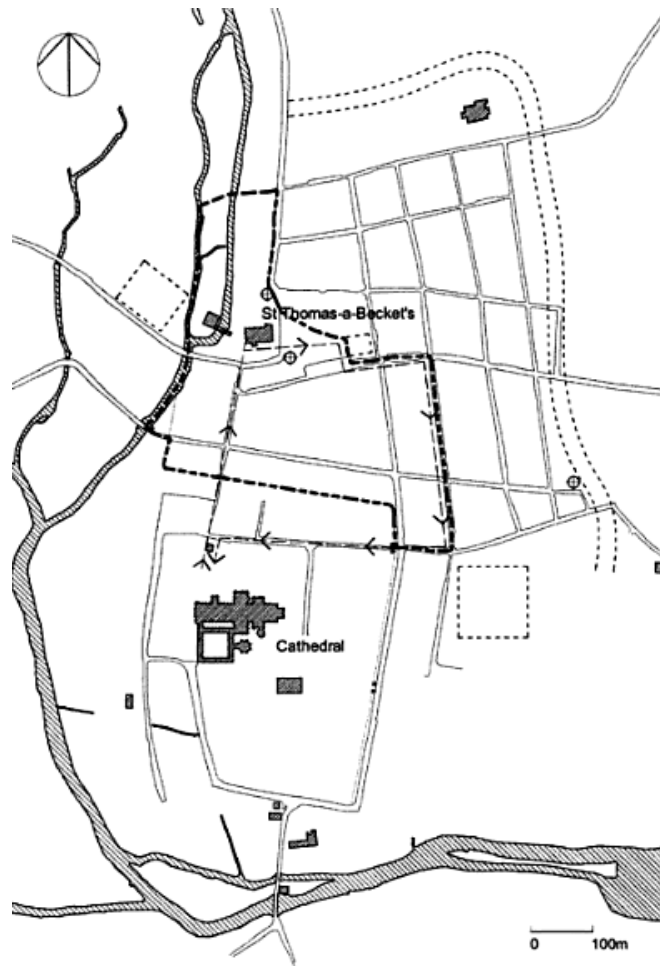
An understanding of the theoretical concepts and beliefs that would have been present during the time of Salisbury's creation forms an important basis on which the study grounds its research. Augustine's notions of the three aspects of lived time are used as evidence to suggest that through the participation in Rogation processions the city and its cathedral combined past, present and future into one experience to form a foundation on which to establish and present Salisbury as a holy city.



Salisbury's City Order, revealed through Rogation Processions and Augustine's Notion of 'Three Aspects of Lived Time'.

Movement within the city was just as important as the concept of time when establishing the theoretical principals that helped shape Salisbury's urban form. The historic use of Biblical narratives and pilgrimage throughout the Christian faith were combined into processions which influenced the urban fabric of the city. The latent order of the city became defined by these processions, the city became a stage upon which the church could display the theological narratives of the christian faith.

The historical context and development of the city changed and evolved throughout time. The earliest settlement of Salisbury known as Old Sarum was ruled by the king with the church as a subservient entity. It was only during the sixteenth century and English Reformation that the church began to have full control over the urban landscape. However the church chose not to physically dominate Salisbury but to hold a more subtle influence over the urban landscape. As depicted in the diagram above the order of the city organised itself into three elements which were only revealed by the act of looking or processing through the city. Within the article Frost describes the "*visual ordering of the city did not coincide with the street pattern*". The city had a strong visual orientation towards the cathedral and yet subtle layering of the urban fabric prevented a direct physical connection, forcing the procession to meander between the streets. This created a narrative and complex symbolism that would only be revealed during periods of procession.



Plan of Salisbury showing the likely route of the procession for Rogation Monday (Frost, 2009)

The article proceeds to explore the various hierarchy's within current and medieval theologies and how this translates into the construction of spaces to facilitate the experience of religious ritual. The example given of gothic cathedrals using light, space and materiality to embody the hierarchy of religious experience sees the architecture striving to help the worshiper to fore fill their religious journey. The cathedral becomes less about the architecture and its detailing and more of a conduit to facilitate religious experiences.

The cathedrals use of a more simplistic ornamental programme compared to other places of worship strives to ground the worshipper in actual experience rather than focusing on the structure of the spaces created by the building. Thresholds were created at Salisbury both internally and externally that could be crossed during daily activities with little reflection of their religious meaning, until a formal Rogation procession revealed their importance to the individuals religious experience. The article concludes by questioning how medieval cathedrals are viewed, that instead of being complete representations religious ideology they are actually an incomplete series of spaces and that only through the act of procession and inhabitation achieve a true representation of Holy Jerusalem.

Appendix 5 | RESEARCH AND THEORY

Critique: Creative Cities - Cultural Industries, Urban Development and the Information Society (Feb 1999).

2nd November 2015

S11733895

The Creative City's New Field Condition, Jan Verwijnen:

Verwijnen describes how in the past and until recently cities sought to revitalise tired and abandoned industrial areas primarily through the gentrification process, this often lead to sanitised, upper middle class developments of generic retail space and housing. The report introduces the notion of a 'Creative City', and how the gentrification process of former industrial areas are being rejected in favour of a new regeneration process based upon innovation and creativity. Verwijnen questions whether cities that are tied down with layers of bureaucracy lack the tools and ability to effectively implement this *"new wave of urban innovation and creativity?"*

The report introduces the 'Innovative Milieu', a concept that includes all the necessary hard and soft infrastructure for cultural industries. The concept describes how importantly 'soft infrastructure' includes systems of social networks and human interactions that help to facilitate the flow of ideas. Verwijnen introduces the idea of 'flows' being the driving force of an innovative milieu, where by the ever increasing transfer of information, through a growing networked society drives cultural and technological innovation. The networked society is quickly becoming a more important factor in a cities cultural and economic regeneration than the older authoritarian, top down approaches of the past.

"Cultures are made up of communication processes. And all forms of communication, as Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard taught us many years ago, are based on the production and consumption of signs. In all societies humankind has existed in and acted through a symbolic environment." Castells (1996: P.372)

What Castells describes is the connected, communicative society where nearly all information is visual. This consumption of multimedia and typographic information in our technological age is defining content as culture through the use of images and signs which Barthes and Baudrillard had written about throughout the 20th century. However it is the 21st century that has seen the rise of the digital age and explosion of our networked cities which is defining a new form of regeneration.

The author again references Castells who describes and concludes that the Network Society represents a change in human experience (1996 P.477). Throughout the modern age and industrial revolution Nature had dominated Culture, yet now in this networked society, Culture refers to Culture. Verwijnen describes how we can now describe Culture as its own entity, an evolving system with its own agenda to the point where our economies have become culturalised, *"Culture is a global business"*. (1996)

The report concludes that if 'creative cities' are to succeed then the urban development of the future must attract these new cultural industries. The traditional layers of bureaucracy with the regeneration of the city must be stripped away in favour of the new networked society. Verwijnen describes how if the production of culture within the networked society has become 'pervasive' then it will be cultural industries themselves that will influence the future environment of the city.

References:

Castells, Manuel (1996). *The Information Age. Economy, Society and Culture. Volume 1: The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford:Blackwell.

Appendix 6 | RESEARCH AND THEORY

Regeneration Game, Kathryn Moore, Terminal World, November 2013

11th November 2015

Adam Richards | S11733895

Regeneration Game:

In the 'Regeneration Game' (2013) Kathryn Moore discusses how railway stations have a cultural, social and economic importance to the urban fabric of a city but yet in many cases they are simply perceived as soulless, dismal and ugly. Moore describes how the new high speed rail line (HS2) is an unprecedented opportunity to revitalise the city and explores using several examples how important it is to learn from past mistakes.

Moore describes how railway stations have in the past been created with very different sets of ambitions and principals. In the 19th century when St Pancras and Paddington were created in London they were seen as centre pieces of the capitol's desire to be viewed globally as an economic powerhouse and used as tools to inspire and impress. In the 20th century however Birmingham New Street was created to be "*efficient, cost-effective and functional, yet was dark, subterranean and unwelcoming*" (P.31, 2013).

Additional stations are identified with many holding historical or architectural importance and yet all are connected via their disregard of context. Moore comments on how all of these stations are self contained and inwardly looking, designed principally for the railway companies with little or no thought as to the negative impact these buildings have on the urban fabric of the city. The opportunity now exists with the investment that HS2 will bring to address these issues and to create stations that provide a high quality of urban space to reinvigorate and energise the city.

Moore introduces the idea of learning from other areas, incorporating a more holistic approach to station design, creating quality, memorable urban environments that would add to the additional investment opportunities HS2 will provide. The New York High Line project is used as a key precedent in addition to the work of John Ruskin who wrote about the importance of the quality of public parks and spaces within a city. Moore proposes the concept of a new HS2 station at Birmingham that is entered through a new grand civic park, providing a high quality public space that would seek to shrug off any "*last vestiges*" (P.32 2013) of the city.

Copenhagen and Antwerp railway stations are used as examples of how they engage with the city by providing facilities for people to enjoy and to dwell rather than just to pass through. Encouraging a greater level of accessibility throughout the station in addition to connecting the building more intrinsically to the wider urban environment through the use of parks and squares elevates the importance of the station to the city. Moore challenges the idea that these new HS2 stations must minimise the impact they should have upon the city, instead they should chose to "*maximise it in a positive, progressive way to ensure they contribute significantly to the quality of life*" (P.33 2013).

References:

Moore, K (2013) *The Regeneration Game*. Terminal World Annual Report.

Appendix 7 | RESEARCH AND THEORY

Cities For People, Not For Profit. N. Brenner, P. Marcuse & M. Mayer, September 2010.

18th November 2015

Adam Richards | S11733895

Cities for people, not for profit:

Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer (2010) describe how the global economic recession has dramatically intensified the struggles of many social movements within the city, emphasising the injustice, destructiveness and un-sustainability of capitalist forms of urbanisation. The authors describe how the financial crisis sent shock waves of accelerated economic restructuring, regulatory reorganisation and sociopolitical conflict through many cities around the world. Evidence of this came in the form of large scale social unrest, demonstrations, strikes and violence by factions of society who felt anger towards the unfairness of economic life.

The article forms the introduction to a much wider analysis of the effects of the economic crisis within the fabric of urban life. Describing cities as “*arenas in which the conflicts and contradictions associated with the historically and geographically specific accumulation strategies are expressed and fought out*”. The text delivers a critical discussion surrounding the challenges facing our cities and suggests the need to roll back the modern profit based forms of urbanisation and to promote alternative, radically democratic and sustainable forms of urbanism.

The article explores several other urban theorists work many of whom having written about similar issues in the past. Harvey (1976, P.314) who writes nearly 30 years previously about how cities are “*founded on the exploitation of the many by the few*” and that “*a genuinely humanising urbanism has yet to be brought into being*”. Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer reflect on what Harvey describes as wholly relevant and urgent, even in today's economic climate. A challenge for ‘radical, urban theorists’ is then how to learn from the lessons of the past and to present alternative, progressive, revolutionary responses to it.

The critical contributions of Peter Marcuse are introduced as a basis for further collaborative discussion. “*The transformation of cities and urban space under contemporary capitalism; the role of the state and urban planning in mediating those transformations and the politics of urban sociospatial exclusion and polarisation along class and ethnoracial lines*”, are all areas of critical urban theory that are still relevant today.

Lefebvre's classic concept ‘The right to the city’ (1996[1968]) is also used within the context of the article as a rallying cry for radical academics and activists to undertake “*transformative political mobilisation*” (2010) within our cities. The article explores the challenges faced by urban theorists in grappling with with historic theoretical concepts and how they can easily be misinterpreted and used within state bureaucratic planning. Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer describe how urban social movements have in the past had mixed success in delivering social change within the city. That in order for critical urban studies to provide social change objective power and strategies are needed to establish transformative urbanism, where currently they are in a state of crisis.

The article concludes by asking whether urban social movements will be successful within the current economic climate. Harvey (2008, P.39) describes the ‘point of collision’ between the deprived and discontented on one side and the ruling classes of the capitalist elite on the other. Whether the city will continue to benefit the few or whether the slogan of “*cities for people, not just for profit*” (2010) will lead to theoretical, political and practical responses to address the crisis within our cities.

References:

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