Humdrum Tasks of the Salaried Men:
Edwin Williams, a London County Council Architect at War

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Introduction

Much of the discussion concerning post-Second World War architecture in Britain revolves around the question whether an appropriate or inappropriate architecture for the social democratic state was ever produced. Questions have been asked as to how civic and political buildings – concert halls, galleries, parliamentary buildings – communicate, express or facilitate concepts and practices of social democratic governance and the formation of a polity.[1] The material, structural and formal values of social housing and education and health care buildings have been assessed for their ability to respond to the requirements of social democracy.[2]

These architectural histories are framed within wider political histories and the emergence of the welfare state from liberal programmes of social security in the 1920s, through to a full-blooded Keynesian mixed economy of the 1950s, which has been variously defined as democratic (in a representational sense), technocratic, bureaucratic, and 'compromised' (to the extent that the new welfare state was concerned with the redistribution of surplus wealth from private to public ends). These different aspects of the welfare state are further complicated in terms of their relation to each other, either simply 'co-existing' (but in this case, which elements are technocratic, which democratic, which bureaucratic and so on?), functionally layered, or competing.

The question posed by architectural history has been whether the *products* of architecture – that

is, buildings – answered the needs of the welfare state, and to what extent these products were over-determined by one or other element in the structure of the welfare state. As an example, it was possible for Adrian Forty to identify and categorise Tecton's Finsbury Health Centre of the 1930s and the London County Council (LCC) Architects' Department's Royal Festival Hall of the 1950s as 'social democratic' in the sense that those buildings spatially confirmed liberal democratic values.[3] On the other hand, it was equally possible for the same author to define the Southbank Exhibition of the Festival of Britain as 'technocratic' because of the structural relationship between the architectural and other design professions that produced that event, and the civil service and executive government of the period. The Festival of Britain Exhibition, then, responded in a broad sense to the needs of a welfare state, but in a specific sense to a *technocracy*.[4] But how are we to understand the daily *practices* (rather than *products*) of architecture as contributing to the history of the welfare state?

In his forensic history of the design of the Royal Festival Hall, Miles Glendinning argues that mid-century modern architecture in Britain has largely been (and should be) understood as the result of conflicts and sympathies operating between the 'art' of the singular visionary architectural designer, and the 'social function' of the collective, prosaic municipal authority.[5] The Festival Hall emerges as the culmination of the architect Robert Matthew's struggle to free the municipal office of the LCC

Architects' Department from the 'vast, repetitive workload of minor development-control casework […] of the same everyday character: numbering and naming of streets, the condition of bomb-damaged roofs, and the demolition of Anderson shelters'.[6]

As such, Glendinning frankly and overtly utilises an established historiographic trope in which the history of architectural production is bifurcated. The necessary (or is that perhaps 'necessarily'?) prosaic building programme of modern social democracy in the twentieth century – the planning and codification of the urban environment, municipal over-site of private building production, regulation of the building industries, distribution and control of consumption of building materials and so on – is recalled only in contradistinction to the design and production of 'exceptional' civic and private spaces of modernism.

This split history of the development of modern architecture in Britain is reproduced throughout the criticism and historiography on and of the period.[7] Hiving off the 'humdrum tasks' of the 'salaried men' allows for exclusive attention to be paid to the emergence of modernism in Britain prior to the Second World War and its subsequent development immediately after. This includes the overturning of regressive and conservative architectural principles in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the emergence of a generation of architects educated in modernism and determined to produce it.[8] The bumpy road of British modernist architecture and the contests between 'New Empiricists', or 'New Humanists', and an earlier avant-garde (represented by émigré figures such as Berthold Lubetkin) and later neo-avant-gardes (neoclassicist or new brutalist) can then be set out along strictly formal lines.

Whilst who and what might be covered by any of these stylistic umbrellas is allowed to remain an always-moot point, the interpretative grid is strictly maintained: formal and structural innovation traceable to the drawing board. With very few exceptions, this produces both a powerful, coherent history (of modernist architecture as naturally responsive to social democracy) and a swathe of contradictions and lacunae, not least of which concerns the relationship of architectural practice to transformations in the building industry and developments in social democracy itself.[9] [fig. 1]

Edwin Williams

A figure such as Edwin Williams does not so much fall outside the stylistic umbrella as fall outside the story of British architecture's ever-changing weather entirely. Born in 1897, Williams was a student at the Liverpool School of Architecture in the early 1920s, the very particular training in architecture he received there complemented by a scholarship to the British School at Rome in 1928.[10] Williams moved to London and joined the LCC Architects' Department in the early 1930s. Regarded as professionally competent and well organised, but personally thin-skinned and caustic, Williams's rise through the ranks of the department reached a ceiling as a succession of younger, avowedly 'modernist' architects were appointed above him.[11] In the late 1930s, Williams applied for the position of Deputy Architect, but this was given to his colleague John Forshaw. Williams subsequently applied for the position of Architect to the Council; again, this was given to Forshaw. Yet again, in the 1940s, and despite high regard for Williams within the department, Robert Matthew (appointed as Architect to the Council) and then Leslie Martin (appointed as Deputy and later promoted to Architect) were brought in to the department from outside.[12]

With little evidence of any contribution to the advancement of modern architecture, Williams has been safely placed in the backroom of modern architecture's production throughout the twentieth century, dismissed with his Beaux Arts training. The implication (particularly in Glendinning's reading) is that if Williams was competent and a good manager,

Fig. 1: Royal Festival Hall architects – Peter Moro, Sir Leslie Martin, Sir Robert Matthew, and Edwin Williams (1948). Courtesy: RIBA Library Pictures.

he would never have been able to achieve the kind of *architectural* leadership within the department that either Matthew or Martin could and did.

This paper presents an argument that depends on pulling a figure like Williams – and the kind of work that he conducted – into historical relief. This is not to suggest that Williams can be shown to have produced any remarkable but previously unrecognised architecture of merit. The paucity of biographical material further mitigates against a fuller historical account of Williams as an individual.[13] Rather, and following Andrew Saint, the 'real subject' is not the individual authorship of certain architectural products, 'but a particular attitude of mind, an approach towards architecture'.[14] It is the roles that Williams undertook throughout his career, and the manner in which Williams conducted those roles, that contribute to our understanding and appreciation of fundamental concerns in the provision of architecture within the peculiar social democratic welfare state instituted in Britain. Crucially, Williams's career raises questions about the matrix of relations established between the profession (of architecture), the industry (of building) and various forms of state institution and agency (the LCC and central government) that emerged during and immediately following the Second World War.

The office of the architect to the council that Williams joined in the 1930s was probably one of the largest in the world, certainly the largest in Britain.[15] Services provided by the council's architect included the design of a wide range of building types, major civic buildings (such as County Hall) and regulative (weights and measures, gas meter testing stations, and coroner's courts), educational, health, emergency services (fire), and power services (electricity). The Architect's office superintended slum clearance, designed large-scale housing production and improvement works (paving, street realignment, bridges and parks). The office

sustained at least thirteen committees for construction works and thirty-three sub-committees.[16] This large body of work still remains underrepresented in architectural history.[17] Yet the origin of the role of the council's architect lies not in direct construction activity conducted by the LCC itself.

With its formation in 1889, the LCC inherited most of the functions of the former Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) – a non-democratic institution of governance that had fallen into disrepute.[18] The responsibilities of the architect to the MBW were therefore passed to the LCC, who appointed a 'superintending architect' for the purpose of oversight and regulation of metropolitan building. The later London Building Act of 1894 confirmed this role:

> The Council may for the purposes of aiding in the execution of this Act appoint some fit person to be called "the superintending architect of metropolitan buildings" together with such number of clerks as they think fit.[19]

As such, the first purpose of the council's architect was not to design or conduct architectural practice, but to regulate building production in London. Direct exercise of the London Building Act was continued by district surveyors operating at borough level (the county of London, instituted with the LCC, included forty–four districts), thus maintaining a balance of regulative control between boroughs and the new county-level authority: the LCC. Ultimate authority resided with the council's architect as the statutory official, but a district surveyor's powers were considerable, supervising on site all building works for their compliance with the Act and byelaws.[20] Whilst the office of the architect to the council was, then, engaged in the widest design activity imaginable, that office was also engaged in regulative practices for the whole of London's material reproduction. Uniquely, the architect's office at the LCC engaged in both of these activities.

Major E. G. G. Bax (1939–)
Coordinating Officer
(London Regional Headquarters)

F. R. Hiorns (1939–1940); J. Forshaw (1940–)
Officer-in-Charge
(LCC Architect's Department)

Mr W. H. Carey (1939–)
General Administration
(County Hall)

Mr Edwin Williams (1939–)
Team Training
(LCC Architect's Department)

5 'Group' Co-Ordinators
(LCC Architect's Department)

Assistant Deputies, Technical Staff, Office Staff
(LCC Architect's Department)

27 District Surveyors ' Local Officers in Charge'
(Metropolitan Boroughs)

'Rescue Parties'
(Contractors and Direct Labour)

Fig. 2: Organisational Chart of the Rescue and Recovery Service in 1941. Derived from LMA LCC/AR/WAR/1/30, 'Miscellaneous working papers used in preparation of history' (1945). Source: London Metropolitan Archives.

Although there has been some considerable historical reflection on the various ways in which progressive, moderate and Labour regimes of the LCC enacted metropolitan regulation, motivated by specific political and moral imperatives, little has been done to examine how professionals enacted these in their practice.[21] The following analysis contributes to such a history, and, in doing so, focuses on the central functions of the Architects' Department during the Second World War. It is in that period that the design work of the office was necessarily reduced, and the functions of planning and urban regulation and control came to the fore. It is also the period when Williams exercised some considerable influence by utilising the structural relationship between the LCC superintending architect and borough district surveyors, not for the purposes of regulating London's building, but for London's survival.

The Second World War and the role of the LCC Architects' Department

On 8 February 1939, with the threat of aerial bombardment looming, the Home Office contacted the Clerk of the Council to relay the Lord Privy Seal's decision that the LCC should assume responsibility for the organisation of 'demolition, shoring and rescue work'.[22] Although there was general recognition that the size and complexity of London's civil defence operations required close supervision and control by municipal authorities, a debate continued throughout the period regarding the extent to which oversight and ultimate authority should arrogate to officers of a central state civil service, to the LCC or to borough district surveyors.[23] The resulting structure appeared as a loose pyramid, with the LCC Architects' Department operating at a middle tier between central government and borough levels, who in turn liaised with private professionals and contractors.[24] [fig. 2]

Nine days after the announcement that the council would be responsible for rescue and recovery services in London, a conference was held to review the operational position.[25] There, the nature of the problem became clear. The Borough Engineer of Hampstead explained that

> as regards Hampstead an organisation might be said to be practically non-existent. Building firms in Hampstead were practically restricted to decorative work and they had neither the materials nor employed the type of men required for the work of demolition and rescue.[26]

Although certain borough engineers were slightly more optimistic, particularly in Holborn and Westminster, it became clear that the organisation of the Rescue Service would have to develop some way of generating manpower from a building 'industry' that had largely been absorbed into the war effort.[27]

The proposed Rescue Service faced two problems. First, how to integrate operatives from various building trades – and the ragged edge of the building industry in particular – with professional officers from the county and borough councils. Second, how to get that work force at all, given that they were in direct competition with the military for young, fit, able men. A growing concern developed over 'ill-discipline' in the service, ranging from petty theft to major theft of salvage, and absenteeism.

It was in response to these problems that five training schools were established. Training was, for the most part, provided through a system of lectures and practical exercises. These were delivered by members of the LCC Architects' Department and Engineers' Department, by invited specialists, and by military personnel from the armed forces.

The training programme and five schools

It was Williams who coordinated the schools and produced the council's *Notes on Training for Rescue Parties*, which became the model document for
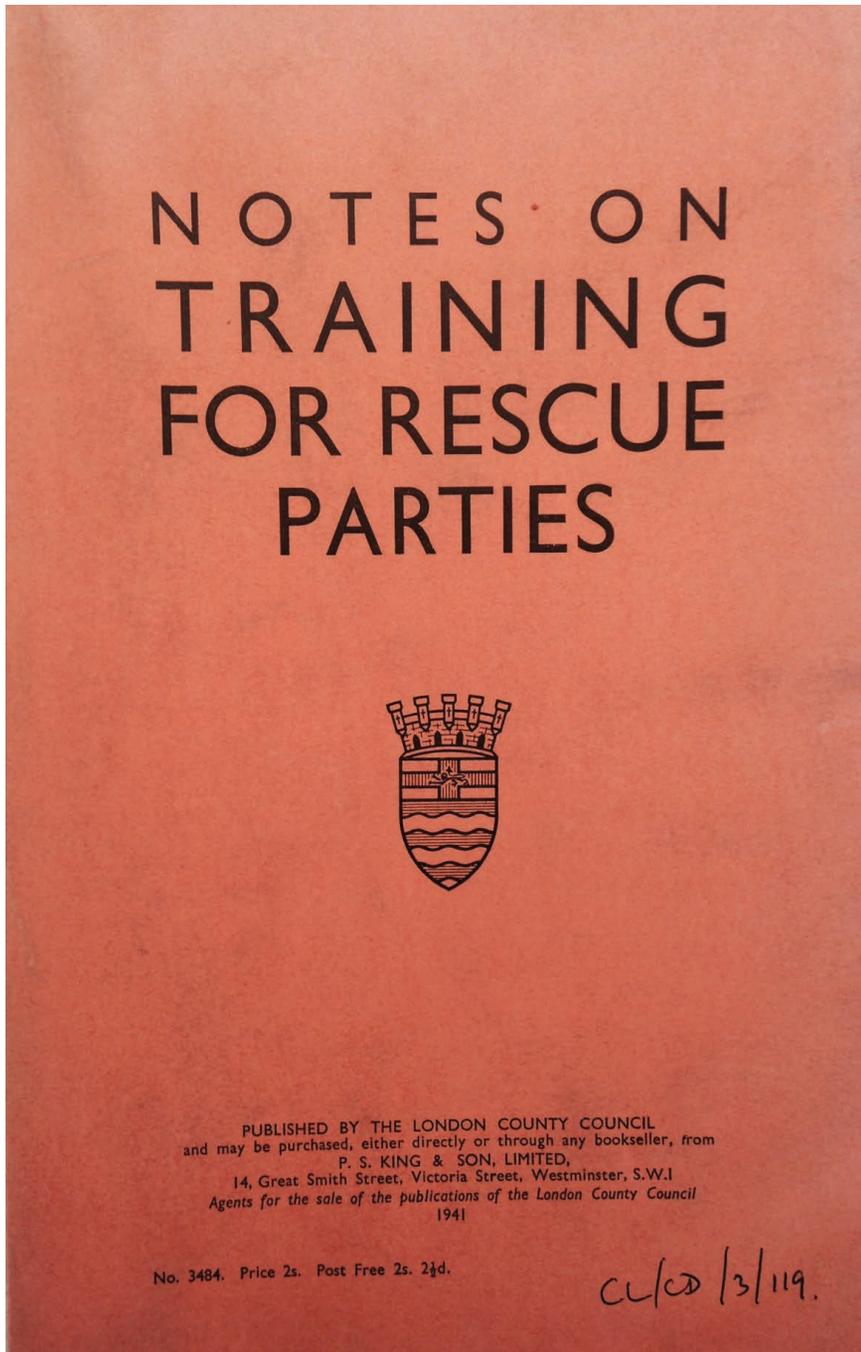
Fig. 3: Cover of London County Council, Notes on Training for Rescue Parties (London: LCC, 1941). Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives.

a national training programme.[28] [fig. 3] From this document and the memoranda on timetables distributed throughout the Rescue Service, a practical educational programme emerges that can be classified in five parts.[29]

Basic construction skills were complemented with recovery skills, such as how to move about in a structure that is unstable and/or on fire, and how to extract bodies, whether injured or lifeless. [fig. 4] Further training was provided by experts in basic bomb detection, management and disposal, as well as in the deployment of explosives for large-scale demolition works.

The organisation and utilisation of equipped lorries was soon supplemented by training in the deployment of heavy plant: mechanical derricks, cranes, and adapted trucks and tractors. Finally, basic instruction in domestic building structures was provided, as well as instruction in core demolition skills, following the 'upside down' or 'top-down' method of deconstruction. These five elements constituted the core of the training programme. They did not constitute training in a craft, nor a technical training, but rather, training in emergency operations. The programme provided a disparate and, in terms of skill, extremely uneven labour force with the most basic understanding of the material and structural qualities of simple buildings.

However, another aspect of the training that became increasingly pronounced was training in the discipline of Rescue Service parties. The early programmes and Williams's *Notes* include forms of training that not only introduced Rescue Service trainees to various skills and services, but also to constant structured exercises testing organisational activity on and off duty. These exercises were initially framed by Williams as necessary due to the peculiar nature of the work to be conducted by the Rescue Service groups; that is, the emphasis placed on 'improvisational discipline' under extreme conditions.

However, there was a progressive development toward a hierarchical structuring of activity and oversight, and of disciplinary programmes such as 'competitive' exercises, whereby operatives were organised into competing teams. Increasingly, the training of Rescue Service operatives moved from a concern with teamwork for the effective operation of equipment and rapid response, to 'teamwork' as a means to prevent and/or exorcise deviant behaviours.

In operation

> The indescribable mess at the incidents, piles of debris covered with a fog of dust and dirt through which the figures, by the light of flares or perhaps a blazing gas-main or a burning building, could be seen passing dimly, were reminiscent of pictures from Dante's Inferno. Daylight only brought a sense of devastation and desolation with a curious impression that buildings after all consisted merely of broken timbers, bricks and rubbish.[30]

As well as immediately attending to bomb-damaged sites – rescuing trapped people and recovering bodies – the service was responsible for recovering valuable items: salvageable material such as lead, timber, brick, iron and steel, ceramics, furniture, textiles, food and water.

The result of salvage operations was the development of a number of distribution networks in the form of salvage stores in government warehouses and hard core dumps in London's parks (and the use of hard core as ballast in shipping to North America). Furniture found its way to a number of markets. Foodstuffs recovered from bomb-damaged sites were immediately distributed through the Health Service. Later, firebombing caused considerable
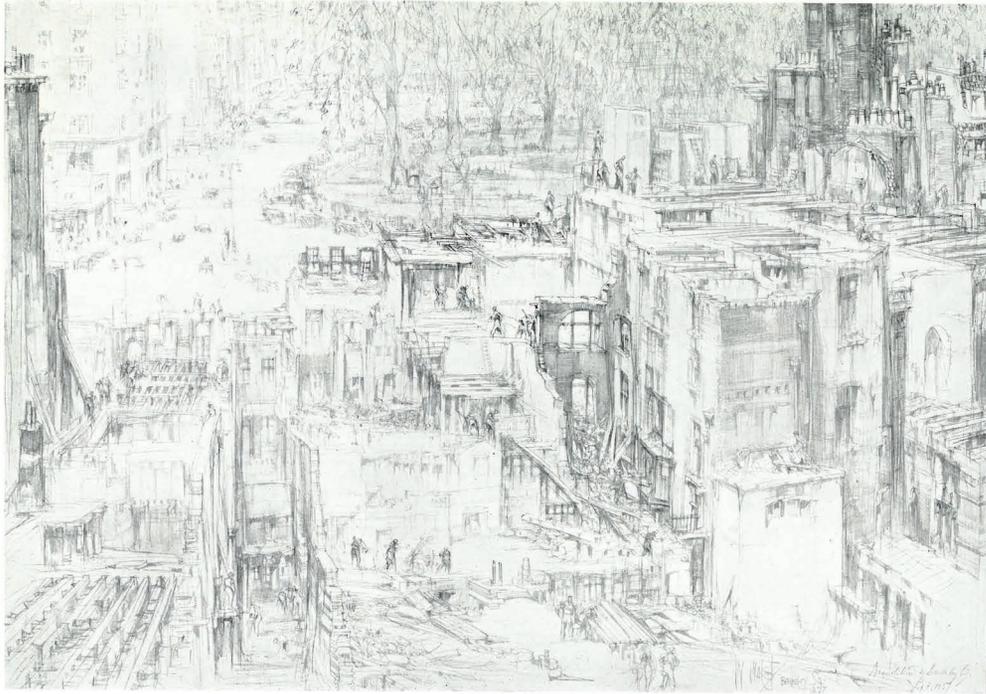
Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 4: Rescue Service Operatives in Training, 1941. LMA LCC/AR/WAR/1/30, 71920. Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives.

Fig. 5: Ministry of Information Photo Division. Reconstruction of 'An Incident': Civil Defence training in Fulham, London, 1942. Courtesy: Imperial War Museum.

Fig. 6: Rescue Service Officers in Training, 1941. LMA LCC/AR/WAR/1/30, 72010. Courtesy: London Metropolitan Archives.

1937

CHANGING LONDON

William Walcot

1941

1937—Transition in peace, showing the demolition of properties in Berkeley Square.

1941—Transition in war; the aftermath of air bombardment, demolition and the removal of danger and debris.

Plate LVIII, facing page 153

Fig. 7: Final plate in Patrick Abercrombie and J.H. Forshaw, County of London Plan (London: HMSO, 1943), Plate LVIII, facing page 153.

problems, particularly in London's docklands, with the Rescue Service managing lakes of molten cheese clogging up docks, and the burnt shells of warehouses barely holding mountains of poisonous tobacco dust (resolved through collection and distribution to the agro-industry as a pesticide). Finally, the Rescue Service provided support for emergency medical and mortuary services.

In the historical accounts of these operations, whether first-hand or in subsequent histories, there are two distinct but, I think, related elements that recur: the first affective, the second epistemological. First, in descriptions of the service the *figure* of the rescue operative is always 'a part of', 'continuous with', or 'hidden within' changing or indeterminate matter (fire, smoke, rubble, etc.). The operative emerges from or recedes into a traumatic material landscape. Not without the caveat that they offer hope, these figures *are* the human dimension of a built environment in transformation. And they disappear with it. [fig. 5]

At the same time, the basis of the history of the service resides in the notebooks of the district surveyors, the statistical tables produced at the LCC, and the memos of instruction issuing from the same, which establish, maintain and police distribution networks. Accounts of the service are essentially accounts of how to quantify and analyse newly 'released' material, how to redistribute the building fabric, how to establish networks for such distribution and how to police them. And this includes populations: from the workers within the service who would later perform the first stages of reconstruction, to the urban population that was identified, measured, allocated to, and relocated from the built environment.

The role of the architect in the Rescue and Recovery Service was to maintain an overview and structure for these two levels, or systems, in play. On the one hand, training, disciplining and instructing

the operatives not only in the management of direct material conditions but also in the emotional circumstances of those conditions. This was achieved within the training schools. At another level, administering and controlling the distribution of materials and populations in London was achieved through the compilation of statistical tables and maps.

Post-Second World War
It is clear that Williams, acting in a role that bridged the work of the LCC Architects' Department and the borough district surveyors, contributed to the formalisation and technical development of the demolition industry. Prior to 1939, demolition was strictly a 'craft' industry relying on a transient work force using traditional methods and equipment of deconstruction.[31] By 1943, those contractors employed in the service had formed the National Federation of Demolition Contractors and, with pressure from the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives, entered into annual agreements through a Demolition Wages Board.[32]

Municipal architects became intimate with and operated the very technical, mechanical and organisational means by which London would be transformed. The same contractors and workers who, at the beginning of the reconstruction process, employed a mixed technical production programme of skilled work and heavy plant, had been trained by the architects and district surveyors who instructed them as the destruction of the blitz progressed. This is reflected at the very moment of transformation (1943) in the last plate of the *County of London Plan.* [fig. 7] The drawing by William Walcot (top of fig. 7) shows an earlier method of demolition in operation at Berkley Square in the 1930s, the scene filled with demolition workers using hand tools to demolish buildings. In the contrasting photograph (bottom of fig. 7) from the 1940s, the new demolition contractor is shown at work using a mechanical derrick fitted with a wrecking ball, and very few workers are visible at all.

Fig. 8: Nigel Henderson. Photograph showing three unidentified men next to a badly damaged building. Date unknown. © Nigel Henderson Estate. Courtesy: Tate Archive.

At another level, Williams continued to utilise the 'improvisational discipline' concept. In a 1962 article for the *RIBA Journal*, Williams sets out his position on the appropriate nature of professional practice in the commercial production of building and its control. In the face of the reshaping of London's municipal government (from the LCC to the Greater London Council), Williams warns against the absorption of building control into a national (and therefore Whitehall controlled) framework.[33]

> Building history in London shows that the real problem lies not in the production of high technical standards, but in the formation of practical laws, which must cater for flexibility to meet individual problems, diverse types of building, and technical ingenuity. Laws are required which can speedily and authoritatively be enforced when necessary.
>
> As a result there has evolved in London the office of the Superintending Architect of Metropolitan Buildings, vested with certain statutory responsibilities, who advises the Building Act Authority on the exercise of its powers, together with the system of district surveyors spread over the county area, and entrusted with the administration and enforcement of constructional standards. They also have a certain measure of autonomy.[34]

Williams argues that attempts to construct a set of totalising standards to which building activity would have to submit is both admirable and dangerous. Opposing this technocratic and centralising organisation of building control, Williams argues for the extension of the 'building control officer's' powers. Citing the specific, contingent and concrete nature of building production, Williams contrasts conformity to technical abstraction with submission to professional judgement. The position is argued on pragmatic, commercial, and political grounds: speed, flexibility and redress.

In countering the arrogation of powers from municipal to state authority, in doing so on the basis that such a position protects individual liberty and the commercial imperative, and in defending the status of professional expertise as the exercise of judgement rather than accession to technical abstract knowledge, Williams's statement on building control encapsulates a liberal and empiricist attitude in modern architecture and its conception of social democratic provision.[35]

Post-Second World War: aesthetics and affectivity

Histories of post-war reconstruction in Britain, and particularly architectural histories, are not blind to the effects of empiricism. However, the 'empiricism' operating in architecture identified in the history of Williams's work at the LCC targets quite a different discursive formation than that identified by the 'New Empiricist' style, famously coined by Eric de Maré in the pages of the *Architectural Review*.[36] 'New Empiricism', proposed as a potential import from Sweden to Britain, was always understood as a refusal of the 'International Style' and the promotion of a regional architecture. 'New Empiricism' has always been a muddle of liberal pragmatism on the one hand, and, on the other, a reactionary socialism, rooted in the image of the arts and crafts if not in the tradition.[37]

One could try to crowbar Williams's work into such a stylistic category. His training in the Liverpool School of the 1920s and his time at the British School in Rome suggests a classicism anathema to 'New Empiricism'. But still, the complex relation between American Beaux Arts and late British arts and crafts embodied in the Liverpool School – in both practical and ideological terms – leaves that option open.[38]

But I think there is value in introducing a new schematic for empiricism in the architecture of the period, since it points to a potentially different periodisation of architectural development. Rather

than rely on an account of architecture as a succession of products – whether these are conceived or interpreted rhetorically, aesthetically or ideologically – we can consider architectural development in terms of disciplinary formations and procedures, and processes of production. Williams's work then becomes part of a longer development of a form of architectural practice that seeks to foster and marshal individual judgement to corporate ends. It also begins to blur the boundaries drawn between architectural practitioners on stylistic grounds.

In particular, whilst Williams's work at the LCC rarely touched aesthetic questions of architecture in the formal sense, his work re-engages us with the many issues that revolved around rhetorical and aesthetic attempts in architecture to suture, elide or recall the traumas of the blitzed city through the 1950s.[39] In conclusion, I only wish to suggest that the ambiguities of reconstruction, the politics of memory, and the trauma of a built environment that is required to both recall and be forgotten – which resides in works such as, and only for example, the photographs of Nigel Henderson – are only heightened at a different register when we examine the disciplinary practices of urban reproduction through the Rescue Service and later demolition practices of reconstruction. [fig. 8]

The parallel production of the affective figures – the Rescue Service operatives who must at once appear and disappear (recover and demolish), and the population figures of municipal authority, which enable planning, redistribution and policing of the built environment – suggest a tension that resonates throughout both the practice of welfare state politics and the arts of the same period. What distinguishes them, of course, is that Williams attempted to generate, in conditions of total war, a set of effective operations and instruments for *managing* the affective conditions of destruction, whereas Henderson was attempting to refine an aesthetics of the same.

Notes

1. See, for example, Barry Curtis, '"One Continuous Interwoven Story" (The Festival of Britain),' *BLOCK* 11 (1985/6): 48–52; and Adrian Forty, 'Being or Nothingness: Private Experience and Public Architecture in Post-War Britain', *Architectural History* 38 (1995): 25–35.

2. For examples of particular housing and educational types, see Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Stefan Muthesius, *The Post-War University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

3. Forty, 'Being or Nothingness'.

4. Adrian Forty, 'Festival Politics', in *A Tonic to the Nation: The Festival of Britain 1951*, eds. Mary Banham and Bevis Hillier (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976), 26–38.

5. Miles Glendinning, 'Teamwork or Masterwork? The Design and Reception of the Royal Festival Hall', *Architectural History* 46 (2003): 277–83.

6. Glendinning, 'Teamwork or Masterwork?', 284.

7. See, for example, Trevor Dannatt ed., *Modern Architecture in Britain* (London: Batsford, 1959); Lionel Esher, *A Broken Wave: The Rebuilding of England, 1940–1980* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 1981); John R. Gold, *The Experience of Modernism: Modern Architects and the Future City, 1928–1953* (London: E&FN Spon, 1997); John R. Gold, *The Practice of Modernism: Modern Architecture and Urban Transformation, 1954–1972* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007); and even John Summerson, *Ten Years of British Architecture, '45–'55: An Arts Council Exhibition, 1956* (London: Arts Council, 1956).

8. Anthony Jackson, 'The Politics of Architecture: English Architecture 1929–1951', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 24, no. 1 (March 1965): 97–107; and Anthony Jackson, *The Politics of Architecture: A History of Modern Architecture in Britain* (London: Architectural Press, 1970).

9. Work such as Nicholas Bullock's account of reconstruction, Mark Swenarton's on the Building Research Station and, more recently, Christine Wall's on the experience of building workers during the

mid-twentieth century begins to redress this imbalance. See Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2002); Mark Swenarton, *Building the New Jerusalem: Architecture, Housing and Politics, 1900–1930* (Bracknell: IHS BRE Press, 2008); and, Christine Wall, *An Architecture of Parts: Architects, Building Workers and Industrialisation in Britain, 1940–1970* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

10. RIBA, *RIBA Kalendar 1928–1929* (London: RIBA), 264 and 626.

11. See Nicholas Merthyr Day, 'The Role of the Architect in Post-War State Housing: A Case Study of the Housing Work of the London County Council 1939–1945' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1988), 358, no. 31.

12. London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), LCC/MIN/6481, presented papers, General Purposes Committee Minutes, June–July, 1939; LMA, LCC/MIN/6483, presented papers, General Purposes Committee minutes, May–July, 1946; and, LMA, LCC/MIN/6487, presented papers, General Purposes Committee minutes, April–July 1947.

13. The *Dictionary of Scottish Architects* lists Edwin Williams but provides little information, accessed 21 July 2015, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=205350. The brief reference to Williams in James Curl and Susan Wilson, *The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), suggests birth and death dates of 1896–1976. It is possible that his biography is confused with that of his contemporary, Edwin Herbert Horsley Williams ('Willie') b. 1895, d. 1976, http://www.scottish,architects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=403477.

14. Andrew Saint, *Towards a Social Architecture: The Role of School Building in Post-War England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), viii.

15. Comparative data on the size of architectural practices are not currently available for British practices in the 1930s. Later data (1950s) can be found in *RIBA, The Architect and His Office* (London: RIBA, 1962).

16. London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), London County Council (LCC) Architect's Department: Organisational, Financial and General, LCC/AR/GEN; and, Gwilym Gibbon and Reginald Bell, *History of the London County Council, 1889–1939* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 471.

17. Housing has attracted the most attention. For an overview of LCC housing prior to the First World War, see Susan Beattie, *A Revolution in London Housing: LCC Housing Architects and Their Work, 1893–1914* (London: GLC, 1980).

18. See David Owen, *The Government of Victorian London, 1855–1889: The Metropolitan Board of Works, the Vestries, and the City Corporation* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982), for an account of the Metropolitan Board of Works that resists its reputation as Board of 'Words' and 'Perks'.

19. *The London Building Act, 1894* (London: LCC, 1901), §136, 113.

20. Gibbon and Bell, *History of the London County Council*, 520–7.

21. See, for example, John Davis, 'London Government 1850–1920: The Metropolitan Board of Works and the London County Council', in *The London Journal* 26, no. 1 (2001): 47–56; *The Politics and the People of London: The London County Council, 1889–1965*, ed. Andrew Saint (London: Hambledon Press, 1989); and Ken Young and Patricia L. Garside, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change, 1837–1981* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982).

22. Letter to Clerk from Hughes-Gibb, 8th February 1939, 128/3, cited in London Metropolitan Archive (LMA), LCC/AR/WAR/1/29 'War History of the Architect's Department: 1939–1945', 6.

23. Details of the structure and consequences of this period of London governance are given in Robin Woolven, 'The London Experience of Regional Governance 1938–1945', *London Journal* 25, no. 2 (2000): 59–78; and Robin Woolven, 'Between Destruction and Reconstruction: London's Debris Clearance and Repair Organisation 1939–1945', in *The Blitz and Its Legacy: Wartime Destruction to Post-War Reconstruction,* eds. Mark Clapson and

Peter J. Larkham (London: Ashgate, 2013), 61–72.

24. LMA LCC/CL/CD/3/119, Edwin Williams, *Notes on Training for Rescue Parties* (London: LCC, 1941), 'Preface' and page 9.

25. LMA, LCC/CE/WAR/1/005, 'Air Raid Precautions. Demolition Rescue Parties'. 'Notes of conference with representatives of metropolitan town clerks and metropolitan borough engineers on the question of the organisation of rescue and demolition parties', 17 February 1939.

26. Ibid.

27. A rather gruff account from the district surveyors' perspective of manpower inadequacies is provided in C. C. Knowles and P. H. Pitt, *The History of Building Regulation in London, 1189–1972, with an account of the District Surveyors' Association* (London: Architectural Press, 1972), 118–19.

28. LMA, LCC/AR/WAR/1/29 'War History of the Architect's Department: 1939–1945'.

29. LMA, LCC/CL/CD/3/119, Edwin Williams, *Notes on Training for Rescue Parties* (London: LCC, 1941).

30. Knowles and Pitt, *The History of Building Regulation in London*, 121.

31. Colin Topliss, *Demolition* (London: Construction Press, 1982), 1–2.

32. For a fuller account of this process and issues raised by it regarding 'skill' and 'knowledge' in the demolition process, see Nick Beech, 'Demolition Figures: The Appearance and Expression of the Topman and Mattockman in LCC Contracts, 1941–1951', *Architectural Research Quarterly*, 16, no. 3 (September 2012): 245–252. On the history of the National Federation of Demolition Contractors, see Mark Anthony, *Seven Decades of Strength: The History of the National Federation of Demolition Contractors* (Hemel Hempstead: Demolition Publications, 2011).

33. Edwin Williams, 'Building Control in Greater London: Dogmatic Standards versus Professional Judgement', *RIBA Journal*, 69, no. 3 (March 1962): 84–85.

34. Ibid., 84.

35. A. J. Ley, *A History of Building Control in England and Wales, 1840–1990* (Coventry: RICS, 2000), 143.

36. See Anon. 'The New Empiricism: Sweden's Latest Style', *Architectural Review*, vol. 101 (June 1947): 199–207; and, Eric de Maré, 'The New Empiricism: The Antecedents and Origins of Sweden's Latest Style', *Architectural Review*, vol. 103 (1948): 9–10.

37. Reyner Banham's recollection of Jim Stirling's exclamation – 'William Morris was a Swede!' – encapsulates a great deal of 'New Empiricism'. See Reyner Banham, 'Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics, 1945–1965', in *Concerning Architecture: Essay on Architectural Writers and Writing Presented to Nikolaus Pevsner*, ed. John Summerson (London: Allen Lane, 1968), 266.

38. Christopher Crouch, *Design Culture in Liverpool, 1880–1914: The Origins of the Liverpool School of Architecture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002); and Saint, *Towards a Social Architecture*, 5.

39. On the effect of the blitz on British culture and particularly modernism, see Leo Mellor, *Reading the Ruins: Modernism, Bombsites and British Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Biography

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