

## PLANNING IN RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: THE CASE OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

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*Urban terrorism and the physical damage it can cause are issues of growing concern for cities. Both the nature of the rapid action engendered by a major terrorist act and the longer-term more strategic response to the need for redevelopment can be improved by trying to learn from the experiences of cities which have already been in this position. This paper tells the story of the planning and related responses to the explosion of a terrorist bomb in the City Centre of Manchester, England, in June 1996, which in insurance liability terms was reportedly the world's worst man-made disaster of that year. It focuses on the strategic planning approaches adopted and the key decisions taken in the nine month period immediately following the bomb, which is arguably the period which determines the shape of the remainder of the recovery process by virtue of these decisions.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Urban terrorism seems increasingly to be part of the life of cities in many parts of the world, some of which (such as the United States of America) have had until very recently no history of this kind of experience whatsoever. Understandably, when attacks of this kind occur, immediate media attention tends to focus on the loss of human life that is sometimes involved and on the extent of personal injury experienced, with issues arising from the damages to property that are usually a consequence of an act of urban terrorism being relegated to a lower order of importance. Nevertheless, extensive property damage can often have in its own way a very profound effect on the immediate and the longer-term fortunes of a city.

It typically triggers both an immediate need to respond to the particular physical circumstances that are the aftermath of a terrorist event and a longer-term and more strategic need to tackle the redevelopment problems and opportunities that have arisen. In the belief that experiences of this kind ought to be written about when they occur so that others can learn from them, this paper tells the story of the response in Manchester, England, to the devastation of a major part of the City Centre by a terrorist bomb on 15 June 1996.

The focus of the paper is on the stances adopted and the key decisions taken during the nine months that immediately followed the bomb, because it is clear that what was done in this period (or at any rate, what key participants felt needed to be done) quite fundamentally shaped the nature of the recovery process for subsequent years. The approach adopted is to try to describe the issues that were faced during this period and the approaches that were adopted in tackling them from a contemporary perspective (i.e., as they were seen at that time) rather than with the benefit of hindsight. Although commentary is offered on some lessons that might be learned from the Manchester experience, this is not presented primarily as a normative paper but as a case study of how one city faced up to a catastrophic event. There is a time for more critical *post hoc* evaluation when the processes described herein have unfolded over a longer period, but it is important in carrying out exercises of this kind that sight is not lost of the fact that a situation of this nature requires a large number of actions to be taken quickly, within the framework of the perceptions and values held by the people charged with carrying out these functions. That is the primary purpose of this paper.

For these purposes, the paper is in five sections. The first looks at the literature that is available about these sorts of events, and at the information sources used for this case study. The second sets the context by explaining what happened and the significance of its timing. The third section outlines what the immediate consequences of the explosion were in terms of the nature and scale of the damage it caused. The fourth section looks at the major issues for the city that have arisen as a result, and the approaches that have been adopted in tackling them. The final section tries to draw some conclusions from this experience in terms of the general lessons that might be of relevance to other cities which unfortunately find themselves in similar situations, whatever their causes.

## LITERATURE AND METHODS

In the broadest sense, there is a growing literature about disasters of various kinds (see, for example, Kreps, 1989; Schneider, 1995; Steele, 1996). There is also some reflective material on the experiences of and processes involved in rebuilding European cities after war damage (Diefendorf, 1990). Similarly, there is a literature about safety in public places which, in Britain at any rate, has been evolving as this has been seen to be an issue of growing public and political importance (Pettersson in Coupland, 1997:179-202; Oc and Tiesdell, 1997). More generally, there is also material about the reconfiguration of urban streets for public use where safety is one of several factors involved (Moudon, 1991). This present author has not been able to find any English-language example, however, of a case study which looks at what actually happens in the immediate aftermath of the sudden devastation of a large part of a city in terms of how the planning process addressed such an issue. Thus there appears to be no directly comparable literature which can be used to compare and contrast

with the material presented in this case study of Manchester. The approach that has been adopted as a consequence is the wholly empirical one of reporting what happened and then commenting upon that.

There are basically four sources for the material that constitutes the remainder of this paper:

- Information made publicly available by Manchester City Council, together with unpublished information from this same source.
- The extensive coverage of the event and its aftermath in the *Manchester Evening News* (particularly) and in other local and national media.
- The personal knowledge of the author, deriving from his long involvement as a professional planner in the area as Manchester's Planning Director until less than a year before the bomb, and as the chief officer responsible for the city's Emergency Plan which was triggered as a consequence of the explosion. There is an important sense in which this is an "insider" account and not the views of an external observer.
- A series of conversations on a non-attributable basis with people directly involved in the processes described below.

In addition, a draft of the text was checked for factual accuracy by a member of the City Planning Department's team that is dealing with the bomb-damaged area, although comment on the validity of the opinions expressed was not sought; these remain the responsibility of the author.

A particular difficulty with a focus on the immediate aftermath of the Manchester bomb (in this case, a period of about nine months) is that almost by definition only a relatively small amount of formally published information became available during that period. The process got on with doing what needed to be done, rather than (for the most part) with publishing formal documents about it. As a consequence, the narrative that follows has had to be pieced together from the range of sources listed above, rather than being able to rely on a set of key documents. Sources should be taken to be the combination noted above unless they are individually cited.

## CONTEXT

The bomb attributed to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) which exploded in Manchester City Centre at just after 11:00 am on 15 June 1996 was the largest peacetime bomb (of reportedly 3,300 lbs) ever detonated in mainland Britain. The day concerned was a Saturday, which in British cities is usually the busiest shopping day of the week, and the location chosen was a few yards north of what is normally regarded as the prime retail location in Manchester (the Market Street, Cross Street junction on the diagram). Generally speaking, British City Centres, unlike many North American downtowns, have not lost most of their retail trade to out-of-town and edge-of-town centres, and Manchester City Centre at the time of the bomb was in fact the biggest shopping centre in northwest England. More generally, Manchester City Centre had been going through something of a renaissance in recent years (Kitchen, 1997), of which retailing had been a significant component.

Over and above this, Manchester at the time was full of overseas visitors because it was one of the venues for the European Nations Soccer Championships being hosted by England in June 1996. To put some sort of perspective to this, the *Manchester Evening News* reported a survey of Manchester hotels over the period of the European Soccer Championships which showed that they experienced a 57% rise in room revenues and a 38% increase in food and drink sales as compared with this same period twelve months previously. This timing, involving the combination of a peak shopping day and an upsurge of overseas visitors, confirms the impression that the planting of the bomb was an act deliberately designed to cause maximum disruption.

### IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

There were approximately 220 casualties reported as a result of the bomb, although no one was killed. This latter statistic may be in part because something like 75 minutes in advance, a coded warning was given of the imminent explosion of a bomb, and police as a consequence had time to find it (but not to disarm it) and to attempt to clear people away from the danger area. There was a small amount of subsequent criticism of this police operation because of the scale of the casualty figures, but the clear impression from comments made in the local press was that its success contributed significantly to the avoidance of deaths during the incident. It may be relevant to note that the efficiency of the police operation was undoubtedly improved through the lessons learned from having to deal with a much smaller-scale terrorist bomb incident in a less crowded part of Manchester City Centre in December 1992.

Over 670 businesses were displaced from their existing premises as a consequence of the damage caused by the bomb; the major area from which this occurred is shown hatched on

FIGURE 1. The administrative and commercial core of Manchester City Centre in relation to the IRA bomb.

FIGURE 2. Corporation Street looking south from its junction with Withy Grove. This was the major through road where the bomb was planted, and much of it remained closed throughout 1997.

FIGURE 3. Victorian buildings to the west of Corporation Street lost most of their windows, and the area was still cordoned off from public access for safety reasons a week after the bomb.

the diagram. In addition, the 100 or so residents of a housing area which sits on top of the Arndale Centre (also shown on the diagram) were displaced into temporary accommodation. In total, some 49,000 square metres (525,000 square feet) of retail floorspace were destroyed or badly damaged, and the equivalent figure for office floorspace was 57,000 square metres (610,000 square feet). This area had to be made safe immediately, and this in practice meant that a sizeable part of the City Centre, including one of its major through streets, was fenced-off to prevent public access. Whilst this fenced-off area was progressively reduced in the ensuing months, its core area immediately surrounding the location of the bomb including a section of the through street remained closed throughout 1997, which significantly reduced the permeability of this part of the City Centre both for pedestrians and for road traffic. The photographs, which were taken one week after the bomb, show respectively the main through street which was closed, the damage to substantial buildings on the edge of the worst affected area, and the effect on a small business just beyond this area.

These figures for destroyed or damaged floorspace are very large by any test, and the potentially adverse consequences for the city's economy are immediately apparent from the sheer scale of them. To try to put this into perspective, there are roughly 100,000 jobs in the City Centre, which is a much larger area than the administrative and commercial core shown on the diagram. At conventional floorspace per job conversion factors for office and retail activities, this area of damaged floorspace would have been home to of the order of 10% of the total number of jobs located in the City Centre. Manchester City Council estimates suggest that a very high proportion of these jobs were disrupted by the bomb, and for variable periods of time, but only a small proportion of them were expected to disappear altogether as a result.

## **MAJOR ISSUES**

This section of the paper looks at six major issues, and discusses both the issues that arose and the responses in Manchester to them in the first weeks and months after the bomb. These six are:

FIGURE 4. Some small businesses on the western side of Deansgate beyond the worst affected area nevertheless lost their windows, but carried on regardless.

- security and safety
- immediate problems for businesses and residents
- financial issues
- redevelopment issues
- long-term confidence
- the nature of the planning framework

As far as security and safety were concerned, the primary need was to deal with the immediate public safety issues having to do with the risk of injury arising from building collapses or people accessing dangerous sites without permission, for example in order to loot. This was a resource-consuming process in itself. Once this had been dealt with, the key question was the balance to be struck between physical actions designed to make the City Centre more secure and the desire to ensure that such actions were not counter-productive. Put simply, is a secure City Centre worth having if people feel that the measures that have achieved that level of security have also destroyed many of the qualities of the place that they liked and that caused them to visit? Equally, is a very high quality City Centre environment worth having if people do not feel safe in it and therefore do not make very much use of it? There are clearly tensions between the various components of these questions, and thus the precise balance to be struck is neither an easy nor necessarily a very obvious one. The approach adopted in Manchester was to reject the "ring of steel" philosophy that had been decided upon in response to a previous IRA bomb in part of London's Docklands, which accentuated security perspectives. Instead, the philosophy adopted emphasised low-key measures such as more extensive coverage by closed circuit television (cctv), which helped people to feel safe but which did not have such an adverse effect on their perceptions of the qualities of the City Centre. There has been a major drive in Britain in recent years, with government funding in some cases, to promote the use of cctv in public places for public safety reasons with little apparent public opposition (Oc and Tiesdell, 1997:130-142), so the approach in Manchester was consistent with this thinking.

The main immediate problems for businesses, and particularly for small businesses, were to do with securing their survival. Many small businesses operate on the basis that they need to trade today to provide resources to do business tomorrow. They do not have significant reserves to fall back on for any extensive period of time if trading becomes impossible, and cash-flow problems will very quickly materialise, especially if the legal liability for some overheads (such as floorspace rental) remains. The absence of adequate insurance coverage in many cases (see below) exacerbates these difficulties. In these circumstances, the main need for those businesses whose floorspace had been destroyed or badly damaged was to identify alternative premises from which they could restart trading as quickly as possible. The City Council had a major role to play in this, both in helping to identify alternative premises and in providing financial assistance in some cases. It was helpful in these terms that the City Planning Department had maintained over many years a good quality information base about land and property availability (Manchester City Council, 1994). It was also fortunate that the built form of many of the City Centre's more peripheral areas consisted of quite large, often Victorian or Edwardian, buildings which were often under-occupied on the upper floors, so that there was a ready supply of relatively cheap alternative floorspace within half a mile or so of most affected locations. Of the 670 businesses displaced by the bomb, the City Council's estimate four months after the event was that just over 600 (about 90%) had been at least temporarily relocated elsewhere.

To put this issue of temporary relocation into perspective, Manchester City Council information in respect to the retail businesses located in an area slightly larger than the "worst affected" area shown on the diagram (which, of course was not solely a retail area) shows that by about three months after the bomb:

- 52% had returned to their original locations and recommenced trading or had never had to move from those locations;
- 24% had recommenced trading on sites elsewhere in the City Centre, about one-quarter of which were in this "worst affected" area and three-quarters elsewhere in the City Centre;
- 1% were operating solely as mail order businesses; and
- 23% had not recommenced trading. This last group in particular probably contains a relatively small number of retail businesses which may be permanently lost to the city.

In some sense, the problems for larger businesses affected by something like this are not as extreme as those of smaller businesses. They do not tend to live quite such a "hand to mouth" existence, for example, and they may well have significant reserves that can tide them over a difficult patch rather than having to rely on the cash generated by yesterday's trading activities. They may also be part of large organisations, and the immediate economic difficulties caused by something like an act of urban terrorism can therefore be spread across those organisations. On the other hand, they may well not have the locational flexibility of much smaller organisations, and it is also likely that the number of alternative premises immediately available for consideration of relocation opportunities will be much less for large businesses than for small businesses. These considerations played a role in the temporary relocation of Mark and Spencer's department store (a flagship retailing activity in British shopping centres), which had been destroyed by the explosion as the van containing the bomb was parked more or less outside it. The store was temporarily relocated into two premises, one of which shared parts of a building previously under-occupied by Lewis's (a competitor department store in the City Centre, which undoubtedly gained a trading advantage for itself on the back of having Mark and Spencer as co-occupier), with another part of the business going to free-standing premises nearby. This whole process, including identifying the opportunity and fitting out the available space, took approximately four and a half months; and this was regarded as a very significant landmark in the process of returning to normality because it enabled a major retailing name to recommence business quickly.

The most immediate financial problem for businesses directly affected by the bomb was that, in a high proportion of cases, insurance coverage was simply inadequate to meet the costs of the repair or replacement of bomb-damaged property. A Manchester City Council survey tentatively estimated that one in five affected businesses had no insurance and a further one in three were only partly covered by their insurers. The total insurance cost of the damage caused was reported in the British

financial press in March 1997 as being £422 million (about \$655 million), according to a Swiss reinsurance source that had carried out a worldwide survey of damage claims. This made it the world's most expensive man-made disaster of 1996 in insurance terms, but because of the problem of under-insurance it is clear that this figure is in turn well below the true cost of the full treatment of all the damage.

The other main financial problems faced by businesses were the loss of stock and the absence of cash-flow arising from the inability to trade for a period of time. The seriousness of these problems would have varied considerably from business to business.

Taken together, these problems gave rise to the need for financial assistance to be made available at relatively short notice if businesses in this situation were to have any chance of survival. In practice, because Britain has no real equivalent of the American concept of the declaration of a Federal Disaster Area, this either meant financial assistance from the City Council and/or public contributions. This was channelled through the Lord Mayor's Fund, which was opened for both public and private donations to be made more or less immediately after the bomb. After four months the Fund had given over £1 million (about \$2.325 million) to businesses to help them relocate. A typical check size was in the range £3,000 - £5,000 (about \$4,650 - \$7,750), which would not cover the full cost of most relocations but which was certainly a useful contribution to them.

The public expenditure implications were also significant. The City Council spent over £4 million (\$6.2 million) on coping with the immediate physical aftermath of the bomb, which of course had not been provided for in the City Council's 1996-97 revenue budget but which had to be incurred as a matter of urgency. This process was guided by the City Council's Emergency Plan, which was triggered by the events of 15 June 1996. A further quite large amount of unbudgeted public expenditure was necessarily incurred by the Greater Manchester Police. In turn, the capital costs of the redevelopment process over the next few years would inevitably be very many times greater than the amounts involved in the emergency revenue expenditure by the City Council and the Greater Manchester Police. Financial matters on this scale are difficult to resolve quickly, although speed is clearly one of the requirements of the situation. The greatest problems were in terms of the contribution which, it was argued by the City Council, should be made by the government. This came via a series of announcements over a period of virtually eight months. By the date of the final announcement in this series (10 February 1997), just over £67 million (\$104 million) had been committed by the government from various sources. At the time of that announcement, private sector contributions to the redevelopment process were reported as amounting to at least £345 million (\$535 million), or approximately five times the public contribution.

The redevelopment process presents both opportunities and problems. The opportunities in this case arose as a result of the chance to replace in whole or in part some of Manchester's least-loved modern buildings (such as the Arndale shopping complex) much earlier than would have been the case in the normal course of events, and to do so to a better standard. The problems were, in a sense, the other side of this coin. A city which has had much of its commercial heart badly damaged at one point in time needs from an economic perspective to get that damage repaired and to get itself back on its feet again as quickly as possible. To pursue a redevelopment process that actually does more than is strictly necessary to repair this damage, but that takes more time and costs more money as a consequence, is thus to trade off the possibility of achieving longer-term qualitative gains against the certainty of a perpetuation of the economic problems caused by the bomb.

In this context, it was helpful that the approach adopted in Manchester very quickly after the events of 15 June 1996 was to establish a new organisation, Manchester Millennium, to spearhead the response, although the City Council retained its statutory powers such as those of controlling development. This was a public-private body, the board of which was chaired by a leading member of the regional and national property development industry and the executive of which was led by the City Council's Deputy Chief Executive on a seconded basis. The basis for this initiative can be found in the history of the growth of public-private partnerships as regeneration vehicles in Manchester in

recent years (Peck and Tickell, 1995; Kitchen, 1997). The existence of this cross-sectoral and purpose-constructed agency provided a ready vehicle for quick discussions between key players about the stance to be adopted in deciding on a response to the damage caused by the bomb, and attitudes agreed in those discussions in turn became the elements of a common stance in negotiations with the Government. This also meant that there was likely to be some continuity in the decision-making process, because Manchester Millennium was intended to take a lead not merely in shaping the response but also in carrying it through the implementation process. Manchester Millennium also became the vehicle through which both the master plan emerging from the design competition discussed below and a subsequent more detailed plan about implementation were published (Manchester Millennium, 1996, 1997). No doubt, the decision to structure this new organisation in the way that it was done, with a heavy emphasis on inputs from the development sector in the City rather than a more broadly representative cross-section of interests, had a significant effect on the ways Manchester Millennium decided to approach its tasks.

Quick agreement was reached on the value of an international design competition as an element in the response process, and in turn ready agreement to this approach was expressed on behalf of the government by Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, who was in any event known to be a strong supporter of this type of mechanism. The purpose of this was more to look for practical gains that would not happen automatically (for example in relation to spaces, streets and transport) than to look for radical re-thinks of this whole part of the City Centre, or for detailed proposals for the redevelopment of individual sites and buildings which could in any event be handled through normal processes. On this basis, the competition was mounted very quickly and with a short time-span. So, by the beginning of September 1996, just over eleven weeks after the bomb had exploded, the 27 initial entries to the competition had been reduced to five consortia invited to submit detailed proposals. These five were given just over six weeks (to 18 October) to submit their detailed proposals, and the winning consortium was announced on 1 November 1996, some four and a half months (or just over nineteen weeks) after the bomb had been detonated.

As with most design competitions, the announcement of a winner was merely the beginning of the next phase of the process. Almost as a symbol of this, the announcement of the winning team was accompanied by a request that it work together with another short-listed team on the further refinement of its proposals because the competition judges had liked some particular aspects of that team's work and felt that they would add value to the process as a whole. The key issues that are likely to determine how successful this approach is in the longer-term will be:

- the perceived added value gained from any works that were more than was strictly necessary to respond to the damage caused by the bomb;
- the financial implications of the proposals, not just in an overall sense but also in terms of the incidence of costs between the respective parties;
- how successful the process is in persuading all property interests to sign up for something that each interest may not necessarily perceive as being the best that it could do for itself. The approach here is to try to persuade people through peer group pressure to sign up for something that in an overall sense adds value to what would otherwise be achieved. This task is being spearheaded by Manchester Millennium, working with existing property interests that are already "onside." There is evidence that by late 1997 some difficulties were being experienced in these terms with some property interests to the point at which some of the master planning ideas may have to be compromised (Myles and Taylor, 1998);
- public reactions to the end-product, and public willingness to continue to support the centre during the redevelopment phase.

The importance of trying to take actions which secure long-term confidence in Manchester City Centre is difficult to exaggerate. To illustrate the extent of the problem, there seemed to be an initial public reaction of support for the centre, with people flocking in during the last couple of weeks of June 1996. Although this is impressionistic, there seemed almost to be an element of public defiance of an outrage here, as well as an element of curiosity to see what damage had actually been caused. After this initial burst of support and interest, however, people stopped visiting on the same scale, no

doubt in part because they realised that some of their favourite shops were not actually open for trading. As a consequence, four months after the bomb City Centre retailers were reporting that their takings were 30% down on where they had been just before the bomb exploded. As well as being an obvious problem in terms of the retailing industry, this also raises questions about the extent to which the City Centre once it had returned to full competitiveness could recapture trade diverted in the interim to other centres. Public confidence in the City Centre would be an important component of these processes.

The concept of "confidence" when applied to the public at large is an intangible commodity. For example, does the fact that the IRA bombed parts of Manchester City Centre twice within a four year period (in December 1992 and June 1996) mean that people may feel in some sense "at risk" when they go into the City Centre, on the basis that the chances of a third bombing here are much greater than in competitor locations? Similarly, it can also be argued that the undoubted need to block off streets and buildings that have been damaged and that could be dangerous stands as a constant reminder of these sorts of difficulties at a time when in many ways what the city would prefer people to do is to forget about them. In addition, a new one million square feet out-of-town shopping centre was under construction throughout 1997 at Trafford Park, a few miles to the west of Manchester City Centre, and it opened for trading in 1998 well before the redevelopment of some of the City Centre's damaged retail areas had been completed. Proposals for the further expansion of this facility were on the table even before it had opened for trading. Irrespective of the IRA bomb, this new retail facility would have competed with Manchester City Centre; but the combined effects of this added competition and of the IRA bomb may have long-term adverse effects on people's perceptions of Manchester City Centre as a retail location, despite their traditional loyalties to the city.

As far as business perceptions of confidence in the aftermath of the IRA bomb are concerned, it is clear from all the information presented in this paper that there was a short-term trading problem for businesses which must have influenced perceptions of confidence. As a consequence, the likelihood is that business confidence was at its lowest ebb in the period immediately after the bomb. Manchester City Council information, from an unpublished survey of business carried out in September 1996 (about three months after the bomb), suggests that:

- the split between businesses which felt that the public's readiness to shop in Manchester City Centre would be adversely affected in the long-term as a result of the bomb and those that did not think this was almost exactly 50:50;
- for every two businesses that felt that there would be a long-term effect on the City Centre's entertainment role, five did not think there would be such an effect;
- just over 45% of businesses felt that there would be no long-term effects on the "other services" sector, with 33% saying that they did not know and just under 20% saying that there would be such an effect.

A small survey of City Centre retailers carried out early in 1998 (Ashworth, 1998) suggests that the IRA bomb was still regarded then, some eighteen months after the event, as the major factor affecting the City Centre's retail success by 40% of the sample and as the second most important factor (after general economic trends) by a further 25%. All of this would suggest that the problem of business confidence has been and continues to be a very real one.

During the first few months after the bomb, the approach that was adopted to these sorts of issues was to try to achieve a series of "good news" stories in order to convey the impression as frequently and as fully as possible that the City Centre was returning to normality. For example, every time that further elements of the retail area re-opened for trading, it was presented as a "good news" story for the City Centre. In this context, a great deal of effort and faith was put into a major promotional campaign for Christmas 1996, with as much as possible of the centre's retail floorspace being re-opened for business as part of this process. An added emphasis in the campaign was on the range of leisure activities that could be pursued as part of a visit to the City Centre over that period, such as, for example, a New York style ice-skating rink in the major civic square in front of the Town Hall. It is simply too early to say whether all this is working in its own terms, but it may well be the case that

the critical issue will turn out to be how deep-seated any public loss of confidence in the City Centre as a result of the IRA bomb has been, rather than the public reaction separately or together to this stream of "good news" stories.

More generally, of course, the IRA bomb and its aftermath substantially disrupted the city's national and international marketing activities. City marketing had been a rapidly growing phenomenon in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s (Kearns and Philo, 1993). Within this, Manchester had been one of the more active cities (Law, 1993:142-149; Taylor, Evans and Fraser 1996:300-306), seeking to present itself as an international city by virtue of the extensive range of functions it performed as the *de facto* capital of northern England. The need to upgrade this activity in terms of the agency structure established to carry it forward was under intensive discussion at the time of the IRA bomb, so that whilst that event did not shape that debate, it certainly gave added focus to it (Kitchen, 1997:220, 221, 225, 226). The outcome of this has been the creation of two new public-private initiatives (Kitchen, 1997:220, 221, 225, 226), which will not only be seeking to bring inward investment to the area but will also be vehicles for telling the wider world the continuing good news stories about the recovery process.

As far as the issue of the appropriate planning framework to underpin all of this is concerned, what was immediately clear was that there was not the time or likely to be the support for a long drawn-out process of plan-making going right back to first principles and involving extensive public consultation. The primary need of the city was to get back on its feet as quickly as possible, and a planning process that slowed down the achievement of this objective would most certainly be unwelcome, especially since throughout any such period the world would not be standing still but would be adjusting competitively to the new situation. Equally, the individual interests that would be directly involved in the reconstruction process could not be expected to sit around waiting for such a process to conclude, especially if their business livelihoods were dependent upon as rapid a response as possible in terms of decisions about their projects. On the other hand, if any of the opportunities provided by the new situation were to be taken, some sort of planning framework would be needed to guide this, no matter how loose it might be. As a consequence, the approach adopted was to draw on the planning frameworks that already existed (Manchester City Council, 1984, 1995) and on the public consultation that had taken place as part of their assembly, emphasising broad principles that shaped the process as a whole and then aiming to draw up site-specific briefs for individual redevelopment or refurbishment projects on a rolling programme basis. This approach, which is described in more detail below, provided a broad planning context for the design competition discussed above, and it was also intended to result in a framework that could subsequently go through formal procedures to form part of or to be linked to the city's statutory development plans without being unduly constrained by these procedures (Manchester City Council, 1997a:18-21).

There was an element of public consultation tacked on to this reliance on pre-existing and essentially broad-brush plans, in the sense that the entries for the design competition were put on public display and comments were invited. A considerable amount of publicity was also given to this process via the columns of the *Manchester Evening News*, and people who did not go to the public display of submitted schemes were nonetheless able to read about them through the local newspaper. This exercise appeared to have very little effect on the process of making decisions about redevelopment, however, in any sense other than that it provided a backcloth; it was really more about public relations than about effective public consultation (Myles and Taylor, 1998). It enabled Manchester Millennium to feel a degree of confidence that its stance of seeking worthwhile improvements which did not significantly delay the process of implementation would command broad public support, but it did not lead to any apparent reconsideration of that stance within the organisation. The practical effect of this general stance was that it was putting off to a later date any notion of effective public involvement in shaping decisions about the form of redevelopment in favour of discussions amongst the much smaller group of people that were part of the networks operated by Manchester Millennium. As far as the wider public were concerned, in the fullness of time people could see (if they wished) individual applications for planning permission arising out of site-specific negotiations with property owners as part of the normal consultative operations of the development control process; but there

was no real wide-ranging attempt to generate a public consensus about the framework within which such applications would sit and against which they would be judged. This approach also meant, of course, that Manchester Millennium's public accountability for its stewardship of the process was being deferred. In effect, what it was saying was, "Judge us by the projects we are able to agree with property owners, but not beforehand."

There is in this, inevitably, a large dose of pragmatism. In an ideal world, there may well have been a case for a more radical and a more leisured re-examination of the new circumstances and opportunities, and there may also have been a case for the more extensive use of the formal development plan machinery than that proposed. Arguments could undoubtedly be advanced also for more extensive public consultation than would occur on the back of public showings of the fruits of the design competition, the publicity given to the broad statement of principles, and individual applications for planning permission following negotiations with property owners. But the City Council as local planning authority was not dealing with an ideal world here. Arguably, it was actually dealing with about as great an extreme opposite to that situation as it is possible to envisage, and its response in planning terms was a recognition of this reality. In this situation, the primary benefits of an interpretation by the local planning authority that its existing development plan framework was adequate for the purpose of shaping the redevelopment process were that no new planning actions had to be undertaken and no new by-laws or similar powers had to be sought before the recovery process could get under way, thus saving the time (and no doubt also the public debate) that these processes would have involved. The ability to make a judgement of this kind without significant fear that it could be successfully challenged stems from the fact that the British planning system is by its nature discretionary, as compared with the regulatory forms to be found in many other parts of the world (Booth, 1996).

In simple terms, what this means is that it is for the local planning authority to determine what it regards as being consistent with its adopted development plan (Bruton and Nicholson, 1990: Chapters 3 and 4). As long as Manchester City Council as local planning authority felt that what it needed to do to respond to the IRA bomb could sit within this framework, there was really nothing that anyone else could do to force the City Council to embark upon a fresh round of plan-making. Essentially, this was the judgment that Manchester City Council as local planning authority made. The broad framework was seen as being provided by the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (Manchester City Council, 1995), by an associated guide to the general physical principles that development in the city as a whole ought to follow (Manchester City Council, 1997b), and by the master planning document published by Manchester Millennium (1996). All of these were drawn together in the form of "supplementary planning guidance" (basically, guidance that elaborates on the content of a statutory plan and that as a consequence carries some statutory force) adopted by the City Council in April 1997, some eighteen months after the bomb. In turn, this material was further integrated into the mainstream of the City's Unitary Development Plan in the first monitoring report on that Plan published in October 1997 (Manchester City Council 1997a:18-21). Within this broad framework, reliance was placed on the process of drawing up site-specific briefs for locations where redevelopment in the near future was likely, and then on the process of development control (i.e., making applications for planning permission to the local planning authority) once schemes had been negotiated, with consultations limited to those normally carried out as part of the development control process.

The alternative to this approach, of deciding from the outset to prepare a fresh statutory development plan, would have run the risk of being very time-consuming. The Manchester Unitary Development Plan, for example, took five and a half years to go through all its statutory stages, and this process was completed just less than twelve months before the IRA bomb (Kitchen, 1996, 1997: Chapter 4). This essentially pragmatic view of development planning was thus helped by the fact that the existing development plan was relatively fresh, although in fact the Unitary Development Plan already contained a similar kind of pragmatic judgment in that it had incorporated the extant City Centre Local Plan (Manchester City Council, 1984) as it stood rather than embarking on a new round of detailed planning in respect to the City Centre. This approach, as this example illustrates, was not new in

Manchester, where over several years and in many circumstances the Council had seen the value in trying to focus on broad principles which would stand for a period of time without getting swamped by detail. This meant that at least it had a legacy in these terms that could be picked up very quickly when circumstances demanded, as in this case they did.

## GENERAL LESSONS

It is almost certainly true to say that there is no such thing as absolute safety in a city. Consequently, an emphasis on security measures which could guarantee public safety in response to an event such as the IRA bomb would be the equivalent of King Arthur's knights pursuing the holy grail. In terms of the city's economic future, it is arguable in any event that people's perceptions of safety are more important than any absolute measures (whatever those might be), and reactions to any further security measures that may be taken need to be balanced against people's perceptions of the extent to which any such measures might also make the city a less attractive place to visit. Thus, low-visibility security measures such as an extension of closed-circuit television cameras, as long as this does not give rise to major civil liberties concerns (Graham and Marvin, 1996:225-227), may well make more sense in terms of people's overall perceptions than high-profile but much more intrusive security measures of the kind touted by the "ring of steel" argument.

The Manchester experience also shows that the problems of business survival in the immediate aftermath of this sort of situation are very real. The immediate upwelling of public support and sympathy can initially be very valuable in these terms, but it is unlikely of itself to carry business through the whole process of restoring a viable trading position. This suggests that there may be two fundamental requirements in this sort of situation. The first is a good level of awareness of what sort of temporary measures might be capable of implementation very quickly in order to get small businesses (in particular) restarted. Key issues here might be an understanding of what floorspace is vacant or under-occupied in the vicinity, or what nearby land can be used on which temporary facilities can be installed, and the ability to take effective action quickly based upon this information. If the level of pre-existing information about matters such as this is poor, valuable time can be wasted whilst this position is rectified through a round of fresh surveys.

The second requirement is the ability to set up an organisation quickly, or to make use of an existing organisation, that can receive, manage, and disburse financial help in sensitive ways to businesses that clearly need it. The extent of under-insurance revealed by the bomb in Manchester is almost certainly not unique to that city, and its repetition elsewhere would quickly bring about the need for financial assistance if businesses are to survive an event as traumatic as this. If businesses do not survive on a large scale, a big hole can immediately be punched in the economic base of a city; and the Manchester figures quoted above could have been very damaging to the city's economy in a long term sense if the survival rate had been much lower than it now seems likely to be. The City Council performed this function in Manchester through the Lord Mayor's Fund, and it is probably true to say that, in Britain at any rate, people's natural reaction in these circumstances would be to turn to the local authority. But there is no necessity for this function to be performed by the local council. Any organisation that could handle and disburse public and private contributions efficiently and sympathetically, and could maintain public confidence in its ability to do this fairly and impartially, could do this job. What is important is that the means of doing this should be capable of swinging into action more or less immediately, without a protracted turf war over responsibilities.

A key issue in Manchester has been the balance to be struck between rapid rebuilding and re-opening on the one hand and the identification of wider opportunities to improve the city on the other hand. This latter approach might well be more complicated, more expensive, and more time-consuming than the *de minimis* approach but may bring greater long-term benefits. This is not a straightforward cost-benefit calculation because, as this paper has indicated, a very important dimension of all of this is intangibles such as public confidence. What became clear fairly quickly in Manchester was that there was some public support for doing more than the minimum, provided that this could be done

relatively quickly; it was almost as if people felt that if they had to endure the pain, then there must be some gains to compensate. What also became clear fairly quickly was that in reality some opportunities were likely to be much easier to take than others, and that it was possible as a consequence to look at this opportunity by opportunity. Thus, the strategy which emerged was one which sought to combine the swiftest practical rebuilding with grasping the greatest amount of opportunities for further improvement which would win public support without slowing the whole process down significantly. The existence of a new and purpose-constructed organisation such as Manchester Millennium, with a multi-sectoral base and an ongoing responsibility to provide leadership to these processes, was an important component of the action regarded as being necessary to achieve these objectives. At the same time, of course, once these stances had been decided upon and decisions taken as a consequence (including in particular the view that was taken about the scope for public involvement in these processes), and once a new organisation was in place to champion them, changing the strategic approach would have been very difficult. Thus the decisions that were taken about these matters during the nine months or so immediately following the bomb shaped the redevelopment process for the future.

As has already been mentioned, one of the most enduring problems may well turn out to be the extent to which an event of this kind and its aftermath undermines people's long-term confidence in the city. This is partly about the psychological point that fears about safety may be as important (if not more so) than objective assessments of risk. But it is also related to the extent to which people's habits may change during the rebuilding phase as they make use of other opportunities, and may then prove to be resistant to attempts to persuade them to revert back to what they used to do. Three points emerge from thinking about this issue. The first is that in its own terms this is a powerful argument for a quick rebuilding option. Whilst there is probably not a precise equation between these two factors, generally speaking the slower the redevelopment process the more difficult will be this problem of changing habits in the interim. The second is that an approach which allows the re-opening of facilities in phases, rather than relying on everything coming together at the end of the process, has a great deal to offer in terms of people's perceptions of the restoration of normality and hopefully thereby of their associated habits. The third is that promotion and publicity over this period will be critical, not only to combat people's fears but also to show that the city still has a great deal to offer notwithstanding the redevelopment process. The probability is that this will require a publicity effort on a continued basis from all the affected sectors that is well in excess of what would have been undertaken in normal circumstances. It is also worth noting in this context, however, that an approach to redevelopment that produces re-openings in several phases is also an approach which provides a large number of promotion and publicity opportunities.

Finally, if the three touchstones of the process are speed, the restoration of public confidence, and achievement of improvements where this can be done without too much difficulty, then these need also to be the starting points for the planning frameworks which will support these processes. There are likely to be some tensions between these elements in these terms; for example, would a more comprehensive approach to public consultation have benefits in terms of the restoration of public confidence which outweighed its adverse effects in terms of speed? Another starting point, of course, is what already exists, in terms of formal and informal planning documentation, the public and business consultation that helped to shape those documents, and the in-house information base that supports them. If there is not time to go back to first principles, as there usually will not be in this type of circumstance, what already exists needs to be used to help to get the key points agreed with as many parties as possible as quickly as possible. Something like a design competition, quickly mounted, can act as a focus for this process, but it clearly is not a substitute for it. This will inevitably mean trying to be as clear as possible from the outset about what is principle and what are matters of detail that can be left to later stages. It is most unlikely that everyone will agree about this because the details are important to a successful outcome in a general sense and specifically some details will be particularly important to some people. But allowing the process to get bogged down in detail will court all the problems of delay discussed above, and in this kind of situation (perhaps more than any other) the planning process will not be thanked for contributing to what is regarded as unreasonable delay.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Hopefully, no other city will ever have to experience the kinds of problems in terms of the extent of the devastation of property which houses key economic uses that Manchester experienced as a result of the IRA bomb of June 1996. But the record would suggest that this is far too optimistic a stance to take. In the United States of America in recent years, for example, New York, Oklahoma City, and Atlanta have all experienced acts of urban terrorism, albeit not on the scale of the Manchester bomb in terms of damage to property. If we cannot eliminate such events in a troubled world, the next best thing that we can try to do is to ensure that the experiences of cities that do suffer in these ways are available to others. Hopefully this case study contributes in these terms.

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This paper is based upon a visiting public lecture given by the author at the University of Florida on 6 November 1996. The lecture was sponsored by the College of Architecture and the Department of Urban and Regional Planning of the University of Florida in conjunction with the San Felasco Section, Florida Chapter, American Planning Association. The author would like to thank the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University for funding support that enabled this case study to be researched and written, and also two anonymous referees for their comments on the first draft.

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Manuscript revisions completed 24 January 2001.