

Good clothes and general prosperity [...] feminine holiday-makers were well-hatted and well shod, well gloved and neat of hair [...] pleated georgette, pleated silk'. [Working girls wore] neat waterproofs cut in trench coat fashion. Before the war such a garment [...] was an extravagance few could afford [...] white fox furs fashionable from Belgravia to Bethnal Green, from Mayfair to Hampstead, proclaimed that there is a new equality in the expenditure of pin money.

The young were equally well dressed in white muslin and pink bows and children 'obviously of the working classes had neat little overcoats that west end mothers could not have bettered' [...] 'some parties came in taxis a visible sign of the change in the standard of expenditure since 1914'.⁵⁷

At the end of the war the heath once again reflected the last events. The signing of the Armistice was announced in Hampstead by the firing of maroons, a type of firework, and anti-aircraft guns on the summit of the heath were also fired followed by the sounding of the 'All Clear' on bugles. The London depots of the Army Service Corps held a torch lit procession to the flagstaff on the heath where an effigy of the Kaiser was burnt on a bonfire, watched by thousands of spectators, and fireworks and fire balloons were set off. The *Hampstead & Highgate Express* reported that:

Everywhere the news was joyfully received, many of the shops closed and did not reopen until the next morning and most of the school children were dismissed for the day. The cadet corps of University College School with their band playing paraded the principal thoroughfares [...] everywhere there was jubilation.⁵⁸

Peace celebrations were held the following year with Hampstead's Mayor spending £200 on the festivities. The Women's Free Church Council and the Hampstead Council of Social Welfare organised tents and a cloakroom on the heath for women and

children. Water carts were taken up to the tents and men were recruited to act as stokers for the boilers. A bonfire was lit on the battery, fireworks and flares were lit at the WhiteStone Pond and a procession of massed choirs and bands of several churches paraded from the town hall up to the heath for a dedicatory service for the day and the new era.⁵⁹

The final act on the heath was the unveiling of the war memorial next to the WhiteStone Pond at the highest point in London. That the people of Hampstead chose the heath for the siting of their memorial, quite some distance away from the centre of Hampstead village, reflects the importance of the heath to the war and to Hampstead. The war memorial was listed at Grade II at the beginning of 2015, 100 years since the Royal Engineers Signal Service and the Royal Field Artillery were photographed training on the heath.

PARK POLICY AND DESIGN OF PUBLIC PARKS IN LONDON, 1900-1945

By Jan Woudstra

When the influential German landscape architect and writer Leberecht Miggé published *Die Gartenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (1913) he characterised the London public park in three illustrations that were representative for both park policy and park design during the early twentieth century. The first of these pictures showed a bathing pool in Victoria Park,¹ which he incorrectly identified as being Hyde Park, and a second showed children in a sand play area. These had the aim to emphasise the functional use and social significance. The third image was a plan of Clapham Common, which he identified in the caption as: 'Ein typischer Englischer Park', where he praised the 'extensive, grove like accessible meadows, that are crossed by artless [informal] walks. Water where it was present. (Even an old settlement was no obstacle.) A bandstand next to a tea pavilion surrounded with a simple

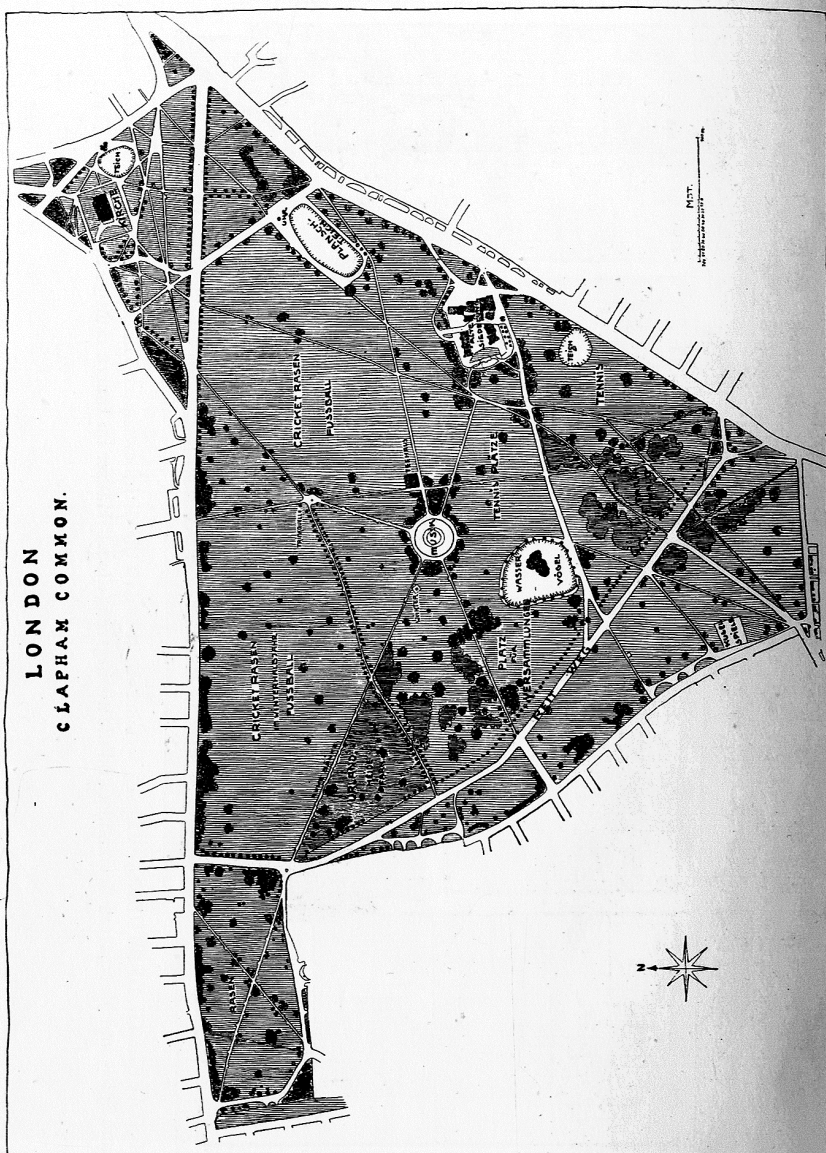
57. *The Times*, 6 August 1918.

58. *Hampstead & Highgate Express*, 16 November 1918, *Hampstead & Highgate Express*, 23 November 1918.

59. *Hampstead & Highgate Express*, 21 June 1919 and 26 July 1919; Peace Day Saturday 19 June 1919, Hampstead Borough Council Minutes, 19 June 1919, p.299.

1. This image derived from Lieut. Col. J. J. Sexby, *The Municipal Parks, Gardens, and Open Spaces of London: Their history and associations* (London: Elliot Stock, 2ND ed., 1905), p.555.

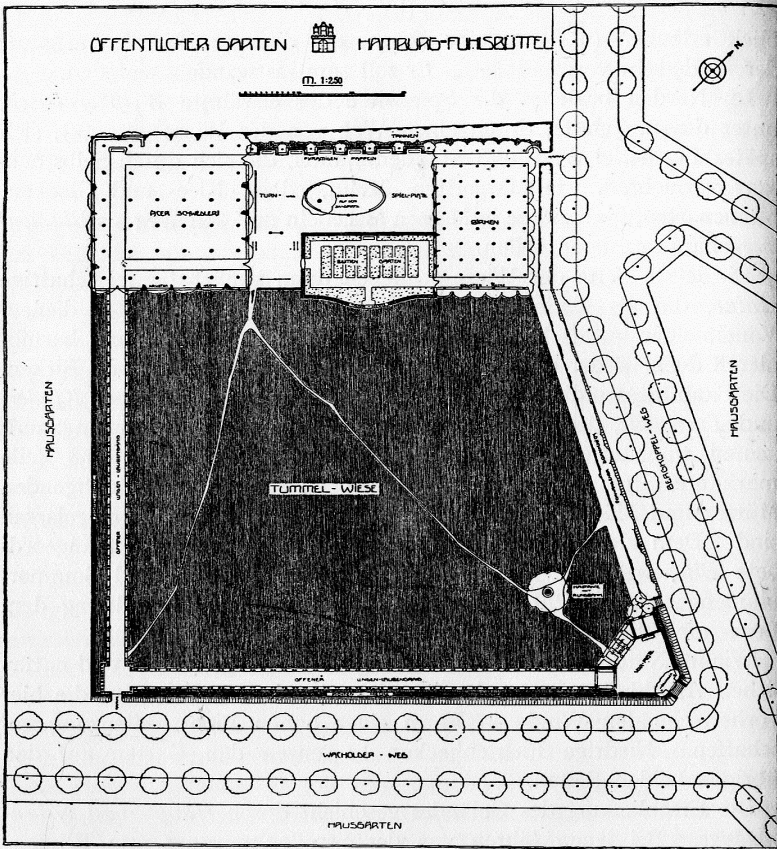
London
County
Council



3. EIN TYPISCHER ENGLISCHER PARK. Ausgedehnte, hainartige, *betretbare* Wiesen, von ungekünstelten Wegen durchzogen. Wasser, wie es sich bot. (Selbst eine alte Siedlung ist kein Hindernis.) Ein Musiktempel und Teehaus dazu und eine schlichte Einfriedigung ringsum: das Ganze nicht viel mehr als eine naiv genützte und doch gesegnete Landschaft. (Text s. S. 22.)

33. Clapham Common was identified by Leberecht Migge as 'a typical English park', but in fact was common land to which the public traditionally had certain rights (MIGGE, *DIE GARTENKULTUR DES 20. JAHRHUNDERTS* (1913), PLATE 3)

Plan zu dem
Öffentlichen
Garten in
Hamburg-
Fuhlsbüttel

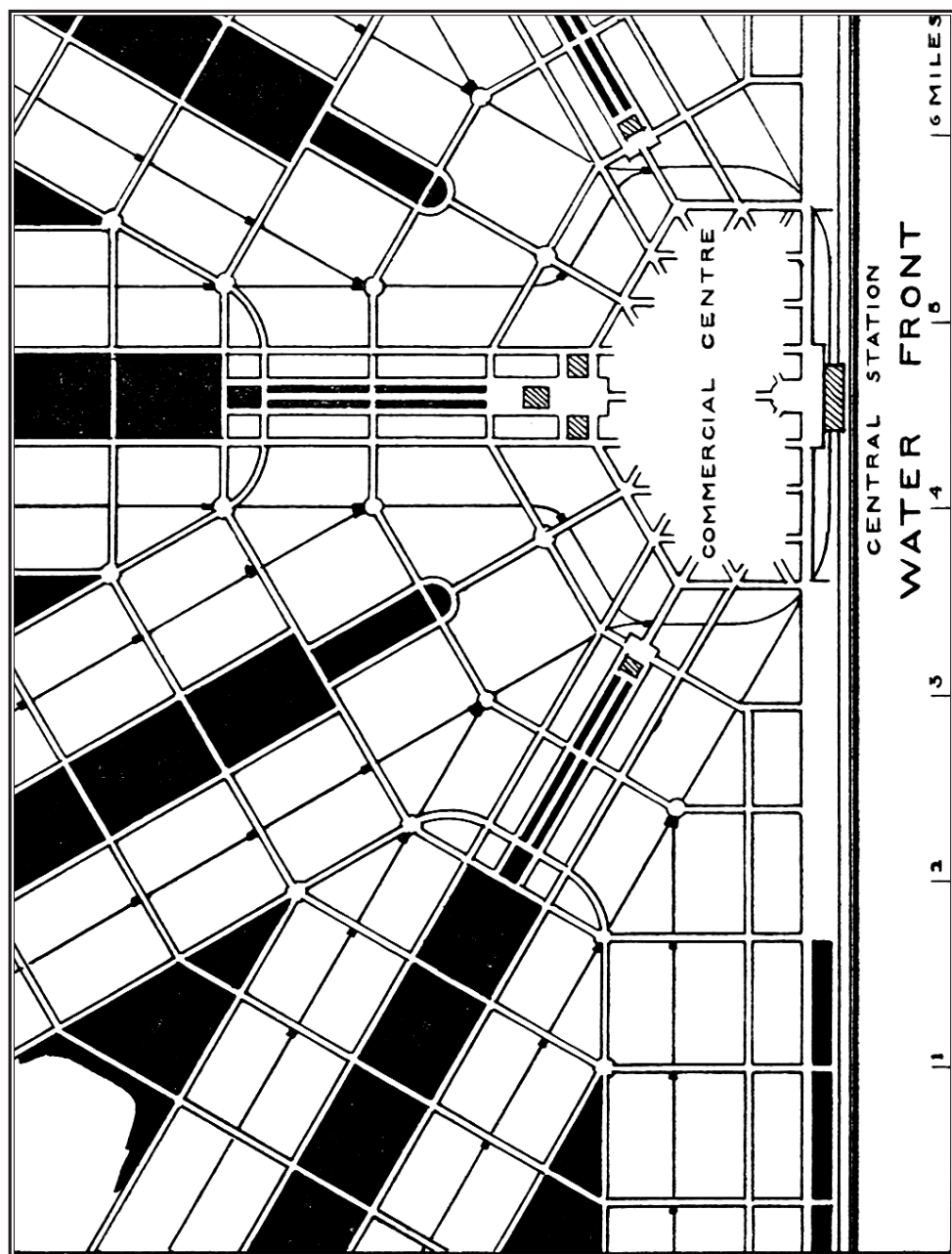


L. Migge

Wirklichkeit ist es aber nicht so hart. Die Einzelformungen ordneten sich auch hier unter einen Willen zum zusammenfassenden Rhythmus gartenarchitektonischer Art. Da ist nichts rührselig oder empfindsam oder malerisch-romantisch aufgefaßt, sondern ein Menschenwerk ist in selbstbewußter, würdiger Ordnung menschlichen Zwecken erschlossen¹.

¹ Um so peinlicher berührt es, wenn die Mühen und Opfer, die die Schaffung dieses Gartens unter damals schwierigen Verhältnissen forderte, jetzt infolge der falschen und

34. For his design for a public park in Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel, Leberecht Migge, inspired by the organisation of spaces at Clapham Common, left the central area open, suggesting some desire lines surreptitiously crossing the space (MIGGE, *DIE GARTENKULTUR DES 20. JAHRHUNDERTS* (1913), p.74)



35. Henry Lanchester preferred radially placed park systems over rings of parks because they did not define the city and exercise restrictive influence on the space within them
(THE BUILDER, 95 (1908), p.343)

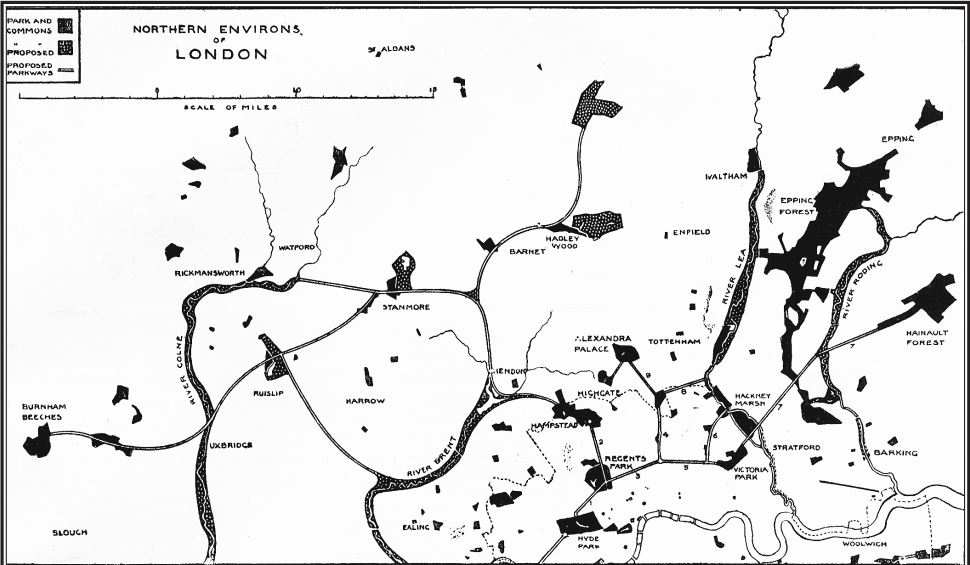


Fig. 2.

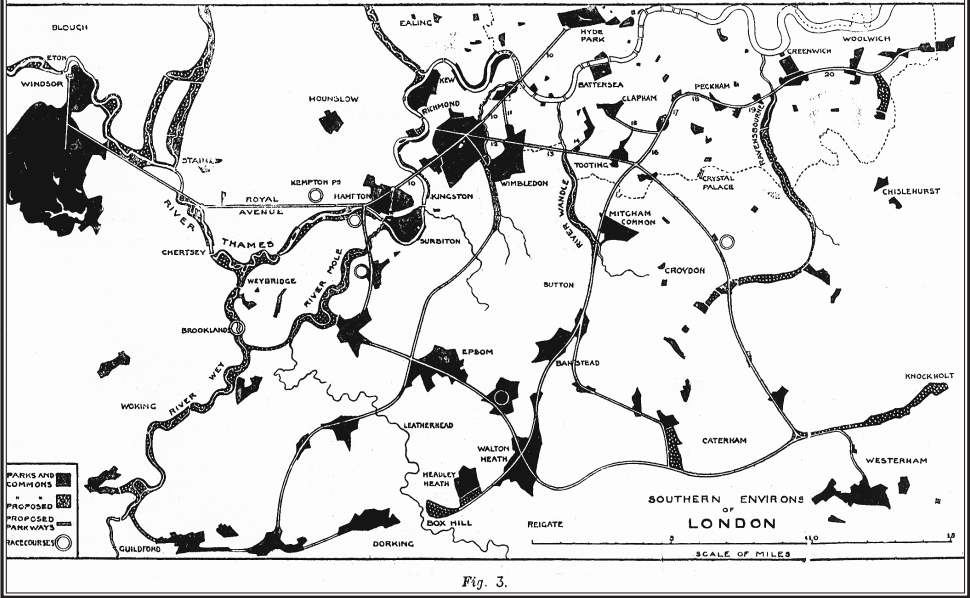


Fig. 3.

36. Henry Lanchester's proposals for a park system for London followed existing rivers and main routes
(*THE BUILDER*, 95 (1908), p.345)

fence: the whole is not much more than a simple utilitarian and yet blessed landscape' (fig. 33).

In the main text Migge reported that there were truly public gardens in England and the USA, which might be proudly referred to as such:

The English people's parks, which we will study today, have the principle of practical use of greenspaces, altogether shaped to perfection by nature. The English do not know ornamental parks in our sense of the word. Their matter-of-fact nature hardly requires them to invent a special design for their park needs. They simply fence an area of characteristic English landscape immediately outside their cities, according to requirement for bathing and swimming excavate a waterbody, in a reasonably casual manner lay walks across the site that are required for through traffic, add some shelters or tea pavilions - and the people's park is complete.

And even when it does not seem possible to expend even a shilling for luxury and play equipment, there is still enough to please the eye. One sees namely people, men, women, youths and children who camp on the grass in their thousands and thousands, take walks, play, do gymnastics or participate in politics. The white and red of their garments interweaves the dark green foliage in such a refreshing manner, like the colourful embroidery of traditional fabric. Their calls and exultations fill the air. Who then needs decoration? It is the people, *the lively lives*, which really decorate this garden.³

It is clear that this fitted Migge's modernist agenda, with its appreciation for non-design, and that this inspired his layout for a public garden in Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel (fig. 34). However, common land to which the public traditionally had specific rights, even

when it had been 'improved', was rarely considered as 'parkland' in England.

This passionate appreciation of non-designed parks reveals not only Migge's vision of parks for the future, but it also reveals something important about design of public parks in London during the first half of the twentieth century. The existing stock of parks was already renowned and in the West End relied largely on royal properties, with Migge, besides celebrating the common, favouring the former royal hunting ground at Hyde Park. Other parks such as Kensington Gardens, Green Park and St James's Park derived from royal parks and gardens and were only later adapted for public use. Famous nineteenth-century public parks, laid out for the purpose, such as Victoria Park, Battersea Park, Finsbury Park and Queen's Park, were designed by named designers and have been well researched.⁴ Remarkably, a large proportion of public parks were laid out during the first half of the twentieth century, yet unlike the parks of the nineteenth century laid out by named designers, only a few were designed by landscape architects. This can partially be attributed to the fact that there was as yet no organisation representing garden designers and landscape architects. A British Association of Garden Architects was only formed in 1929, renamed the next year as the Institute of Landscape Architects (ILA). This included garden designers, with Thomas Mawson as the most prominent figure and its first president, but there were also architects and town planners, who emphasised landscape planning, specifically Thomas Adams and Patrick Abercrombie.

From the early twentieth century, these 'landscape architects', and others, had attempted to provide an input on London's park provision. This paper shows how through a series of unsolicited schemes - provided by members of the Town Planning Institute founded in 1909 - there was gradually an impact when their proposals became adopted in park policy and they were asked to produce plans for London. Something similar

2. Leberecht Migge, *die Gartenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1913), plate 3. 'Ausgedehnte, hainartige, betretbare Wiesen, von ungekünstelten Wegen durchzogen. Wasser, wie es sich bot. (Selbst eine alte Siedlung ist kein Hindernis.) Ein Musiktempel und Teehaus dazu und eine schlichte Einfriedigung ringsum: das Ganze nicht viel mehr als seine naiv genutzte und doch gesegnete Landschaft.'

3. Migge, *die Gartenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts*, op. cit., p.22: author's translation.

4. George F Chadwick, *The Park and the Town* (London: Architectural Press, 1966); Hazel Conway, *People's Parks: The design and development of Victorian parks in Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991); the main piece looking at the twentieth century: Tom Turner, 'Open space planning in London: From standards per 1000 to green strategy', *Town Planning Review* 63/4 (1992), pp.365-386.

happened with landscape designers who contributed to a design competition for a park, offering schemes that were an improvement on existing schemes. Once they had organised themselves into the Institute of Landscape Architects the efforts became more coordinated. Until then landscape design was low on the list of considerations, in a world where it was left to the borough surveyor or parks superintendent to draw up a park scheme for implementation.

To provide the historical context, the general scene for the development of the public parks movement in Great Britain had been set with the 1833 report on 'Public Walks or Open Spaces' by the Select Committee on Public Walks that had established the physical, social and political needs for parks. While some of the earliest parks, Victoria Park (proposed in 1840 and opened in 1845) and Battersea Park (first proposed in 1845), were conceived to address social, sanitary and health concerns, they were funded by the Crown. The 1848 *Public Health Act* reinforced these efforts to improve public health not only by proactive measures, including improved drainage and sewers, removal of refuse and provision of drinking water, but it also provided the legal basis for acquisition and management of open space.⁵

There was, however, little action and the initiatives in the provision of open space were generated by concerned private entities, such as the Commons and Footpath Preservation Society (1865) and The Kyrle Society (1877), the latter aiming to bring 'beauty home to the people', with one of its objectives being 'to co-operate with the National Health Society in securing open-air spaces in poor neighbourhoods to be laid out as public gardens'.⁶ These efforts were given greater weight with the *Metropolitan Open Spaces Act* (1877), which provided the legal basis for acquisition and management of open space, and the *Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act* (1878), which did this for land in the neighbourhood of London.⁷ Despite this,

publicly funded opportunities continued to be missed with the potential of existing open spaces unrealised. Thus the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA), set up in 1882, aimed to ensure:

the protection, preservation, safeguarding and acquiring for permanent preservation for public use, of gardens, disused burial grounds, churchyards, open spaces, areas of land likely to be used for building purposes, strips of land adjoining roads and footpaths, or any land situated within the Metropolitan Police District or in its vicinity.⁸

Disused burial grounds were one of the main foci and in 1884 the *Disused Burial Grounds Act* was enforced to prevent building over sites and opened possibilities for recreational use.

However, as the population of London and of other cities continued to grow, general health deteriorated, shown particularly graphically through the recruits for the Boer War (1899-1902) where an average of one in three young men was found to be in poor health.⁹ The problem was officially recognised in 1904 in the *Report on Physical Deterioration* compiled by an Inter-departmental Committee, and while much of it concentrated on food and eating habits, it also informed a renewed interest in parks and open spaces. The emphasis in the creation of these was therefore primarily intended to benefit health. Hence William Wallace Pettigrew (c.1867-1947), one of the leading superintendents of parks in the country, would promote public parks and gardens as places 'for the playing of games'. He would argue that though everyone 'recognises the importance of fresh air in the preservation and improvement of health' it would be difficult to draw people to parks without making them 'as beautiful as possible with varied kinds of flowering trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, and conservatories filled with plants, so as to interest those with gardening and aesthetic tastes'. While the presence of music was also desirable, it was:

the provision for, and encouragement of, sport [that] is a most important function

5. www.parliament.uk, The 1848 Public Health Act; Elizabeth Fee, Theodore M. Brown, 'The Public Health Act of 1848' *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 83/11 (2005)

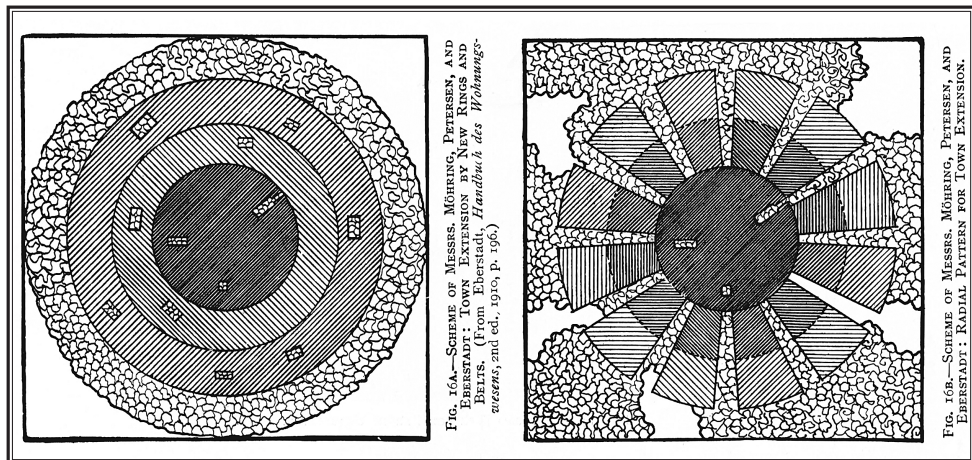
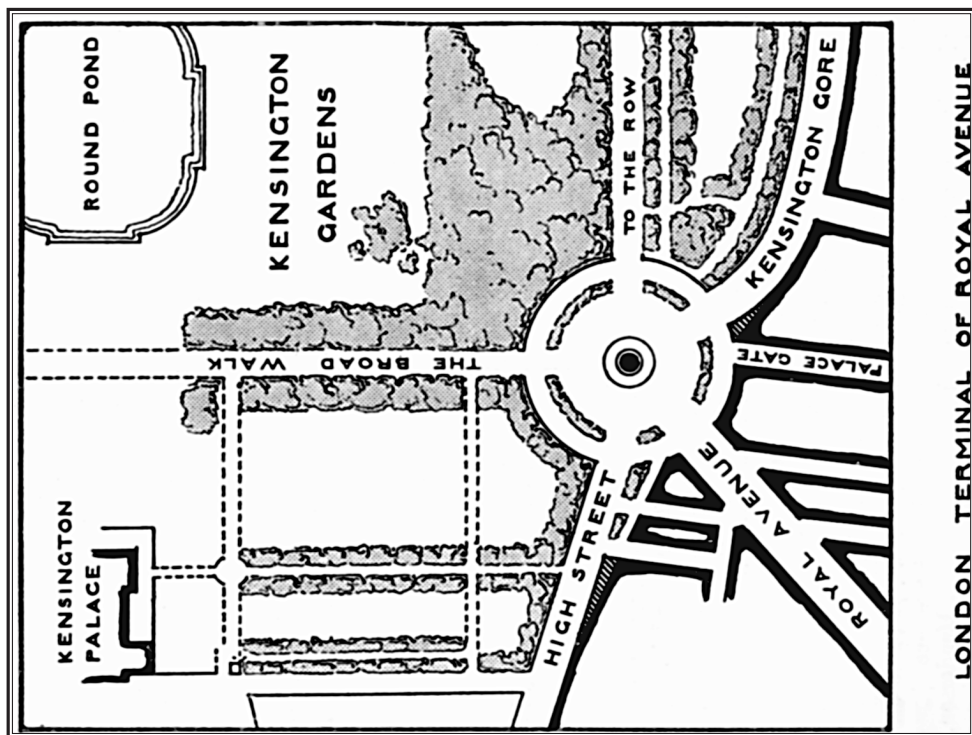
http://www.scielosp.org/scielo.php?pid=S0042-96862005001000017&script=sci_arttext, Pettigrew p.1.

6. *The Spectator* Archive, 29 January 1881, p.3 (online).

7. See: Hazel Conway, *Public Parks* (Risborough: Shire, 1996), p.29.

8. <http://www.mpga.org.uk/history.php>.

9. See a note by T. C. Horsfall in *Town Planning Conference London*, 10-15 October 1910 (London: RIBA, 1911), pp.494-6.



37. The grand gesture for Henry Lanchester's scheme was a royal avenue from Windsor Castle to Kensington Palace, via Hampton Court and Richmond Park
(THE BUILDER, 95 (1908), p.347)

38. In 1910 Professor Rudolph Eberstadt presented his proposals for Greater Berlin that included diagrams of town extensions in rings (top) and in a radial pattern (below), which were used by Thomas Mawson in *Civic Art* (1911) to discuss the principles relating to park systems, which the latter defined as 'a chain of parks, gardens and open spaces connected by boulevards or parkways, or a grouping of common lands and tree-planted open spaces, parks and gardens, arranged according to a comprehensive plan, and extending from the city into the open country, the object being to secure a continuous through route under leafy canopies, or across beautiful green lawns or naturally wild common reserves'
(TOWN PLANNING CONFERENCE, LONDON, 10-15 OCTOBER 1910: TRANSACTIONS (1911), p.328; DEFINITION: MAWSON, CIVIC ART (1911), p.79)

of a parks department, as it does to old and young alike, and to every class of the community.

He linked the ability to draw greater numbers of people to the 'diversity of the games provided for'. The first group of games that should be provided in the 'recreation ground' were all intended for young people: football and cricket; hockey, baseball and lacrosse. The second group was formed of games for the pleasure garden intended for 'older folks', including tennis, bowling, croquet and quoits, and archery for ladies, but only in special instances. Other possible facilities to be included were water sports such as boating, bathing, fishing, model yachting; and skating and curling in winter. While it was not important to maintain this provision as well as in private clubs, Pettigrew believed that 'every effort should be made to keep the ground in the best possible condition for the playing of the game for which it is intended'.¹⁰ In allocating principal importance to horticulture and the variety of provision in order to attract people to parks, it is clear that he had little time for the notion of well-designed spaces.

Other people took on the issue of access to open spaces, which had famously been discussed by John Claudius Loudon early in the previous century. Loudon's precedence was not acknowledged by the pioneer town planner Henry Vaughan Lanchester (1863-1953), a University College London professor in architecture, when he introduced the notion of a park system for London. He rejected the idea of a ring of parks around the city, as the Ring Strasse in Vienna, preferring parks and open spaces to be placed radially because 'they do not define the city area and exercise a restrictive influence on the space within them; for another, they lead from the more densely populated areas out into the open country, thus encouraging a general exodus towards it, and they also adapt themselves to the gradual expansion of the city' (*fig. 35*). He also demonstrated how this was a much more economical method, and how – following German examples – airflow might be encouraged by restricting and varying building

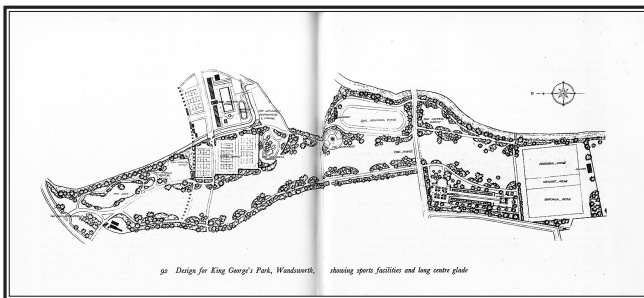
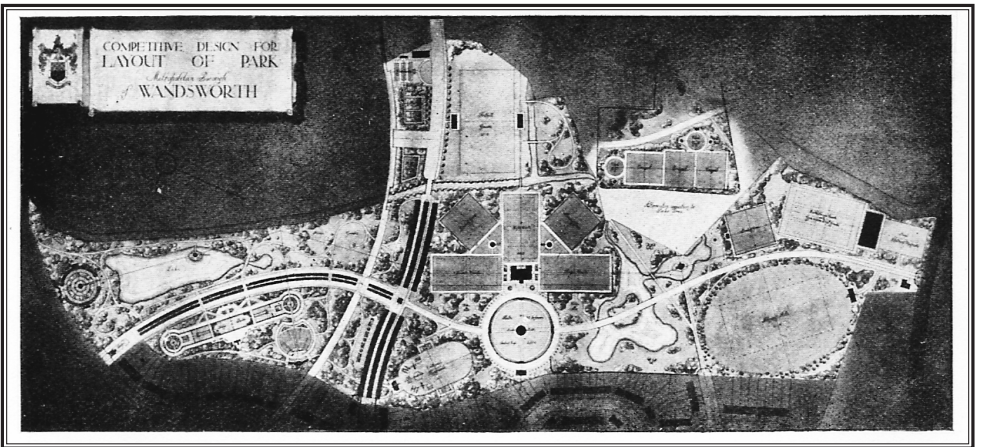
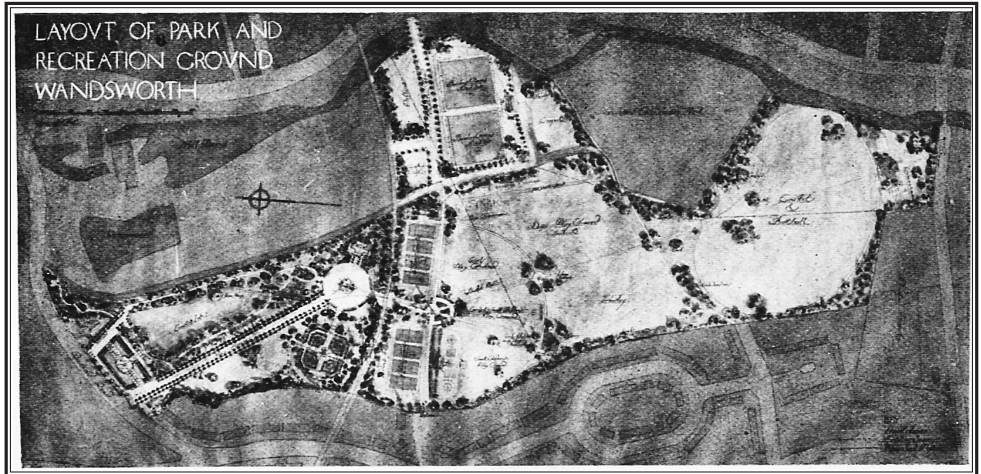
heights and densities.

The main prototypes, however, were various proposals by the American Olmsted firm, such as those for Providence, Boston and Washington. Based on such exemplars, Lanchester firstly proposed 'boulevards or parkways connecting existing parks'. These should vary from 80-200FT (24-60M) in length, which in places were to be expanded to provide small playgrounds, and they were to be well planted to give the 'impression that they are extensions of the parks to which they lead, and appear to connect those districts that are badly provided with open spaces with the most accessible park, thus inducing the public to make use of the latter, and obviate the feeling of discouragement that the necessity for traversing miles of mean streets naturally creates.' In places, particularly in North London, these parkways would also become the main thoroughfares by which the inhabitants might be 'rapidly transported by cheerful routes to their natural playgrounds' and they would give the 'idea of these parks extending throughout the more populous portions of the city'. The intention was that everyone should have access either to the 'larger parks and commons, or remote from the pleasant outlet into more rural surroundings' (*fig. 36*). The grand gesture within this was a 'Royal avenue' to the south of London from Windsor Castle to Kensington Palace, via Hampton Court and Richmond Park (*fig. 37*).

Boulevards connected links in the inner section of the city, while similar links in the outer areas would be connected with parkways, which Lanchester defined as 'a boulevard of a less formal and more rural character'. In acknowledging the contribution of the various societies, such as the MPGA and the Commons Preservation Society, in their assistance in 'preserving' various commons and important views, he referred to these as 'reservations'. These included areas of either 'high ground' for its 'health-giving influence, its value in the character of the landscape, and the exhilarating effect of an extensive outlook'; 'points of special interest ... to prevent the destruction of scenes of artistic or traditional interest'; and 'river banks'. River banks were intended 'to preserve the characteristic qualities of waterside scenery, and to preclude

10. W. W. Pettigrew, 'Public parks and gardens', *The Gardeners' Chronicle* Vol.41, 3RD Series (1907), p.23.

11. J. C. Loudon, 'Hints for breathing places for the Metropolis, and for country towns and villages, on fixed principles', *Gardener's Magazine* v (1829), pp.686-690.



39. Two of the unpremiered designs submitted for the competition for Southfields Park, Wandsworth, later renamed King George's Park, both showing the influence of Thomas Mawson (TOWN PLANNING REVIEW 9/4 (1922), PLATE 48)

40. The executed design for King George's Park, Wandsworth by Percy Cane united the various sections of the site through a glade. The polluted river Wandle was disguised by planting (PERCY CANE, THE EARTH IS MY CANVAS (1956), PLATE 92)

building operations in low lying areas'. Public access should be allowed to all agricultural land fronting the river 'to such a depth as shall preserve the existing effect of the river and its banks'. These and any 'important and characteristic views' should be preserved by acquisition. This was the case along the Thames, but also along the tributaries Roding, Lea, Brent and Colne to the north, and the Ravensbourne, Wandle, Mole and Wey to the south.¹² What is remarkable about this proposal from a trained architect is that, apart from the royal avenue, it proposed no major interventions, and Lanchester himself described the process of establishing a park system as one of identifying the existing parks and commons, adding 'suitable additions' after which 'it only remains to provide a few grass-bordered avenues to link them together, and we have a whole...'.

There was very little emphasis on the creation and design of spaces, which clearly was secondary, presumably because Lanchester considered formal eighteenth-century gardens and nineteenth-century landscape parks as having less educational value than the modern parks, which he considered as seen through the eyes of a 'social reformer'. From this perspective he saw a requirement for two types of provision; firstly, the nature reserve 'where townfolk can appreciate those aspects of life which would otherwise be beyond the range of their observation'; and secondly, the recreation ground 'varying in type according to local demand, but laid out to afford the maximum accommodation for the physical activities which counteract the defects due to their absence in most of the occupations of the dwellers in a town.'

When finally acknowledging that a 'well-furnished flower garden' might be a popular feature, he was rather disparaging about traditional bedding, describing this as 'the few circles and crescents, carpet bedded, that every self-respecting park includes'. His preference in that case was for: 'Real flower gardens with herbaceous borders, beds gay with well-chosen colours, water and water plants, flowering shrubs and trees, where the changes from season to season ensure a

sustained interest.' By noting that such flower gardens would occasionally be found with the old houses that had 'sometimes come in the possession of the public', Lanchester appears to suggest that there was no need to lay these out afresh, believing that these, and 'woodlands with streamlets and viewpoints' delighted 'townsfolk' equally.¹³

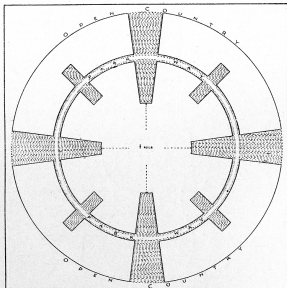
Thomas H. Mawson (1861-1933), the best-known British landscape architect of this period, who had come to prominence in 1900 with a folio publication entitled *The Art and Craft of Garden Making*, also tackled the issue of the design of public parks. At the international Town Planning Conference held in London in October 1910, the open spaces and park system for that city were among the main topics and Mawson was one of the speakers. His talk referred to Lanchester, who was also at this conference; he presented a diagram of the city in relation to its parks that was compared with those shown by Professor Rudolph Eberstadt, produced for the Greater Berlin Plan (*fig. 38*). Following a discussion of the minimum area for open spaces and the generosity of parks systems of Boston and Chicago, Mawson arrived at the issue of 'design and equipment of public parks and gardens' in Britain, noting that 'the most fatal mistake is the failure of municipal authorities to recognize the claims of landscape architecture'. The nation had a tradition of great private gardens, but neither their owner-designers, nor professionals were involved in the design of parks, which was 'almost entirely the work of amateurs'.

In Mawson's view, common mistakes with laying out parks and gardens included the fact that it was being overlooked that they had to be planned in relation to their surroundings. In Britain they were often laid out on left-over bits of land initially intended for other purposes rather than being laid out in a systematic fashion, as in Paris. As a result there were irregular boundary lines with a boundary road created to follow the sinuous course of this border. Another cause of failure he cited was the fact that 'landscape gardening' (as opposed to landscape architecture) was

12. H. V. Lanchester, 'Park systems for great cities', *The Builder* 95 (1908), pp.343-348.

13. Though this quote dates from a later and very different era, it probably represents his earlier views: H. V. Lanchester, *The Art of Town Planning* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1925 [1932 ed.]), p.146; pp.160-161.

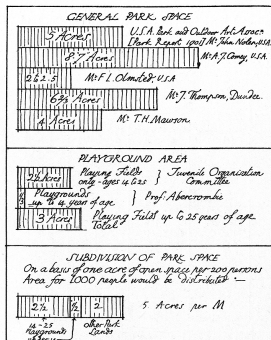
On the whole it seems that the best general criterion for the apportionment of public open space is in proportion to population rather than any fixed proportion of area, and as town planning schemes will determine the general character of buildings in, and density of houses over particular areas, it will be comparatively easy to calculate the population that will have to be catered for in each part. If the standards set by the



2. Diameter of Large Circle, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles; Area, 1,131 acres; estimated Population, 45,240.
- | | | |
|---|----|--------------------------|
| Area of each Park Wedge (exclusive of Parkway) | = | 152 |
| Area of Pleasure in Circular Parkway | = | 38 |
| Area of oblong Playgrounds (exclusive of Parkway), 9 acres each = | 36 | |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 226, a |
| | | $1/5$ th of Large Circle |
| | | 1 acre per 200 per |

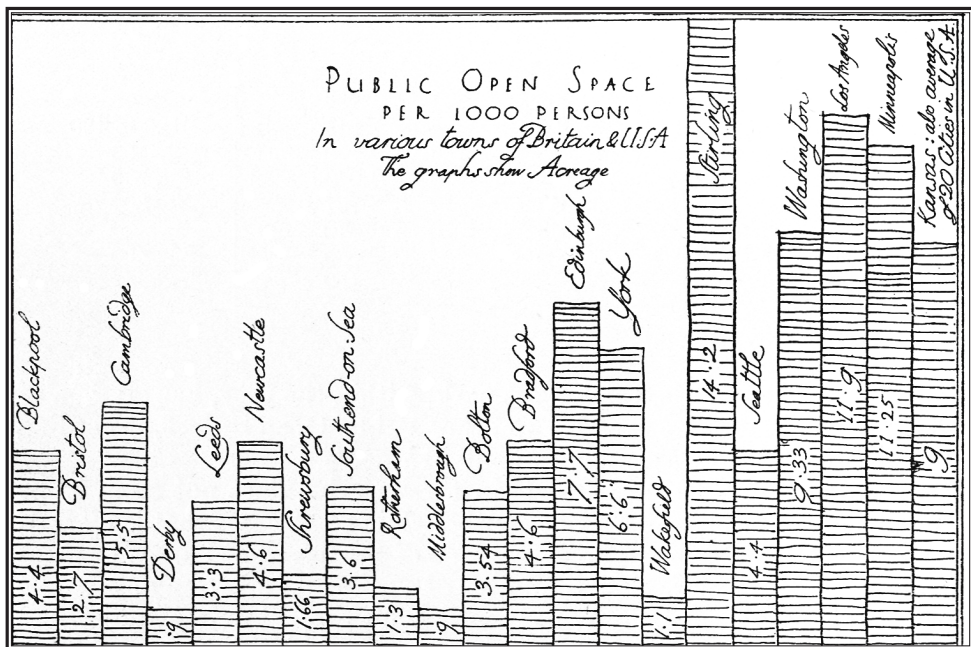
Juvenile Organisation Committee and other authorities that have been quoted are accepted, a general proportion of 1 acre of permanent open space per 200 or 250 of population does not seem an extravagant ideal to aim at ultimately. As such spaces are often of so much benefit to surrounding land, one would expect that to provide for the ultimate realisation

of some such proportion should, in the case of undeveloped land, be an economical proceeding on the part of a Local Authority if use is made of a town planning scheme and of the opportunity that it may provide for guiding development on to the best lines when the time comes. In each district, local financial and other considerations will, of course, be deciding factors. At an average density of 40 people per acre, over a district, 1 acre of park and playground space for every 200 people is equivalent to



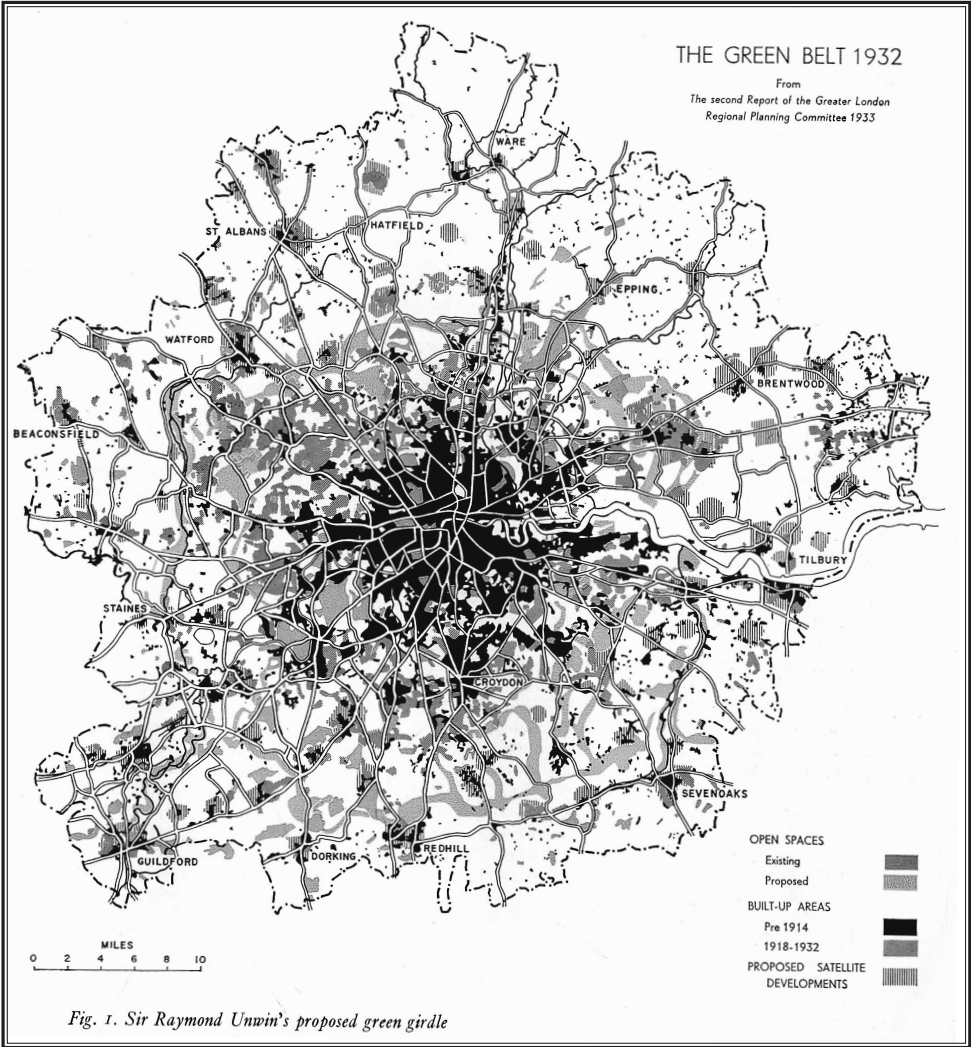
The upper space gives various Standards of the number of acres per thousand of the population for general open spaces.

one-fifth of the area. Even this proportion, spaced to meet playground requirements, would, as the diagrams show, hardly allow the provision of one really large park or nature reserve, and such large space is a great asset to a big city where the open country is far distant.



41. The town planner George Pepler surveyed the various open space standards proposed by different specialists including landscape architects John Nolen, F. L. Olmsted and T. H. Mawson (TOWN PLANNING REVIEW 10/1 (1923), PP.16-17)

42. Pepler showed how the provision of open space in cities in Britain and the USA varied widely and that provision to meet all needs was a matter 'requiring most careful consideration' (TOWN PLANNING REVIEW 10/1 (1923), p.20)



43. In 1932 Raymond Unwin advised the London County Council and put forward proposals for a concentric park system that he referred to as a 'green girdle'.

It was the starting point for discussions that ultimately led to the

Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act, 1938

(REDRAWING IN: MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, *THE GREEN BELTS* (1962), p.3)

supposed to be 'an art which aimed at concealing art' and one that 'seeks to reproduce Nature in her "gentler moods"'. Landscape architecture had to be inventive, hence the objectives should be clearly understood, in order to express 'the motif' and understand 'the local requirements', as well as 'necessities of the site', conceived within a context of 'knowledge of traditional design'. Mawson identified the fourth cause of failure of public parks as the 'introduction of all manner of cheap cast-iron erections', noting that 'Cultured design' was not possible with such features. A fifth cause resulted from a lack of practical knowledge of planting, with practical gardeners seeking 'novelty, variety, and rarity for their own sake,' resulting in 'huddled groups of sickly, half-starved arboricultural curiosities'. Instead there should be an artist gardener, with wide knowledge of trees and shrubs, especially native trees, who might prefer to plant only 'six well-proved varieties'.

While he acknowledged Britain 'as the home of incomparable fine gardens', Mawson noted that the best examples, where English landscape design was applied to public parks, were on the continent. Drawing attention to 'the expansive lawn and woodland effects' referred to as 'our national heritage' it was clear that this referred to 'peculiarly local and national' conditions, where utility was considered over ornament. 'Being a sporting and yet intensely economical people, we seldom lay out a park purely as an ornamental feature, but design it upon a revenue-producing basis'. Parks generally included the maximum amount of recreation space preferring those activities that produced revenue. In some instances parks were closed on specific dates to enable fees to be charged for annual festivals or fêtes. Artificial lakes provided an opportunity to charge rental for boating and skating; at bowling greens there were charges for lockers and at tennis lawns for the use of nets; at bandstands there were charges for the hire of chairs. On the continent this was different, and so was the 'determinant artistic factor', i.e. 'green lawns' in England, and trees, spinney woods or woodland on the continent, which affected both ground plans and perspective views. Thus the common French treatment of 'many

curved lines of walks starting from a single centre, and all curving in the same direction, but widening out as they get further from the centre' would be appropriate through a spinney wood, but not across a lawn.

Calling for municipal authorities to think more seriously about design of parks, Mawson considered that the greatest opportunities were in:

...convenient planning and arrangement of recreation grounds and a fuller appreciation of our great heritage – beautiful lawns and trees – and when with true artistic insight we learn to grasp the significance of existing features whether of near or distant views, and acquire the skill perfectly to weave in the new with the old without discord.

This confirmed his ideas about the English style in garden design that might 'be formal or informal'; it might be 'architectural' or might 'so forget the canons of architecture as to run to wild Nature and help her, as Sedding put it, to "speak the truth"'.¹⁴ The most perfect characteristic would 'be found in its adaptation to the site, locality, and environment, in its avoidance of engineering feats at least in the country'. In the context of a municipal authority it would 'follow a course of wise restraint and avoid the landscapist's eccentricities' and would 'follow a logical and artistic progression' by 'the preservation of every natural beauty in the informal style, and by following Art to be supreme mistress in the formal style.' This Mawson considered to be in harmony with architectural tradition, which entailed 'monumental expression of the civic centre', but preferred 'rural simplicity in the suburb'.¹⁵

In *Civic Art: Studies in town planning, parks, boulevards and open spaces* (1911) Mawson elaborated on his lecture, dedicating three chapters to the issue of public parks in this well-illustrated folio volume. Clearly intended to impress a potential civic clientele, the chapter on park systems retained a strong London bias by reiterating Lanchester's

14. He refers to and provides a rather free quote from: John Dando Sedding, *Garden Craft Old and New* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1895), p.31.

15. Thomas H. Mawson, 'Public parks and gardens: their design and equipment' RIBA, *Town Planning Conference, London, 10-15 October 1910: Transactions* (London: RIBA, 1911), pp.434-51 (437).

proposals. A chapter on design of public parks was also set up in such a way that London might learn from other examples, while the chapter on equipment in public parks commenced with praise for the Hyde Park Corner entrance designed by the London County Council (LCC)¹⁶ and then provided examples of buildings and furniture from elsewhere as a source of inspiration and encouragement to improve standards.¹⁷ Despite these efforts to ingratiate himself in the hopes of being invited to design a park for London, the only commission he received was for the King Edward Memorial Park, Shadwell (East London), produced in 1915, and which remained unexecuted. Its construction could not commence due to a ban on the employment of workpeople in wartime conditions. On the death of the chairman of the committee that had commissioned the plan the project became the responsibility of the LCC to whom Mawson gifted his plan. When the Chairman of the Parks Committee informed him that 'they had their own landscape gardeners', Mawson responded that he 'was offering the work of a landscape architect, and not that of a landscape gardener'. He concluded that 'The poor man did not know the difference',¹⁸ which indicates the disregard for professional designers and an inability to recognize what landscape architects might be able to bring to park projects.

As a result of this attitude few parks were designed by professional designers; one exception was Wandsworth Park – Southfields Park, later renamed King George's Park, which was put out to competition in 1921, with the first prize awarded to the architect T. R. Somerford and a second prize to Bridgman & Eggers, also an architectural practice. The competition was reviewed together with one for Seaford, Essex, in *Town Planning Review*, under the heading 'Two Wasteful

Competitions'. The results of this competition were considered to be disastrous as 'no competent assessor was appointed' since the drawings apparently had been assessed by a jury lacking knowledge of landscape design. The programmes of requirements 'were badly worked out' and because no consultation with the client was allowed, drawings submitted were 'always in the nature of preliminary sketches' and needed to be 'restudied' prior to execution. While the main excuse for competitions was 'obviously to get ideas' this would have been of greater benefit 'if the fundamental conditions were settled by a competent assessor'.¹⁹ In the event – perhaps as a result of the criticism – neither of the prize winners was involved in the layout, and the executed design by garden designer Percy Cane (1881-1976) was opened two years later (figs. 39 & 40).

The long narrow site cut up by roads was later described by Cane as 'a more or less derelict site of rough grassland'; it was also partially along the river Wandle, which diverted from the site as it approached the Thames, and was at the time very polluted. A requirement for sports facilities dominated the agenda, which included 'cricket pitches, a running track and pavilion, fifteen tennis courts and a tennis pavilion, a bowling green, a putting green, a children's garden, bandstand and swimming and paddling pools'. Instead of lumping all the sports facilities together in an American style sport park, they were arranged in blocks along the edges, disguised by planting and with sufficient space left to create a long narrow 'glade' throughout the length of the site. The latter visually connected the different sections of the park and would have provided a real sense of space. Sculpted planting around the edge of the site was intended to recall the notion of 'country scenery' within a densely built-up area of London. The artificial nature of the Wandle was also disguised by the planting of flowering trees and shrubs.²⁰

King George's Park was one of the rare schemes that was executed following a design by an independent landscape designer. The

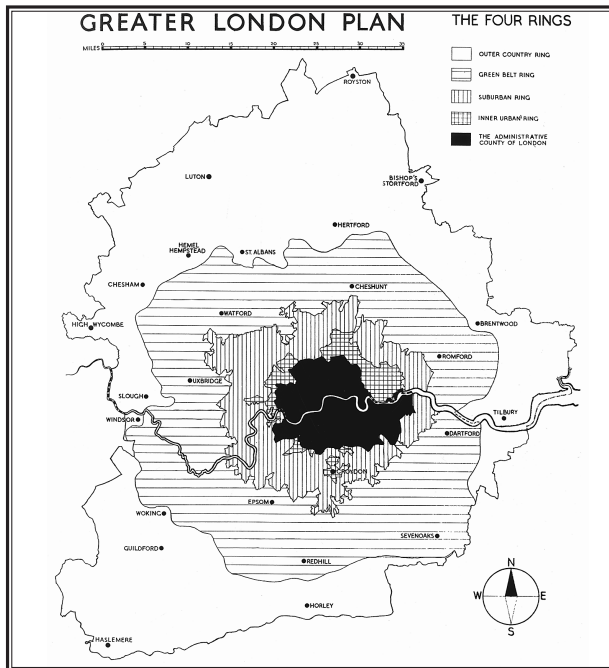
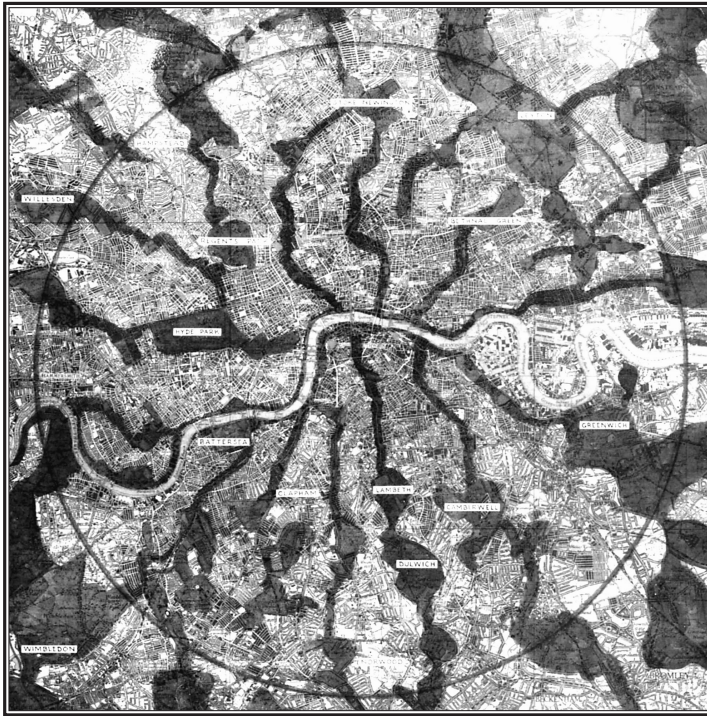
16. Mawson may just have tried to be polite as the scheme here was heavily criticized by S. D. Adshead, 'Town planning and amenities' *Town Planning Review* 5/2 (1914), pp.86-90: 'How utterly stupid to plant trees in the centre of what is a tree-surrounded space. As well take the flowers from their beds and plant them in the path; and why plant trees in a business thoroughfare...'

17. Thomas H. Mawson, *Civic Art: Studies in town planning, parks, boulevards and open spaces* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1911), pp.79-95; 161-206.

18. Thomas H. Mawson, *The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect* (London: Richards, 1927), pp.247-8.

19. 'Two Wasteful Competitions', *Town Planning Review* 9/4 (1922), pp.270-270v.

20. Percy S. Cane, *The Earth is my Canvas* (London: Methuen, 1956), pp.153-56.



44. Ralph Tubbs was one of the first to publish a hypothetical scheme for reconstructing London after the War, based on a radial pattern and incorporating existing parks
(RALPH TUBBS, *LIVING IN CITIES* (1942), p.31)

45. Patrick Abercrombie's proposals took a regional perspective, proposing four rings around London, ranging from urban, suburban to the greenbelt and 'outer country ring' that were supposed to be legislated and were designed to restrict growth, which instead was to take place in new towns
(ABERCROMBIE, *GREATER LONDON PLAN* 1944 (1945), DIAGRAM FACING P.30)



46. The 'Open space plan' incorporated in the *County of London Plan* (1943) produced by Patrick Abercrombie and J. H. Forshaw provided realistic proposals based on a profound survey (FORSHAW AND ABERCROMBIE, *COUNTY OF LONDON PLAN* (1943), p.46f.)

period post World War I was dominated by recovery and rebuilding prosperity. One of the issues was to restore the 'health and vigour' of the population, and a simple, potent and economical way of doing this was by means of provision of outdoor recreation. However, recreational spaces were not available everywhere where they were required. This was the issue that encouraged George Pepler, founder member and past president of the Town Planning Institute, to go on a mission to promote open space plans for cities, which required an exploration and survey of standards as to where and how much space was required. His survey encompassed standards applied in the USA - including in the *Park Census Report* (1901) by the American Park and Outdoor Art Association, John Nolen, A. J. Coney, F. L. Olmsted - while in Britain those provided by J. Thomson in a development plan for Dundee, and those adopted by Mawson, were discussed (*figs. 41 & 42*). Other standards included an emphasis on provision for playgrounds utilised by Professor Patrick Abercrombie in his instruction to students at Liverpool University. It was thought 'that the best general criterion for the apportionment of public open space' should be 'in proportion to population rather than any fixed proportion of areas', with Pepler recommending the standards of the Juvenile Organisation Committee of 1 acre of open space per 200 or 250 of population. He concluded that 'the adequate, and well allocated, provision of open space of all kinds to meet the needs of the present and prospective population, is a matter requiring most careful consideration by Town Planners'.²¹

Open space allocation was a main issue at the 1924 International Town Planning Conference in Amsterdam, where Fritz Schumacher promoted 3 square metres for each inhabitant; F. Flavel Shurtleff in the regional plan for New York and its environs one acre per 150 persons (a standard referred to as 'Good American practice'); Hendrik Cleyndert from the Netherlands promoted 20 square metres per inhabitant as a normal standard (10 square metres was minimum); Martin Wagner's standards in *Städtische Freiflächenpolitik* (1915) were subjected to closer

scrutiny since they provided more detailed recommendations: 19½ square metres per inhabitant, of which 13 square meters for the town wood, 4 square metres for sports and playgrounds and 2½ square metres for ornamental parks and parkways. Thus the Wagner, Dutch and English standards all practically amounted to the same standard of one acre of open space per 200 population.²²

The above became the standard that was adopted by the National Playing Fields Association, after it was founded in 1926 aiming 'to support local authorities and other bodies in any steps they take to provide people with adequate recreation grounds'.²³ The Association argued that in order 'to provide for the bare needs of health and wellbeing' they endorsed 'a minimum standard' of 'five acres per 1,000 persons, of which four acres are required for physical recreation; the odd acre per 1,000 helping to meet the needs of quiet refreshment in pleasant places'. While mainly concerned with the provision of playing fields they recognized 'the need for places of quiet retreat and recuperation, a need that increases in proportion to the growing speed and hustle of urban life'. In order to achieve their objectives they demanded 'a definite long-sighted policy' and 'the preparation of a comprehensive plan, based on careful study of local circumstances, comprising a definite system to meet economically and efficiently the requirements of persons of all ages'.²⁴

Under the presidency and vice presidency of notable men, the Association formed a council on which various sports, educational and philanthropic societies and numerous municipalities were represented. They then set about organising committees in counties and towns that aimed to 'excite local interest and enthusiasm for the movement'. A national survey was organised by inviting local authorities to complete forms showing size of parks and recreation grounds and availability for different games and sports. The deficiencies identified had to be made up by the local committees 'by exerting pressure on local bodies or by securing private donations

22. G. L. Pepler, 'Open spaces', *Town Planning Review* 11/3 (1925), pp.189-90.

23. 'Playing grounds for the people', *The British Medical Journal* 2/3427 (1926), p.493.

24. 'Playing fields and town planning', *Town Planning Review* 12/2 (1926), pp.117-121.

21. G. L. Pepler, 'Open spaces', *Town Planning Review* 10/1 (1923), pp.11-24.

and subscriptions'. For example Thomas Wall provided £20,000 to purchase playing fields in south-west London and the trustees of the 58TH (London) Division Fund pledged £3,000 to buy playing fields in memory of the London men who fell in the War.²⁵ Thus the emphasis became on quantity and provision of playing fields with lesser attention as to what these places looked like.

The Town Planning Acts of 1909 and 1919 made town planning compulsory for towns over 20,000 inhabitants, but Professor Patrick Geddes had warned against plans for individual towns and promoted regional planning as had already been done in Boston, Massachusetts. One of the main considerations here was public recreation and its importance in establishing a park system that did not adhere to 'artificial boundaries or human developments which have led to the need for parks', and so the need was stressed for local authorities to look across their boundaries. In Boston the park system involved 38 local authorities plus 15,000 acres of parks and 25 miles of parkway. By 1923 some 12 regional plans had been produced in England; while this included several areas in the London area, a regional plan for Greater London was not completed till 1929.²⁶ This included an open space section written by Raymond Unwin that was fully costed. In this 'memorandum' he adopted the standards laid down by the National Playing Fields Association, calculating that in order to satisfy their standard would require 40.5 square miles. He recognized the shortcomings in that this was calculated for a particular number of people, while the population of London was set to increase substantially, and a need for additional space for pleasure and picnic required further space. Unwin proposed new standards that amounted to 65.14 square miles of greenspace. He envisioned that this could be achieved by a park system, or 'green girdle' that surrounded the region with additional radial arms turning towards the city. It is clear how influential previous advisors had been and

remarkable how proposed standards were generally adopted.²⁷

The economic crisis temporarily halted any progress, but when the building industry picked up, there was renewed impetus to realise Unwin's green girdle, which by that stage had been surpassed by new housing (*fig. 43*). A scheme was put forward in 1935 'to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a green belt or girdle of open space lands, not necessarily continuous, but as readily accessible from the completely urbanised area of London as practicable'. Grants were made available to local authorities to preserve lands and 18,000 acres were acquired within a few months, by which stage it was felt necessary to pass a bill to provide rules and guidelines. This ultimately ended up as the *Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act* (1938).²⁸ By 1939 the Green Belt was already so much part of the open space network that it was highlighted in a popular publication such as *Open-Air London* (1939).²⁹

The emphasis on fulfilling standards meant a bias on quantity over quality of design, and little was published on design of public parks. Pettigrew's handbook *Municipal Parks Layout, Management and Administration* (1937) emphasised a concern with quality detail for play and sports provision. There was no discussion of spatial issues or aesthetics.³⁰ A series of articles by Thomas Mawson's nephew Robert Mattocks in *Town Planning Review* in 1937 and 1938 provided a much more ambitious approach, cribbing illustrations from the magazine, but also including a substantial number from elsewhere, with examples from many countries. It dealt with the park system and park planning, producing a typology of different greenspaces and including planting.³¹ Another publication entitled *Play Parks*

27. Greater London Regional Planning Committee, *First Report* (London, 1929) accessed via a transcription by Tom Turner at: http://www.gardenvisit.com/landscape_architecture/london_landscape_architecture/planning_pos_public_open_space/ramond_unwin_1929_landscape_plan_london.

28. Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *The Green Belts* (London: HMSO, 1962), pp.2-4.

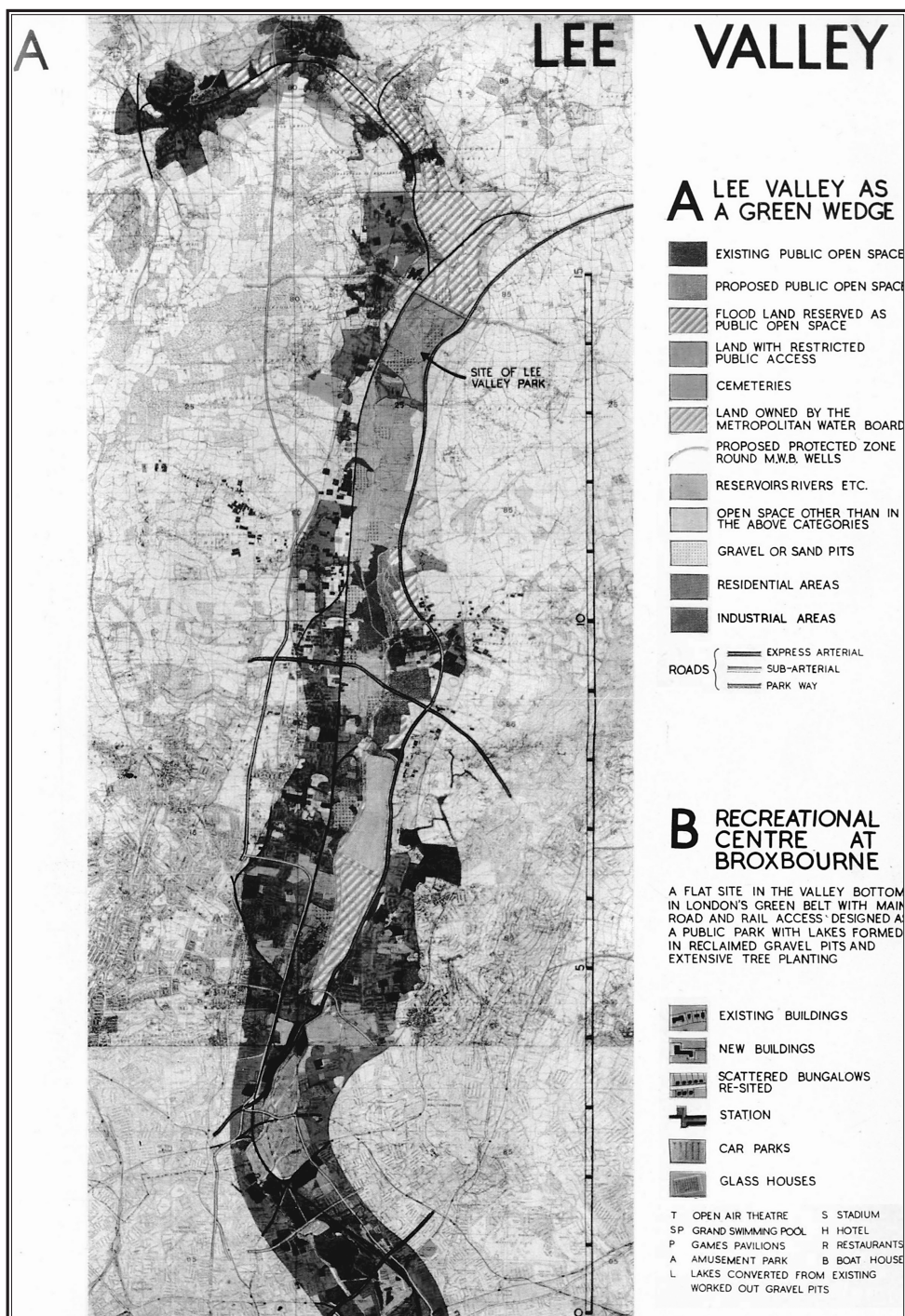
29. An., *Open-Air London* (London: London County Council, London Transport, 1939), pp.85-138.

30. W. W. Pettigrew, *Municipal Parks Layout, Management and Administration* (London: Journal of Park Administration, 1937).

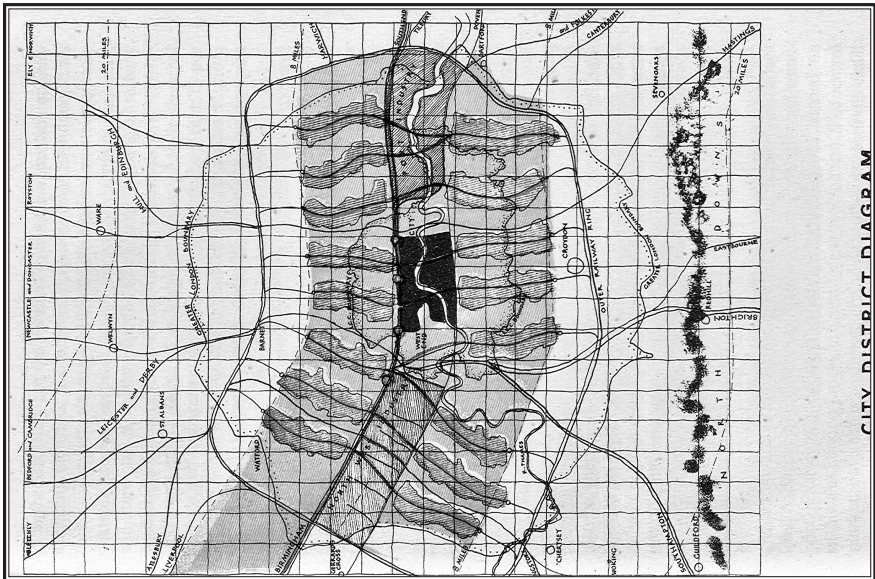
31. Robert H. Mattocks, 'The park system', *Town Planning Review* (TPR) 17/3 (1937), pp.161-183; 'Park planning: part 2' TPR 17/4 (1937), pp.243-270; 'Park planning: part 3' TPR 18/1 (1938), pp.27-40; 'Park planning: part 4' TPR 18/2 (1938), pp.105-127; 'Park planning: part 5' TPR 18/3 (1939), pp.187-202.

25. 'More playing fields', *The Spectator*, 30 April 1927, pp.755-756.

26. Patrick Abercrombie, 'Regional planning', *Town Planning Review* 10/2 (1923), pp.109-118 (111-2).



47. The proposals for Lee Valley envisioned this as a 'green wedge' penetrating the city. Various generations have each since made additions to completing this vision, most lately for the 2012 Olympic Games (ABERCROMBIE, GREATER LONDON PLAN 1944 (1945), PLATE BETWEEN PP.170-171)



48. Peter Shephard's proposal for Broxbourne Park included as an example of a modern park; located either side of the Lee it was designed in an apparent casual manner with the site transected by paths, with tree planting aligning some of these, thus forming a range of differently shaped spaces. The approach taken here was that of avoidance of stylistic references, and in doing so the park would have appeared much like the commons so admired by Leberecht Migge
(ABERCROMBIE, GREATER LONDON PLAN 1944 (1945), PLATE BETWEEN PP.170-171)

49. The plans by the MARS Group foresaw a re-organisation of London that included demolition of suburbs and rebuilding with bands of high-rise housing interspersed by greenspace. It shows the extent to which park systems were now part of modern city planning (MAXWELL FRY, FINE BUILDING (LONDON: FABER AND FABER, 1944), PLATE 15)

(c.1937) was a brochure at King George VI's ascension to the crown in 1936 and was written by town planner and landscape architect Thomas Adams. This encouraged the creation of play parks and tree planting to mark the occasion, with contributions from members of the Institute of Landscape Architects. It included various hypothetical schemes for parks by Adams, and his associates Prentice Mawson and Peter Youngman, as well as by L. H. Bucknell and Ruth Ellis; J. H. Forshaw (the architect to the LCC); and a playing field at Stanmore, London by Stanley Hart.³² The fact that so many hypothetical projects were included is indicative of the lack of professional involvement in the design of actual parks during this period.

Following the heavy air-bombardments in 1940-1941 it was necessary to consider the post-war reconstruction or redevelopment of the city. The architect Ralph Tubbs (1912-1996) was one of the first to produce a coherent scheme; in 1940 he had organised an exhibition entitled 'Living in Cities', producing a pamphlet with that title two years later, after the destruction of the bombing gave 'the chance for replanning' (fig. 44). In this he produced a modernist vision of London, with housing around squares and offices in tower blocks, all this connected to a radial park system.³³ However it was Patrick Abercrombie who was officially commissioned to devise 'methods and machinery for the planning and carrying out of the reconstruction of Town and Country'. He collaborated on this with Forshaw to produce the *County of London Plan* (1943). One of the early chapters was on the 'Open spaces and park system', which identified and addressed maldistribution and deficiencies in the provision of public open space and proposed standards. By this stage Abercrombie considered that 3 acres per 1,000 would be provided by the Green Belt, enabling the reduction of Unwin's 7 acres per 1,000 to 4 acres per 1,000. This included all green open space types including: amenity parks and parkways; general playing fields; school playing fields; recreation and sports centres; small play centres for children; formal squares

or rest gardens within the residential area; riverside pleasancess; amenity open space; and allotments (figs. 45 & 46).³⁴

When Abercrombie produced the regional plan, the *Greater London Plan 1944* (1945) the emphasis within the report had shifted from the notion of the park system to 'Outdoor Recreation: Open Spaces' and 'open space system' and 'park system', terms that were used interchangeably. The components for the Greater London park system included a wider range of open spaces: children's playgrounds; town squares, rest gardens; school playgrounds and fields; landscaped town parks; large playing fields; recreation and sports centres; connecting and radiating parkways; interpenetrating wedges; smaller green belts and strips of open space; commons and heathlands; the Thames, the Lee and other rivers; green belt reservations, downs, hills, forests, woodlands, outer parks; areas of high scenic value; the outer circumambient country of normal farmland. This shows that Abercrombie did not standardise his approaches and questioned what needed to be included in terms of open space for each plan.³⁵

Within the various exemplary schemes included in the Plan was one for a park system and park in the Lee Valley (fig. 47). Drawn up by the architect and landscape architect Peter Shephard (1913-2002), it provided an alternative vision to the valley that was cluttered up with heavy industry, and it was referred to as an opportunity 'for a great piece of constructive, preservative and regenerative planning'. At the proposed Broxbourne Park, disused gravel workings were to be converted into 'large water-parks'; additionally it included an amusement park, games pavilions and restaurants, hotels, a sports stadium and swimming pool, all to the south side (fig. 48). The layout however was not park-like, but rational, with walks cutting across the site in direct lines, with some aligned with trees and others through open meadows.³⁶ This created a variety of spaces and the resulting design was not greatly different from the general

34. J. H. Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *County of London Plan* (London: Macmillan, 1943), pp.36-47. 'Chapter Three. Open spaces and park system'.

35. Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944* (London: HMSO, 1945), pp.97-110.

36. *Ibid.*, pp.106, 108, plus Lee Valley and Broxbourne plates.

32. Thomas Adams, *Play Parks with suggestions for their Design, Equipment and Planning* (London: Coronation Planting Committee, [1937].

33. Ralph Tubbs, *Living in Cities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942), pp.21, 31, 44, 45.

arrangement of commons, so however significant in impact, Abercrombie's graphically well-produced proposals were relatively low-key in design terms and the proposed approach was pragmatic, applied with common sense. In this it responded to the conservative nature of public opinion.³⁷ By this stage it was clear that the non-design approach celebrated by Migge was engrained within English society; it certainly was not considered modernist.

The conservative approach resulted in a response from the MARS Group (Modern Architectural Research Group) - the English branch of CIAM (Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne) - who produced an alternative plan for London in a rather Corbusian manner that meant wholesale demolition of suburbs, to be rebuilt in parallel bands of high-rise housing interspersed by a park system (*fig. 49*). It shows the extent that park systems were now engrained as part of city planning, with this concept detailed by the landscape architect Christopher Tunnard (1910-1979).³⁸ This scheme pre-empted approaches in the post-war era when landscape architects became more generally involved in the design of open spaces, although in continued austerity there were few opportunities to provide any large new parks, which had to wait till the final decade of the twentieth century.

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FINSBURY CIRCUS: FROM MOORFIELDS TO CROSSRAIL

By Sally Williams

The beautiful public garden in the centre of Finsbury Circus in the City, currently largely obscured by unprepossessing hoardings courtesy of Crossrail, is located on arguably the capital's oldest place of public recreation - the Moorfields. These fields north of the City walls were recorded in use as such as early as 1173, having been given to the City in trust 'for the ease of the citizens' by a wealthy widow before the Norman Conquest.¹ Over the centuries the fortunes of this tract of land rose and fell, and it has undergone a series of makeovers as a place of public recreation, most recently when the private garden that had been enjoyed by residents of Finsbury Circus since c.1820 was 'thrown open' to the public in 1901. Its latest transformation will be revealed in 2018 when the fencing comes down.

The early history of the area that became known as Moorfields reveals some interesting stories: there is evidence of prehistoric human activity, an Iron Age burial site, and of course Roman occupation.² The City Wall, built by the Romans in the latter part of the second century, crossed the main channel of the now subterranean Walbrook River, which divided the Roman City in two, reaching the Thames at Dowgate.³ Flowing from rivulets in Islington and Hoxton, the western section of the Walbrook runs down City Road under the west side of Finsbury Pavement, passing into the City through a culvert described by John Stow in 1598 as a 'subterranean aqueduct'.⁴ The eastern section from Hoxton flows round the eastern side of Finsbury Pavement to another similar culvert in London Wall. As this land to the north of the City Wall was liable to flooding, it became known as *Fenbury* or *Moor*

37. Annabel Downs, *Peter Shepheard* (London: LDT, 2004); Jan Woudstra and Peter Blundell Jones, 'Some modernist houses and their gardens: Part 3: Sir Peter Shepheard's house and garden, 21 Well Road, London (1977-82)', *Die Gartenkunst* 19/2 (2007), pp. 399-410.

38. David Jacques and Jan Woudstra, *Landscape Modernism Renounced: The career of Christopher Tunnard (1910-1979)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp.198-202.

1. See Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, *The London Square* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2012), p.19.

2. See City of London, *Finsbury Circus Conservation Area Character Summary and Management Strategy SPD*, adopted 14 July 2015, p.7. Evidence, including a flint tool and an Iron Age burial found during excavations at 12-15 Finsbury Circus, indicates that there may have been a small settlement on the banks of the Walbrook.

3. See Richard Trench and Ellis Hillman, *London under London. A subterranean guide* (John Murray, 1984; new edition 1993, reprinted 1994), pp.26-29.

4. Within the City wall the Walbrook was entirely culverted by the time the Agas map was drawn in c.1562.