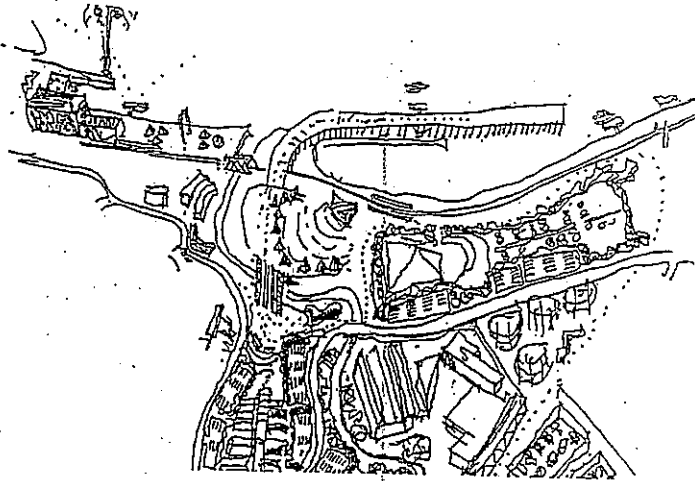


THE DUNSTON MANUSCRIPT

BOB JARVIS



Gateshead Revisited
5 December 2001 London

Cowcross Street in December, the UDG Christmas event... exactly how do Urban Designers celebrate the season and more?

This year Dr Bob Jarvis of South Bank University and the regular Endpiece writer in Urban Design Quarterly launched himself on an attentive audience with the Dunston Chronicles, an illustrated poetic reading of an hour's length.

Fish out of water, voice out of time, style out of fashion? Far from it. Bob's flow drew the audience over an atypical, but all too typical, urban design project, the Gateshead bid for a National Garden Festival, which failed on the narrated account, but succeeded with merit a few years later.

Visually we were treated to a sequence of images, sketches and documents dredged from the frequently junked world of local authority creativity – many moved too fast to catch the eye. Layer on this the Jarvis diary of events in the late 80s – the meetings, more meetings, the official views, the posed dance of local power-seekers as the reality of the bid unfolded. Then layer on this the problems and opportunities of the Gateshead site, the personalities – yes personalities – of the designers, and the slow progress of the dreams to the masterplan. To the inconclusive conclusion, Bob kept the audience alive with his well-pointed lines and repertoire of vocal effects...but, as they frequently ask round my way, is this Urban Design?

For most readers, urban design has always focused on a plan and its progress, with dreams and aspirations ducking and diving for contact with the finance and programme-led reality. We look back on a scheme – winning or losing – as a staid sequence of drawings, minuted decisions and outcomes. What gets lost is the personal and group development, the role of personalities, the infrequent team activities, the role of emotions and beliefs in the process. Inevitable perhaps, but surprising given the fundamental humanism of urban design.

When questioned, I find it very difficult to provide students with any published accounts of the way in which urban design schemes were conceived and effected – the human drama is kept for moans to the family or exchanges in the pub. What Bob Jarvis succeeded in doing was to bring our shared professional interest to life... to suggest the humour and tragedy of urban designing. There was sufficient response in the multi-aged audience to recognise that he hit the spot.

Writing for an urban design audience is limiting enough, to wander off into poetic accounts of urban design is clearly insane. I was reminded of Black Mountain and Ed Dorn, then of Louis MacNiece, but that's my problem. Nevertheless I hope that Bob finds similar settings to extend his commentary. He needs urban design, but more important, urban design needs the provocative asides of Bob Jarvis. #

Brian Goodey

D. (No image)

"This is not a story my people tell. It is something I know myself.
And when I do my job, I'm thinking about these things.
Because when I do my job, that is what I think about" ¹

They say:

That necromancy's out of style these days
That rock'n roll's the shamanism of today
and planning, that supremely rational art,
is now a science,
of muddling through.

This is what people said and did,
written down at the time,
so it must be true:

Words and ideas and lines on paper,
where ideas come from, and who said what to whom,
with what result.

(Or none at all.)

This is a true story.

Though this is not the story my people tell,
long ago and far away,
that midnight madness conjured out of Maytime's air
seemed real enough.

Its about:

project implementation and poetic anthropology and office politics
and how things start and how they finish
and love and money
and a dream and a memory.

1. Dunston Basin (in black and white)

It's about:

-the spirit of the place (that ghost kept locked up in professional language)
- fuzzy notions, vague ideas, doodles pinned up on the wall and sketches carefully
covered up at night.

It's a kind of long drawn out conversation, a kind of talking
about special places.

And all sorts of things that get forgotten,
all sorts of silences in the official record,
that professionals don't speak about,
much,
in daylight, on the record,
outside the analyst's chair,

And when they say, like they often do, when they're afraid of something they
daren't say,

"You can't use words like that",

remember :

we deal in dreams

2. Aerial view : track beds and car dumps.

The criteria for conservation are quite clearly set out in successive circulars,
and amplified by successive listings of buildings and designations of areas,
and the legal tests of appeals and inquiries, modified and interpreted through local
policies and practice.

It should all have been clear enough.

That this was off the map.

Out of bounds.

Someone else's patch.

But on the cyanide blue chipped flood foul flatlands
in the November sleet by the abandoned Retort House.
In the archives of the Journal of Ferro Concrete,

In the small print of the Circulars,

between the lines of the third person passives of the administrative *parole* ,
who could tell?

3 : Close up detail - structural timbers, surface decay.

Riverside mud.

Rotted 15x15 pitch pine bolted into trestles, decked and overlayed with standard-

gauge rail tracks falling towards the landward end on a slight gradient.

Ground so foul you can't walk over it.

Streams so bad nothing lives in them.

Factories. Flats. Gas holders. Grade separated intersections.

Coke works. Subways.

Car dumps.

Abandoned sidings.

The dynamic landscape of the late twentieth century

4: Eight scenarios for Dunston Staiths : No. 9 now you try.

It's 1979.

One of the responsibilities of local authorities
is to bring to the attention of the Secretary of State,
buildings threatened with demolition, which are worthy of protection
as listed buildings.



¹ Anderson, L. *United States* Harper and Row, New York, 1983, (part 4, 3) pages unnumbered

And so the letter goes.
 The Staiths are out of use, under threat, the last on the Tyne, 1890.
 Source: Tomlinson's History of the North Eastern Railway.
 A third of a mile long.

And so the letter goes.
 And when it's added to the list of buildings
 of architectural or historical interest, things go up the chute.

Don't ever forget: "Such things could prejudice Council Policy"
 This is a serious matter: "Never write that sort of letter again"
 This is not your role: "Be more careful with that sort of thing"

But think what the options are:
 1-Careful preservation, as is,
 2-Just leave it to decay,
 3-Greetings from Dunston Amusement Park, N.J.,
 4-A Working Museum of Coal and shipping
 5-The People's Free Shanty Town Houseboat Republic of New Free Dunston
 6-Arena, floating stage and bleachers out in the sun,
 7-A Marina, waterspouts and recreation
 8-The tidy zero sure line of reclamation's shore,

9-The last's a blank. It's up to you.
 If it's up to them, then:
 "Riverside policy has to be taken properly into account in all cases"
 "Make it absolutely quite clear that there will be no County Council involvement.
 Whatsoever."
 (Double underlining).

5: The liberally landscaped comprehensively conserved Newcastle
 900 (and a half) water level subregional strategic park !

But John in Landscape sends two pages and a sketch:
 "Everything that was promised on the Town Moor but never built"
 "Parks are a lost art"
 "Parks should be enclosed by railings, planted with conifers and staffed by keepers
 in brown coats"

On the requisite two pages of A4- the ur-garden festival.
 Undated ms. , summer 1980.
 Filed on C GD 05 13 01.
 Forgotten.

6: Floating theatre
 In the corridors of power. In important Ministerial meetings.
 Big ideas. Big stuff. Big talk. Lots of media coverage. Save the inner city.
 Enterprise Zone.

Free fall, free lunch.
 But are Listed Buildings still listed?
 No-one seems to know, though some would wish them gone.

A seminar: the Chief Executive has a vision:
 "A place where the developer can create his own environments he sees it"

Some student projects sketch a different dream:
 a sail-in theatre, hanging gardens, painted gas holders, power station superstores.

The developers turn their back to such delights:
 "Jobs are more important than environment"
 says the Chief Exec.

Even *Planning* asks, "Must enterprise exclude imagination?"

7: Alpha-soixante

This place is twinned with Alphaville,
 waiting for its Lemmy Caution,
 another revenger-reporter,
 in another *étrange aventure*
 in another *Capitale de la douleur*.
 another legend,
 too complex for everyday communication,
 struggles against the dictionary of the regulation of land use.

Silence : Logic Safety : Prudence,
 and local government today.

8: Dunston Basin Marina Apartment Development (sketch)³

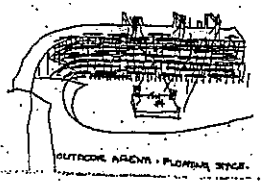
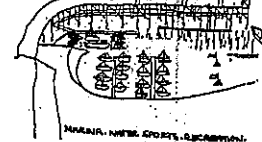
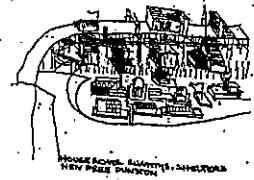
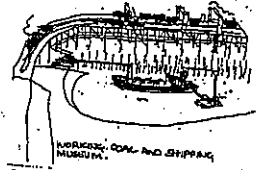
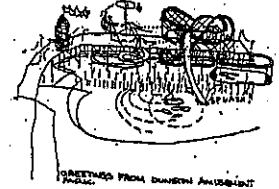
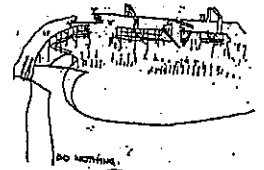
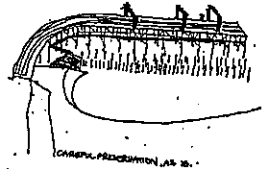
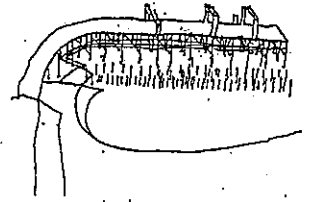
One of the County's projects is to support the Industrial Monuments Trust,
 and John whose job that is, talks to Ian about the Staiths
 and Ian makes a bid, for Gateshead's funds
 just for consultants fees,
 just to let the Industrial Monuments Trust employ
 just one man for a few months,
 just to explore the options.

Geoff gets seconded in.
 Gets a desk and a phone
 and his own note paper.
 Talks to boat owners.
 Talks to the brass

² Planning, July 11 1981 *Enterprise* but too little imagination

³ See Jarvis, B, 1994 *Talking about Special Places*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Open University,
 Chapter 9, "Up the chute" pp 229-240 for a fuller description of these events.

DUNSTON STAITHS: UP THE CHUTE ?



Talks to developers
structural engineers
consulting architects

And his report reports:
the Staiths haven't deteriorated,
they could be developed with the Gas works site
for recreation
and a floating museum,
A Day out at Dunston Water Park,
It would cost two point eight million.
It could generate nine point eight million
and bring life back to the riverside (thank you)
encouraged by the local authority (thats going to be very useful)
with investment in infrastructure (now clear your desk).

But no-one can agree who should report it
to which committee
of which authority
with whose recommendations.

No action needed:
"I doubt that the Council attaches much importance to them".

9: Department of the Environment, Room P2/115, 2 Marsham Street,
March 23 1983, "Dear Mr. Miles.....
I attach a copy of the press notice launching the search for the third National
Garden Festival to be held in six years time".

Five and a half sides, single spaced
what a garden festival should be and do:
"derelict land, the difficulties of which are such that
it would be unlikely
to be reclaimed quickly"
"the catalytic effect of deadlines"
"high quality landscape"
"environmental improvement"
"a single parcel of land"
"a hundred acres"
"near the heart of urban areas"

The letter slides from tray to tray,
lies between agenda items and the daily post,
the circulation list grows
but no one picks it up.
There's all that getting things done to.
Memoranda. Comments on applications.
Conditions to scrutinise.

Planning's real achievements.
This
is just another gamble.
The letter sinks deeper,
somewhere between "Any observations, Mike?"
and "See D. about this quickly",

10: Norwood Cokeworks (aerial view)

And reaches Pete
who picks it up.
He's working on a plan for somewhere on the edges
of nowhere, edged by somewhere else,
claypits and coke sidings and suburbs.

he sees it and thinks
this could be.....
could make this claypit.....
or something like, at least.

He talks to D.
"Draw up a list if you like,
but don't spend too long on it".

So, over coffee, they draw up a list
and add and change around
have second thoughts,
ask around,
ask even
Conservation.

Because one of their sites includes those listed, silent Staiths.
"This is something that might interest you,
What do you think?"

11: Cross River Park.

It's just one look, that's all that it takes,

First thoughts:
not just the Staiths,
The Joy of Concrete.
The Soapworks as Palazzo.

First notes:
A flat nowhere redeemed by being at least a visible flat nowhere
A hole in the ground in an inaccessible location, so negative it's positive
(The Robert Smithson Memorial Park, perhaps)

1700ft Framework for future

Staiths may be put back to work

9745 BY TONY HENDERSON 17/11/83

A MONUMENT to the North's great coal-producing days could bring new life to a run-down area of Tyneside. Gateshead's Dunston staiths, at 1700ft, the longest of the many coal shipping piers built on the Tyne, is the centerpiece of an ambitious £2.500 study project to create a major riverside development area.

The idea is to revitalize the staiths, already a Grade II listed monument, into a park, museum, and about 40 acres of derelict land to provide new facilities and, hopefully, jobs for the area.

A five-month feasibility project, backed by Gateshead Council and Tyne Wear Industrial Memoranda Trust, will be complete in March when scientists on how the site can be developed will be presented to councillors.

The report will come from architect Geoffrey Formstone, a consulting engineer with the Birmingham firm Transportation Planning Services, which is also working on plans to regenerate London's docklands.

He says: "This part of the Tyne is ripe for development. From the point I have talked to, there is a big community interest in the staiths. Almost every family in the area seems to have had a stick in it at some time."

Colliers

Gateshead Council has built a new railway to preserve the original Redwood staiths, the last surviving timber trestle structure of its type on the Tyne. Wear on the Tyne. At its peak, Dunston staiths was loading 1,000,000 tons of coal a month into as many as 20 colliers at a time.

"Staiths were vital to the North's coal industry and mining and shipping industries and some were built up the banks of the region's rivers."

Dunston itself was once widely a Redwood's mill and from the early 19th century, coal from William Collier was transported in horse-drawn carts along the wagonway to nearby wharves of the same spot.

When the Swing Bridge replaced the earlier stone structure in 1878, it established colliers to cross further south and the North-Eastern Railway came to Dunston staiths in 1883. The staiths closed in 1958.

The railway company carried the coal in its trucks from the area's pits and ran the wagonway in the staiths, which stood on tracks above the high water mark, and the colliers were loaded from hoppers set at various levels.

The staiths, which employed several hundred workers, played a big part in the life of the area.

Gateshead Council approached the Industrial Memoranda Trust with the idea of preserving and using the staiths site, which is an Enterprise Zone, and the result was the commissioning of the study project.

Trust chairman Stafford Lindsay said: "Dunston staiths are an example of what makes the North-East coal industry important in playing a major role in the development of the region."

The staiths occupy three acres, with a further nine acres of flat basin and 27 acres of land behind the staiths. Gateshead Council, however, has another 25 acres owned by British Rail which could be brought into the development depending on the recommendations of the study.

The idea is that the staiths should finally be revived and several sporting and recreational schemes are being considered.

"This would fit in with Tyne Wear policy to revive declining communities and improve the riverside."

One possibility is the staiths being used for commercial purposes such as cargo trader, but more likely are plans for a shopping centre, water sports, museum and recreational area.

Kilmer and Dwyer consultants have drawn the ground plan for such water-based facilities.

Officials are conscious of the fact that the staiths has never been exploited as a leisure and recreational asset. But now, with the arrival of new industries and the river clean up by the North-Eastern Water Authority, the chance is there.



DUNSTON STAITHS—ripe for development

A pair that span the river, tying south facing slopes and stalths
 (But the chief officers don't talk, so that ones out)
 A straggle of sites aligned around a grade separated three way interchange.
 (That's the one we choose)

It's just one look and that's all.

12: Stitch and stone and motorolarama

So Pete writes the letters,
 Bob works out some costings
 and, yes he'll do a few sketches.
 This is their chance
 for their fifteen minutes.

13: The allée at sunset.

Between the avenue and the underpass,
 between the doodles and a poem
 a joke and a bit of history
 a bit of collage and a bit of licence
 a bit of motorolarama and a bit of Milton Keynes
 he drives around, on local government mileage rates
 or sits, sheltering from the sleet,
 while the dust turns to mud,
 parked up somewhere between
 the fibre spinners and the ironworks
 trying to make sense,
 to deal out these dreams

14: Drainage culvert access or ventilation shaft (site notes for the National Garden Festival, Gateshead)

Gypsies children invade and occupy the cash and carry warehouse,
 that's the first sign.
 They leave the car park scattered with ashes
 from vinyl car seat covers.

Next: dog packs roam the embankments
 where marsh grasses struggle through the track beds,
 long after the rails have been lifted.

Slugs breed in the underpass,
 enriched with urine and darkness.

An abandoned caravan settles into the spur road.
 Scrap timber stockades mark out dung hill territories.
 Car body shells pile up like wind breaks.

Crows and large land gulls roost in the reort house,
 living on rare and toxic chemicals from the ruins
 they grow fat and weird, hallucinate,
 scavenge for gaskets, valve fittings and inner tubes.

Footpaths are carelessly sluiced,
 washed black with the effluents of tar works and distilleries.
 The unpainted walls of factories judder.
 Unnameable machine processes are repeated
 for days on end, even in broad daylight

Meanwhile irises and lilies naturalise
 in the carbon deposits of coal shipping registers
 and customs dockets of berths and loadings
 burnt to the ground.

Donkeys graze on the forecourts of small garages
 as if they know of something
 a crisis or that the deal of the month
 might never come off.
 While dealers in dreams
 play with fountains and cascades
 and paper parklands'
 litter blowing their minds.

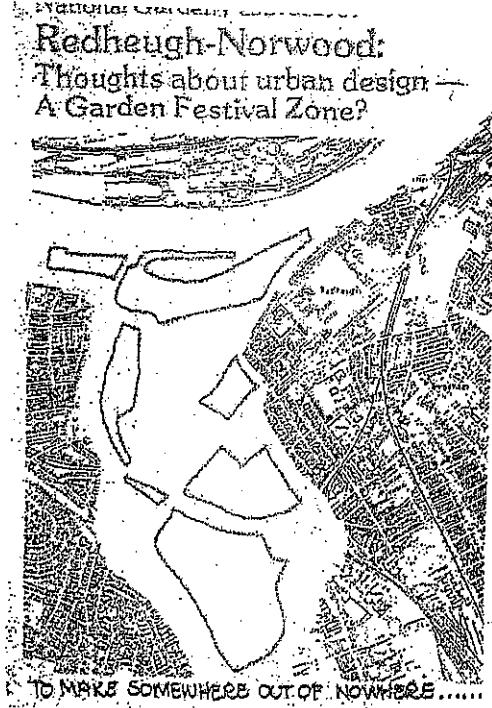
15: In the underpass

Somewhere out of nowhere.
 Site and zone, once at the edge of great estates,
 turn to ironworks to sidings to underpass and bypass to slab block and point block,

each generation doing the best it can
 to produce, to join one place to another.
 And leaving this place:
 surrounded,
 fragmented,
 shadowed,
 scarred,
 cut,
 wounded,
 bruised.

16: To make some where out of nowhere (eight frames a second)

To mend, to heal, to slitch together,
 torn scraps..

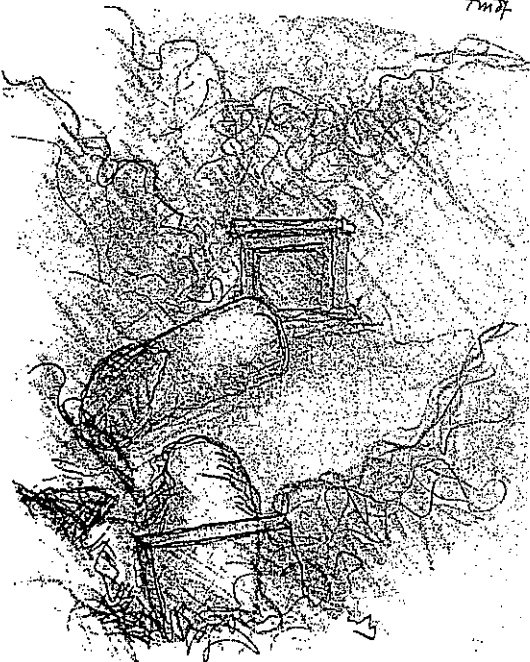


TO MEND, TO HEAL, TO SLITCH BACK TOGETHER,
 THE TORN SCRAPS.....





*Grove Chapel
Museum
7/17*



a riverside of magic beasts
a trellis of conveyor belts,
a topiary of ropes
fantastic archways
glittering tunnels
horizons of flags.

Could this be a ribbon, a garland.
All this a dream, another scribbled line
or do these words hold darker deeper truths,
for those fifty minute hours to unravel?

17: To mend, to heal (detail of pen drawing over map).

She says "Its just a day dream, like a poem. I wonder who its really for?"

And in that park lie:
fallen columns, forgotten memorials,
lost inscriptions, moss stained, damp scented follies.

Relics, where at the silent night edge,
scribbled graffiti, obliterated initials
spatter half truths
etch the walls of lost mansions,
in the collapsed cellars of hope.

Among the fragments of language,
among the abandoned shrubberies,
among shards of sentences,
among overgrown topiaries,
among the undergrowth of sense,
at midnight,
lost in the maze of possibilities
lie phantoms, recollections, imaginings.

Roots undermine the rubble. Distortion enters.
Scrub covers the revelements. By chance,
weeds slur the ponds. Geometries loose focus, blur.
Larch hides the terraces.
Only ruins stand,
and silence seems like truth.

And then she says "You know, we're just like chalk and cheese"
And then D says "Thank you. Very interesting. Hope we can use it, someday"

18: Possible diagram of management and decisions.

The bid is printed up and sent in, shrugged off into the post.
Back to work.
Business as usual.

From time to time though, Pete runs through the way decisions turn,
wonders about the money and the themes.
Files examples and press cuttings.
Lists the literatures to search.
Lionel draws some plans for planting on the loop roads.

The Department appoints advisors,
the advisors come and meet D, a man from finance, the Chief Exec himself,
and Pete.

They ask about organization, sponsorship and programmes,
they praise the flair, the imagination
and get the train back south at five.

Pete reckons
they'll be in the top three,
after Hull.

On an inside page of the Gateshead Post, a two inch filler,
"Region Bids for New Garden".

The decision will be made in the autumn, they advise in the summer.
Or in November,
or in December,
or by Christmas anyway.

19: Dunston Basin, viewed from Redheugh.

And Pete has meetings,
Bob has meetings,
Ian has meetings.

The Industrial Development Team make plans:
blast out the "Soap Works", filled rotten hides and skins,
(half a million quid should do the job), break its balustrades
for land fill, level up the site and grid it out
for light industrial units. laid in landscaped lines.
If only they had read, like he'd been taught to do,
from this swirling driftwood and detritus,
shadow girders, used commerce and contraceptives
a wondrous vision of some new Peru⁴

⁴ See: Harrison, T., Newcastle is Peru in *The Lainers* 1970.

20: Gateshead to hold Flower Olympics?(Gateshead Post 29 iii 1984)

It's in the papers now,
D. sends out a note:
"Consultants will be appointed, soon,
with a view to making recommendations
to the Department of Environment,
by the end of August.
They will be approaching us directly,
in mid-March. Or thereabouts."
The same routines and questions.
Money and programme and sensible shoes.
"But those sketches,
they're a bit
fanciful
aren't they?"

"Oh. Yes. Nothing serious.
Just daydream stuff. Fairy tales."
D. shrugs them off. "Nothing serious."

"Mm. That's a pity.
There's something interesting there.
A bit wild, a bit undisciplined,
But interesting."

21: Is there anything good on TV tonight?

Pete draws up a list of headings,
things to work on, like:
Master Plan and Costings,
Attendances, marketing strategy, spin-off benefits,
organization,
"If we can get this done," he says
"we've just about got it".

So its:
April: Physical Master Plan,
May: Second Draft,
June: Lobbying and then Re-draft,
July: Second Assessment.

They all sit round and talk:
timetables and borehole data,
watertables and ground temperature surveys.
The Chief Executive sends a chart, of how its going to be,

the way things will be organised,
he'd like comments form Chief Officers.

More meetings.
More memoranda.
Pete sends his note
and writes him in,
Mayakovsky's ghost.
Between the paragraphs of committee reports
and the conditions of planning permissions:
revolutionary slogans, poems and broken hearts.

22: Carnival : So too, a city needs its dreams. (Pattern 5B)

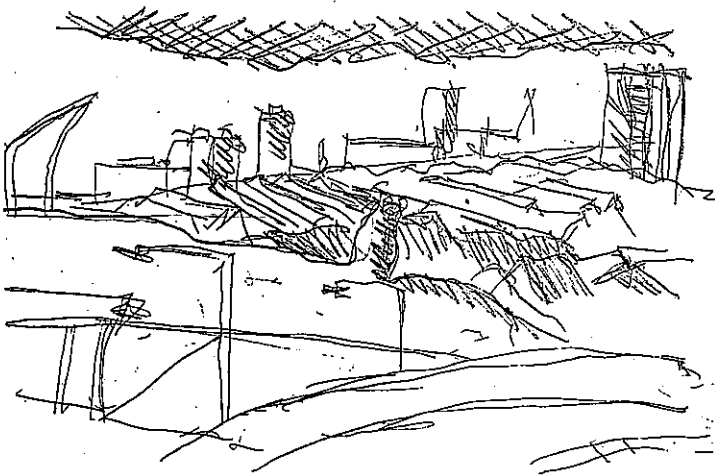
"It seems to me,
we need genuine team work,
the organisation of the team is part of the design,
we don't hold a common idea of what
a garden festival should be.....
I could sketch a spectrum
I could write some notes on method.....
Please let me know if
you'd like me to come to your next meeting"

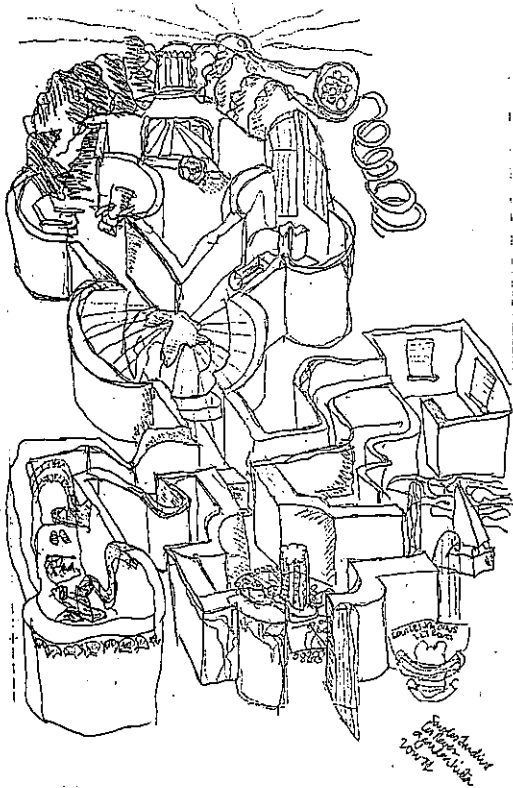
And then,
three days through the next week
the D would like
to see you.
"Would you work on this bid?
"OK, but I'm a County employee. And this a District bld.
But after all its just advice,
On a listed building, and its setting, after all."

Some people write lists of jobs, their title and their name.
Some people get left out, and get upset.
Some people go home to think.
But he just goes out. Jazz dance and midnight coffee.
Another all night drive.
Some crazy game is starting up.
Or just the same old story. The same old song.

23: File index box of notes, alphabetically listed.

There is to be no project leader!
Put aside the tyranny of the plan!
Broaden the area of search!
Send me as many ideas as you can!
Send me a postcard from 1989!





And so it swirls to ten by five at two a.m.,
 it's too big to carry. Fluorescent paper, gum and tape
 hold together air and light and times still yet to be.
 It's almost illegible but it still makes sense.
 Scribbled incantations and a joke.
 It's crazy but OK.

28 : (Detail - final panel of text from above)

And halfway into this, another meeting.
 Another list. Additional material required:
 the pollution of the river, the highway calculations,
 the projected modal split of visitors, the scale of the market,
 average earnings and of public funds,
 incomes from revenue and franchises,
 land costs, development costs and impacts,
 perceived long term benefits.

And halfway into this the tension
 between freedom and fixed outcomes,
 between flexibility and a master plan,
 between "concept" and practicality rise slowly
 in the pauses between
 talk of planting details and videos versus multi slide presentations
 of what?

And halfway into this debate, he says something
 about the patterns and the ideas,
 "All this is too theoretical, too airy fairy, too up in the air;
 we have to be practical" the one called co-ordinator says.

More drainage details. Plants per metre.
 The one called co-ordinator asks the designers, each,
 to prepare a version of their Master Plan.
 A grand design. "High quality open space"

"How will you know which one to choose, which one is best ?"
 No reply.

Pete talks about
 "The landscape as a base, a stage".
 Later he remarks:
 "Single management equals no joy".

29: Liverpool Garden Festival Guidebook.

Liverpool International Garden Festival opened in April 1984.

The designers know what they're looking for :
 planting plans and maintenance and flow lines.
 They'll take hundreds of slides on miles of film.
 They have a good day out.
 The thrill of all those big contracts, so hard and fast,
 to write home about.

He sends three post cards home,⁶

30: To Alison : Timeship Tardis runs aground, hopes dashed.

Long ago and far away
 there were temples and sacred groves;
 and spirits walked the earth
 as hermits, wild eyed shepherds,
 seekers and seers of visions, oracles.

Today, a management co-ordinator
 on secondment from the Department's Manchester office
 explained, for an hour at least,
 the background and objectives.
 He illustrated this with slides of sites
 that any one could see from the window,
 just a ferry across the Mersey.

The planners all took notes.
 Learning from the absence of experience.
 Collecting brochures and reports
 with glossy covers, and before and after artists
 impressions.

In intelligence, in scientific analysis
 in thinking, I think
 we've lost the art of gardening.
 The magic touch is gone.
 Who sponsored Eden?
 Did he get adequate media coverage, a good return
 in column inches?
 We've come a long way since
 (in video equipped coach parties, mainly)
 to this *horticultus Interruptus*.

⁶ Originally published in Urban Design Quarterly, December 1984.

The team meets, formally, for the first time,
sitting down in the same room, round the same table.
D. comes in and says:
"Its up to you."

There's still a list of jobs and titles,
a "co-ordinator" not leader.
The project won't be authored.
These things are not to be negotiated.
"I leave the rest to you".

But everyone's got questions:
"Will there be a model?"
"Will there be overtime payments?"
"What's the cost code charged for this?"
"When will it be reported to Committee?"

And the one who's called 'co-ordinator' says:
"The prospectus is already written.
That's the basis for the presentation"

"The presentation of what ?", he asks.
(His job is on the list, as 'concepts')
"What is this thing that we will present?"

"The designers will design it"

The meeting ends.

24: Project office wall (May 1984)

Pete fixes up a room,
an old store somewhere back of stairs,
dry rotted and paper thick.
"The Project Office",
a kind of home from home.

Pictures, maps and plans,
views of the site. Deadline diaries.
A magic post box
invites opinion:
send me a postcard, drop me a line,
yours views from nowhere,
ideas for whatever ever it is a garden festival might be.

No-one has a clue what's going on, what will emerge.
"Flying by the seat of our pants" Pete says.

Flying and falling,
at the same time.

25: Why am I going out of my head whenever you're around. (drawing)

He's:
scratching at the face of reason;
an old astrologer;
dancing on the plans;
I've got a bag full of magic
markers
I've got a rock from the moon.

26: A Pattern Language which.....

He's:
running to the Xerox;
writing in silver and gold.
"Mad carnival" stands against the reasoned geography of "Accessible Green",
pinpoints a dialectic, the schism between
love and money, so to speak.
*Just as an individual person dreams fantastic happenings
to release the inner forces which
cannot be encompassed
by ordinary events*

so too a city needs its dreams⁵

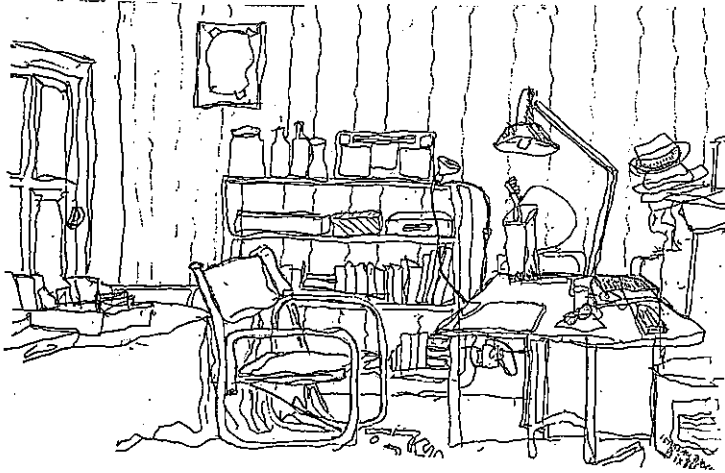
27:generates Garden Festivals (Mixed media 3m x 1.5m, 1984)

The pattern grows across the floor,
the tape machine is speaking longues,
crawling about
a script never written.

The flow seems right enough:
promenade and night life,
common rooms and dancing in the street,
zen view and open stairs,
fruiting trees and sitting places.
Each copied and embellished:
a note, a line, a sketch, a wish
that you were here;
a web of silver dreams and half remembered moments,
some other time and place
called up to serve as hope.



⁵ Alexander et al. *A Pattern Language* OUP 1977 pp 299-300



There's broken stems,
 dried up limp leaves of grass
 in the ornamental beds.
 But the price's been paid, and time is short,
 and it took a government directive
 two and a half years to come to this
 anticlimax, behind a cyclone secure fence,
 cut off.
 But still I'll write,
 (it is a postcard and, after all, it's true)
 "Wish you were here".

31 : To Steve and Charlotte: S.S Typhoo not the Ark. No tulips found
 on Aararat.

I came here with a sketch book
 with lots of film and coloured pencils.
 I came here looking for something
 that no-one seemed to understand.
 I came from long ago and far away
 things were different then.

And this is what I found:
 fifty wheelchair cripples in juicy jaffa caps,
 giggling and drooling and looking for the portaloos;
 junk from six counties and ice cream from Wallasey,
 cooked on the spot with as much ketchup as you like;
 a greeting from the City of Cologne, a seat and a tree,
 a place to meet, it says, where no one would want to meet even your enemy,
 late at night;
 a pair of supervisors in neat suits,
 stopping kids from throwing stones
 and asking their dictaphones
 'How can we get more life into this';
 and two pavilions and a moongate,
 shipped in from Beijing,
 a lake with rocky islands
 from the People's Republic of China,
 with love.

32: Rock pool with fishes

And I sat on one of those islands
 for thirty five minutes
 sat cross legged and breathing fire
 staring and swaying.
 Sat still and turned up my headphones to cut out the racket
 of the tills and excursions and p.a. announcements.

Sat still and listened to the universe in the air,
a great big house with nothing in it.
 Sat still until a grey windproof wrapped
 unshaven MSC sponsored smiling scouse security watch man came to look.

He hates it here too.
 He understands what I meant.
 He knows what's missing.

33 :To Dolan and Moira : It takes more than coffee to get to Allah from
 Toxteth, even in the Turkish garden.

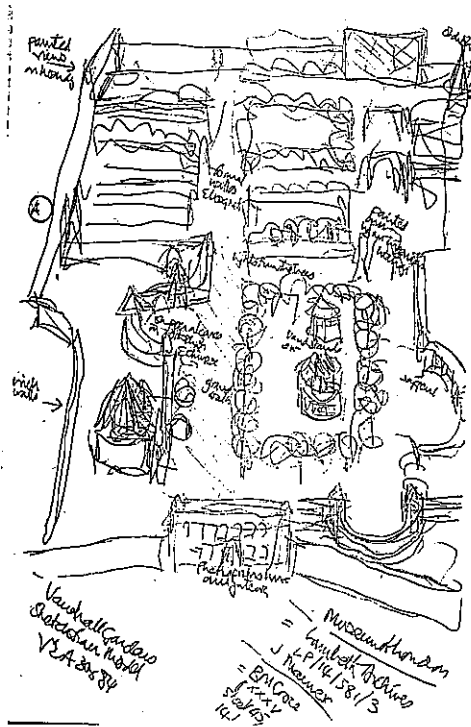
Yeah, I'd smile too,
 for a Turkish coffee house,
 richly timbered, marble paved and shallow domed,
 with a harem of ice-cream barrow girls
 to joke and flirt with the day trippers,
 paper back readers all, no sale it's free.
 All on the inclusive ticket to the most spectacular event

this side of nineteen sixty six, or 68 or nineteen eighty one,
 north of Rue Gay Lussac, west of Brixton, east of Watts.

But twenty five million quid won't buy you love,
 just plants and earth and stained timber
 and fibre glass animals that never lived,
 concrete water spouts,
 sponsored displays from twenty countries'
 six major construction firms
 three local authorities
 and several quango's and charitable trusts.

34: Les evenements soixante huit.

But this is just the tip.
 The sky is rosy.
 That's why the Red Cross nurses
 laugh and lift up their International Garden Festival all weather capes
 just for me,
 behind John Lennon's lead cast
 fuck you all victory V
 may be I'm amazed
 in front of the giant honey pots.



35 :Photoviewpoint sign, Liverpool Garden Festival.

The official notes conclude:

- "Generally impressive,
- but concerned that so much investment in planting will only be temporary"
- "Missed out on horticultural sales and commercial areas"
- "A shopping market could have provided visitor cover at nil cost"
- "Pedestrian circulation was good. The level crossings forced people to stop and and look around"
- "House builders were pleased with the sales from the show houses"
- "The sponsored bits mean sponsors can get something out of it as well as the visitor"
- "It's important to have a vantage point.
- The postcards are not mentioned,
- and he asks "Why not make free?"
- and Lionel says "It is free once you've paid to get inside"
- and Pete says "Nothings really free. It's all book-keeping"

36: Battersea Pleasure Gardens, 1951. Visitors plan and brochure.

Everyone is busy now,
working with their arms deep round their drawing boards.
Hiding their secret embraces.

He's busy, collecting snippets here and there.
The plans of the Festival of Britain, chanced in a Bensham junk shop.
Press cuttings.
Taking down notes.
Sitting in at meetings,
with the man from the Waterboard.
the man from Main Drainage,
someone from Policy.

A big blank sheet:
The Master Master Plan.

37: Catchment area diagrams and projected visitor numbers

Harry doesn't like the lack of team spirit,
and hides his drawings every night.
Ian talks about imagery
and Disneyland.

Richard writes a shopping list for architects:
Large hall: twomillionsevenhundred and fifty thousand pounds
Out door auditorium : sevenhundredfifty thousand
3 no. restaurants, public house, and sixty bed hotel : Onemillionsixhundredand
thirtythousand pounds

Railway exhibition, three large domes : fivehundredthousand
2 miles of Lochrin fencing, 2.5 metres high :one hundred thousand
and so on.
That'll do nicely, at current prices.
It all adds up.

38: Space Diagram

Postcards in Esperanto,
copies of catalogues
and Polaroids of Disneyland
and sponsors lists.

And questions:
Is it a place or an event?
Or is it a series of rooms?
Or a series of houses in a landscape?

Should each garden have:
a shelter and food,
a demonstration and some information,
and be intricate at eye-level,
but centred, focussed in the mind.

39 : Topiary Teddy Bears' Picnic.

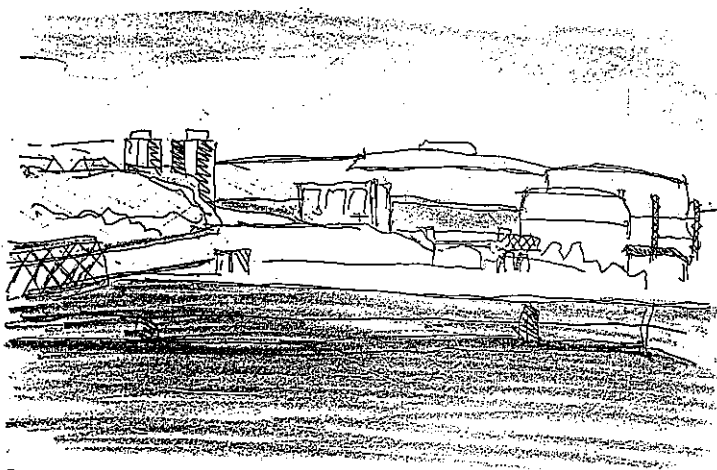
Reception send a teddy bears picnic,
in topiary.
Alex sends her note on planting,
territory and individuality,
techniques for early growth,
the canopy and understorey,
community and education.

40: Floodlight balloons on the river bank.

Pete puts up his notebook, jotted in the night.
Search lights on the riverside,
film set house fronts
balloons and hovercraft
"Too much emphasis on "landscape"
:the opposite of gardening?"

Personalities and kibitzes.

Enjoyable, Educational, and Exciting.
Elegant, Efficient and Economic.



41: Garden Growing Wild (from A Pattern Language)

400 scraps and notions,
one word answers to a question no one has asked.
Images and fragments.
From this four hundred he promises to produce:
a chart or diagram,
some great connecting up,
or something.
400 hundred questions,
another lost weekend
and a floor to spread them on.

No clues where this will end, or start.
Except the strongest notions come from those
who said they haven't got a clue themselves.
And just put down the first thing that comes into their minds
when
the thing they most want to see
just isn't there.

For those two days
shuffling up this oddly squared up pack
and asking "What is this thing to be?"

Go out for walks.
List every one on a roll of tracing paper.
And cut it up.
And turn to answer the phone.

42 : Flow chart, part 1

She says she's got the job.
Love and kisses.
See you Tuesday.
It's just a box of rain?
A sequence.
Questions then constraints.
Investigations, possibilities.
Funds.

Brainstorms and precedents.
Patterns and the lessons of experience.
Themes and lines from songs.

New questions :
What's the difference between a circus and a fun fair?
Between night and day? A place and an event?
Homes and gardens?
A kit of parts?

43: Flow chart (2)

And more lists and connections,
practical matters and fantasies entwine.
Events that are gardens.
And did you enjoy the trip?
Can you ask lots of questions?
Did you meet anyone you liked?
Would you come back another day?

44: Garden of Eden

Would you live there all the time?
Like wild cats in the grass.
Like unicorns in our dreams.

45: Project office wall. Later view.

Things aren't so good back in the room.
It's getting panicky. The assessors are coming.
Things aren't ready. What can we show them?

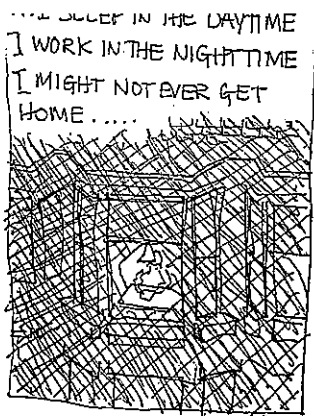
Where's the Master Plan?
Maybe we should forget the whole thing?
Do we know what they want?

Pete says it will be difficult.
Wonder what the one called the co-ordinator can conjure up.
Maybe a jigsaw not a plan.
Some things are known:
the costs for reclamation (give or take);
the price of building bridges (more or less).
But some things are not spoken, left out of minutes:
the Soap Works and the Staihs?
("We'll discuss it later")

The designers get their big bold ego-pens and slash,
a canal, a dock, a mound, a road.
Harry's on the job and happy,
but if you ask
"How do you know it's right?"
he's got no answer.

D's worried too.
The costs don't add up right.
The reclamation's problematic.
A lull of disillusion.





From these fears,
 and that it will all be,
 another palace of disenchantment
 another boulevard of despair
 another place of disorientation
 another hotel of lost souls,

when this could be
 a garden of earthly delights and sweeter dreams,
 free entry at all times of day, and deep into the night
 a place to wander and to drift.
 But with who?
 Milord, I am from another country.
 Cut up that map,
 set this place to drift.

47: A seat, an old brick wall and a tree.

"The first place I think of,
 is a garden, a peach tree, warm bricks,
 and wild grass"⁸

Simple things have to be said in all of this,
 set out this astrologer's consideration,
 sitting up all night as the clouds turn back to dust.
 That wall, that tree,
 that seat in the evening sun,
 those things,
 more important than

what's on TV tonight.

48: Sketch plan, 1984 (pencil on tracing paper)

So, on a borrowed attic table, spreading over the floor,
 words to spaces and to lines and shape.

In seven days,
 seven maids with seven master plans
 could scribble this dream to shape?

49: Seven patterns that generate a garden festival.

"There seemed to be some important principles".

- :free access
- :dispersed parking
- :restored buildings
- :sequence and variety
- :focus points of activity
- :zone and sites
- :landmarks

50: Sketch Aerial View.

A kind of plan,
 without a key,
 just a sketch,
 a possibility
 and some notes.

Welcome to the netherworld of plans.

51: Mad Carnival, with annotations.

These patterns are just sparks,
 points of inspiration.

The poems, the inspirations
 and the dedications are all meant.

The rest is just the automatic writing,
 The human face. Their conscience.

This pen's run out.

Not in the minutes.
 Not in the notes.
 Not in the answers to questions.

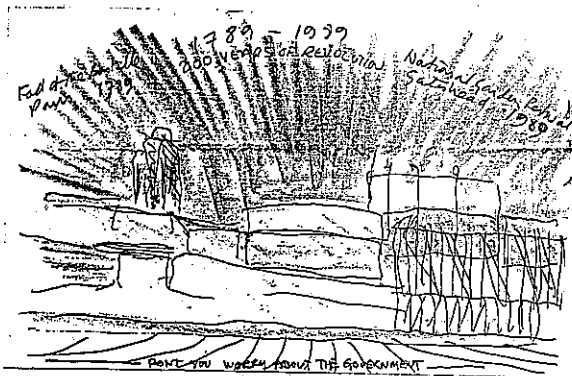
Just pin it up
 and leave the rest to chance.

52: Hexagram 59:

Scattering, disintegration and dispersal.

But persistence in a righteous cause brings reward.
 Calls for faith,
 and generosity,

and a place of safety
 a temple from the ills of the world.



⁸ Alexander, C The Timeless Way of Building OUP 1980 p xx

53: Garden Festival as The Ultimate Trivia Game.

The Team meets again.
Tensed up, a little proud, a little nervous.
The one called co-ordinator is in the chair.
"We'll start with the designs".

Pete wonders if thats right.
Bob asks about the basic facts of reclamation.
"We'll press on,
we'll deal with that
later."

Harry gets his plan out, big bold strokes,
felt pen zig zags and new canals,
all coloured up.

Lionel shows us his, not quite finished,
with curly landscape lines and scattered clumps.

Bob's got one,
with the after uses platted first.
Neatly set out house plots, access roads and landfill sites,
with costs.
The rest follows on from that, he says.

And then its his turn.
Starts with the hexagram and principles.
But before he reaches the plan,
the one they call co-ordinator says,
"Thats what any first year architecture student could see.
Now I shall take all these plans
and draw the Master Plan
myself."

Ian's note says:
"Serious points were raised
by a number of people
and met by slighting asides
or just insults."

54: List of garden festival features.

Later the Designers meet,
draw up a list of major points,
agree on the main uses.

There will be
open air athletics, a pop festival, a glasshouse
an ice rink, a funfair, a marina and a car park.

The gas holders will be
painted in primary colours.

The River Team will be
canalised.

Transport on the site will be
rubber wheeled and will operate on a hard surface loop.

At the Staiths will be
a tramway.

Along the riverside will be
a miniature railway.

Will be the eternal future imperative tense
that make design so easy.

Meanwhile,
Tyne and Wear County Council submit,
as they are required so to do,
application GDstroke 598 stroke84
for the redevelopment of riverside land at Dunston
(including the demolition of the former CWS Soapworks).
British Rail Property Board, at about the same time,
apply for Listed Building Consent
for the demolition of Dunston Staiths.
There are no consultations.

55: Gertrude Jekyll's Garden at Lindisfarne Castle (sketch)

The nights grow lighter.
The day's light lengthens into near midsummer.
An island garden rises from the waves.
An old man whispers go forward, meet it.

D's secretary comes round and leaves a note,
"Would you come to Monday's meeting,
will that be OK?"

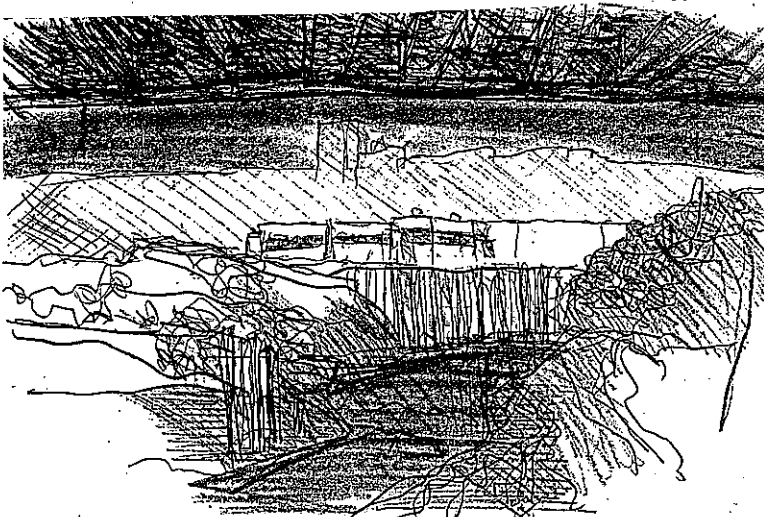
56: Gertrude Jekyll's Garden at Lindisfarne Castle.

Across the sheep roughened grass,
against the clear blue sky,
set low against the wind and marshes,
old songs are suddenly remembered,
*I tore the walls all down, and the garden grew and flourished*⁹
their lines run together
*the concrete and the clay begin to tremble*¹⁰
scribbled and cross hatched into a postcard,
*I hear wonderful sounds coming out of the ground*¹¹
fluorescent message in the mail.
The same old songs,
the same moment's madness
from which there's no escape.

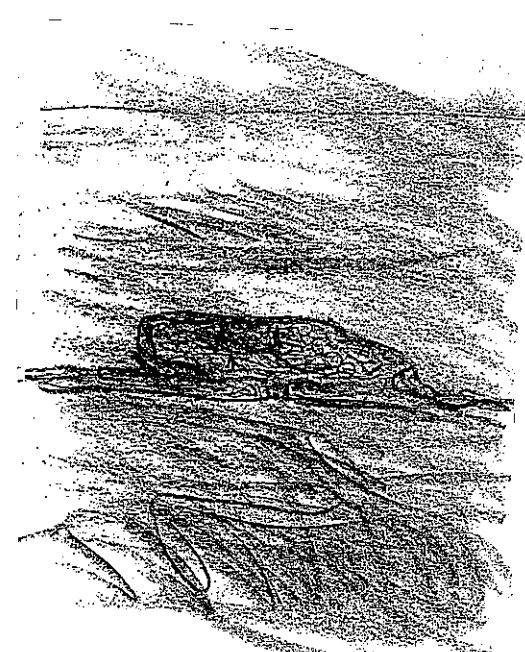
⁹ Crosby, D., *Mind Gardens* BMI 1967, on The Byrds *Younger than Yesterday*, CBS 1967

¹⁰ Parker, Moeller, *Concrete and Clay*, Apollo Music, 1965, (Recorded by Unit 4+2)

¹¹ Byme, D *Full up the Poots*, Warner Bros Music, 1983, on Talking Heads *Sp Eak In G! N To Ngu Es*, Warner Bros 1983



TWO HUNDRED YEARS No. 2.



57: Office Wall Collage (mid June).

Monday, everyone's back in the office
at half past eight they shuffle in.

D. says he won't discuss personalities.
"The bid should be ready by the twentyfourth,
yet nothing is ready.

First we need a report to Policy and Resources.
Pete will you write it?"

The meeting turns
to lists of sites and levels of costs
to the programme and the after use.
A logo and a number of options.

Except on specific matters
relating to the conservation of historic buildings,
he says nothing.

At coffee D. comes over.
"Like a word with you.
Done valuable work
It seems to be agreed
you'll stay on the project
after all."

58: Official Master Plan.

It's Presentation Time.
What's it going to be?
Will it be a Master Plan?
Or a diagram?
A zoning plan perhaps?

Pete says :
"We need to anticipate who'll read it"
D. says:
"Our Master Plan will be tom up anyway.
Whoever designs the real thing will start again"
Harry says:
"Presentation gives power"
D. replies:
"It must show our thinking, not be too cut and dried"

Lionel says :
"It must be the best possible,
the finest drawing we can make.
It's like selling a car. Swish presentation,
the initial impact counts"

D. says:
"We're not in the car business"
And Bob adds,
"More like a Lego set, so you can follow the thinking through"
So Richard adds, "What about a compromise-
our thinking and
a typical, possible plan"
OK. The printer needs it by the 20th.

59: Car dump and Dunston Rocket.

And so the National Garden Festival,
Second Stage Submission with Full Colour Artwork,
Master Plan (no, its not, its a diagram, with illustrative material)
Green Ink on Green Paper Handicap Stakes
are go.

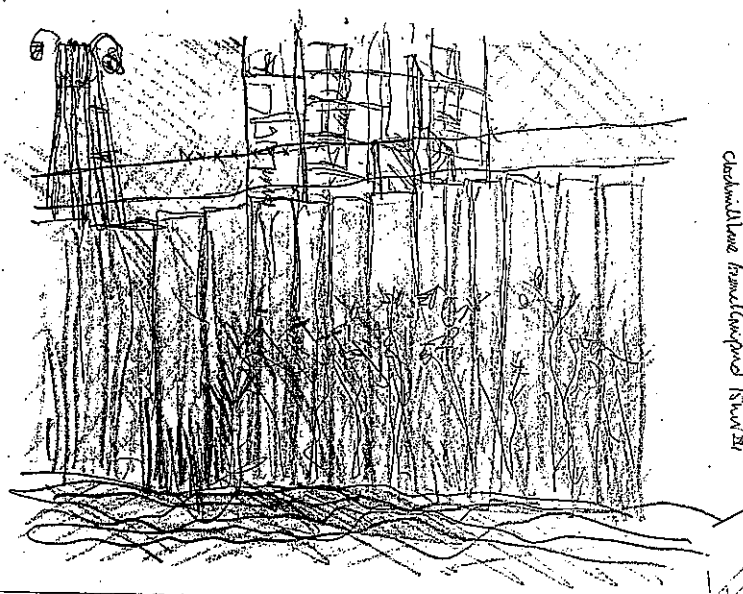
Against Swansea, this part time bunch of time serving
local government officers and doodlers,
Against Glasgow, who've got big time big name consultants, both of them,
who's your money on?

Pete is coordinating writing the report he's written,
and Richard's coordinating the co-ordination
He's on the bus again.
*Wake up young lovers: the whole thing is over.
One time too many. Too far to go.
What's that? Who's driving? Where we going?
Nobody knows 12*

Some strange ideas have filtered in,
free access and no fixed plan
at least are still around.

The theme, they tell him, is to be
Experience.

"Would you like to write the masterplan paragraphs.
Explain the thinking. Something like that."
Richard suggests.
Pete's pasting plans together.
A bit of the road diagram.
A bit of Bob's after use and reclamation.
And Lionel's structure planting.
"Just so that by next week there's not just His to point to"
whispers Bob.



Cashed in the hand-drawn plan

60 : Promenade, Nightlife and other Patterns (Xerox copy, overdrawn)

The paragraphs collage old friends, or so their pages seem by now.
Alexander C. on the wild passion when we let go.
Firsig R. about the romantic quality where the action is.
Laing RD. to make a point that experience is not an objective fact,
and how the blind methods of objective science destroy us all.

More notes and chance connections,
fond memories and juxtapositions
cut and paste
Kemp and Switzer,
art and dance,
House and Gardens, fete champetre
and bit or rock and roll.
Parody or style?
Somewhere between advertising copy
Mayakovsky and a song,
two parts psychiatry,
a dash of garden history.

61: Grotto, Boboli Gardens, Florence.

He leaves the notes,
Imagines another
Roman de la Rose,
The Dream of Poliphius,
but with a backing band
and light show.
Gives up,

this draughtsman's contract is reneged,
these mumbled clues must serve enough.
The mud tide ebbs over Dunston's dead black basin;
gardens are symbols,
shaped in clay and twig
talisman to decay,

62: Land Areas and Parcels.

while words hold fast,
become documents
turn into letters of support from contractors
and boroughs,
builders, chains of hotels
and chambers of commerce.
Consultants,
universities and advertising agencies
are all backing this bid.
But know nothing of this tale.

The basic dimensions are plotted, carefully.
The acres, the areas, the lengths of the perimeters planimetered, accurately.
The river mud analysis is sifted out, slowly.
The fisheries survey caught and netted.
The atmospheric pollution pored over.

The hydrological data and bore hole reports
are there,
awash with columns and tables and indices,
appendices and diagrams,
suitable species of plants and relative rates of growth,
plants that are capable of achieving the performance required.

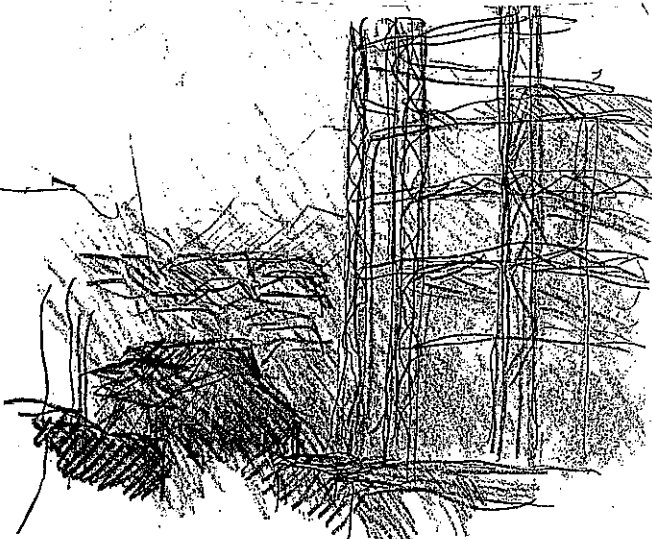
63 : Microclimatic zones.

Lists from the Yellow Pages
of potential sponsors and registered contractors,
suppliers of recreational equipment,
and research institutions
are there to show
it can be done.
Whatever it is.

The number of bricklayers and labourers,
plumbers and joiners, plasterers and painters,
scaffolders and light structural erectors,
paviors and glaziers,
and all their foremen and clerks of works
to build all the buildings and lay all the roadways and paths
in twelve months
is calculated,
precisely.

Five hundred man years of horticultural aftercare,
and maintenance is costed out,
to a round figure.
Drafts are rewritten.
Rewritten again.
Some bits go and some bits stay.
Quotations without citation.
Lines of incantations
slip past,
like Lemmy Caution reading Elouard in Alphaville.
But Pete says D. says "That stuff's to stay,
though could you make the drawings neater?"

"No, no these only sketches, first thoughts and scraps,
not polished figurines, retouched photographs.
They are the dreams that design might make come true."



Deborah Smith
15/11/74

64 : Final Plan

The Master Plan is almost finished.
Now the graphics lads are busy,
touching it up a bit,
where it looked too flat.
So Pete's guesses
and Bob's alignments
and Richard's approximations take some shape
- before your very eyes.

65 : Happy Plastic People

Mike has done some sketches, too.
Views of bustling crowds and balloon bright basins by the Staitths.
But between the Plan, all coloured up
and these crayoned perspectives,
there's something missing still.

D. it seems liked some aerial views he'd done
(a country estate developed
in the manner of their time,
exedera and follies; beside a half moon lake a draughtsman,
sketching with Claude Glass, turns back the age,
but in the Green Belt 13)
"Could you do something like that
again?"

66: Where only the scrapyards and pigeon crees are free (pencil sketch).

So for two more sunset days
he walks the site,
sketching and scribbling,
scratching the contours
and wondering at the colours
of the pigeon crees and the bodies of scrapped cars
as the sky turns to darkness.

67: Two hundred years of Revolution 1789-1989, fires over Dunston (postcard).

The gas holders burn in the long rays of the sunset.
Point blocks on postcards recall past revolutions,
looking forward to new freedoms,
sent on to friends,
intercepted and misread.

68: Airplane Banner and Dedication (detail)

That night,
more incantations, more desires
unnameable fragments of invisible cities.
Coloured pencils scratch out
a deep perspective grid,
give form and shape to dreams
A banner and a wave,
shaking and looping
nothing's certain,
in all of this.

69: Collapsed axonometric.

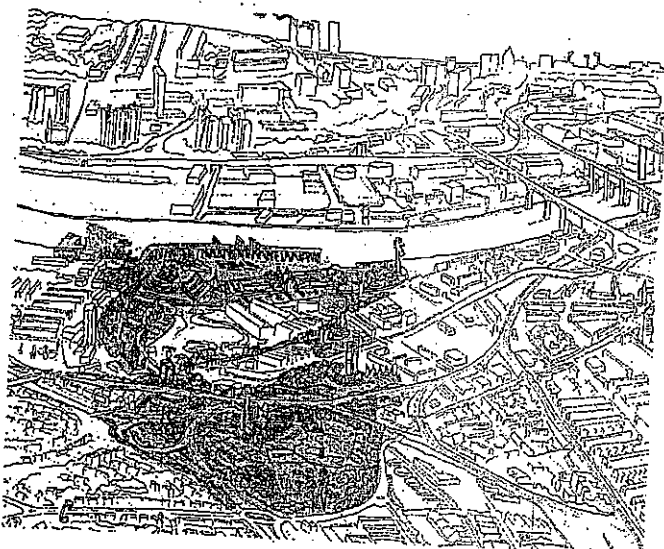
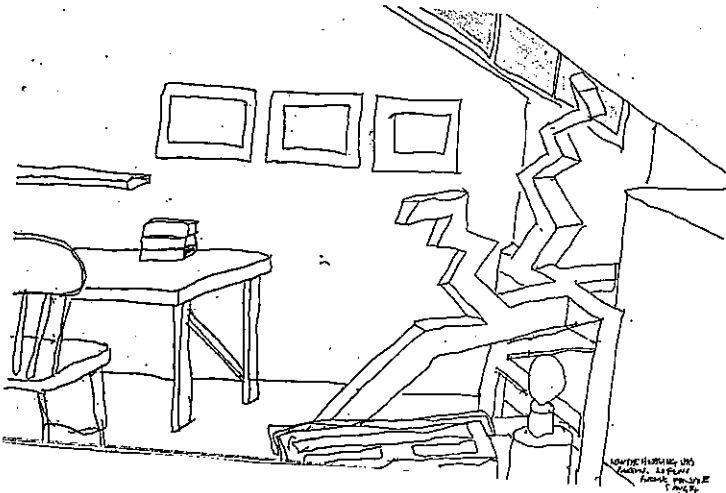
Private jokes surround this love's lifeboat.
On terrace ends Mayakovsky adds graffiti,
claims to live in Benscham once again.
Across the basin bands plug in
on floating stages.
All this in colour,
around it writhing in black line
is an ocean of concrete
that would sink this
technicolour archipelago,
fit for a king.
But she hasn't time to look.
A collapsed axonometric is the technical term.

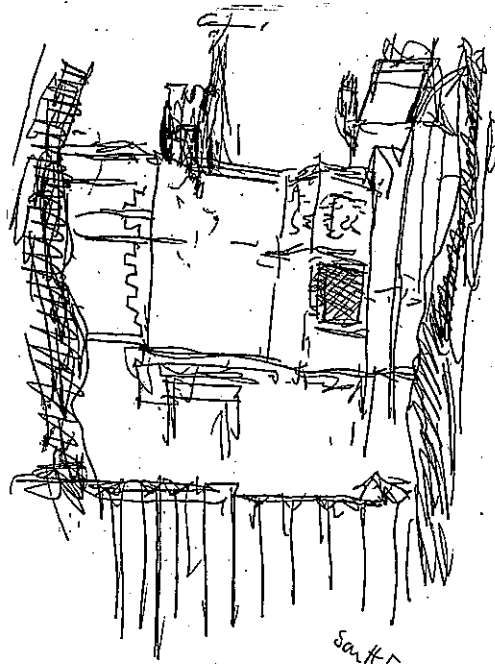
70: Operating Diagram.

The next day the assessors come.
Their curious display pinned up.
From the Parks Department, for all, a rose.
The assessors introduce themselves, their task:
Architect. Economist. Landscape Architect.

They'd like to take away all the information needed to make their assessment.
A letter is circulated with the headings
under which they'll make their judgment.

There is a list of who'll say what to whom.
The team sits round a horseshoe table,
and edgily turn to hard questions,
number and price.





Salt Frank
- gaps

Things loosen up.
"What's Ca' Ekin?"
"Just a joke"
But later D. asks,
"What's in the rules, to say it can't be free?"

And so on into smaller groups,
next day we talk of artists, jugglers and sculptors.
Things loosen up.
Some talk of Alexander and then of Grady Clay.
The lunch is good.
The wine is free.

71: The Final Version of the Plan.

To show it can be done Pete's patch Xerox pasted another master plan.
Another version of the future, half formed before your very eyes.
In groups, in cars they tour the site.
They get out at the station.
It starts to rain.

It's Pete's birthday,
and in the office afterwards,
drinking cheap red wine to celebrate.
D. comes up and says,
"Could I have a word,
about this letter, on this application,
I can't send it out like this."

The rain clears by evening
and in Saltwell's sunset silhouette they circumnavigate converging paths
through the convoluted shrubbery, still damp.

On Sunday she arrives to say she has to leave.

72: Excuse and reason.

At this point there is a break in the manuscript.
Dates and sequences of events are difficult to establish.
The notes are unclear and parts are erased,
(Plans are only lines on paper, places that aren't, yet.)

If this were a movie there would be a here a fast and complex edit:
close-ups, papers burning, books thrown in disarray,
a blur of jumps and rolls, a beach at dawn,
the angled chairs, the quiet voice, the fifty minute hour.
(The subject isn't raised again.)

73: D. and the Secretary of State hold out the Master Plan.

Months later
the Minister comes.
Holds out the plan with the Boss,
and smiles for the photographer of The Northern Echo
and The Gateshead Post.
"This Festival could mean
jobs galore".

On the second of November, there is a press release,
which reads,
"In a statement made in Middlesbrough today...."

74: Flower Power (Gateshead Post).

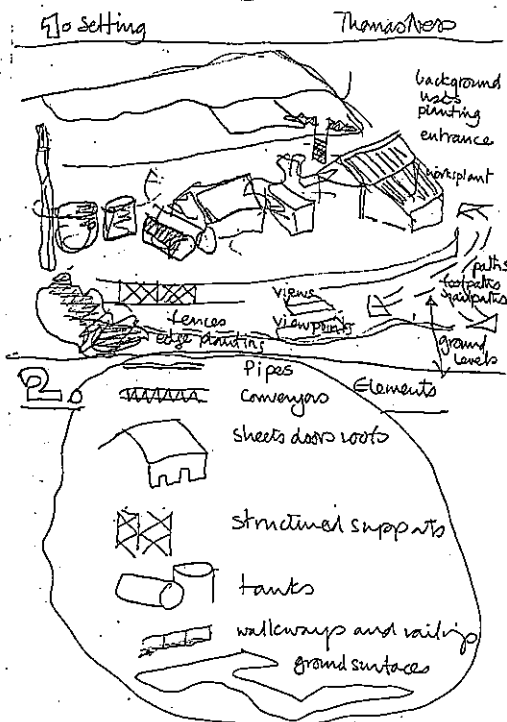
Next thing a Chief Officer's Working Group is set up.
The Chief Executive,
the Director of Finance,
and D.
decide
"the Festival will not be design led"
(it says in secret minutes).
Pete is asked
to co-ordinate the drafts,
and Lionel gets thirty thousand pounds to spend,
by March,
on line side trees.

Richard gets busy at meetings.
Bob gets busy on next year's reclamation plan.

Everybody wonders who's in charge,
who'll get what memos (we'll have a logo competition),
who'll hear what's overheard
(the architects are designing a festival hall),
except they're not
(they've got no code to charge the fee against).

75: The Universal Traveller. Badge: "Helps make dreams come true"

A ghost drifts in the machine
in corridors and on the corners of the stairs,
"Hi, what's happening on the Garden Festival?"
as if he'd be the one to know.



76: Dayglo patterns

Round about then the Assessors report is circulated. As paragraph four point four, points out "the philosophising was was sometimes hard to grasp", paragraphs four point eight to five point five adds, "the innovative approach was uncrystallised" but "considerable thought had been given, to what garden festivals are or might become." The Assessors say they were refreshed by the "exploratory approach" which contains "the possibility of a step forward".

77: The structure of the Garden Festival Company

But underneath this calming sea bask buzz word sharks with pound sign teeth: 'organisational ability', they snap 'realistic perceptions', another swift attack 'a degree of ruthlessness is called for' tasty stuff these daydreams, and 'firmer attitudes' just adds a taste to 'worthy but too diffuse'. Snap. He sends a note to Pete, for what purpose now it's all washed up, isn't clear. It ends with a remark: something about babies and bath water. A final question mark, then: "When it comes back round to love and money then money walks in sensible shoes all over us"

78: I'm Dreaming of a city/it was my own invention ¹⁴(Ink drawing)

and silent, in parentheses and off the record: "while love just sings makes dreams seem true, if only for a moment, somewhere, at twilight in the park a wild lost place that might have been."

79: Impact analysis

Its time for him to see D. again, to try and raise this wreck. D. asks, straightforwardly enough: "What do you think you could contribute?" There's a million ways to work things out.¹⁵ "I'd like to explore the principles, to design without building, expand the pictograms, draw up those charts again, find a balance between 'the ideas and the Assessors criticisms.'" Design's a cyclic process, I'm running in circles Come to my senses sometime!¹⁶

80: Mayakovsky lying in state at the Writer's Club, 52 Vorovsky Street, Moscow, 1930.

Mayakovsky's last letter As they say, the incident is closed. Love's boat has crashed on philistine reefs It would be useless making a list of who did what to whom. We shared weapons and wounds. To those who remain - I wish happiness.¹⁷

¹⁴ Byrne, D *What a day that was* Index Music 1981, recorded on *Songs from Broadway Production of The Catherine Wheel*, Sire Records, 1981.

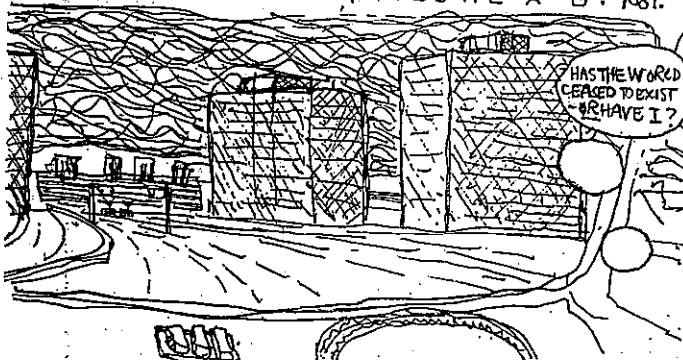
¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Byrne, D *Girlfriend is better* Warner Bros Music, 1983, on Talking Heads *Sp Eak In GIN To Ngu Es*, Warner Bros 1983

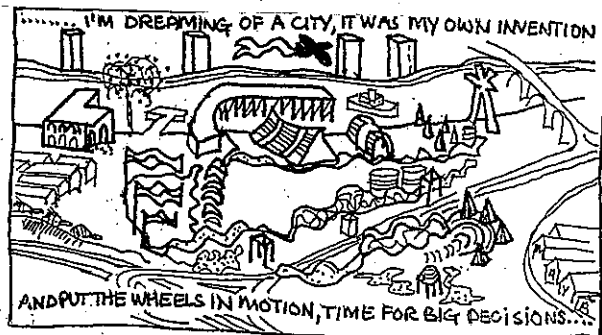
¹⁷ Mayakovsky, V (*The last letter*) published in Elliot D., (ed) *Mayakovsky: Twenty Years of Work* Museum of Modern Art, Oxford 1982, p.80.

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WELCOME TO GATESHEAD N.B.



MODERN TOWN PLANNING LEFT ONLY ONE QUESTION TO RESOLVE AT THE SPILT LEVEL INTERSECTION OF REALITY/MODES.



81: Black out.

Such dreams, that magic island
-all that old stuff's been junked,
atoms in slow motion, dissolved like clouds at dawn.

When ruthless decisions have to be made,
what's left is just a rattle in an empty skull;
shells left on a doorstep
wrapped with no message;
an illusion in plans drawn pinned up on the wall;
a gap in the conversation

where the void seeps in.
The end is silence anyhow.
The old astrologer dries up.
Management consultants prepare their reports.

Another boat,
another reef,
same old story, same old song.
No forwarding address.
No matter,
what else is left to say.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Parts of this originally appeared in *Urban Design Quarterly* (Three Liverpool Postcards, December 1984)- 31-34, *Landscape Research* (*Scratching at the Face of Reason*, Vol 15.2, 1990, pp23-28)- 0 and 81, *Planning Education and The Profession*, Newcastle University 1996 (*Narrative Code*)-14.

An earlier version with slides (corresponding to the numbered sections here) has been read from manuscript notes at Oxford Polytechnic, February 1985 ("This is a true story"); Newcastle University, May 1990 ("Eighty slides and a memory"); and South Bank University, 1994-5 ("Fit for a King"). This version first read at the Urban Design Group, December 2001.

HOW DREAMS END

Its a strange feeling, but one not uncommon to designers, to go back to something they sketched but others built, to see their dreams realised by others. Paying for a ticket to experience a place you have lived on paper, in another time, needing a map to walk around a site you've drawn so many times, in another place, are strange sensations. We know who owns the copyright of drawings, of the designs contractors construct, but dreams, first words, ideas, image drawn from the air... are stranger stuff. So often it is those first dreams that get written out of the authorised history, yet they resonate in every telling.

Standing in line for my ticket to the Gateshead National Garden Festival I was aware of the echoes of that wild dream time, that mad carnival fit for a king, whence its design ideas came (see UDQ 16). But the official Souvenir Programme starts at Chapter 2 or even 3. A bundle of ideograms, a clutch of poems, scraps of the *Situationiste Internationale* make a strange frame to criticise £37m. of investment. But when their postcards promise 'A day out of this world' and PR-men sell (again) "the most spectacular event" then dealers in dreams awake.

There are six years of the compromises of daylight history, six years of the realism of getting things done, six years of others' imagination and pragmatism overlaid on Gateshead's successful, second stage, bid. But its seven principles remain a benchmark in garden festival theory (if such a thing exists). How does the present realisation match them?

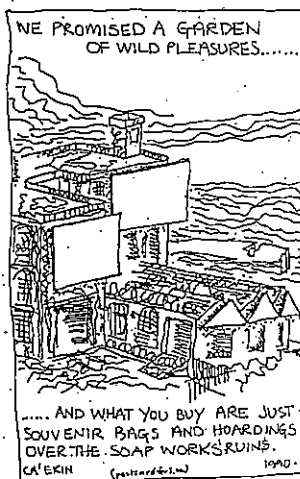
At NGF '90 there is no question of free access. Elegant fabric roofs span the turnstiles, high fences are concealed (from the inside) by lush planting and high mounds: a private spectacle rather than public place. However discrete the control, the gates still close at 8pm. The three large parking lots are more a response to the sites' topology than the principle of dispersed parking, which envisaged if not a drive-in festival at least a short walk to the car, parked. Building Restoration stops dead at the fence. Mending Dunston Staiths - one of the generators of the bid - may be the festival's most worthwhile project, but W Ekins' riverside palazzo in ferro-concrete, the CWS Soap Works, remains a wreck, screened by art-boards, when it should have been gallery spaces. The principles of sequence and variety of space and experience and focus of activity show up the much vaunted absence of a master plan. The festival-landscape is a jumble of competing, often kitsch, fragments, ill-matched and intervisible. The 'Times on the Tyne' theme gardens turn their backs to the river itself, hiding behind bunkers of 'landscape'. The banal spectacle over-

whelms. Notions of festival zone, extending the sites into the locality, are more fictions of tourism than tangible realities, the packaging of art catalogues and resort brochures. The 'Festival Landmarks' are too small, too private in their language - and too many - to be memorable. The major public landmark is a temporary ferris wheel - an appropriate symbol perhaps, endlessly recycling brief thrills.

The design success of the Festival are the simplest gardens. Spaces that attempt little, are self contained, visually enclosed yet rich in evocation. GMB's Saltmarsh garden, Fülcher, Tate and Carter's *Northern landscape*, BTCV's woodlands, Durham CC's reconstructions and even Veronica Ryan's *Steves in the Ground* do more with less than all the blooming technicolour around them.

The Festival's failure is in urban design. From the start it was claimed that NGF '90 would not be 'design led' - and it shows. Beneath strategic planning, after-use, marketing, sponsorship lies the muddle of experience. The undoubted achievements of reclamation, civil engineering and investment are not matched in the quality of the physical structuring of the event's space. Coherent organisation of space and sequence, views and moments; those old lessons from Pope and Cullen and Lynch, of Hidcote, Rousham and the Villa d'Este, even Vauxhall Gardens and the Festival of Britain seem to have been overlooked along the way. But I guess you can't take risks with £37m. British Garden Festivals seem locked into a single model, still, in Pete Duff's potent words, 'a circus with plants'.

BOB JARVIS



The Dunston Manuscript offers a rare and intimate insight into the urban design process - an hour long epic which is equal parts design method, implementation research ... and epic poem and visual performance poem. Its influences range through Vladimir Mayakovsky, Chris Alexander and Laurie Anderson. It has been rarely performed and is deliberately unpublished - Brian Goodey wrote of one of its performances 'to wander off into poetic accounts of urban design is clearly insane'

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