

City Center Regeneration to Drive Economic Competitiveness? The Case Study of Liverpool One

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how urban regeneration can be used to drive economic competitiveness using the case study of Liverpool One, in Liverpool, United Kingdom. With a process which began in 1999, Liverpool One resulted in over 42 hectares of land being redeveloped as part of a wholesale rejuvenation of Liverpool City Centre. This contributed to Liverpool becoming the fastest growing UK region outside of London. In discussing Liverpool One, the paper outlines some of the planning challenges faced during its construction and what this successful regeneration project now means for those seeking to develop within the city centre, whilst drawing out some of the lessons international planners and developers might learn from Liverpool.

Key words : City Centres, Retail, Liverpool, United Kingdom, Urban Regeneration

1. Introduction

In the United Kingdom, in the aftermath of the report of the Urban Task Force (Urban Task Force, 2005) which called for an ‘urban renaissance’, many towns and cities embraced urban regeneration as a vehicle to drive economic competitiveness (Roberts and Sykes, 2000). This would see a shift in the principles guiding the UK planning system, moving away from out-of-town developments such as shopping malls, and a renewed focus on previously neglected city centres (Jabobs, 1988) as the site of economic activity. In the period that followed, many UK city centres would undergo substantial regeneration, overhauling aging shopping centres and infrastructure as a means to underpin economic strategies for the new millennium.

Much of this activity was conducted under the auspices of Urban Entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 2001), in which cities are cast as rivals in a global market place where, to succeed, they must attract footloose capital away from their competitors (Jessop, 1997, 1998). Though most entrepreneurial activity focuses on removing what Peterson (1981) terms the ‘burden on business’, i.e. making it easier for businesses to locate and thrive, in practice this is achieved in a wide variety of ways.

This includes (but is not limited to) reducing business rates, creating enterprise zones and programmes of urban regeneration which can offer new and attractive premises for potential investors (Parkinson and Harding, 1995). Crucially, this activity is not limited to the World Cities of Sassen (1991), but extends to every tier of urban activity, and results in places being cast as ‘winners’ or ‘losers’ depending on how well they apply those entrepreneurial principles (Peck and Tickell, 1994).

A leading example of a city using urban regeneration to drive an economic revival is Liverpool, England. This is a process which has taken place over 30 years, beginning with the regeneration of the Albert Docks in the mid-1980s (Robson, 1987, 1988). While this regeneration was the beginning of Liverpool’s revival, however, it was a prolonged focus on the city centre and particularly the retail offer which served as the real platform for Liverpool’s economic success (Parkinson, 2008). Amidst all this development, it was a scheme dubbed Liverpool One which stands out as the international exemplar of city centre regeneration for economic competitiveness. The development, an eight year regeneration of 42 hectares of prime city centre real estate (Parkinson, 2008, Littlefield, 2009) would transform the city’s economic prospects, and change Liverpool from an underperforming city to a major regional centre

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(Parkinson et al., 2016).

This paper, therefore, seeks to discuss and explore Liverpool One as this exemplar of how urban regeneration can drive economic competitiveness. In doing, it seeks to build on existing accounts of Liverpool One's genesis (Parkinson, 2008, Littlefield, 2009, Biddulph, 2011) which, while detailed, were produced in the immediate period following its opening. As such, those works lack a discussion of how Liverpool One affected the wider city centre over a longer period of time, and how it sits within Liverpool's wider programme of regeneration. Consequently, this paper seeks to address those elements directly, discussing not only the circumstances surrounding the genesis and construction of Liverpool One, but also its economic effect upon the city, and how it has changed the way in which Liverpool approaches new development opportunities. This is achieved using an extended documentary analysis of plans from Liverpool One's development, and immediate analysis of Liverpool One's economic effect, updating this with contemporary economic analysis, site analysis and contemporary accounts of development within the city.

2. Background

Liverpool, located in the North West of England found its fortune as a port city. Situated with favourable access into the Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean beyond, and capitalising on the benefits of the slave trade, Liverpool's port quickly flourished, with the world's first wet dock being built in 1715 (Wilks-Heeg, 2003). Though the slave trade was outlawed in the UK in 1807, in part due to the work of abolitionists such as Liverpoolian William Roscoe, Liverpool was now well-placed as one of the British Empire's key trading ports, and the city grew in economic and cultural stature - leading to claims that Liverpool was 'the Second City of the Empire'.

The relationship with the River Mersey and the sea beyond would not only provide an economic driver for the City, but also an architectural focus which Liverpool would rarely relinquish. Alongside the city's docks, companies including the Cunard shipping line and Royal Liver Insurance would invest in riverside headquarters at the Pier-head, with the buildings, known as the 'Three Graces', acting as the centrepiece of Liverpool's skyline and later becoming the centre piece of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Beyond this the White Star Line (owner of the HMS Titanic) would also headquarter themselves within the city, whilst Liverpool's Customs' House, which at

its peak would make a greater economic contribution to the British Empire than London, also dominated the waterfront.

This economic dominance would prove to be short-lived and, in the post-war period, Liverpool's fortunes began to turn as the cornerstones of its economy were fundamentally challenged in a perfect storm of societal changes (Sykes et al., 2013). The first challenge came through changes to the way goods were shipped as a result of containerisation. This had the dual-effect of rendering the city's inner docks redundant as the larger ships could neither enter, nor unload their goods, whilst also devastating the Stevedores who could not compete with the rate at which cranes could unload the more modern containers. Secondly, and simultaneously, a modal shift away from cruise liners towards the more fashionable (and substantially quicker) jet engines rendered the transatlantic cruise liners as an outdated relic of a bygone era. Thirdly, Liverpool's decline would be precipitated by a major socio-political shift: Great Britain's ascension to the European Economic Union (EU) and the decline in trade with the British Empire and wider Commonwealth (Lane, 1987). This would see Liverpool shift as the UK's main port, as others including Dover, Harwich and Portsmouth would be better placed to deal with shipping to the continental mainland, whilst a shift away from sugar cane towards sugar beet would undermine Tate and Lyle, one of the employers most reliant on transatlantic trade routes, ultimately resulting in the closure of the plant (Meegan, 2003).

The fundamental collapse of Liverpool's economic base would have a profound social, environmental and economic impact upon the Merseyside area. Liverpool's population would collapse from a peak of nearly 850,000 in 1931 to 435,500 by the time of the 2001 census, with many moving into the surrounding boroughs (Bernt et al., 2014, Rink et al., 2012). Similarly, the scale of dereliction left by this rapid de-industrialisation was profound with swathes of sites, particularly in the North of the city, abandoned to the elements, resulting in environmental harm as the network of canals and docks similarly fell into disrepair and in some cases were retaken by the tidal flows of the heavily polluted Mersey (Rink et al., 2012, Sykes et al., 2013).

Liverpool's nadir came in the 1980s as the declining socio-economic conditions began to come to a head. In 1981, poor employment rates, which eventually bottomed out at 20%, and worsening race-relations in the predominately black community of Toxteth boiled over into a riot in which residents and police forces fought along Upper Parliament Street to the edge of the city centre (Parkinson, 1985). Faced with this, the

reaction from the Thatcher Government was divided. In papers released some thirty years after it became evident that some, including then Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe, saw the incident as symptomatic of a city which was beyond saving and advocated a 'managed decline' where resources might be better deployed elsewhere (Travis, 2011).

Margaret Thatcher disagreed with this view and, shortly after the riots, dispatched Environment Minister Michael Heseltine to the city with a brief of troubleshooting what became known as 'the inner city problem' (Jacobs, 1988). Heseltine's solution was the formation of one of two Urban Development Corporations (UDC) - the other being London's Docklands - tasked with the redevelopment of some 860 acres of the Merseyside docklands area (Robson, 1987). Premised on public investment which would attract a greater amount of private sector funding (Robson, 1988), the Merseyside UDC would focus on re-developing two sites: the Otterspool Promenade area, through an International Garden Festival to be held in 1984, and the substantial regeneration of the Albert Dock which, by now heavily in disrepair and filled with heavily-polluted silt the depth of two double decker buses, was described as 'an affront to a civilised society' by Heseltine (Frost and North, 2013).

Officially opened by HRH Prince Charles in 1988, the redeveloped Albert Dock was a place transformed into a prime example of mixed-use development. The dockside was a mixture of shops and restaurants with the upper floors converted into apartments. Also on site were Granada Studios (a national television broadcaster), a museum dedicated to The Beatles, and TATE Liverpool - a national art gallery. Beyond this the natural environment was also improved in a first success for the Mersey Basin campaign who led the charge in improving the quality of the River Mersey and its surrounds, as the dock infrastructure was restored and the polluted silt removed. Indeed, though the UDCs faced contemporary criticism for being imposed upon the cities (Goodwin and Painter, 1996) the Merseyside UDC was, by most accounts, a success, and the regeneration of the Albert Dock in particular is considered, in hindsight, as a key marker of Liverpool's re-ascendance.

3. Towards 2008 – A Revitalisation

The work done throughout the 80s and 90s saw that Liverpool headed towards the new millennium on an upward trajectory, yet there was more to be done (Parkinson, 2008). In 1997, following the election of Tony Blair's Labour government, there

was a renewed focus on the city - epitomised through the work of Lord Richard Rogers' Urban Task Force which called for the delivery of an Urban Renaissance (Rogers, 1999). Answering this call, Liverpool formed the country's first Urban Regeneration Corporation (URC): Liverpool Vision (Parkinson, 2008). More strategic than the UDCs of the 1980s, Liverpool Vision's task was to work in partnership with public and private actors to identify and facilitate economic opportunities.

For Vision's partners, the prime opportunity for redevelopment lay in Liverpool's outdated city centre which, they reasoned, was a drag anchor in the entire city's economy (Parkinson, 2008). Thus, in 2000, Liverpool Vision brought forward their Strategic Investment Framework (Liverpool Vision, 2000) which identified seven action areas for redevelopment (Figure One) centring on the waterfront, business district, cultural quarters and the retail core.

LIVERPOOL VISION ACTION AREAS

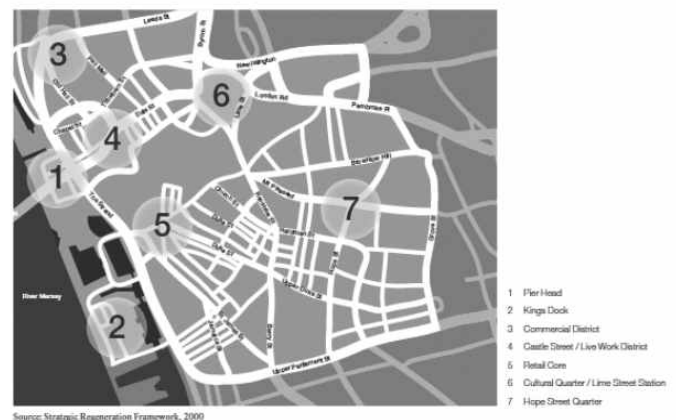


Fig. 1. Liverpool Vision Action Areas (From Parkinson, 2008)

In essence, Liverpool city centre faced two main problems. Firstly, despite the regeneration work done in the Albert Dock, the city centre remained blighted by inherited planning issues. This was epitomised by Chavasse Park, a small area of open land which, alongside the post-war ring road of the Strand, served to physically cut off the Albert Dock development from the rest of the city centre (Biddulph, 2011). Beyond this, the city centre was also pockmarked with swathes of underutilised land, epitomised by the site of the former Customs House which was bombed and demolished in aftermath of the Second World War, with empty lots being used as vast surface car parks across the city centre. Secondly, despite some tentative regeneration, Liverpool's shopping offer and infrastructure, such as the St John's Precinct and Paradise Street Bus Station, was ageing and being increasingly outperformed by out-of-town shopping

centres such as the Trafford Centre in neighbouring Manchester (Littlefield, 2009).

Though Liverpool Vision would facilitate much of the regeneration, they did not begin with a blank canvas. Indeed there had been various attempts to regenerate the Chavasse Park site since the mid-1990s (Biddulph, 2011) albeit often confounded by the same institutional barriers which led to the formation of Liverpool Vision (Parkinson, 2008).

Determined to see the area turned around, the foundation for any redevelopment would be laid in 1999, when Liverpool City Council produced an urban design study for what became known as the Paradise Street Development Area, which argued that any redevelopment should:

- “retain listed buildings and other buildings of interest and character;
 - retain at least some of the pre-existing street pattern;
 - maximise ‘permeability’ over a 24-h period;
 - reinforce the character of the city centre, especially the physical and commercial link with the sea;
 - respond to the ‘scale and massing’ of buildings and the ‘metropolitan character’ of Liverpool;
 - exploit the changes in level across the site (there is a ..11metre.. .fall, original inlet around which Liverpool was built);
 - create ‘active perimeter frontages’, such as shop fronts rather than blank walls;
 - provide full access from the main shopping route of Church Street;
 - relocate any business or activity that is inappropriate for the redeveloped site;
 - create high quality, open, public space;
 - create links to neighbouring districts, such as the Rope Walks, the central business district and the waterfront.”
- (Littlefield, 2009, p.22)

On the basis of this urban design study, Liverpool City Council issued a call for partners to progress this vision. Impressed by the scope and potential of the urban design study, and Liverpool’s new governance structures (including Vision), the Duke of Westminster-owned Grosvenor development company would eventually be selected as the developer for the site (Biddulph, 2011), submitting their initial proposal for the site in 1999 (Grosvenor, 1999) and, after scrutiny in the early part of 2000, were selected as the city council’s preferred developers (Littlefield, 2009).

The result was the proposal for what would be ultimately named ‘Liverpool One’ - in part taking its name from the area’s postcode L1 - a fundamental redevelopment of 42 acres of the city centre, encompassing some 234,000m² of development including 154,000m² of retail space, with estimated costs of over £1 billion (Parkinson, 2008).

With a masterplan (Grosvenor, 2001) produced by architects BDP, who were previously involved in developing the Granada Studios in the Albert Dock (BDP, 2009), and building on the themes identified in the original urban design study, Liverpool One would be premised on creating good, quick walking links to Church Street, Liverpool’s existing principal shopping street, with the existing Marks and Spencer store taken as its centre (Biddulph, 2011 p86). As such, Marks and Spencer would encompass one extreme of a triangle (see figure two) which would link up Church Street with two major ‘anchor’ stores within the new development (ultimately the department stores Debenhams and John Lewis). To facilitate this, the development would need to fundamentally alter some of the existing Church Street store fronts as a means to create a new shopping arcade which would provide the third pedestrian link through to Liverpool One. In particular this would require the preservation of a piece of Liverpool’s historic fabric - the Maltese cross signifying the position of the Altar of the former St Peters Church, from which Church Street drew its name.

Reflecting the new mood in urban development in the wake of the Urban Task Force (Rogers, 1999), Liverpool One completely embraced the newly-in-vogue principles of mixed use development. With retail incorporating the ground floor uses, Grosvenor’s masterplan exploited the 11 meter height differential identified in the original urban design study to incorporate some 21,500m² of leisure space, including bars, restaurants and a 14 screen cinema, alongside some 600 residential units (Parkinson, 2008)

The masterplan also provided an innovative solution to the dual-problem of the area’s vast unsightly surface car parks and Chavasse Park which, while making an important contribution to city centre’s green space (Mell, 2016a, Mell, 2016b), was not seen as a boon to the city. The response was to construct an underground superstructure which would contain, amongst other infrastructure for the site, a multi-story car park (Biddulph, 2011), and upon which a new, remodelled Chavasse Park would be placed on top occupying the same basic footprint. This would mean that Liverpool One would contribute some 2.2ha of open space to the city centre (Parkinson, 2008). The new Chavasse Park would also form a key element of the link through to the

waterfront and Albert Dock providing a high-quality area through which people would be willing to walk. The link to the waterfront was also aided with the construction of a Hilton hotel, which would make a substantial contribution to the city’s burgeoning tourist economy (TMP., 2009)

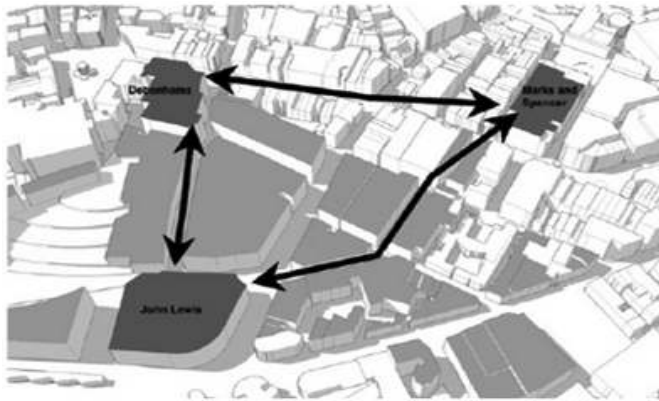


Fig. 2. The Proposed Liverpool One (Source, Biddulph, 2011, p86)

Finally, the scheme would also take the opportunity to revitalise some of Liverpool’s transport network, replacing the old Paradise Street Bus Station with a new bus interchange at the end of the site providing a fresh terminus within the city centre.

Thus, Liverpool was beginning the new millennium with a bold strategy to overhaul its city centre, but BDP’s masterplan only set out the parameters for the scheme. Now the challenge was delivering this vision.

3.1 Building Liverpool One – Architectural Challenges

Following the publication of the Masterplan, in 2004 BDP issued a call for architects to begin submitting proposals. The rationale behind this was to have multiple architects contribute to a scheme which gave an impression of different ‘buildings in a city’ (Littlefield, 2009 p149) which nonetheless conformed to the design criteria, as opposed to a potentially clumsy overall scheme if undertaken by one designer. The result was the commissioning of 26 architectural firms, representing a mixture of international and local practice, with each allocated a block or site within the overall area (Figure three).

Though the architects were given specific briefs, down to the precise size and volume of their buildings, for Grosvenor the idea was to foster a sense of competitive collaboration, where architects would be free to innovate, but in a way where they could not ignore what was happening around them. This method,

where schemes would be brought on-stream in a piecemeal fashion, would also provide some insurance against a potential failure of any individual part of the overall site.

Above all, the overall masterplan called for a shopping precinct which sought to draw away from the out-of-town malls (e.g. Sheffield’s Meadowhall, or Manchester’s Trafford Centre) which had dominated retail planning throughout the 80s and 90s (Biddulph, 2011). Though not without criticism (Minton, 2006), the ‘mall without walls’ concept would come to define the scheme, with a guiding principle of attracting the major high street stores, but without shutting out the elements. Though this was achieved, sections of the scheme such as the Dixon Jones-designed Peter’s Lane Arcade would go through several design iterations before its semi-enclosed space would meet with formal approval (Littlefield, 2009)

Broadly speaking, however, Liverpool One was not particularly littered with planning controversies and the developers generally enjoyed a good working relationship with English Heritage who would take an interest in preserving the character of the recently designated World Heritage Site which bordered the development. The main exception to this was the design of One Park West, an apartment building intended to bound the site, and frame the remodelled Chavasse Park. Originally intended to be 40 stories tall, the designs were reduced by 20 stories, and then a further 10 as a means to avoid a potentially costly and delaying public enquiry (Littlefield, 2009). This debate about the preservation of the character of the World Heritage Site would foreshadow a broader discussion which would take place nearly a decade later - and to be developed later in this paper - about the balancing of new development with the city’s historic fabric.

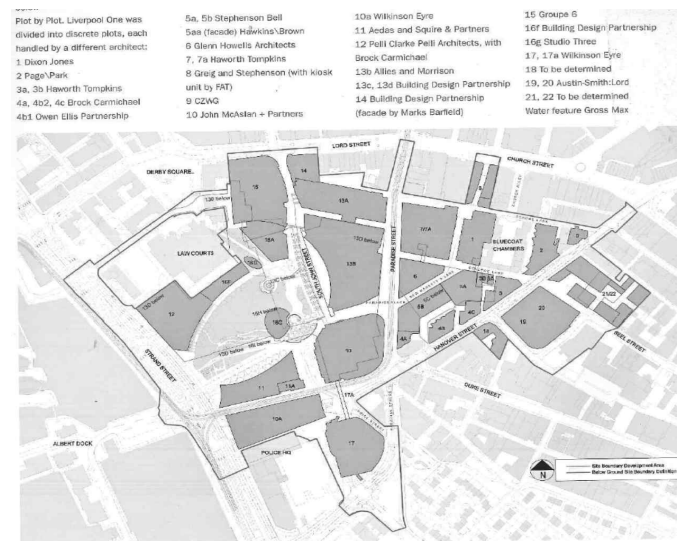


Fig. 3. Three-Architectural Practices and Sites in Liverpool One (Littlefield, 2009 p151).

4. 2008 – Opening and Functioning

Though Liverpool One was nearly a decade in the making, the plans would be given a new expediency on the 4th of June 2003 when Liverpool was announced as the European Capital of Culture for 2008 (Garcia et al., 2010). With Liverpool One scheduled to open in May of 2008 (though some sections would be opened much earlier, such as the new Paradise Street Bus Station in 2005), there would be a prime opportunity to contribute, both to the Capital of Culture celebrations, and a broader sense of Liverpool's revival (North et al., 2017) already described elsewhere as 'a city that has got its mojo back' (Frost and North, 2013).

Although not without challenges (Littlefield, 2009), in 2008, and amid Liverpool's Capital of Culture celebrations in which an estimated 15 million people would visit the city (Garcia et al., 2010) to see, amongst other things saw former Beatle Ringo Starr play a concert from atop St George's Hall and a 20ft mechanical spider walk through the city centre streets, the retail elements of Liverpool One officially opened on May 29th 2008. The rest of the development including Chavasse Park, formally opened by The Princess Royal, would follow on October 1st 2008.

In doing so, visitors to Liverpool would now have access to prime high street brands including Debenhams and John Lewis (as the anchor stores), as well as Apple, Lego and Topman. Liverpool and Everton football clubs would also open stores; with Everton taking the opportunity to score points on their arch-rivals by naming their store Everton 2 (the store address would therefore read Everton Two, Liverpool One). Beyond this, Odeon would open their 14 screen cinema, while national restaurant chains Wagamama and Nandos would lead the restaurant offer.

In transport terms, the three new car parking sites, by now comprising some 60% of the city centre car parking capacity (Liverpool Vision, 2014), would mean that surface car parking would come to an end effectively overnight, with only a few sites remaining. At the same time, the Paradise Street bus station would enjoy a 66% increase in passenger numbers (ibid) in part driven by development along popular bus routes elsewhere in the city.

Beyond the remodelled Chavasse Park, which had moved from an expanse of grassland to a multi-level open space with a tiered garden at one end, the designs also contributed to the UK environmental agenda which was codifying in the aftermath of

the Stern Review (Stern, 2006). As well as rainwater capture, the Liverpool One management team also instigated a scheme whereby the oil used in the on-site restaurants was collected and recycled as biofuel, powering the fleet of vehicles used to maintain the area (Low Carbon Liverpool, 2013).

In the immediate aftermath of Liverpool One's opening the economic contribution to Liverpool's economy was clear. With an average annual customer footfall of approximately 26 million people (Liverpool Vision, 2014), the 2600 jobs created by 2007/08 had contributed to a 16.3% increase in job growth within the city centre - nearly quadruple the UK national average over the same period (Parkinson, 2008), with another 2500 jobs expected as the site reached capacity. This, undoubtedly, would contribute to Liverpool's position as the fastest growing UK region outside of London by the end of the decade (TMP., 2009), and robust growth beyond this (Parkinson et al., 2016). In short, Liverpool One was a keystone of Liverpool's economic vitalisation, and would form part of the city's new economic strategy as it sought to capitalise on its new visitor offer (Liverpool LEP, 2009).

4.1 Issues for the Wider City Centre

Beyond this economic view, Liverpool One would have a number of impacts on the wider city centre, both positive and negative in nature, which in some cases would take some years to emerge and subsequently settle.

Though Liverpool one had achieved one of its primary goals in connecting with the surrounding districts (Littlefield, 2009), most notably Church Street and the Docks, in the immediate wake of the opening, there was a danger that the potential for newer premises in Liverpool One would act as a drain on the city centre's other retail sites - concerns heightened when major stores Waterstones, HMV and Virgin Music/Zavviclosed their original premises on Bold Street and Clayton Square respectively, and moved to new stores in Liverpool One, whilst new offerings on Church Street included discount store Pound World. These concerns were deeply felt on Bold St which, whilst a high-end shopping street in the 60s and 70s, had experienced a steep decline throughout the 80s and 90s becoming home to a series of discount stores. Therefore the empty store fronts, their initial replacements in clearance warehouse-style shops, and a draining of footfall towards Liverpool One did little to alleviate fears that Bold Street's revival in the early 2000s would be short-lived.

Over time, these fears receded, and as the city centre adjusted

to its new equilibrium, Church Street’s role remained undiminished as evidenced through the opening of major chain stores Forever 21 and Primark, whilst Bold Street found a new role as the city’s bohemian district, fostering a number of independent shops, bars and restaurants as a counterpoint to the chain-focused offering of Liverpool One.

The ‘Malls without Walls’ concept critiqued by (Minton, 2009) would raise another issue to be addressed within the city centre; the management of ‘public’ private space. Though Liverpool One was designed with permeability in mind, and had no external barrier or ‘closing time’ reflecting the wish to encourage round-the-clock usage, it is nonetheless private - being leased to Grosvenor for 250 years (Biddulph, 2011). The result is a slightly sanitised, almost fairy tale like experience (Minton, 2006) where undesirable uses e.g. busking are quickly moved on. This effect can also be evidenced in the new Chavasse Park where, once a magnet for drug use and other anti-social

behaviour, now such activity (e.g. ball games, public intoxication) is swiftly stopped by uniformed staff. Beyond this, however, Biddulph (2011) rightly suggests this approach has raised few major issues in practice, and in many cases, can be argued as a positive thing.

From a retail perspective, the limitations of this public-private approach can be observed during the annual Christmas Market in which the Liverpool City Council supported traders do not permeate into the Paradise Street section of Liverpool One, creating a stark divide between the public and private spaces. Similarly, Liverpool One is not party to Liverpool’s Business Improvement District - a consortium of some 650 members and 35 acres of retail space (Liverpool BID, 2017) - meaning that, in effect Liverpool City Centre has two rival organisations (as well as the commercial district to the North), roughly of similar size managing the area (Figure four), rather than one coherent body.



Fig. 4. Four – Liverpool One (yellow) and Liverpool’s Other Business Improvement Districts: Central (Blue) and Commercial (Red) (Source: Adapted from Liverpoolbidcompany.com)

Now, nearly 10 years after its official opening, Liverpool One has become a settled part of Liverpool's city centre. With most of the above planning issues sorted, at least on a workable level, the site stands as a case study of highly-effective city centre retail-driven regeneration. Going further, much like the regeneration of the Albert Dock was a key signifier of a shift in Liverpool's development trajectory in the 1980s (Evans, 2003), Liverpool One played a key role in confirming Liverpool's revitalisation in 2008. This, alongside the Capital of Culture celebrations, affirmed perceptions that Liverpool had returned to the economic mainstream, and helped to put long-held misconceptions about the city to bed. However, although Liverpool proudly pointed towards the economic growth that stemmed from this wholesale regeneration, there were those who argued that city centre-focused regeneration had its limits (Boland, 2010), with social exclusion rates in particular remaining a problem in areas of the city sharing a border with the city centre, such as Toxteth and Everton (Shaw et al., 2012). Consequently, whilst 2008 would appear to the outside observer as a fairy tale ending, there remained much to do, and in the intervening period, there has been significant further regeneration in the city centre and its fringes.

5. Wider Regeneration Efforts, and Post-Capital of Culture Futures

5.1 Wider Regeneration in the City

Ever since its founding, Liverpool has rarely turned its back to the sea and, though Albert Dock and the broader work of the Urban Development Corporation marked the beginning of Liverpool's waterfront regeneration, it would be far from the last to occur.

Though the original Urban Design Study called for Liverpool One to reinforce the city's commercial and physical links with the sea (Littlefield, 2009), and this was achieved to some extent by increasing permeability through to the Mersey, in the context of Liverpool's waterfront, it was only one actor amongst an ensemble cast. Indeed, for much of Liverpool One's development period, a multitude of interlinked schemes were also underway, in effect underscoring the need to have good links to the waterfront.

On the Kings Dock site, immediately to the south of Albert Dock, after several false starts, including a deal to relocate Everton Football Club to a new stadium, work was underway for an 11,000 seat arena and convention centre - dubbed the

Echo Arena, after Liverpool's local newspaper. Opening in January 2008, in time to host the opening ceremony of the Capital of Culture celebrations, the Echo Arena gave Liverpool a boost to its burgeoning visitor economy (TMP., 2009) with a facility which would allow it to compete with other cities in hosting major events. This included pop-concerts by international stars including Paul McCartney, Roger Waters, Katy Perry and Lady Gaga, as well as political events with the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats both holding their annual conferences in the city. In redeveloping the Kings Dock site, the Echo Arena also removed another of Liverpool's large surface car parks, whilst public realm improvements transformed the promenade and links into the Albert Dock.

The Pier Head would also undergo substantial regeneration during this time. In doing so, and though not new to controversy, the attempts to build on the site would raise many of the same heritage issues faced by One Park West with regards to modernisation which balanced the visual impact of the skyline. Indeed in 2004, architect Will Alsop's proposals for 'the Fourth Grace' as part of the Capital of Culture bid were abandoned in the face of widespread public opposition.

As well as public realm works, designed to modernise the plaza and link the Leeds-Liverpool Canal to the South Docks, a new ferry terminal for the Mersey Ferries was constructed - with both projects completed in 2009. The most significant development on the site was the 'Museum of Liverpool' which was completed in 2011. The largest new museum built in the UK for 100 years (Museum of Liverpool, 2017), and dedicated to celebrating the history of the city, the Museum of Liverpool would present arguably the most significant change to Liverpool's skyline for some time. In 2012, the suite of redeveloped sites was completed on Mann Island, the site of the proposed 'Fourth Grace', where a series of three office and residential blocks were built and completed in 2012. Such was the sensitivity of building on the World Heritage Site that all three buildings were nominated for the 'Carbuncle Cup'; an annual prize for the worst new building in the UK - with the Museum of Liverpool winning in 2011.

The debate over the role of Liverpool's built heritage, and its relationship with the river, is one which continues to define debate with regards to development across the city centre, perhaps best reflected through work on a site to the immediate north of the Pier Head known as Liverpool Waters. Developed as part of Peel Holding's wider Atlantic Gateway strategy (Harrison, 2013), which includes infrastructure such as the new

Super-Port and a redeveloped Manchester Shipping Canal, the £5.5bn 60 hectare redevelopment of former docklands into office and residential developments is billed by Peel as arguably the largest urban regeneration project in the city, if not the UK (Jones, 2015, Peel, 2016). Reflecting the sensitivity of building on the Pier Head itself, the very act of Liverpool City Council granting Liverpool Waters planning permission in 2012 would result in UNESCO placing Liverpool on its 'at danger' list (Jones, 2015) and, with parallels to Dresden and its Waldschlösschen Bridge, a threat to remove Liverpool's status completely if work proceeded.

Elsewhere in the city centre, alongside concerns about a rapid studentification (Smith, 2004) built on Liverpool's burgeoning universities and broader knowledge economy, the construction of student accommodation within the vicinity of the World Heritage Site has raised similar debates about the role of built heritage within a modern city. Here, the replacing of Grade II listed buildings with new purpose-built student flats has sharply divided opinion as to what the city centre is for, and what Liverpool's role is moving forward.

Crucially for Liverpool's incumbent Mayor, Joe Anderson, it is development and regeneration which drives the city's entrepreneurial economy (North et al., 2017) and, whilst heritage is important, in development terms the city is not to be viewed as a museum. Above all, however, these debates are an indicator of how far Liverpool has come in the intervening years since the early 1980s. Once a place where all and any development was to be welcomed as a remedy to city's ailing economy, the success of the Liverpool One project as well as other schemes including the Albert Docks, Kings Dock and Ropewalks symbolised a city centre which had been successfully regenerated and, consequently, had removed 'quick win' style projects from its list of options. Now, therefore, the options for Liverpool city centre become more complex - requiring the city's leaders, planners and developers to consider what will best serve Liverpool's economic goals and ambitions.

5.2 Economic Opportunities and Challenges

Beyond this, there are also a number of new economic opportunities which stand to have a profound effect on the city. At the fore of those opportunities is the UK Government's proposal for the devolution of power away from London and towards a number of city regions - dubbed 'The Northern Powerhouse' (Nurse, 2015, Haughton et al., 2016). In exchange for electing a new Mayor for the wider city-region, each area

signing up to a 'devolution deal' with the Government will receive some £900m (spread over 30 years) to fund economic development projects, as well as direct control over a raft of public services including crime and, in some cases, health. With the aim of fostering economic growth across Northern England as a means to rival London (Nurse, 2015), this Northern Powerhouse is premised on the opportunities created through stronger and faster transport links between Northern England's core cities (Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle), as well as London. Alongside plans for seamless ticketing delivered through Transport for the North, a newly created body, the main thrust of this programme will delivered through modernisation and electrification of the existing Victorian-era railway infrastructure and the facilitation of high-speed rail links.

The proposed high-speed rail link for northern England -dubbed HS3 - will follow on from HS2, the proposed link between London, Birmingham and Manchester. Although a terminus on the busy West Coast Mainline which links northern England and London, Liverpool is not scheduled to be part of the HS2 network, despite intense lobbying from the city. Nonetheless, via think tank ResPublica, the city endorsed a vision for high-speed rail within Liverpool, including the construction of a new railway station in the heart of the city centre to accommodate the new trains (ResPublica, 2016). In doing so, this broadly aligned with Liverpool's Strategic Investment Framework (City of Liverpool, 2012), which outlined a vision for the city centre in the post Capital of Culture period, with a particular focus on the regeneration of the area around Lime Street Station and St George's Plaza. In doing so, the proposals resonate with the notion that, with the Pier Head, Kings Dock and the retail quarter of Liverpool City Centre largely redeveloped, the city's leaders are looking at new opportunities to regenerate the Liverpool's built fabric, with the area surrounding Lime Street, being a prime area for development.

Yet, above these proposals a greater economic challenge now faces Liverpool's policy makers: making the most of Britain's 2016 decision to leave the European Union. The potential outcomes that the process off 'Brexit' may bring reflects Liverpool's relationship with the European Union as, though it was the simultaneous decline in Commonwealth trade and shift towards European markets which helped to undermine the Port of Liverpool's economic potency (Lane, 1987, Sykes et al., 2013), it was European Object One money which helped to finance and underpin much of the city's economic revival

(Meegan, 2003). Indeed, Liverpool Lime Street Station, Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool John Lennon Airport are all examples of major transport infrastructure which was funded by the EU. Nonetheless, despite Liverpool voting to retain membership, and rhetoric from the Mayor which indicated that the city would continue to forge strong links with the Continent (Cowley, 2015), others in the city argued that the redeveloped city centre, alongside new port infrastructure, would leave Liverpool well placed to capitalise on new economic opportunities to arise from Britain leaving the European Union.

Above all, while the outcome still remains unclear, both positions reflect something of Liverpool's fundamental values as an outward looking city. This can be observed from its beginnings as a port, through to the core design principles of its modern day urban regeneration. It has been the River Mersey and Liverpool's relationship with the sea which has influenced the city for centuries and, as the city progresses its vision, this seems unlikely to change.

6. Conclusions

Liverpool's economic revival across the turn of the new millennium was premised on near wholesale city centre regeneration. Following the regeneration of the Albert Dock, in 1999 the city turned its attention to the Paradise Street area to the south of the city centre. The result was the redevelopment of 42 hectares of land, in a project which became known as Liverpool One, which opened during Liverpool's celebration as European Capital of Culture in 2008. Embracing the principles of mixed-used development, the combination of retail, leisure and residential development revived Liverpool's flagging city centre economy, where an annual footfall of 26 million people helped propel growth in the city centre economy to four times the national average (Liverpool Vision, 2014, Parkinson, 2008), whilst also helping make Liverpool the fastest growing city region outside of London by the end of the decade (TMP., 2009).

Although Liverpool One's economic contribution was clear, it did present a number of planning-based challenges. Its construction required the collaboration of over twenty architectural practices (Littlefield, 2009), and its 'mall without walls' concept raised a number of issues about the management of public-private space (Minton, 2006, Biddulph, 2011). However, whilst these issues did not visibly affect the city centre in a negative way, the construction of Liverpool One did raise issues for the wider city centre. In particular, the Church Street

and Bold Street regions did experience a retail drain as tenants moved to the new development. Although this did settle over time, with Bold Street in particular finding a new role as the city's independent quarter, nonetheless the construction of Liverpool One did present a challenge for the city centre.

Though Liverpool One, alongside a suite of other nearby development in the Kings Dock, represented the culmination of Liverpool's revival, this saw regeneration move into a new phase. As such, with the easy targets of derelict land and surface car parking largely eliminated, the city must now consider its development trajectory more carefully. In particular, this involves balancing Liverpool's built heritage and UNESCO World Heritage Site status. Whilst Liverpool One managed to negotiate these hurdles, new development is garnering more attention with regards to how it interacts with Liverpool's historic environment. This, undoubtedly, is the next big challenge for planners and developers in the city.

Ultimately, there are a number of lessons which can be applied to those cities, particularly in international contexts, who seek to learn from the example of Liverpool. Above all, Liverpool One stands out as an exemplar of public-private cooperation, with the developers delivering Liverpool City Council's vision for the Paradise Street Site, whilst incorporating a number of different architects to create a non-uniform design. The success of this approach is reflected in the fact that Liverpool's one the Masterplan was nominated for the prestigious RIBA prize in 2009. Liverpool One's construction also highlights how development can balance heritage needs. In particular, One Park West stands out as an example of how the developers worked with English Heritage and ultimately responded to concerns, modifying a design so as to protect existing heritage.

As such, Liverpool One represents an excellent case study of how urban regeneration can drive competitiveness, and the issues that it has raised during its conception, construction and completion can serve as a good benchmark against which other putative schemes can base their own regeneration initiatives.

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