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Manchester Castlefield: An Example For Inner City Revitalisation

Introduction

Twenty years ago, the area of inner city Manchester, which is called Castlefield today, was a part of town nobody was eager to visit, a kind of *no-go area*. There you could find dubious dealers of used cars, tanneries, a stockyard, and concrete works. Many of the buildings were originating in the early and grand days of Manchester's industrialisation, but had been extended and built over, as their use for storage and production had required. The youngest additions were of concrete and corrugated iron.

Today Castlefield is not only presented as "Manchester's Birthplace", but is the place to be for designers and software developers. In this area the largest part of the tourist attractions of inner city Manchester can be found. And indeed, Castlefield offers a well looked after and pleasant surrounding for tourism, for working and living – to those who can afford it.

Until rather recent times Castlefield did not exist in any comparable way: the name was associated only with the area of the former Roman camp, from the 1840's on also with the canal basins built at its western edge. Only during the process of redevelopment, which was banking on the area's past, "Castlefield" became established as name of the entire quarter. In the following I will try to describe how the perspective on the area was developed and changed that far, influenced by massive engineering of the appearance of its built environment.

At first, Castlefield is described - as it presents itself to the visitor today, then its history will be summarised, as it is used continually as an argument for the revitalisation of the area. Then the process of revitalisation itself will be looked at: the beginning directed by several interested groups and the *Manchester City Council* (MCC), and the second phase from 1988 to 1996 under the sole authority of the *Central Manchester Development Corporation* (CMDC).

Castlefield's revitalisation emphasised its specific past. While doing that it showed again and again the influence of *heritage*-positions onto the handling of the past¹. To be able to show this dominance in the redevelopment-process, the *heritage*-debate will be summarised as well. Then the marketing of old buildings and the process of *gentrification* are discussed. Finally I will look at the re-use and the related interpretation of the area and its buildings, and the meaning of this for the presentation and interpretation of the city.

Castlefield Today

Today Castlefield is a core-area of Manchester's inner city. Here one can find many tourist attractions: e.g. the Museum of Science and Industry, or the Granada studios, complete with

¹ *Heritage* means the use of the past, or a specific reconstruction of it, as normative symbol/sign for the present. With that usually a kind of sentimental transfiguration of the past happens.

fun fair and theme hotel. Close by, just outside of the development area Castlefield, the exhibition of the Labour History Museum is situated.

The whole is dominated by relics of the Industrial Revolution: first of all the narrow canals, different railway bridges, and the warehouses and terminals belonging to canal and railway infrastructure. Many pubs and restaurants are situated here; a youth hostel is neighbouring to the central events arena, which is built around a reopened canal basin. From here it is only a few yards to the Roman Gardens Area containing reconstructed parts of the Roman camp that once existed at this place. Three (not all of them used) railway bridges are built across Castlefield Basin alone – each in a different style built at differing times.

Footpaths lead to all parts of the place, including in their network the towpaths of the canals, thus offering links to other inner city areas - apart from streets and traffic.

In this part of Castlefield the density of building is not that high, between the warehouses and new buildings green spaces and small squares are to be found. The canal-area is surrounded by more built-up areas: Liverpool Road in the north, one of the main roads of the area, and Knott Mill in the south-east, linked with Castlefield economically and in its concept. The entire revitalised area is showing the same design of landscaping, footpaths, lighting, and street furniture. Integrated into this concept are certain views and vistas centring on historic buildings and structures, emphasising the usage as canal and railroad junction in the past.

Castlefield can be divided into three main sections: the north is dominated by Granada and the museums, the centre focuses on the canals and their usage for tourism, while the buildings are occupied by upscale housing and offices for software and design developers and other service-sector firms. In Knott Mill are warehouses as well, but also former workshops and textile mills. Most of these buildings are smaller than those in Castlefield's centre and the built-up is much more dense, open spaces are the exception. Here one finds offices and housing as well, but canals do not dominate the appearance of this part of the city.

Quarters of Manchester that are next to Castlefield, but not interesting for tourism or exclusive housing, are only partly included in the redevelopment or the linking to the footpath-network. Also in Castlefield itself some projects have not been finished - even though they had been part of the first planning stages in 1982: the network of footpaths is not complete, a park and ride programme, planned for the relief of the inner city, has not been put into operation at all.

In March 1998, the *Manchester City Council* (MCC) decided on a strategy and action plan for Castlefield, to continue the restructuring of the area. The plan contains older concepts and tries to close existing gaps in the revitalisation of this part of the city. The revitalisation is seen in relation to the situation of other parts of the inner city: remaining derelict or just unused spaces are to be developed, the footpath-network is to be completed to optimise the connection to the city's centre. Existing motor traffic is planned to be re-directed away from the inner city by means of new relief roads. In Castlefield itself a one way system is hoped to limit the volume of traffic. The housing areas are to be improved by laying out playgrounds (something the CMDC did not do), the landscaping of the Roman Gardens is to be improved (MCC Feb. 1998: 5-14).

Generally the new road developments are meant to lessen the traffic in the inner city. This should automatically lead to a higher traffic density on relief and ring roads, making these

even worse obstacles for pedestrians as they are now. The construction of a great number of easy to use pedestrian crossings is planned to hinder the split up of the quarters².

Castlefield today means exclusive housing and working in an area with a growing variety of cultural and leisure options. Not only the inhabitants of Manchester but also tourism benefits from the growing cultural opportunities, which have become a trademark of the city (Cass 1996: 55).

The commercialisation and marketing of certain periods of the past and the re-use of buildings originating in these periods are offering growth to Manchester. Concepts from the redevelopment of Castlefield are adapted for the revitalisation of other areas of the inner city, e.g. the Northern Quarter. But revitalisation has not spread into all parts of the city, even some bordering at Castlefield are seemingly left out, e.g. there are no activities of the kind to be recognised in the area of Salford which is divided from Castlefield only by the river Irwell.

The new possibilities in the area have influenced the nightlife and the pub-landscape. New restaurants and pubs are added to those already existing. Castlefield is situated at the end of a long line of pubs etc. alongside Rochdale canal and Whitworth Street. Of course the pubs and bars influence the scenery. How far Castlefield can develop a close pub and club infrastructure and still stay a main area for family recreation has to be seen. At the moment the uses of Castlefield at day differ widely from those at night.

Parking spaces already have become a major problem for Manchester's entire inner city. Ground is getting too expensive to be used for simple surface parking. The extension of the tram-system, Metrolink, combined with intensified footpath-networking to reach as many destinations as quickly as possible, is hoped to reduce individual motor traffic and thus the parking problem³.

Castlefield's History

Revitalisation is using the past of the area, which today is defined as "Castlefield", and the interpretation and presentation of aspects of local history. Parts of the built-up of the area are used as witnesses of the past – they are done up and emphasised in a peculiar way to show the historical importance of the area to visitors.

Oldest exhibits proving the existence of a settlement in the area date back to Roman times, whether there have been earlier settlements is not known. In the years 78 - 86 CE a simple encampment with shallow trenches, earthworks and wooden palisades is built at the confluence of Irwell and Medlock. It is likely that only at the beginning of the third century the fortification in stone was executed. When the camp was vacated in 410 CE, the attached settlement at the military road to York also became derelict. The Roman settlement's name, "Mamucium", derives from the sandstone hill the camp had been standing on. That the name of Manchester derives from this name seems conceivable (Encyc. Brit. 1984: 431).

² Richard Duddell, Senior Planner, MCC - Technical Services Dept., in conversation on 25.11.1997.

³ Planning in relation to the *Government White Paper on Transport Policy* published on 20. Juli 1998.

Under the reign of Edward the Elder, king of the West-Saxons, the rebuilding of the camp is begun after 923 to use it for defence against the Norsemen. With the arrival of the Normans this fort is vacated as well. Slightly to the north of the fortification, the settlement at the confluence of Irk and Irwell already exists. Medieval Manchester develops from that settlement, not from the former Roman camp, which is decaying, later on its stones are used for bridge-building, the area is used as pasture (Shercliff 1983: 4).

During the 1720's the river Irwell is made navigable. At his banks quays are built, Quay Street is built as their accessway. In 1739 soldiers camp in the "Campfield", which got its name from that instance, not from the Roman fort (Baines 1889: 16). In 1762 the Bridgewater Canal is opened. During the 1770's the canal network is extended continually, next to the former Roman camp the terminus of the Bridgewater Canal is built, important for the transfer of goods from road to canal and vice versa. Due to the link-up with the Rochdale Canal the terminus becomes more important. From 1804 on, far-distanced places like Hull and Liverpool can be reached on the canals (Patch 1997: 34). During that times the first warehouses are built in the vicinity of the camp, centring on the canals: as the Duke's Warehouse was spanning the End of the canal, other warehouses were connected to the Bridgewater Canal by short branch canals, so called warehouse basins. Only Merchant's Warehouse is built directly alongside the canal (Brumhead, Wyke 1997: 26 f.). Canals dominate trade for approximately sixty years, then they lose their leading position to the railways. Their use is reduced to the transport of bulk goods (Stratton, Trinder 1997: 96 f.). In 1830 the Liverpool – Manchester Railway is opened. In Liverpool Road, today considered to be part of Castlefield, the terminus is situated. From 1844 on, Liverpool Road Station is only used for goods and livestock; passenger transport is relocated to Victoria Station, closer to the city centre. In 1896-98, only a few hundred yards away, next to the Central Station (just outside the area of today's Castlefield) the Great Northern Railway Warehouse is erected, largest of its time: it provides links to the canals and the railways, but also allows goods-transport by road (ibid.: 98).

The canal companies in Manchester realised the competition by the railways in 1844, but already in 1846 the *Bridgewater Canal Company*, the *Peak Forrest-*, and the *Rochdale Company* are owned by railway companies that use them as suppliers for the railways and for bulk cargoes like cotton (Patch 1997: 34 f.). Most canal companies lose their independence and competitiveness to the railways.

On Camp Field, north of Liverpool Road, a hay market is established followed by a variety of markets. Until 1876 the four traditional annual fairs are held, from 1877 on, the daily market is situated there. Since the early 19th century also the potato market is held there, for the necessary deliveries Potato Wharf is built. In 1880 and 1882, the Higher and Lower Campfield Market Halls are erected, of which the second becomes City Exhibition Hall and is used until the 1970's for events and exhibitions (Brumhead, Wyke 1989: 27 f.).

After the boom of the Industrial Revolution starts the slow but steady decline of the area, at the beginning of this century and continuing well into the 1980's. The canals had been used, but most of the times the boats had had cargo for only one tour and had to return empty. The railway companies stopped using the canals (nearly) altogether. With the increase of road

transport after World War I, the commercial use of the canals came close to extinction, e.g. in 1952, the *Rochdale Canal Act* ended the operation of this canal (Patch 1997: 35).

In spite of the activities and developments in this area of the city the population did not see a relation between the canal quays and for example Liverpool Road Station. There was no recognisable unity of the area and no name for it. The different parts of today's Castlefield were oriented to different neighbouring areas, e.g. Knott Mill or St. Georges. If something happened it did so at a particular place, e.g. the opening of the Manchester-Liverpool Railway was at Liverpool Road, or a mass-meeting on the *Reform Bill* in 1832 was at the Camp Field, "Castlefield" was never mentioned.

Castlefield's Revitalisation

Today's Castlefield has to be seen as a product of the inner city revitalisation-wave that took place in Great Britain in the last twenty years. In regard to town planning and history of civilisation, Castlefield's revitalisation is something special: for an area, which had not even been seen as a unity beforehand, an image was constructed, one could even say invented. Apart from a few enthusiasts nobody knew until well into the 1970's of the historic role of some of the old buildings in the area. Castlefield's redevelopment is an example for intense *image building*: first an idea of the historic importance of the area was developed, then the area itself was revitalised. In this process Castlefield has not become a museum, as areas close to the city centre, especially with a pronounced past, are ideally used for housing and commercial enterprises, and thus for the cultural revitalisation of the inner cities.

During the 1960's, an archaeological survey of the remains of the Roman fort was carried out when parts of the existing buildings that covered the remains had been demolished. The results helped to remind interested people of the significance of that part of the city (Cass 1996:49). The *Manchester Region Industrial Archaeology Society* then started to take photographs of the oldest industrial buildings, especially of those that were connected to the canals and the development of the railway system. With these photographs they started to promote the preservation of particular buildings (Brumhead, Wyke 1989: 42). When in 1975 Liverpool Road Station was closed, the *Greater Manchester Council* (GMC) checked the possibilities to re-use it as a museum. Three years later the GMC bought Liverpool Road Station for the symbolic price of £ 1, to establish the *North Western Museum of Science and Industry* on the premises (ibid.: 5). An essential stock of exhibits for the museum came from the *Northern Mill Engine Society* (Samuel 1994: 250).

In 1978, the GMC started to emphasise the richness of the industrial heritage of the appropriate buildings and to use them to advertise for the city. In 1979, the GMC proposed *Conservation Area*⁴ status for Castlefield, the *Department for the Environment* (DoE) declared it *Outstanding Conservation Area* and detailed surveys and plans for possible developments were started (Brumhead, Wyke 1989: 5). The GMC as well as the *Manchester City Council* supported the revitalisation of Castlefield as it offered possibilities to work against further de-

⁴ *Conservation Areas* are places of historical or architectural interest. Plans related to these areas have to be published locally to allow resident interest groups to take influence on the planning. *Conservation Areas* are suggested by the *District Council* as areas of worthiness of increased protection and confirmed or refused by the DoE (Rydin 1993: 108).

population and decay of the inner city (HMSO 1995: 29). Another crucial point for the promotion of inner city areas is that only inhabitants and resident firms have to pay direct taxes and fees to the city. Populated or commercially used inner city areas mean revenue for the city.

In 1980, the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was celebrated on the premises of the Liverpool Road Station. These festivities had been organised to the larger extent by the *Liverpool Road Station Society* that had been founded by enthusiasts to preserve the station. Its members cleared out and cleaned the site as far as possible. While the interest in industrial archaeology had been growing for some time already, it was only at that time that David Rhodes, *City Planning Officer* and then *Project Officer* of the *Liverpool Road Station Society* claimed to be the one who had revived the name of the core area "Castlefield" to be used for the entire *Heritage Park*⁵.

Starting with the building of the passenger station all parts of the station were restored. The Manchester branch of the *Victorian Society* started to draw the attention of single persons and public bodies to the importance of the Georgian and Victorian buildings still standing at Castlefield. They negotiated with the *Inner City Partnership* of Manchester and Salford the restoration of the City Exhibition Hall and its possible use as an aviation museum (Brumhead, Wyke 1989: 42). In 1982, the *Castlefield Conservation Steering Committee*, on which all larger organisations and landowners of the area were sitting, was established and a plan for long term development was adopted (ibid.: 5): Castlefield became Great Britain's first *Urban Heritage Park*, covering approximately 180 acres of land dominated by narrow canals. Tourism and *heritage* were planned to be the main factors of the beginning redevelopment, the canals were considered one of the central features due to their role in industrial history. Their potential for development was seen as rather big as their total length is more than eight miles in Manchester alone and as they are connecting different parts of the city and provide a link to the national canal network (Cass 1991: 741).

The further revitalisation of Castlefield did not happen according to these early plans: the planning and development of the late 1980's concentrated on recreational and touristic options in Castlefield, neglecting older concepts of mixed use of the *Urban Heritage Park* for housing, working, and tourism.

Jim Ramsbottom, who started to invest in Castlefield in 1982, had to wait until 1990 before he could develop his properties. He planned the creation of a truly mixed complex containing offices, shops, and housing for different social groups. Official plans for the revitalisation of Castlefield (from 1988 on by the CMDC) incorporated housing and recreation elements like restaurants etc. but hardly any offices – even though offices, in combination with housing, promised to integrate the area into the living and working infrastructure of the city and to improve its reputation. As nobody was willing to partake in the financial risk of a redevelopment according to his plans, the self-financed re-use had to be dominated by amortisation plans and the question of costs. Eastgate Building was the first finished project

⁵ Claimed in a lecture at the *Manchester Lit. & Phil. Society* in 1978, and in a pamphlet at the anniversary of Liverpool Road Station 1980 (Eddie Cass in conversation on 24.11.1997).

and turned out to be an office building through and through. It influenced the plans for its surroundings: later redevelopments were restricted to the creation of further offices, as the concept of mixed use was not valid any longer for entire Castlefield, different parts of the area became earmarked for different uses⁶.

The Phoenix-Initiative, a co-operation of businesspeople situated at Whitworth Street, started to plan for the Whitworth Street corridor along the Rochdale canal, as they wanted to continue the redevelopment that had started in Castlefield. Manchester's Chinatown close by was another example they looked at when planning, as there the same sort of buildings had successfully been converted (Cass 1996: 52). But the larger part of the development of Whitworth Street did only take off after the CMDC had started operation⁷.

Under the direction of the MCC non-representative industrial buildings of younger origin were demolished. The excavation of filled canal parts was started, scrap yards and other businesses were made to move as they were not considered appropriate for an area to be revitalised (Cass 1996: 50). In the time following the walls and the North Gate of the Roman fort were reconstructed. A *Visitor and Information Centre* was opened with its main focus on Castlefield and not Manchester as a whole. The annual *Castlefield Carnival* was introduced to inform the population of the changes going on in Castlefield, to offer a reason to visit the area, to see the improvements, and to improve the reputation of the area⁸.

In 1983, the *Museum of Science and Industry* opened at the former Liverpool Road Goods Station, the *Air and Space Gallery* at the neighbouring City Exhibition Hall followed soon. The museum expanded quickly and soon became a touristic centre of the revitalising area, later on of other developing areas as well (ibid.: 49). While the museum had been planned as technics-museum with a focus on the Northwest of England, later on the themes of the exhibitions became centred on the industrial city as such. This offered the possibility to show and explain Manchester's importance for the development of several industries. Still today it is the museum's intention to work for the city's welfare and to promote "the pleasure of understanding" (Porter, Dixon 1996: 25).

At the same time the re-use of mills and warehouses for non-industrial uses began slowly. New accessways and bridges were built, the towpaths along the canals were made up to invite pedestrians into the area (Cass 1991: 744).

In 1985, a sculpture by Locky Morris was put up near Duke's Lock, at the beginning of the Rochdale canal, showing a spade on whose blade a piece of meat was frying. "Navy's Dinner" was meant to remind of the construction workers of the canals but first of all it was a try to incorporate art into the area (Brumhead, Wyke 1990: 6 f.). In 1986, a sculpture by Ted Roocroft that depicts tree sheep was erected in the vicinity of the Roman fort. The sheep are meant to be a symbol of peace, also reminding of the use of the area for pasture in pre-industrial time (ibid.: 7). On the one hand it was referring to the interests of the then popular peace-movement, on the other hand it was another piece of public art to enhance the quality of the green spaces developing. Another important step was the opening of the *G-Mex Exhibition and Events Centre* in the former Central Station in direct neighbourhood of the Roman Gardens Area.

⁶ Jim Ramsbottom, in conversation on 19.9.1997.

⁷ Dr. J. Patrick Greene, Director of the Museum of Science and Industry, in conversation on 24.11.1997.

⁸ Graham Sandham, Manager of the Castlefield Management Company, in conversation on 19.9.1997.

In 1988, the *Central Manchester Development Corporation* (CMDC) was created to revitalise a total of almost 500 acres and to attract private investors into the area. The CMDC's area was situated to the south of the city centre, beginning at Piccadilly Station and leading to Pomona Docks, it was separated into six *conservation areas*, containing all in all more than 90 listed buildings. With the help of public and private money and funds of the European Union housing and offices in the inner city were created. As it is customary with *Urban Development Corporations* (UDCs), the CMDC held the planning authority for the area - including all listed buildings and natural monuments. If an UDC considers it necessary for the development of their area, it is entitled to dispossess owners of their buildings and properties (Rydin 1993: 170). Their plans do not have to be published, UDCs are directly responsible to the Minister for the Environment and this minister has to justify its activities before parliament (Heineberg 1997: 319). Developments are executed without communal control, but UDCs started to co-operate with local planning authorities to improve their image. The MCC and its planning department were put into a kind of consultancy without authority for the development area. The CMDC only kept a small planning staff but used the city's planning department to draw up the detailed plans for their projects (to which their special planning regulations had to be applied). Main features of Castlefield's redevelopment had been heritage, tourism, and recreation activities since 1982. This was not changed by the CMDC, as their's was an area next to the city centre, with large quantities of buildings listed, most of the building stock intended for redevelopment, all in all "a unique resource" (CMDC Mai 1990: 6).

Existing plans and projects of the different interest groups could be continued, the results that had been achieved already offered a solid basis for further developments. The main difference between revitalisation directed by the MCC and the Development Corporation was the speed of planning and execution of plans. No wonder, as planning under the authority of the MCC had to take into account many restrictions the UDC was allowed to ignore (like the conservation of listed buildings etc.).

Upper Campfield Market was restored to house the exhibition of the *National Museum of Labour History*, while their archives were put into the Mechanics' Institute, where the museum opened on May Day 1990. The plans to convert the market hall turned out to be too expensive and finally the exhibition of the museum was set up in the Pump House just outside the Castlefield development sector. Even though other planners consider the Pump House part of Castlefield (the borders of the area are at least unclarified) the museum had to repay most of the help it had received of the CMDC up to that time⁹.

In 1991, the *Visions Community Design Ltd.* decided to build a centre for community regeneration with environmental and education resources to promote - against the background of the redeveloped Castlefield - sustainable building technology, energy consciousness etc. It is aiming at school groups and adults alike, additional to the educational program an architectural and technical aid scheme is planned. The project is financed by the *Millennium Commission* and different firms.

In 1992, the Victoria and Albert-Hotel opened in warehouses at the river Irwell, financed by *Granada Television*, who run their Studios Tour since 1989 close by, where they show for

⁹ Dr. J. Patrick Greene, in conversation on 24.11.1997.

example the set of Coronation Street (Cass 1996: 51). It has to be mentioned that *Granada Television* is not actively supporting the revitalisation of Castlefield (Greene 1996: 7).

The YMCA moved its leisure facilities to the new Castlefield Hotel next to the re-created Staffordshire Wharf. On the other side of the wharf, an open-air arena seating up to 1.500 has been built. Metrolink, a modern tram system, services Castlefield via the stop at the G-Mex, providing a direct link to Manchester's main station (Piccadilly Station) and to the city centre. In 1993, the *Inland Waterways Association* organised its annual rally of narrow boats with the destination Castlefield. 500 boats took part, approximately 300.000 visitors came to Castlefield to see the boats and to take part in the event. Due to the success Potato Wharf was dug out and connected to the canal again. Little later a boat rental settled there, Castlefield became established as a destination for narrow boat tourism (Cass 1996: 50 f.). In the same year, the *Castlefield Management Company* and their associated *Ranger Service Initiative* commenced their work to guarantee a positive appearance of Castlefield. The *Manchester Ship Canal Company* financed the building of a new youth hostel at Potato Wharf, connected the canal-network to the Manchester Ship Canal, and developed their Castle Quay warehouse for housing and design studios. Jim Ramsbottom restored a lock keeper's house at the end of the Rochdale, converted the stables next door to a family pub, and developed the neighbouring warehouses as offices (Cass 1996: 51).

Upper Campfield Market finally became a multi-purpose building, as other uses have not been realisable. In 1994, Manchester's theatre initiative "City of Drama" started there. Castlefield was used more and more for the cultural program of the city, special events started to take place dominantly in this part of the city. During the theatre initiative Manchester twinned with Barcelona, Catalan Square was laid out to emphasise the new relation. At the Western end of Castle Street, in the centre of Castlefield, the Catalan artist Madola created another work of art to enhance the cityscape: a 10-20 inches high and several yards wide disc covered with yellow slates, into which Catalan and English writing is carved. The disc is surrounded by blue slated strips which are set into the normal paving of the area. It is meant to remind of the sun, water, and industry as central elements of the rise of both cities¹⁰.

The former Congregational Chapel at the edge of Castlefield had been converted to recording studios, now conversion into a restaurant is planned. One of the oldest remaining warehouses, Merchants Warehouse, of which almost one half had been burned out, has been restored and developed into offices. New staircases in steel and glass have been added to the outside of the building not to destroy the wooden inner structure of it.

In 1996, the CMDC was decommissioned and planning authority was returned to the MCC. The number of inhabitants of the inner city is said to have climbed from 250 to more than 3.000 during the existence of the CMDC (Burrows Communications Ltd. 1996: 47), to check these figures is hardly possible.

Since the time of the Industrial Revolution, poorest housing conditions, so called *back to back-housing*, prevailed in Castlefield's northeastern area. It is planned to incorporate this aspect of the local past into the presentation of the *Urban Heritage Park*. As no buildings of the type have survived there, it is planned to relocate an appropriate building to Castlefield (Brumhead, Wyke 1989: 32). Since 1997, the *Castlefield Management Company* offers a guide for a city

¹⁰ Madola: Mediterránea -sitting on the sun in Castlefield!; Castlefield Management Company, April 1996.

trail covering the concerned area. As the buildings of social deprivation are gone the visitor has to imagine a fitting ambience: "As you walk, imagine the streets lined with housing, look at the Roman Gardens and imagine four more streets of houses."¹¹

The *Heritage*-Debate And Revitalisation

At the turn of the century, Émile Durkheim developed the concept of collective consciousness¹²: any human being is seeing itself as belonging to certain groups. Maurice Halbwachs added collective memory to the concept¹³: groups and their members influence each other's memories and shape new members of the group. In this way the specific memory of different groups is created and formed continually (of course it remains subject to constant change). He points at the differences between lived and learned history: learned history starts where the social memory ends. It is using fixed boundaries and specific dates, it focuses on the discontinuity of events, whereas social i.e. collective memory is trying to construct continuity. The collective memory is considered to be the foundation of the collective self-understanding of groups: situations are remembered in which polarities between different groups are manifested: 'Us' in opposition to 'Them'¹⁴.

In this context 'History' is understood as research into past events and conditions, especially into political, social, and economical developments that are specific for a place, a region, a nation, or the world. History is seen in relation to socially dominant discourses that influence the construction of the past. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, history does not have a defined object and is only valid for the time and society in which it is created¹⁵.

'*Heritage*' means the sum of historic buildings, monuments, and sceneries of a nation, especially if they are considered [by the culturally dominating groups] to be worthy of preservation (Shorter Oxford 1993: 1223). It can be translated as 'inheritance', but also as 'property' or 'right of birth', in relation to the *heritage*-debate the connotation of 'memory' or 'cultural heritage' should be made.

The crucial difference between *heritage* and history seems to be the close association of identity and *heritage*, which manifests itself as permanent construction of continuity between "then" and "now": in that specific way the ancestors lived, from there the actual society has developed. Identity describes the feeling of unity with oneself and with the own development, and also "to be in accord with the emotions of a community that has got its future, history (or mythology) straightened out with the community itself" (Erikson 1975: 29; my translation).

The *heritage*-debate has been influenced by the interest in regional history and the history of "average" people, i.e. social history that has become prominent since the 1960's¹⁶,

¹¹ Castlefield Management Company: [Castlefield Liverpool Road Trail](#); w/o date or pagenumbers.

¹² É. Durkheim: *Soziologie und Philosophie*; Frankfurt a.M.: 1967.

¹³ M. Halbwachs: z.B. in: *Das kollektive Gedächtnis*; Stuttgart: 1967.

¹⁴ B.Anderson: *Imagined Communities*; London: 1992.

¹⁵ C. Lévi-Strauss: *Das wilde Denken*; und: *Strukturelle Antropologie*; both: Frankfurt a.M.: 1971.

¹⁶ E.g. in the "people's history"-historiography, a kind of "history from below"-movement, started by academics like E.P. Thompson and others in GB (Stinshoff 1991, 206 f.). In Skandinavia, the "Grav hvor du star" (dig where you are standing)-movement resulted in comparable developments, started by Sven Lindqvist's book of the same name (Andersen 1988, 84).

whereas historiography had previously been mainly the history of political rulers and of the influential. But the relation to contemporary developments has to be seen as well: the decline of industry and economic recession lead to an increase in un-used and decaying buildings and industrial areas.

Groups interested in the history of industrialisation started to discuss the importance of different buildings and ensembles for the national history. One of the main concerns was that the loss of the historically more important buildings would lead to a loss of identity – at least for the concerned local population a part of their roots into the past would be destroyed. The debate led to a slow increase in listed buildings and museums related to industrial history.

Industrial buildings are not easily used for other purposes. If they are to be used commercially it comes as a problem that not that many businesses can use them without massive changes of their substance. Often the last possibility to use a specific industrial building is to turn it into a museum. The large quantity of industrial buildings still existing should allow to reflect on the worth and importance of each single object and whether it should really be preserved (Krankenhagen 1990: 155). The emphasis put on old buildings influences the way the related period of the past is treated¹⁷. Everything new is compared to the concepts of importance and appearance attached to the old buildings. But a place loses its identity and authenticity when it is cleared out and changed to be marketable (Barke, Harrop 1994: 111 f.). In the case of Castlefield the removal of the remaining industrial usage, the clearing out of whatever had gathered, the landscaping and greening resulted in a completely new appearance of the area. Only the façades of selected buildings have been preserved and restored, everything else is changed: it was dirty and noisy, now it is neat, green and comparably quiet.

The way one treats the own history, the ideational and material inheritance, expresses a lot of the spiritual and moral state of a society and its ability to act in the future. Whether a society's perspective centres on the past, present, or future is related to its ability to deal with new situations (Reiß-Schmidt 1994: 1937).

The way a community emphasises specific buildings and their time of origin allows to conclude on its self-understanding and how it values the different periods of its past¹⁸. In Castlefield only buildings dating back to the grand days of industrialisation have been preserved and adapted to new uses. Buildings of the last sixty years have been demolished, as they did not fit into the desired image¹⁹.

While the discussion of the creation of traditions and images in historiography is well established, the *heritage*-debate itself started to take shape in 1985 with David Lowenthal's "The Past is a Foreign Country". Lowenthal analysed the inexactitude and one-sidedness of many presentations of historic events and warned of the dangers of simplifying historical

¹⁷ Axel Föhl points at the problem of differentiation between old buildings and monuments: "The industrial old building is desired to survive, always called exaggeratedly 'monument' by the curator of monuments. [...] in the end it looks as if one is demolishing monuments, even though they would simply be 'old buildings' if nobody had called them monument before." (Föhl 1994: 1949; my translation)

¹⁸ Nikolaus Pevsner stresses that in architecture imitation and repetition of the past show a lack of self-confidence, and in the field of intellect and aesthetics a lack in power and courage (Pevsner 1997: 332 f.). In that context the German efforts to rebuild the Berlin Stadtschloß or the Frauenkirche at Dresden, have to be seen as an attempt to cut out the recent past, focussing on the "grand" past prior to 1945.

¹⁹ E.g. Blantyre Street No. 1 & 2 (CMDC Mai 1994: 51; further examples in: CMDC 1996: 10).

presentation and understanding. He stressed the impossibility of keeping the remains of anything without altering these exhibits. One of his main issues was to point again and again at the transitoriness of concepts of the past as the present is continually altering its relation to the past.

After 1985, the *heritage*-debate became a forum for critique of the cultural politics of the Thatcher-governments as well: of its glorification and over-emphasising of periods of the past, the so called *heritage craze* of the 1980's that had been used as welcomed distraction from political and social problems of the present (as Wright (1985) and Hewison (1987) point out). In opposition to this, Raphael Samuel points at the non-political nature of many developments in this field, e.g. the *Railway Preservation* or *Steam Traction Rallies* (Samuel 1994: 302). He concludes that every political position developed its own concepts of alternative *heritage*, as well on regional as on national level. According to Samuel, the *heritage*-industry, i.e. the marketing of cultural heritage, developed due to the economical situation of the eighties: the bad state of the economy and the political reaction to it, like job-creation schemes etc., made possible the establishment of regional studies and the development of *heritage*-centres. It had been most of all in the inner cities where the marketing of the results had been pressed forward and not in the more traditional rural areas (Samuel 1994: 238).

These developments resulted in a different way to exhibit in museums as not only more regional or special themes were to be presented. The background of those working in museums diversified, e.g. enthusiasts turned up for particular fields of industrialisation, some of them with a personal link to the more recent industrial past. Topics of the recent past became exhibited, more material was available, but also more concepts of how to present these exhibits – especially in the field of the musealisation of crafts and industry. Of course this changed the images of the objects and processes shown.

David McCrone, Angela Morris and Richard Kiely argue that the marketing of *heritage* as element of tourism is unavoidable in the late 20th century, in which art and commerce are firmly combined. *Heritage* produces meaning and the possibility to position oneself, in this regard it is not essential that the used images of the past are simplifying and easily falsifiable (McCrone, Morris, Kiely 1995: 207). The existing *heritage*-situation with its basic sociological factors is interpreted. In this process today's society and its need for *heritage* and the role of *heritage* for the development of identity is focussed on:

"Value is not intrinsic to the object, but added. Objects are 'valued' because they are judged to be so, and not for any necessary intrinsic merit. [...] The appeal of *Heritage* over history is that it evokes key social and cultural processes which help to embed people in time" (ibid.: 206).

Lowenthal again stresses the importance of the division between *heritage* and history: according to him, it allows a deliberate reaction on changes of concepts of the past. He considers this to be necessary as today's society mostly puts the main interest on constructed authenticity and appropriate staging of it (in his eyes, "mass"-culture has become the dominant culture in Western societies, "high"-culture has become, in relation, peripheral). Genuine remains and their possible statements on the past are covered over (Lowenthal 1996:

249). Uncritical acceptance of *heritage* as history and the mixing of both concepts²⁰ promote the spread of massively simplifying images of the past, usually in combination with nationalist and chauvinist undertones (ibid.: 250).

The Marketing Of Old Buildings And *Gentrification*

If one assumes that in post-industrial or service society *heritage* becomes central for the legitimisation of the actions of the state, resulting in the change of culture into commodities (McCrone, Morris, Kiely 1995: 16 f.), then everything connectable to these areas becomes marketable, but also it can be taken by particular political tendencies.

Old buildings can be made objects to promote a particular area, like high-profile offices and housing, also allowing their use for tourism. All these uses can be economically important, as additional earnings for the community should result from according developments. Buildings that promise results along that line are often developed to turn them into a source of income. This often leads to substantial changes of the buildings and ensembles.

Planned development of an area means a high degree of aesthetic control, especially in the course of the revitalisation of old buildings. The particular look that can be created by the addition of new annexes to old industrial buildings guarantees the exclusivity of these developments. The setting allows to price the objects in a way that can be seen as social selection among prospective inhabitants: lower income groups are practically excluded. The development of social enclaves in revitalised old buildings, usually of the factory/warehouse type, is an international phenomenon (examples in: Lowenthal 1985: 403; et al). The influence of solvent customers and their specific taste on the planning processes for particular *conservation areas* is huge, as they seemingly are the most desired prospective inhabitants. Their taste for certain materials, designs, etc. is taken into account even if they are not taking part in the planning actively:

"Often the new residents use the historic nature of the area to form a community group which reflects, at one and the same time, the unique character of the built environment and the social organisation of the community around that historic environment. Such groups can be highly effective in placing pressure on local planners for further protection and enhancement of the locality." (Rydin 1993: 239)

Not only when a redevelopment asks for major changes, the substance of the buildings and their looks (and their surroundings) are transformed. Restored and converted, their sites landscaped and the paths paved, industrial buildings with old substance do no longer appear to be as old as they are, their age has become unrecognisable, their specific former use discernible only by specialists. In bad cases, the result turns out to be a mixture of styles that does not allow to recognise an overall concept, a pastiche. Successful examples present something new that is building on the old without blurring the boundaries of the different stages. No plagiarism of style is intended but extensions or conversions of old buildings in keeping with the times. It has been pointed at the fact that most industrial buildings have been planned to be

²⁰ In this context, *Heritage* is to be seen as emotional positioning of the own society by means of a fixed image of the past. History, on the other hand, is defined as the development of theories comparing and discussing constructions of history based on empirical data. The incompatibility of the two positions is obvious.

adaptable to changes in the ways of production or even for completely different uses²¹ (Stratton, Trinder 1997: 120). The re-use of these buildings can be understood as bringing them up to date: their main function is not to remind of a particular period of the past but to be used for the housing of contemporary people or businesses.

In the case of Castlefield, the different societies that triggered the redevelopment of the area did fully co-operate on the improvement of the image (e.g. when clearing Liverpool Road Station, etc.). The appearance of the area was changed, the related activities were reported by local media. By this the understanding of the historical importance of that part of the city was influenced, the image became improved. The revitalisation and accentuation of the area's importance again influenced the self-confidence of the population, as the historic role of Manchester for the nation and the meaning of Castlefield for Manchester was emphasised, thus pointing at the activities of the inhabitants of Manchester then and now. While the economical and social present was not allowing for local pride, the past was offering something to identify with.

The beginning of revitalisation under the authority of the *Greater Manchester Council* and the MCC was an essential precondition for the success of the CMDC. Up to its foundation the aforementioned had already invested £ 7 million in the *Conservation Area*, but had failed to integrate private investors in their development work, as the environmental and conservational restrictions made the development of most of the listed buildings extremely expensive. One of the reasons for the creation of the CMDC was the desired reduction of planning and development restrictions (Grigor 1995: 62).

Gentrification took place in Castlefield, too. The establishing of mostly design and software developing firms helped to associate a specific group of people with Castlefield and the inner city:

"Nine-to-fivers they are not, but individuals, people who work independently as designers, musicians, IT sorts, the lovers of specialist coffees, the type of people fellow entrepreneur Jim Ramsbottom affectionately calls the 'pony-tail brigade'." (Schofield 1997: 10)

The change of Castlefield's buildings and their appearance that has happened along with social change - or rather has caused it - remains to be noted. The areas of Castlefield that contained housing prior to the redevelopment had been working class, whose inhabitants had worked partly in the local works and warehouses. These jobs have gone quite a while ago, of their housing only little remains at the east end of Liverpool Road, all other housing in Castlefield is aiming at higher living standards. Part of the look of revitalised inner city areas and of its former industrial buildings seems to be the young, urban, well earning person who is living or working there.

²¹ This obviously excludes highly specialised buildings or contemporary industrial buildings which usually fall apart at the end of their amortization period.

Castlefield's Interpretation

Castlefield did not exist as it is presented today, it was constructed as area of its own only during the redevelopment. From 1989 on, Castlefield is called "Manchester's Birthplace" (Brumhead, Wyke 1989: 43). The area's image is seen in relation to specific buildings or at least a peculiar type of building. These form a kind of canon, as they are symbolising a higher coherence: on the one hand, there are the narrow canals and the related buildings, offering in their actual usage a unity of present and past, as the traces of the past infrastructure etc. are integrated into new buildings and structures. The old buildings can be used to show some periods of the history of trade and industry, the development of Britain into a merchant empire, the importance of Manchester as centre of trade and manufacture, also the development of automation of production and related social changes (interlinked with the history of steam power). On the other hand, there are the railway-buildings that remind of the different phases of the development of the British railway network, but also generally of the related concepts of steam power and progress. In general: references can be made to the beginning of the modern technological world again and again.

The choice of buildings that were to be restored decided on the appearance of the re-developed Castlefield: the demolition of those buildings understood to be ugly or non-representative - like the younger concrete and corrugated iron buildings, also of the abattoir etc. - limited the options to remind of the period of economic recession, and of the change in the concept of what an industrial building should be.

Locky Morris' "Navy's Dinner" is the only reminder of social conditions at the time of the canals' construction, Madola's "Mediterránea" centres on industry as one of the sources of the city's growth but leaves out industrial decline and Manchester's (and Barcelona's) recent past. The idea to relocate one single example of *back to back*-housing to Liverpool Road is rather peripheral in comparison to the rest of the area. But it might be a signal for a changing concept of what periods and aspects of the past are to be reminded of in Castlefield.

The collective understanding always centres on segments of the possible variety of meanings, present in exhibits and objects. Especially if interpretatory assistance like signs etc. are given. Castlefield offers many of these assistances: signs explain the function of specific buildings, others the importance of single warehouses, etc. Already the way the paths, bridges, and buildings are signposted is pointing at the specialness of the meaning given to these buildings and monuments. The specific landscaping, the buildings and their state of repair, the style of the new extensions, conversions, and buildings, all is looking special and different to the usual non-designed city-quarters. Even if the historical importance is not to be grasped, the area is stepping out of the line of the neighbouring areas in its expensive looks. The entire Castlefield area has been prepared for touristic use, the housing areas are integrated into the according presentation. Subliminal everything is marked as important and special.

A crucial factor of the positive image of today's Castlefield is the accent on its "Tradition of Innovation" made by the city and the CMDC. It helped to put Castlefield and the neighbouring Knott Mill on the map of those working in the creative professions. The buildings of the first Industrial Revolution are used for the "Information Revolution" happening today, a connection is created to a past, which is seen as positive. The assumed

continuity of the local spirit of innovation is meant to influence the perspective on present and future²². The past of the area, its *heritage*-factor, is seen as part of its special marketability.

Castlefield is presented, is staged and did not develop on its own, i.e. undirected, but was planned as a whole. The way it is today is the product of precise planning, like most other new housing estates, only that most of its buildings are not newly built, but are restored for their actual uses. Certain periods of its past are emphasised most of the time, continuity is created from the old industrial to the new Castlefield of services and tourism. A continuity that has not been: in the meantime Castlefield was neither representative nor of recognised importance for the nation.

Conclusion

The collective identity of the population is dominated by interpretations of history and related illustrations, like for example in the production of Castlefield: what can be seen is not a restoration of the old in every detail, but (apart from exceptions like Merchants Warehouse) only the representative shell of the buildings. The addition of new buildings, modern windows and roofs, the paving of paths and canal banks, etc. illustrate that it is not a reconstruction of the building substance of the past, but a continuation of the old into the new (e.g. in: Brumhead, Wyke 1989). As the old substance of most buildings was worked over for their development, they do not appear to be old really but to imitate the old in style and building material. If one takes the end of most industrial production in Manchester as turning point of the consciousness of the population, and the social changes resulting from that as drastic and far-reaching event, then revitalisation and re-use of industrial areas – like Castlefield – can be seen as trying to create continuity where the economical changes were the most profound and where they were doubting the collective identity (Davids, Stinshoff 1996: 10 f.). In Castlefield it has been tried to stage the past for the present to influence the present's self-definition. At the same time a mystification of the past happens, leading to partial nostalgia and distracting from the present and its inherent problems.

Redevelopment fixed Castlefield's role: the old buildings are understood to be symbolic for the industrialisation (not only) of Manchester. This section of the past is the real theme of the *heritage park*, the importance and grandness of Manchester and Britain is remembered, social distress and later economical developments are reminded of only in passing²³.

The actual image of Manchester is influenced massively by areas like Castlefield and Chinatown, not only as these areas are used extensively for the presentation and advertising of the city. For Castlefield the concept of the planners worked: it has become the part of the inner city that is dominated by leisure options²⁴. Firms established in Castlefield are to a large extent working in the service sector. Castlefield has become an object of investment-planners

²² Dr. James Grigor, former Chairman of the CMDC, in conversation on 18.9.1997.

²³ This view is excluding the exhibitions of the local museums as these are not part of the heritage park's presentation of Castlefield's past.

²⁴ For example in the TV police-serial "Cracker" there are repeatedly scenes filmed at Castlefield Basin. While other areas of the city and their specific looks are used for e.g. working class scenery, Castlefield is used as symbolic for recreation and tourism ("Cracker"; policedrama in 15 parts, England 1993/94).

and a centre of the more successful creative artists, whose firms are the major users of the offices.

For the non-local visitor Castlefield presents a 'special place'²⁵, a fixed point charged with historical meaning that is generally recognised and accepted. For the person living or working in Castlefield it becomes, despite its specialness, a 'familiar place' as individual routines and a certain familiarity with the place are developed. The place does not end to be special, but the frequent visitor develops a different way to look at and to treat the place due to the own experiences that result in specific personal memories.

Castlefield is - as usual for redeveloped industrial areas with a comparative built-up - presented as a 'special place', but has become a 'familiar place' for many inhabitants of Manchester due to the incorporation of Castlefield into the structures and cultural programs of Manchester (it offers housing to a few, work to some more, and recreation to many without being only a destination for outings and day trips).

It remains to conclude that Castlefield is a failure in regard to its musealisation. During its redevelopment the historic buildings have always been emphasised but only used selectively. Large parts of the local history are not part of the staging of the *Urban Heritage Park*. But Castlefield is not a museum.

The restriction of the past taken into account during the development might be a necessity for the economical success of the revitalisation. And the re-use of Castlefield as it happened is economically and in regard to the revival of the inner city a nice one.

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²⁵ Terms 'special place' (besonderer Ort) and 'familiar place' (eigener Ort) according to: Ipsen, 1994: 239 f.

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