

## Tower Block Modernism vs. Urban Morphology: An analysis of Lee Bank, Birmingham

The rhetoric of inter- and post-war Modernism was a rejection of the past - creating a new art, a new architecture and through them, a new world. Cities, keen to redevelop their slum areas, found this kind of rhetoric eminently seductive. By the end of the thirties, the idea of a 'clean sweep' in slum areas was firmly established among the larger English City Councils. The embarrassing urban legacy of outdated street patterns and obsolete, unhygienic housing (and some would say the social patterns that went with them) was to be wiped clean. Whole quarters of the city were to be replanned and rebuilt along clean, modern lines. A morphological analysis of post-war, explicitly Modernist estates, however, reveals that the ideas of MRG Conzen can still be applied as the rhetoric of clean sweep disguises a more complex picture of recycling urban forms. This paper seeks to determine how far the creation of a high-rise landscape in Birmingham's Bath Row Redevelopment Area (later renamed 'Lee Bank') was shaped by the existing urban form. In addition the redevelopment work being carried out on the site today is briefly examined to determine whether these same mechanisms continue to have an influence on our post-modern world.

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