Necessary Fiction

by
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declaration_

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

_abstract

While documenting the Old Spitalfields Market in London, UK prior to its renovation in 2006, I happened across a simple yet provocative statement: *this will all be fields again,* inscribed into the existing pavement in an area just inside one of the eastern entrances. What it was able to report in just six simple words is the inescapable process of transformation to which the entire neighbourhood had been and will be subjected to. Rediscovered in a photograph years later, the presence of that message is explored here.

As an instrumental narrative, this thesis invests in four parameters of architecture that are as much a reflection of my own struggle to articulate the experience of both literally and figuratively moving within the neighbourhood, as they are indicative of the neighbourhood's propensity for fragmentation and fluctuation through time.

Throughout this work, I have tried to place myself both *on* and *in* the moment of crisis between the opposed binaries of the material and immaterial city, and to write the *necessary fiction* that might allow me to hold them simultaneously in the present.

acknowledgements_

It goes without saying that the enthusiasm and necessary criticism of both my supervisor *Dr. Tracey Eve Winton* and committee members *Dereck Revington* and *Ryszard Sliwka* has been an invaluable gesture in the process of writing this constantly shifting and often unstable document. I sincerely appreciate your collective patience with my desire to know everything. I would also like to extend that same appreciation to my external reader *Shelley Hornstein* for her time and critique.

It is quite necessary to extend a gracious thank you to *Phillip Beesley* for his strong foundation and support of my early research in the first term of the Masters programme, to *Eric Haldenby* for rekindling my appreciation of cultural history, to *Dr. Anne Bordeleau* for her equally invaluable input in the final phases of development, and to the rest of the faculty, administration and students of the UWSA for their continued interaction and humour.

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But most importantly, to all of my friends with whom I have the privilege of conversing each day, all of the brilliant minds who have gone through this whole process with me both directly and indirectly, I don't know where I would be without such a fantastic group of people. To my family, your love, integrity and constant support has been the foundation of my entire education. All of you, I don't think I could ask for anything more.

And finally, to the person with whom I share the deepest affinity and for whom I have the greatest love and respect, Liana this book is undoubtedly half yours.

To Toronto. Sorry things didn't work out between us

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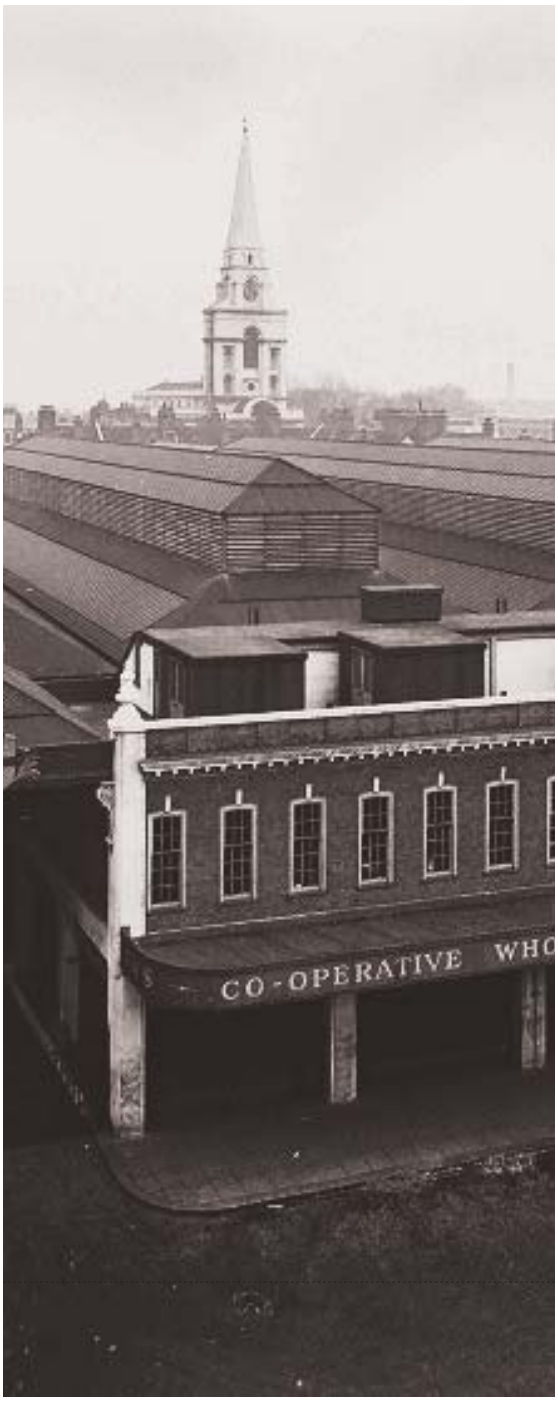
list of illustrations_

all images by author unless otherwise noted.

plates__


OUTER LONDON
INNER LONDON
TOWER HAMLETS, HACKNEY, ISLINGTON
OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

FIG_01: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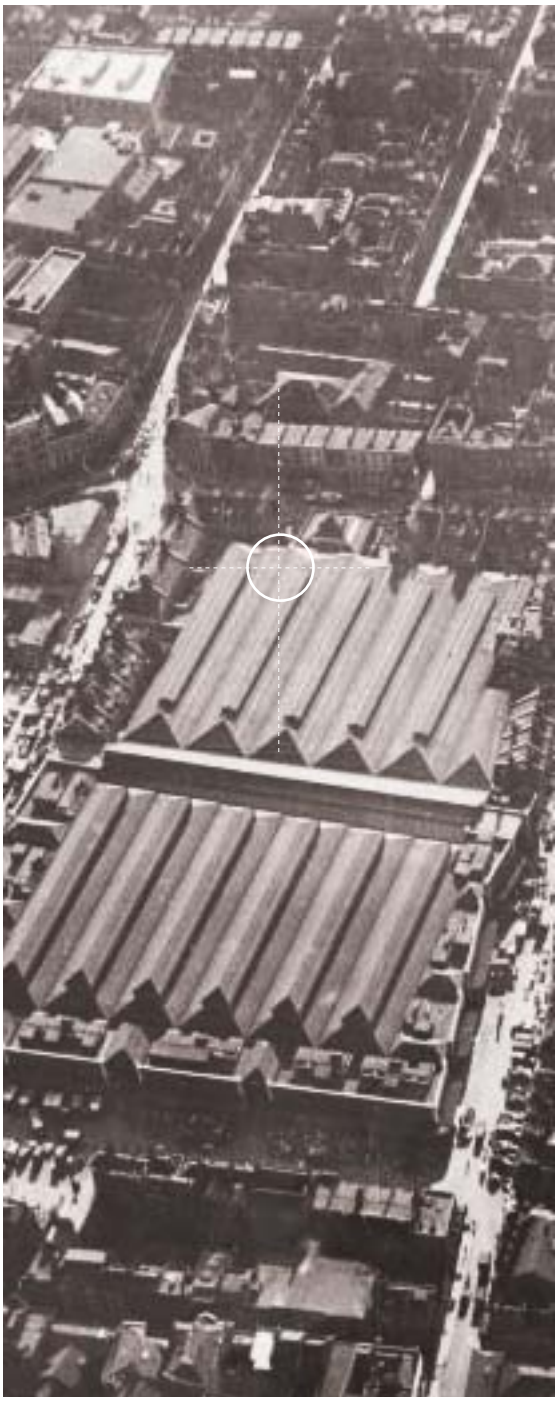


this will all be fields again_

A few years ago, when the author of this book was visiting, or rather exploring, Notre Dame, he found, carved by hand on the wall in a dark recess of one of the towers, the word: ’ΑΝΑΓΚΗ [fatality]. The Greek capitals, black with age and cut quite deep into the stone, the forms and attitudes of their calligraphy, which had something peculiarly Gothic about it, as if to show that the hand which inscribed them was a medieval one, and above all their grim and fatal import, made a keen impression on the author.

He wondered and tried to guess who the tormented soul might have been who had not wanted to depart this world without leaving behind, on the brow of the old church, this stigma of crime or misfortune. Since then, the wall has either been distempered or scraped [...] For such is the treatment accorded to the marvellous churches of the middle ages for close to two hundred years...

FIG_02:Western annex of the Spitalfields Market, completed 1926, demolished 2003 (left)
FIG_03:Aerial photograph of Spitalfields Market Hall indicating location where the message was found. (right)

Mutilation has come on them, the architect scrapes them, then along comes the populace which demolishes them.

Thus apart from the fragile memento here dedicated to it by the author of this book, there is today nothing left of that mysterious word engraved in the gloom of the tower of Notre-Dame, nothing left of the unknown destiny of which it was so cheerless a summary.

The man who wrote that word on that wall was erased from the midst of the generations several centuries ago, the word, in its turn, has been erased from the wall of the church, and soon perhaps the church itself will be erased from the earth.

This book was written about that word.[1]

Victor Hugo. 1831

I had not read the introduction to Victor Hugo's epic before stumbling across the sentence that was imprinted before me, carved into the slickened pavement of Commercial Street just inside the now rebranded `Huguenot Gate'. To be honest, it was not at all present that there may be similarities in the futility of each sign of protest. Here instead was simply an 'unnecessary' picture taken during the course of a site visit. It was a task given to the newest intern: to document the existing conditions of the market. With little thought otherwise, it was snapped, and then I was quickly away, back to the office. This was an image meant to be lost in a hard drive, essentially forgotten. It was by chance that it would be found and re-approached by my curious eyes years later.

In that first renewed glance, the photo still seemed no more than a piece of late-night graffiti. It was just a tracing etched into the myriad of quick fixes that had slowly over time left the floor of the Old Spitalfields Market collaged with hues of light grey cement and yellow caution tape; a tapestry of precautionary measures which when viewed from above, marked the ghosted gutters and drains once used to facilitate the weekly sales of fruit and veg. This market was a neighbourhood staple long relegated to the ring of the outer city boroughs, exiled nearly twenty years ago to the suburban lands of Waltham Forest, to Leyton in the north. I now realize that these ancient 'fields' have since been infiltrated by glass pavilions, by the 'newness' of architecture. And so the implication of the found statement became quite intriguing.

Today the site stands in precarious adjacency to a larger looming presence, a catalogue example of 'good' modern design. Beneath a glazed behemoth in the west are touted all the benefits of redevelopment and urban regeneration. It is a not-so-subtle orchestration of the selling of artisan clothing, curios, and high-end food. Convenience chains push over-priced coffee while purveying the essential commodities to a breed of hip urbanite. It is a space which now satiates a different type of market, a peculiarly nomadic mass of pinstripes and vintage t-shirts in a cycle that repeats daily. All before the majority of the borough descends into the orange haze of streetlights. Under these second suns, shining through the remnant foliage

of bricks and scaffolding, the nocturnal skeletons become articulated by an ethereal darkness. All the while constellations form and reform above in the towers of Moorgate.

It was evident that the poesy of the message held something special. It was something surprisingly tragic. And even today, it is hard to look back on it without an overwhelming sense of perplexity. "*This will all be fields again*" resonates with a striking paradox, its response lay hidden in the heart of every major urban center: "*but will it? And if so then how*?"

To me, this inscription was the Orwellian reaction to decades of what is all too swiftly labelled as 'urban decline', and to the remnant pieces of land left over from the free-market expropriation of London's east end -associated most diligently with Ms. Thatcher's mid-eighties cleanse of the city. In a shifted perspective, this was the sales-pitch tag line for any one of the new development proposals which today characterize the loss of an antiquated Tower Hamlets. Was this someone covertly promoting a marketed spin on the earliest 'terrace' typology? Or was this an equally powerful voice: a fragmentary registration of an idyllic hallucination, made on behalf of the exhausted landscape. Perhaps it was a simple, yet desperate attempt to believe, to dream that despite the passage of time, the harshness of the northern Atlantic climate and the visible scars of industrialization, some three hundred years later such a small fraction of London's massive body might still be a terrain embedded deeply in the consciousness and the dampness of the Thames River clay.

If anything, this message was the affirmation of some sort of prophecy; a promise that under the grime lay something more than just the dirt. That something supra-natural, *the terra incognita*, would be the latent condition of such an un-mappable city.

Just as in Hugo's account of the vandal's scribe on the spires of Notre-Dame, less than half a decade later the inscribed surface has been refaced, the covered market renovated; the brickwork of the perimeter 'Horner' buildings scrubbed, and the Victorian roof repainted in a palette of desaturated grey-tones. The message is gone and I have become the agent of its destruction.

Even after my own involvement in the process of renovation, this current instance of the market is limited in duration. Spitalfields will inevitably evolve again, and the city will show its new face once more. Though it is such a frustrating thing to know that these epochs will slip into the densest dregs of a city, that we all actively participate in a material and mythological corruption of both plan and section, I have found this thesis therein.

And so, this book is written about that photo.


THIS WILL ALL BE F

PLATE_01


TOWN
HAGGERSTON
Haggerston
HOXTON
SHOREDITCH
COLUMBIA RD.
KINGSLAND
A10
BLACKWALL TUNNEL
A1208
WARNER PL
GOSSET
PITFIELD
OLD ST
EASTERN
CURTAIN RD.
CLUBROW
BETHNAL GREEN
A1209
VALLANCE
SCLATER
CHESHIRE
Shoreditch
SPITALFIELDS
COMMERCIAL ST.
NORTON FOLGATE
LIVERPOOL ST.
LIVERPOOL ST
BROADGATE
LONDON WALL
HOUNDSDITCH
CITY
Aldgate East
Aldgate
WHITECHAPEL
WHITECHAPEL HIGH
LEMAN
ABRAHAM
MANSELL
ALIE
MINORIES
LEADENHALL
CHURCH ST
PRESCOT ST
Monument
Tower Gateway
Tower Hill
TOWER HILL
LOWER THAMES ST
BYWARD ST
DOCKS
Whitechapel
CANNON ST
BETHNAL GRN
THREE
B108
B134
B135
A11
A102
A1202
A1208
A1209
A10
A40
26
54
39
40

the necessity of fiction__

For the bookish, London is a book. For criminals, a map of opportunities. For unpapered immigrants, it is a nest of skinned eyes; sanctioned gunmen ready to blow your head off as you run for a train. When the city of distorting mirrors revealed itself, through its districts and discriminations, I discovered more about London's past as a reworking of my own submerged history.[1]

Iain Sinclair, 2006

FIG_04: The A to Z is quite literally the experiential anthology for London. Since 1936 the publication has been made available, cataloguing an up-to-date atlas of every street in the city. My own A to Z is marked showing the location of Sptialfields on pages 40 and 41 (left)

FIG_05:The confusion as to what exactly Spitalfields is becomes articulated through collages of photographs. As individual memories begin to collided, an exact and definable identity of the place becomes less and less distinguishable. Photographs and image by author (following left)

FIG_06:Collage of photographs. Photographs and image by author (following right)


OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

FIG_07:Aerial of Meaford Ontario, (left)
FIG_08:Aerial of London UK, indicating market location (right)

CONTEXT: What that photograph makes me realize in fact, is the extent to which my interest in a place as enigmatic and unpredictable as Spitalfields is much a reflection of my own personal introduction to the 'urban experience'. London was after all the first real metropolitan setting that I had truly thrown my whole self into. Until that moment I had spent nearly twenty years in a small rural Ontario town on the shores of Georgian Bay thousands of kilometres away; where the nearest comparable city in terms of scale was Toronto. And honestly even that was considerably foreign.

Meaford is a fairly removed community of only four thousand residents, nestled into a sublime landscape where the Niagara escarpment ploughs through open orchards along the spine of the Bruce Peninsula; where a visibly large concentration of drumlins - teardrop shaped sediment deposits - dot the basin of ancient Lake Iroquois, indicating both the direction and force of incredible glacial movement. It is a topographic landscape; expansive. A landscape met equally with a vista of open water visible from almost anywhere within town, and by all means the complete antithesis to anything that might categorically be labelled as 'urban'.

So it should come as no surprise then that when I compare my experience and vivid memories of that environment to the mental replay of going underground at Heathrow Airport, boarding the tube, and remaining subterranean until the eventual and eventful moment of stepping up onto Tottenham Court Road, the amazement and anxiety of discovering or emerging into London for the first time, of being absolutely alone in a city of nearly eight million people, has been practically burned into my psyche. Though I have had the opportunity to travel more extensively since, the act of re-describing London is something that I have had to approach with a certain level of ambivalence. To articulate the exact nature of the relationship between myself and the city has been surprisingly difficult. So far, I have been at odds to solidify any particular aspect on paper, partly because that original experience is so deeply embedded in a migratory act, partly because my time spent in the city is relatively and comparatively short, and partly too because the city itself is so quick to change its face. As such, this investigation is in part my own continuing struggle to understand that original shock and flux of such an initiation by London, by interrogating different lines of forces acting- or better yet, interacting- in the city.

Even in the last five years, the identity of Spitalfields and Shoreditch- two of the most attractive wards in the city for a younger creative class- has dramatically shifted, as the newest wave of an arts based community (as is often the case in gentrifying areas of cities) increases its presence and visibility in this peripheral territory of London. It

is a phenomenon which is adding yet another layer to the already complex genetics of the neighbourhood. Architects offices, graphic designers studios, artist studios, ateliers, galleries, public art spaces, cafes and museums are all a part of a broadcast push for the reintroduction of 'culture' into Spitalfields as a 'solution' to decades and even centuries of neglect - or in a different spin, centuries of the acknowledgement of its *alterity* - such that I think that my original sense of awe has now begun to blend with a sense of something akin to distrust or skepticism towards schemes based in the idea of 'urban regeneration'. With such a confluent mixture of influences at work in Spitalfields the choice has been made that this investigation should not inject any type of specific architectural programme (in the more traditional sense) as a response to a conflict. Instead, that energy has been invested into examining the idea of context; a very critical part of the architectural process. This work is embracing the latent responsivity - both experientially and through time - between what is already existent in the neighbourhood and what might eventually be proposed for the neighbourhood as something much more intriguing. It is essentially an expanded reflection on the idea of a shifting or fragmenting field, both physical and temporal, articulated through that message in the photograph of the market floor. In it, I tend to look towards other works of literature, philosophy, film, photography and architecture etc. as a way into such a discussion of the paradoxes at work in Spitalfields; meaning specifically that very lack of a resolution to its instability.

Although it might be easy enough to conclude that London itself is simply too complex to understand and to negate its underlying fluidity, a fairer and more exciting way to assess that same reality

> The context cannot be captured in a single truth; it is the rest of the world, that which is provisionally ignored but in fact has a bearing on the subject under discussion. There is always a context. It is unthinkable that our cultural artefacts could exist without it. In the absence of a sense of contextuality, there can be no sense of either reality or of viable possibility.[2]
>
> *Ole Bouman & Roemer van Toorn, 1994*

is to dwell on this sense of protracted migration, unpredictability, and variability; or even to dwell between the variables themselves. The idea for such an approach comes directly out of my own understanding of architecture as this type of negotiation between act and action, between concept and affect. In fact, there might well be an infinite number of ways to describe this exact duality, but the key is that each side of the coin, isolated, is problematic. In the existing context of Spitalfields, for example, it is difficult to conceive of creating something that would not engender some sense of reaction from any one of the number of voices at work there today. Likewise it is nearly impossible to imagine not being moved in some way by those existing conditions which are generally thought in need of 'fixing'. It is that sense of tension between the two to which I am drawn; the idea of a *cosmopoietic potential*[3] emerging from out their continuous dialogue. The fact that I am presenting the work not only as an outside observer looking back into the neighbourhood, but also presenting it retrospectively in terms of my own observations

and experiences is why I have turned towards using 'fiction' as a design tool. Here, fiction is instrumental in referring to and expressing that presence of a territory like the 'in-between'.

> There is a sense in which we can all equally well see ourselves as architects of a sort. To construe ourselves as 'architects of our own fates and fortunes' is to adopt the figure of the architect as a metaphor for our own agency as we go about our daily practices and through them effectively preserve, construct, and re-construct our life world.[4]
>
> *David Harvey, 2000.*

FICTION: Early on in the writing of this work, I was directed towards a text by the British poet Ted Hughes titled *Myth and Education* (1994). In it, Hughes draws on the system of thought put forth by Plato which suggests that the classical Greek myths, products of an entire culture organized around the use of fiction, once offered perhaps the most comprehensive method of mediating the variable relationship between the heavens and earth. As narrative structures these were basically combinations of abstractions from each system; essentially plastic and parametric constructs. It is worth stating here Hughes' interpretation in full:

A child takes possession of a story as what might be called a unit of imagination. A story which engages, say, earth and the underworld is a unit correspondingly flexible. It contains not merely the space and in some form or another, the contents of those two places, it reconciles their contradictions in a workable fashion and holds open the way between them. The child can re-enter the story at will, look around him, find all these things and consider them at his leisure. In attending to the world of such a story is the beginning of a form of contemplation. And to begin with, each story is like a whole separate imagination, no matter how many the head holds.[5]

He extends this further by suggesting that today stories and storytelling still hold a similar intrinsic value by expressing the conditions of our increasingly subdivided world and our increasingly subdivided selves. Rather than something definite or concretizing, a story can instead be productive in containing all the necessary pieces which, when traversed, produce an enhanced perception of reality. It is a synecdochic system, using one smaller narrative to describe an incredibly complex whole. It is a map of the collision between our own individual inner and outer worlds, and the acknowledgement of the complex threshold between the two.

This is mostly why fiction is so necessary and valuable in talking about Spitalfields and why the prophetic message from the photograph is such a significant thing to address. There is a collective capacity to participate in stories, which affords the ability to examine something as vast and abstract as the market, and its context, and even the rest of the city, on a very accessible, flexible and critical level.

CRISIS: Crisis is a term which is tied very closely to the word critical. In the Oxford English Dictionary the latter is literally defined as *the nature of, or constituting, a crisis*. But it is with the former, with 'crisis', that I have become increasingly interested. To turn on any of the major twenty-four hour news networks or to browse those same out-

lets' web pages is just one example in recognizing its increased presence as a cultural ubiquity. It is a really potent term that has now become a popular and unavoidable cliché, as much an actual condition around which we structure our opinions of the world, or have fundamentally shifted our ways of talking about the world altogether. Its use has a definite prominence and influence on the ways in which we process information.

Crisis suggests the necessity of limitations.[6] It implies the installation of a threshold with a sense of immediacy linked to it; a sense of urgency. But since we are now able to distribute our reactions to situations at an exponential rate- ranging from impending global disasters right down to the haphazard and almost reflexive broadcasting of our private daily rituals, the list of prefixes for the word has begun to expand *ad infinitum;* the value of 'crisis' is itself now facing criticism. Our understanding of its exact importance and the implication of such a word is becoming lost through oversaturation. While more often than not it circulates with the air of chaos, confusion, pressure or dismay, what we tend to lose sight of is that it is actually a quite profound concept.

The etymology is traceable to three similar Greek roots: *krisis, krinein* and *krei-*. The first is a medical reference which announces the turning point in a disease, at which time symptoms become either fatal or remissive. The other two instances are more directly associated with the act of decision, separation or delineation. But each collectively acknowledges the thickness of time and space between those things that are *known* and those that are *unknown*.

Metaphorically speaking, 'crisis' is an awareness of the line between growth and decay; between the corporeal and the metaphysical. In essence, it is a measure of time relating the body – or for this arguments sake a series of personal experiences within an old Victorian market- to a system which is much larger in scale; extending well beyond the extents of a mortal lifespan. This also makes it a way into defining the existential threshold between the possible objective and subjective readings of a city like London: *crisis as an acknowledgment of the 'in-between'*. It is a space of anxiety, anticipation, an ecstatic desire to make oneself vulnerable to a field of external forces, and thus by virtue a means to create or invent the transition that might mediate the various dimensions.

> No one's to blame for crises! / Over us, changeless and invisible, rule/ The laws of economics./ And natural catastrophes recur/In dreadful cycles.[7]
>
> *Bertolt Brecht, 1929*

Crisis too is a space of estrangement, defined by the Spanish architectural theorist Ignasi de Solà Morales when he wrote:

When the relationship between the subject and the world has turned problematic, not even the empirical inquiries of phenomenological research are of any avail. We live today in the estrangement between the self and others, between the self and the world, on the margins even between self and individual. Our perception is not structuring but nomadic. The experience of one's own body and of what is external to it is made up of heterogeneous ingredients, of atoms that do not compose molecules, of portions that fail to fit together. This erratic, nomadic perception of reality is such a characteristic feature of our crisis that architecture manifests itself in a multitude of

ways. It is only fragmentation that fractures projects into particles difficult to recompose. It is also the fact that the unfinished, the partial, and the cumulative have become predominant in a way of working that presents itself as incapable of proposing any higher level of integration.[8]

Drawn out from his position is a critical paradox that the city will always be composed of intertwined binaries: objective and subjective memories, real and synthetic interactions, specific and ambiguous phenomenon to which we find or make ourselves responsive. Crisis, like Hughes' understanding of the role of myths, is another way of approaching their convergence. I would like to think that the message from the market floor is just such a point.

It almost seems possible to adopt a scientific structure, to channel, as an example, the processes of thermodynamics and suggest that for every act of 'architecture', every definition of a limit or literal containment, there is (in some form or another) a reaction that is opposite, something much more figurative. And the process of moving between them is somehow constant. If it is at all possible to illustrate the built world as both fragmenting and as a fragment, as both spaces and the spaces in between, then we may well be on the road towards engaging with something much closer to the actual presence of London than even our current methods of representation allow.

AN INSTRUMENTAL NARRATIVE: The thesis is invested in four parameters of an architectural discourse that are as much a reflection of my own struggle to articulate the experience of both literally and figuratively moving within the neighbourhood, as they are indicative of the neighbourhood's propensity for fragmentation and fluctuation

> The in-between is what fosters and enables the other's transition from being the other of the one to its own becoming, to reconstituting another relation, in different terms [...] thus shared by politics, by culture, and by architecture, insofar as they are all spaces, organizations, structures, that operate within the logic of identity yet also require the excess of subversion, of latency, or of becoming that generates and welcomes the new without which the future is not possible. The in-between, formed by juxtapositions and experiments, formed by realignments or new arrangements, threatens to open itself up as new, to facilitate transformations in the identities that constitute it. One could say that the in-between is the locus of futurity, movement, speed; it is thoroughly spatial and temporal, the very essence of space and time and their intrication. And thus inimical to the project of architecture as a whole.[9]
>
> *Elizabeth Grosz, 2001.*

through time. Each of the chapters is presented as a mixture of narration, imagery and specific readings into Spitalfields' pasts and futures, all elaborated through this fruitful relationship between fiction and the notion of crisis. Parenthetically, the narrations have been conceived as a meandering through the neighbourhood at dusk, in that period which is itself a critical division between day and night. The dusk represents a transitory period between visual perception and the imagination, the threshold between an aesthetic and a synaesthetic interaction with the city, in a state when the assumed exactitude of the eye and memory becomes weakened against the uncertainty and anxiety of the unknown.

Although this book has been through several iterations in its conception, what is true of each version is that there has been a consistent desire to talk about Spitalfields in a way which does not simply render it as something static. Throughout this process of writing, both fiction and crisis have been the key terms in facilitating such an approach.

This choice of approach is incredibly useful because of the fact that London is a city with a very rich literary presence. To be a bit more accurate it has a rich relationship between its literature *and* its historicity; between two modes that weave together the fragments of both the objective and subjective city. In the field that lies between them, it seems fair to propose that such an equation would balance one condition against the other, that at some instant the city might be rendered as both placeless and timeless. It is a dialectic oscillating in two ways.

The first is the scenario where literature is used in place of history- or rather the history of the city is constructed through the narratives with which it has been described. This entails the reinforcement of memory *texturally*, where London is less predicated on fact and is experienced more like a performance;[11] not necessarily rooted in the specifics of location but still yielding an understanding of the place as if it were. The benefit of an approach like this is that the cryptic versions of the story of Spitalfields held in that inscription are no longer exclusive of one another, but instead become a field of material associations from which potential understandings can be drawn out (similar

> We are off again on more adventures. Before us lies the mystery of dark London, of London under the glow of lamps; London under the moon and stars; London under fretful, dull skies. Before us also, lies danger- the awful danger of repeating a story that has been well told already [...] for the night of London is a dark puzzle in which it is possible to find almost everything.
>
> When night falls over London, ancient and primitive things come to our streets; for night is the sinister, dramatic; it brings with it something of the jungle. Beasts of prey and great cities alone in nature remain awake when darkness comes; the one in search of death, the other in search of an extra hour of life.[10]
>
> *H.V.Morton, 1945*

Along a narrow passage, up a dark stair, through a crazy door, into a room not very light, not in the lest splendid; with queer corners, and quaint carvings, and massive chimney pieces [...]with aisles between thick towers of papered up packages, out of whose ends flash all the colours of the rainbow- [... there is] less business going on than at a government office- the well dressed man threads the mazes of the piles, and desks, and cupboards and counters, with a slow step, to greet us, and to assure us, in reply to our apology, that we have not made any mistake whatsoever, and that we are in the silk warehouse which we seek [...] that there is 'turned over' an annual average of one hundred thousand pounds, of good and lawful money of Great Britain.

We may tell our informant, frankly, that looking round upon the evidences of stagnation which present themselves, we utterly disbelieve this statement.[12]

Charles Dickens, 1860.

to the way that representative meanings are drawn out exegetically from a text). To use the description of Spitalfields by Charles Dickens as an example, a darkened warehouse which is somewhat reminiscent of one that may or may not be found near the market, filled with colourful and sensuous silks might not only divulge their obvious physical and phenomenal qualities, but also hide the message of social and political affects of industrial modernity. Dickens' prose is a geographically and spatially ambiguous recollection of event, fiction and physical matter that is still recognizably London. It is in this understanding that the American Scholar Crystal Downing offers *architexture* as *a microcosm of artistic unity within a literary work […signalling] the desire for a text to become a microcosmic world*.[13]

Inversely, the city is approached as the loose assembly of fragments taken from a factual or *artefactual* locations; in essence piecing together history as a non-sequential narrative. The infamous motorini scene from *Fellini's Roma* (1972)[14] is a perfect example of this kind of *artefactual* mapping. Although the entire film is visibly collaged, it is in the final minutes, as the camera is cutting between monuments, that a seemingly logical expedition through the city is established, and one that is visibly Roman. However, to actually plot out the locations in their historical significance and sequence of appearance provides an illustration that is much less faithful in time and space, and is more considerably anachronistic.

Iain Sinclair is an author who is referenced often in this investigation because he is operating in this realm, and quite conveniently in the East End of London. His writing has a unique quality to it, in both the manner in which he continuously addresses the temporality of the city through his


1_CASTEL ST. ANGELO


6_PIAZZA DEL POPOLO


11_TEMPIO DI ERCOLE VINCITORE


2_SAN ANDREA DELLA VALLE


7_PIAZZA DEL QUIRINALE


12_TEATRO DI MARCELLO


3_PIAZZA NAVONA

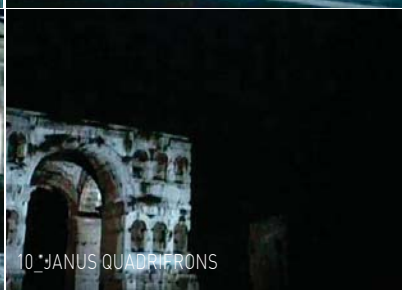

8_CAMPIDOGLIO


13_COLOSSEUM


4_PIAZZA DI SPAGNA


9_CAMPIDOGLIO


5_PIAZZA DEL POPOLO


10_JANUS QUADRIFRONS

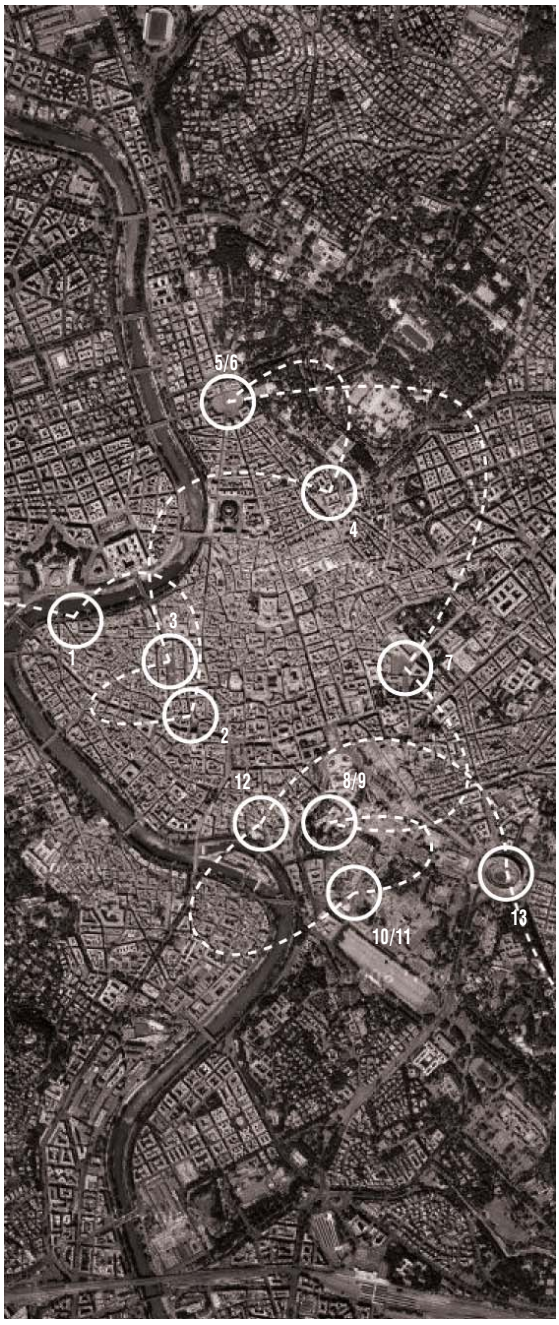


FIG_09:Thirteen stills from Frederico Fellini's *Roma.*(1972) (left)
FIG_10:Map of route taken through the 'Centro Storico' from Frederico Fellini's *Roma (1972)* (above)

text and the distinctive mixture of admiration and contempt he shows for the circumstances that have shaped (and are shaping) Hackney. Recently his energies have been directed at the relationships between the London 2012 Olympic redevelopment and the resultant razing of an entire swath of the Hackney Marshes in the eastern portions of the borough:

I groan when I learn that Victoria Park, the lung of the East End, will be closed to the public and given over, for a few weeks, for the exclusive use of Olympic athletes. But that, after all, is the nature of London; speculation, exploitation, creativity and crime. Darkness and light, Manchian twins, have been here from the days of the Mithras, the founding of the city. Vision and ignorance. Our task is simple; it is to understand and celebrate. To keep walking.[15]

The narration is an impassioned mythologizing of the quotidian. Even he suggests that it comes from direct experience, openly confessing in another of his texts that "*the story [of the city] is accidental. It tells itself if we don't mangle the complex elegance through faulty memory."*[16] The approach is a method of lacing together a comprehensive map of London from experiences that cannot necessarily be categorized, to take fragments of memory and history and reflect them back onto the present city. Anything outside of that reflection is not essential to the map, and exists instead in a field of narrative material that is waiting to be experienced.

If the landscape of the city is described in terms of its passages the reference is undoubtedly two-fold, embodying the literal spatial connotation and also this capacity for both a simultaneous *textural* and *textual* interrogation. As a fluid or weaker experience, there is an opportunity to permit a multiplicity of possible perspectives *in diverse his-*

torical circumstances [where people] have turned their faces towards the city, and created it as the site and embodiment of communities of their dreams and necessities.[17] It is an approach latent my own necessary fiction:

Part I begins a collection of narratives by discussing a very specific and very literal instance of delineation between the existing East End and the City of London which occurred during renovations and redevelopment of the Old Spitalfields Market just prior to my visit in 2006. Using synecdoche as a metaphorical vehicle for talking about each side of the line, the neighbourhood is introduced here in terms of the tension between a city of brick and a city of glass respectively. Furthermore Part I imagines the possibility of a thickness to the transition between them, as the moment of exchange is approached from both sides simultaneously.

Part II examines in more detail the exact fragmentation of the neighbourhood's past and the more recent use of brick in parlaying a very vocal agenda of conservationism. It essentially raises questions as to what exactly constitutes 'existing conditions' or rather to which conditions of interest architecture should be responsive in a place as unstable as Spitalfields.

Part III is both an investigation of the public's interaction with *the glass wall*- a moniker associated with the current trend in large redevelopment schemes being proposed for the areas surrounding the neighbourhood- and the nineteenth century associations of glass as a socially-equalizing aesthetic.

Finally, in Part IV, after having amassed a comprehensive field of material from which the idea of Spitalfields might begin to coalesce, the naiveté of postwar planning in London, and the utopian model that it represents is evaluated against a theoretical and necessary position of *unknowing* the neighbourhood. It addresses the futility in circumventing the image of the city as the *terra incognita*.

The title, *Necessary Fiction*, is a phrase which I have appropriated from a small yet provocative chapter of the book *Soft City* (1974), by the British author Jonathan Raban. His is a highly personalized and antithetical approach to illustrating the varied nuances of London, compared to what he perceived as the imposed rationality of twentieth century urbanism. Although his book is now somewhat dated, there is still a resonance between his reaction to the same cause and effect we are likely to experience in our own contemporary cities and Hughes' interest in fiction as a method of linking discordant fragments. In a chapter describing London as a figurative melodrama, Raban writes:

The city has always been an embodiment of hope and a source of festering guilt: a dream pursued, and found in vain, wanting and destructive. Our current mood of revulsion against cities is not new; we have grown used to looking for Utopia only to discover that we have created hell… Radio, television, magazines, colleges mount ritual talk-ins in which the word 'urban', pronounced in the hushed and contrite tone of a mea culpa, is monotonously followed by the two predicates, 'problems' and 'renewal' On these joyless occasions, it is made clear that the problems have no real solutions, and that the notion of rehabilitation is a piece of empty piety, a necessary fiction in which no one really believes.[18]

If read verbatim, Raban's definition of the 'necessary fiction' seems to be nothing more than a coping mechanism. There is a definite passivity embedded in it, like a prescription for circumventing the tensions of living in such a city as London. So a slightly altered definition, one that

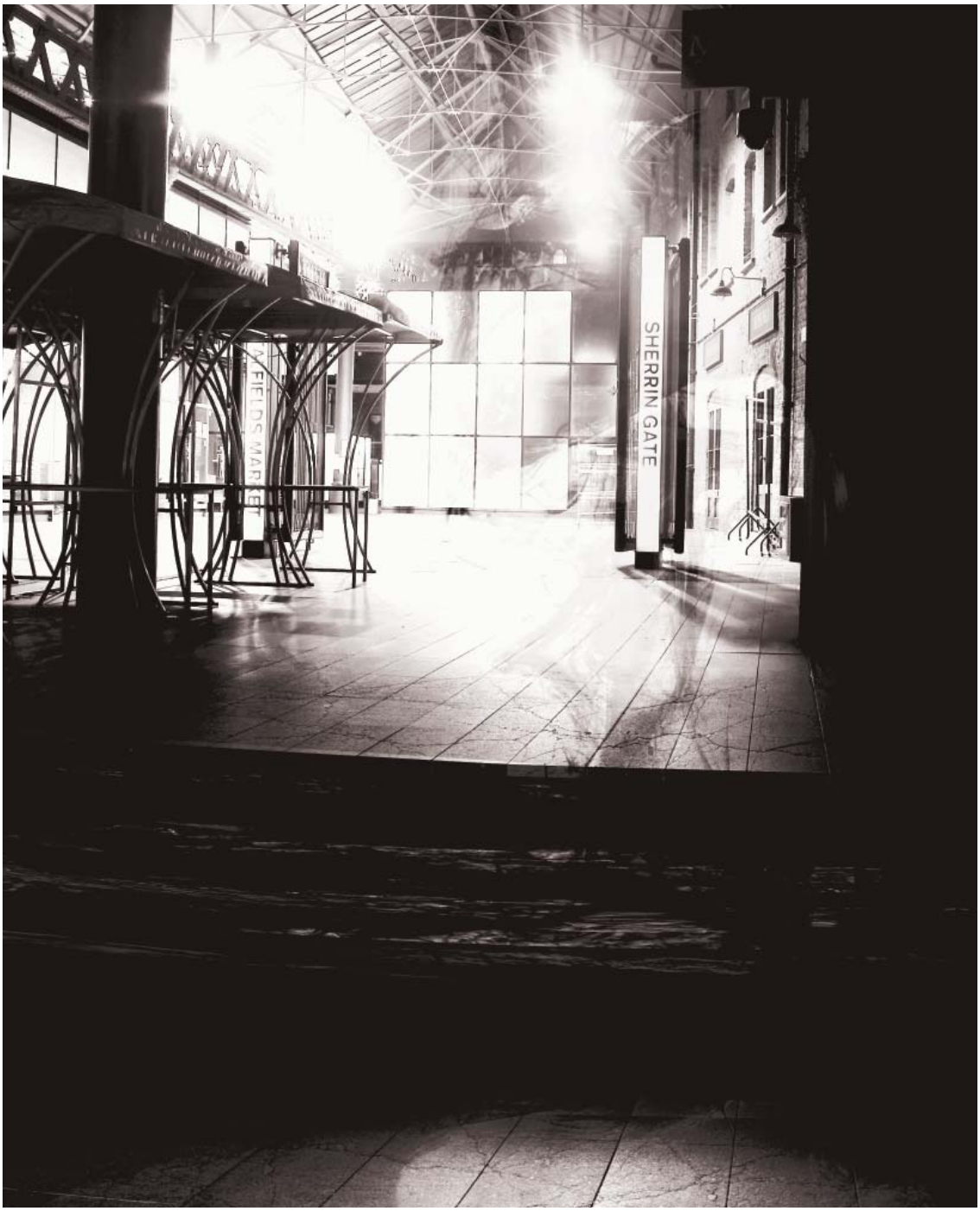
is more literal, is what this investigation represents. Working under the assumption that the message was put in the Old Spitalfields Market for a reason, fiction is used here as a productive and necessary method of evaluation.

To picture those words scratched into the pavement and to hear not just that *this will all be fields,* but rather that it will all be fields *again* play over and over in my own mind (during the last year in particular) has now opened so many questions as to the actual history and possible futures for Spitalfields that, at the very least, I feel that there is justice in attempting to satisfy its authors claim.

PLATE_02


PLATE_18
PLATE_14
PLATE_10
PLATE_20
PLATE_19
PLATE_31
PLATE_28
GLASS WALLS
PLATE_26
PLATE_12
PLATE_21
PLATE_13
PLATE_6
PLATE_3
THIS WILL ALL BE FIELDS AGAIN...
PLATE_25
PLATE_7
BRICKS AND SUPERIMPOSITION
PLATE_22
THRESHOLDS
PLATE_16
PLATE_23
PLATE_24
PLATE_5
PLATE_11
PLATE_4
PLATE_32
PLATE_15
PLATE_17
ASSUMING AND UNKNOWING
PLATE_27
PLATE_29
PLATE_30
PLATE_33
PLATE_2

FIG_10


SHERRIN GATE

thresholds_

London is the most recent superpower to take the world stage as a center of global power. Its belatedness has expressed itself as ceaseless assertions of peerless modernity, and London has, in the twentieth century, continued to be preoccupied with its Janus faced relationship to the past and future to a degree greater than its fellow European relatives.[1]

Pamela K. Gilbert, 2002

FIG_11:Map of photography locations for "Necessary Fictions", illustrating the path that the narratives take through the neighbourhood. (previous)

FIG_12:As the two sides of the market begin to diverge, a rift in the floor opens up. The city is noticeably undone from its periphery. Janus witnesses his own face. Photograph and image by author.

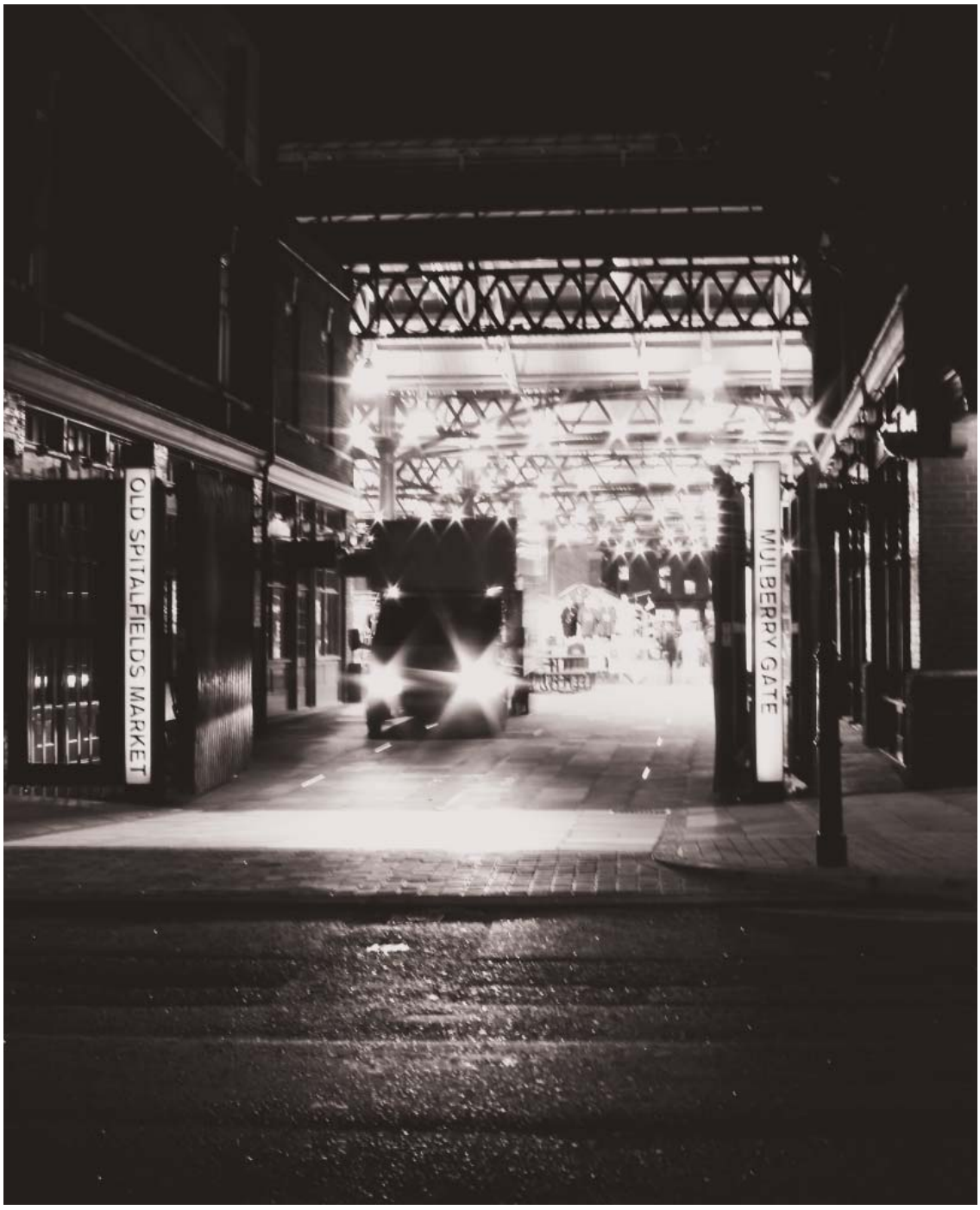


PLATE_03

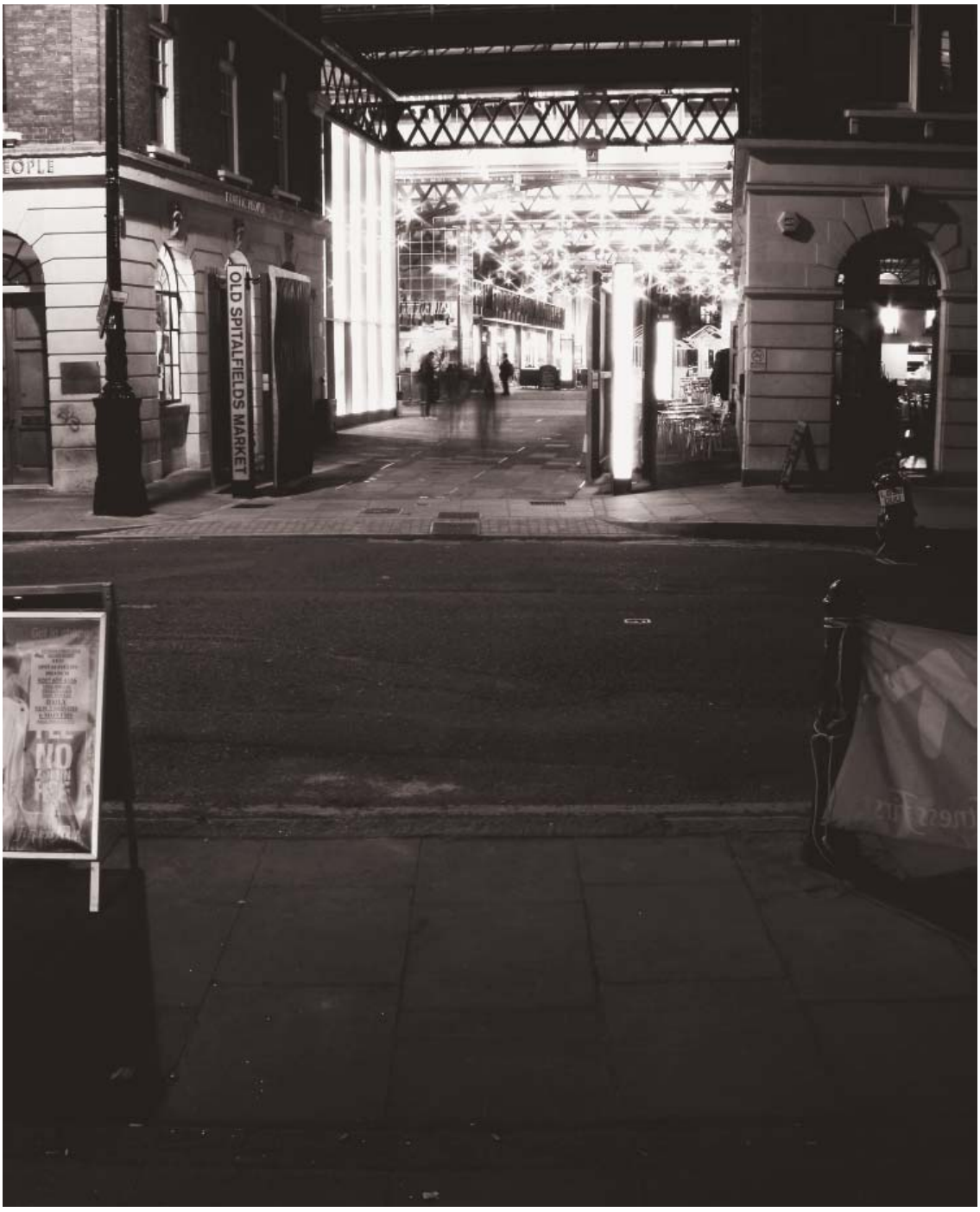
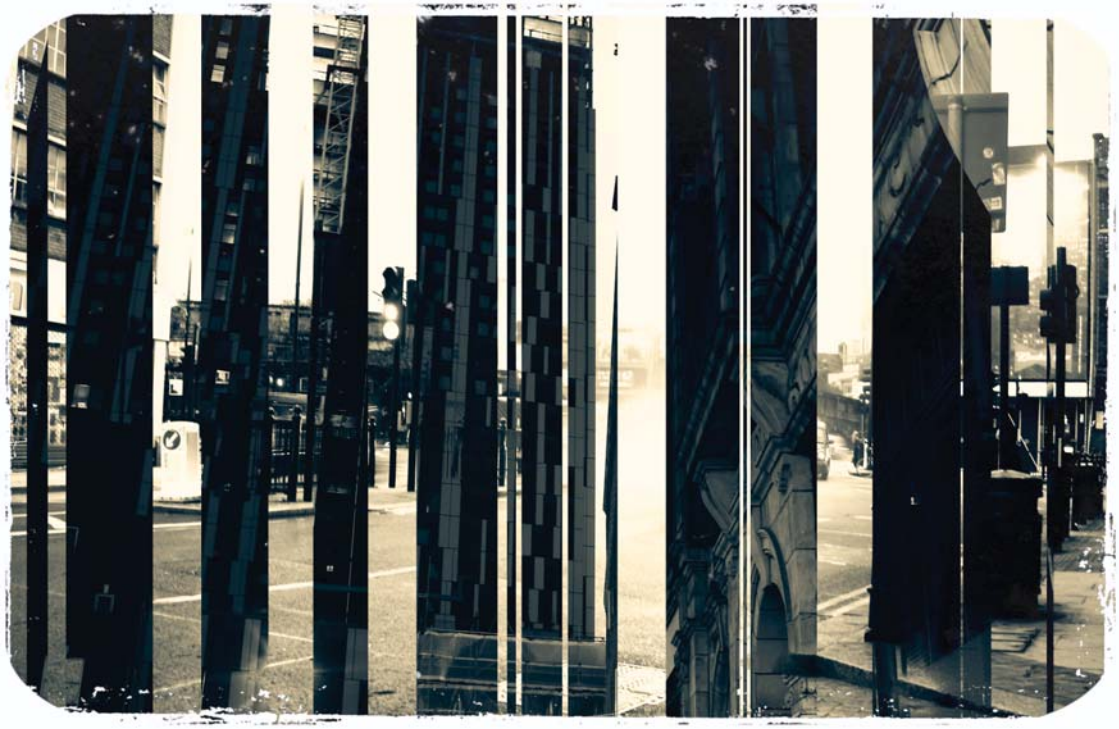
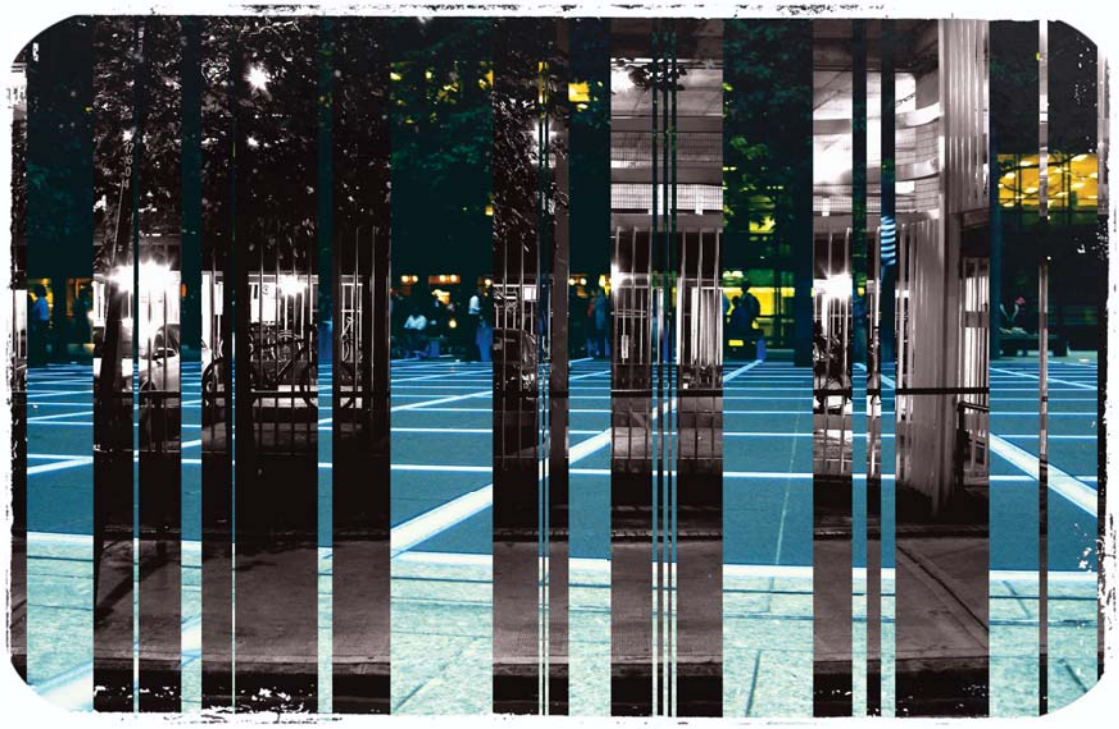


PLATE_04





…although it is incredibly easy to start charting out the differences here, to quantify and qualify all the available physical and ideological discrepancies between the variable fields of London as they converge in parallax around me, migrating from becoming into being and then are gone again, it is equally easy to forget just how much each depends on the others. The bricks and glass of Spitalfields necessarily reinforce their opposite's values. Only in their primal state- when they are both particulates- are they unopposed. With architecture, with energy and participation, they come to life…

FIG_13: Lenticular illustration of site conditions: mixing Bethnal Green Road with the Tenter Ground. Photographs and image by author (above)

FIG_14: Lenticular illustration of site conditions: mixing Finsbury Avenue Square (City of London) with parking garage adjacent to Old Spitalfields Market. (Tower Hamlets) Photographs and image by author (below)

PLATE_05

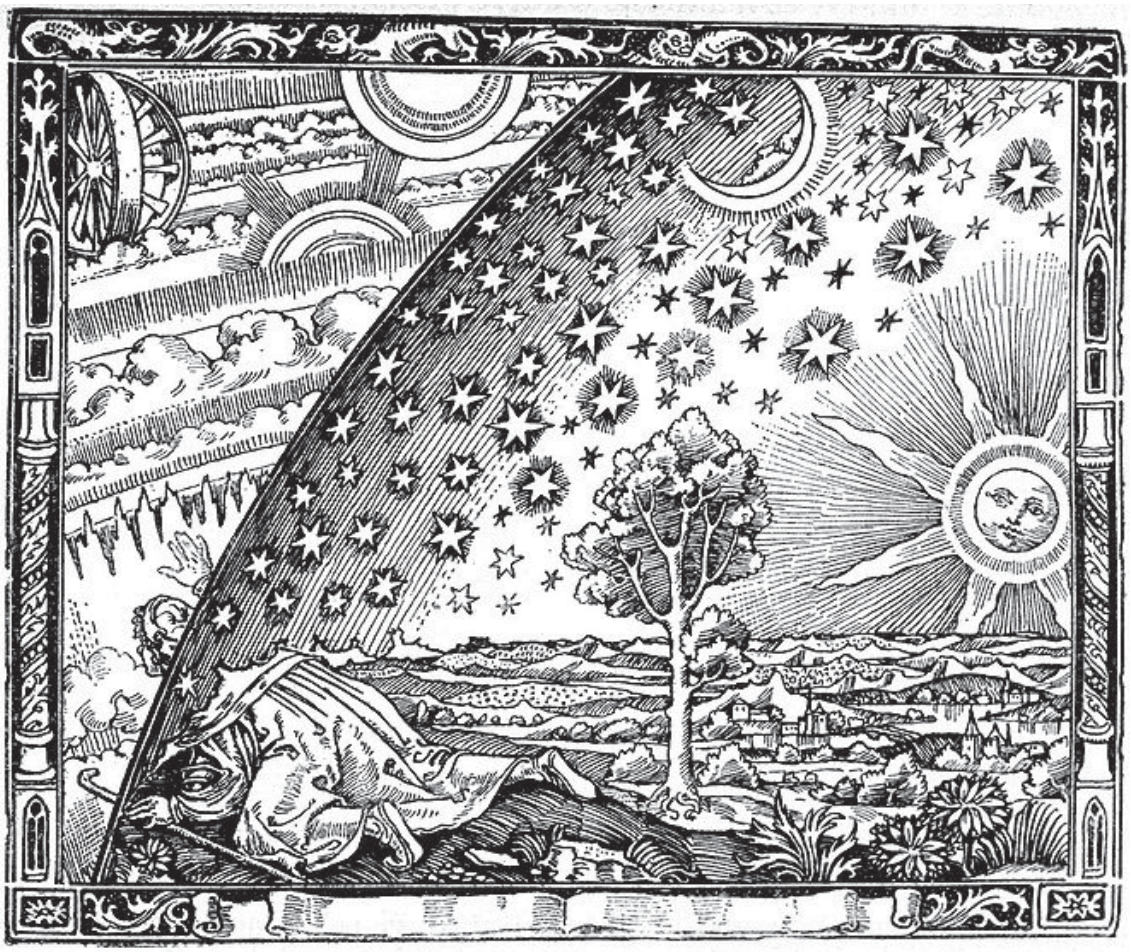
PLATE_06

…how funny it is that to those waiting in line for a table on the terrace at generic and over-marketed restaurants or perusing the assortment of handicrafts beneath the modern glazed canopy of the site's western lobe, and to those browsing antiques and queuing for takeaway under the filigreed roof of the Victorian market hall in the east, a soaring rift in the pavement became such undeniable proof that the histories of Spitalfields were no longer in contact with the futures. Instead they seemed repulsive. For all but a brief moment in the continuum of the city, it was possible to move, both consciously and deliberately, across the thickness of the present…

…it may very well be the case that since that moment of reconstruction, the periphery of the City remains dislodged from its heart, that the self is inadvertently aware of its other, that London's illimitability has become noticeably undone. And despite the continuity of programme, the careful attention to space and light, it is here at this silently implied instance, that Janus had once witnessed his own face…

FIG_15: The thick threshold between the two faces of Spitalfields repelling. Photograph and image by author.

PLATE_07



Un missionnaire du moyen âge raconte qu'il avait trouvé le point
où le ciel et la Terre se touchent...

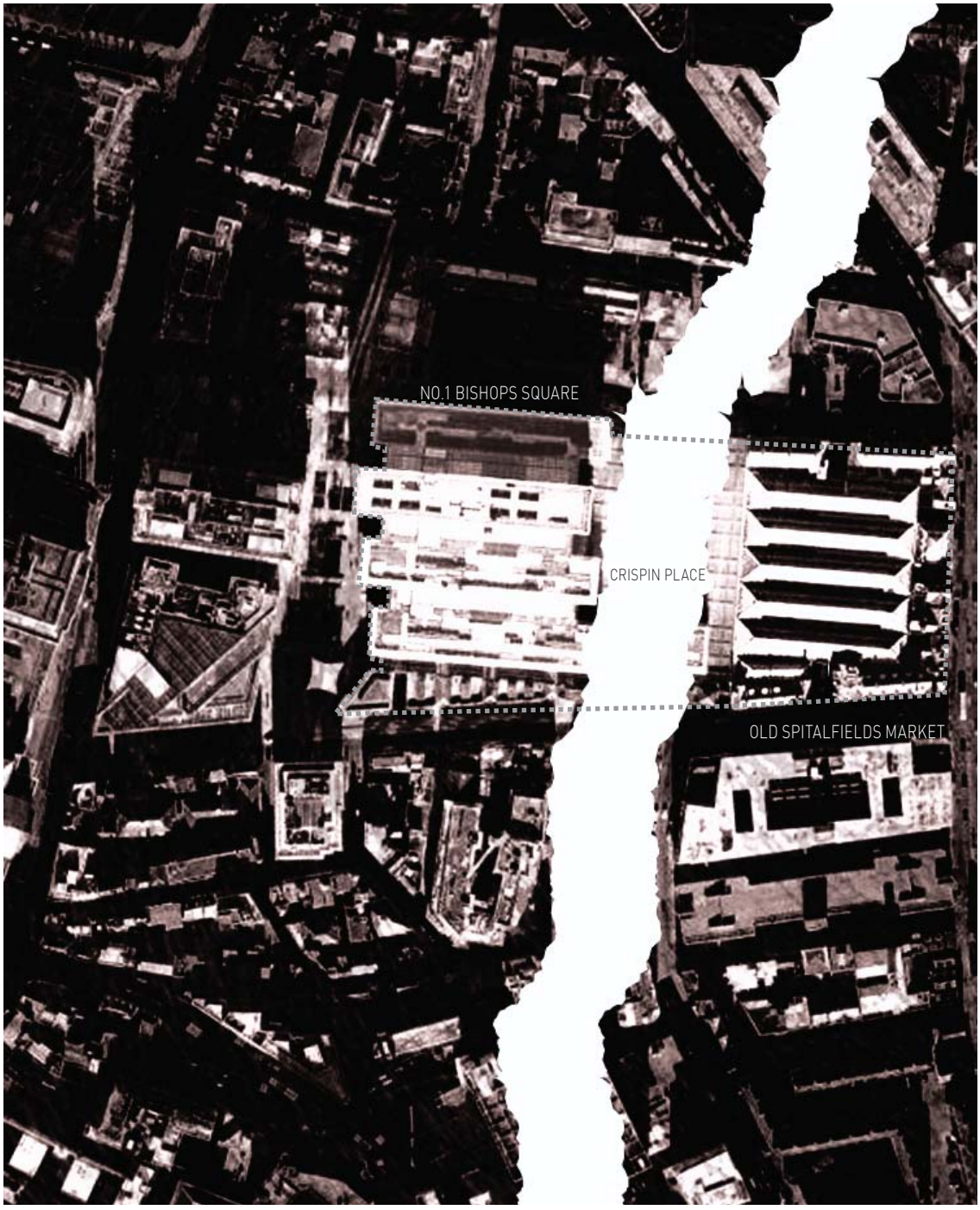
A THICK PRESENT: In plan, lines can be reassuring. A single line on its own is able to carry a heightened level of importance quite simply because it defines in its presence a feeling of limitation, a sense of containment. Even if not extended into a literal, physical barrier, but is still approached directly, a line notates a finite space, an absolute. To move along its length is to understand its additional presence as a vector, its inherent agency in carrying or directing attention. And what is more, to move *through* it, as in a moment of crisis, a line transforms into a potential instance of uncertainty between two opposing fields. It has the potential to become a horizon supporting the thematic dualism of inclusion and exclusion.

In reality, even a single line is never just simply traversed. There is always an assumed thickness to the act of engaging it, an anticipation that builds with closing distance to the moment of exchange between the two sides. "*The dialectics of inside and outside is supported by a reinforced geometrism, in which limits are barriers,"* suggests Gaston Bachelard. *"We must be free as regards all definitive intuitions if we are to follow the daring of poets […] who invite us to the finesses of experience of intimacy, to 'escapades' of imagination."*[1] It is at this level, at the level of metaphysics, that lines have the capacity to reinforce a holistic system, a cosmology. "*Like a door,* Bachelard later states, *it awakens in us a two-way dream that is doubly symbolical."*[2] As a result of the recent redevelopment of Spitalfields, a scarring of the terrain running north-south between the existing market hall, and the recently completed *No 1 Bishops Square* development by Norman Foster (2002), does not just illustrate, quite literally, the myriad of cultural oppositions at work in the neighbourhood, but also informs equally opposed temporalities.

On either side of that understood border are categorically two faces to the same city. To the immediate east are the Spitalfields and Banglatown wards (both in the borough of Tower Hamlets) which are characterized by a mixture of Georgian and Victorian brick tenements, and low-rise postwar housing; historically occupied by a very large immigrant and working-class community. It is an area supporting a very strong and active conservationist agenda. To the west is the complete opposite, the Corporation of the City of London; the city's financial center and arguably one of the major business districts in Europe. Over the last sixty years this region of the city has undergone an incredible physical transformation, shifting from dwindling import and export industries localized around the Thames towards globalized commercial activity. It is necessitating the development of massive quantities of office space, bringing with it a stereotypically corporate aesthetic to match: glass towers, ground-scrapers, and fully designed hardscapes external to both typologies.

Integrated into the design of Bishops Square is *Crispin Place*, a glazed ligature physically connecting the hovering blocks of the modern development back to the renovated Georgian storefronts of the Old Spitalfields Market. Though it was

FIG_16: An undated engraving taken from the 1888 book *L'atmosphère: météorologie populaire,* by Camille Flammarion. The Inscription at the bottom reads: *A missionary of the Middle Ages recounts finding the point where the sky and the Earth touched.* Like the line in the pavement at Spitalfields, this image reflects an moment or instant of transition from one body to another


NO.1 BISHOPS SQUARE
CRISPIN PLACE
OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

finally opened to the public in 2005, the arcade in almost every way meets the current standards of 'good public space' as set by the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority in their 2009 *Manifesto for Public Space* (a checklist of design strategies for creating a 'high-quality' public realm).

It has reputable tenants which can support and propel further the 'economic engine' of the local area. With the inclusion of a market it attracts the proportionate mixture of local and tourist crowds. It is secure at all hours of the day with watchful eyes; cameras plastered in high angle positions. It is brightly lit in the evenings. But most importantly it makes all the proper architectural and historical references to purportedly satisfy a handful of minimum requirements (though not necessarily the desires) of the conservationists.[3]

Considered in the design of Crispin Place is the framing of a principal axis running east-west in line with the spire of Nicolas Hawksmoor's Christ Church Spitalfields; a detail visible through the glass ceiling. The brick shops on the southern flank of the old market are retained, sandblasted and retrofitted. Even the remains of a twelfth century charnel house belonging to the medieval St. Mary's Hospital- the neighbourhoods patron namesake found during six years of intense archaeological excavations- are given a new hermetic encasement; protection against the elements and glazed in with museum like attentiveness (including all the necessary plaques and notations to legitimize its historical value). Finally, there is an overall general allusion of the space to the covered arcades of the nineteenth century; a typology which had once typified the public realm of the modernized city.

FIG_17:Aerial photograph of the full Spitalfields Market Site (2010). Crispin Place marks the thick division between the two halves of the former market site.

But even with all of this, two obvious and quite peculiar details to the design cannot be resolved. In fact, embedded into the *idea* of Crispin place is an architectural dilemma which cannot be designed away.

Thought it is widely recognized that both conservationists and developers are polarized in their view of what should be done with Spitalfields (a drama played out over the prolonged design and reconstruction period of the market), the line at which the two sides were supposed to smoothly reconcile is instead a strange divide; manifested materially as both a literal and phenomenal threshold.

Outside of the mandated archaeological assessment of the site, it is inevitable that one half of the sea of asphalt which had accumulated over decades across the city block, is lost to the process of construction, and that the additional inclusion of something as pragmatic as below surface parking would drastically alter the datum of the plaza above. Once construction of *No.1* is completed, the area surrounding the base of the project is decidedly clad in a cleaner blanket of grey and black granite; a consistent and immaculate plateau of stone to which the eastern portion of the market once referred to, but sitting inches above that new benchmark, will instead have to be refigured. And though it is a relatively temporary condition (as the eastern half has now itself been resurfaced in a synthetic granular pavement) the collision of two visibly different architectonic systems in the glazing above- the coarseness of the structure in the new design versus the filigree of the old roof- still ensures that the transition between the two is not necessarily smooth.

It must be noted that the two terms 'outside' and 'inside' pose problems of metaphysical anthropology that are not symmetrical. To make inside concrete and outside vast is the first task, the first problem, it would seem, of an anthropology of the imagination. But between concrete and vast, the opposition is not a true one. At the slightest touch, asymmetry appears. And it is always like that: inside and outside do not receive in the same way the qualifying epithets that are the measure of our adherence.[4]

Gaston Bachelard, 1958.

Phenomenally, what these two lines (ground and ceiling) create in their presence is a discernible frame, or in Bachelard's terms *a door,* through which the two faces of Spitalfields are actually drawn. And like Bachelard's phenomenological understanding of division, this portal is something which has a curious thickness to it: with the aggression of each side toward the other providing that understood depth to the space between them, and to the act of trespassing across it.[5] As with Bishopsgate before it (the major arterial road running north-south to the west of the market), this threshold marks the border between a number of overlapping and influential fragments.

SYNECDOCHE: Sigmund Freud, in the introductory section of his famous essay *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), discusses the capacity of the human unconscious to easily manoeuvre through such a complex system of references. But using Rome and its literal field of architectural fragments as a proxy for the mind, he essentially notes an incapacity to perceive these multiplicities through any other means than the imagination. He states: *if we try to represent historical sequence in spatial terms, it can only be done by juxtaposition in space; the same space will not hold two contents*.[6] The problem, according to Freud's assertion, is that this type of simultaneity is limited to an immaterial reconciliation. Though this is by all means true, it is still possible to *conceptually* account for, or register the various contradictions on either side of the line in Spitalfields through two of the neighbourhoods more visible and physically present surfaces. By that I would suggest that the fiction of the place might be usefully represented as the division between a city of bricks in the east and a city of glass in the west; opposed in both materiality and historicity, but both equally disorienting; one side indicative of 'London the labyrinth', the other 'London a distorting mirror'.

The term used to define such a relationship is synecdoche, derived from the Greek word *synekdokhe,* meaning *a figure by which a more comprehensive term is used for a less comprehensive or vice versa; as a whole for part or part for a whole*.[7] For a place like Spitalfields (and even the city of London in general) a place that is qualified both in history and literature equally by a certain illimitability, synecdoche affords a means of first imagining, and then categorizing the critical nodes around which the flux of the city can be organized.

A 2008 film by the American director Charlie Kaufmann titled *Synecdoche, New York* [8], is a conveniently titled, tragic exploration of a parallel

FIG_18: Detail from *Magnetic Fields*, by Anish Kapoor, 1991. In the case of Spitalfields, both sides of Crispin Place can be categorized into a number of polemics, but invariably they are all a part of the same system

concept to Freud's idea of co-inhabited realities, and the actual self-destruction that can come out of an attempt to manifest them both literally and simultaneously.

> Both cities themselves and the people who live in them are subject to [a] convenient distortion and exaggeration [...] In a world of crowds and strangers, where things happen at speed, are glimpsed and cannot be recalled- a world, in short which is simply too big to be held at one time in one's imagination- synecdoche is much more than a rhetorical figure, it is a means of survival.[9]
>
> *Jonathan Raban, 1974.*

The film follows the life of a young theatre director Caden Cotard (played by Philip Seymour Hoffman) struggling with a deeply existential crisis. Reacting against the dissolution of his domestic life in the small upstate New York town of Schenectady, his estrangement from both his wife and daughter, his own mysterious susceptibility to illness and the increasingly painful awareness of his inescapable mortality, he decides to embark on a massive autobiographical theatre-piece that will allow him to explore the implications of his existence, and effectively map the affects of his life on the lives of others. Receiving a MacArthur Genius Grant to fund his endeavour, Cotard begins to systematically construct, brick for brick, an exact replica of New York City within a somehow infinitely expansive abandoned warehouse space in the actual New York City. He assembles a population

of actors to re-present events from the past (and his own memories of them) in perfect detail, including the fateful decision to write the play and secure the warehouse space.

But over time the production succumbs to a recursive *mise en abyme*.[10] It inevitably becomes more and more self involving, to the point that not just the city replicates but also the characters within it - including Cotard himself. As every new iteration of the play is formed, he personally and perhaps unintentionally becomes one more step removed from the total work, until actively proclaiming:

I'm not excusing myself from this either. I will have someone play me, to delve into the murky, cowardly depths of my lonely, fucked-up being. And he'll get notes too, and those notes will correspond to the notes I truly receive every day from my god.

Caden is choosing to consciously isolate himself from his memories in order to objectively witness their juxtaposition.[11] But as the warehouse and the reproduced city contained within it are further reproduced, the logic of the play, the sanity of the actors, and the physical fabric of the city begin to simultaneously disintegrate under the strain and enormous tension between the pieces. At a climactic point in the film, before leaping from one of the stage sets, Cotard's double Sammy Barnathan confronts him on the futility of his play:

I have watched you forever, Caden, but you've never really looked at anyone other than yourself. So watch me. Watch my heart break. Watch me jump. Watch me learn that after death there is nothing. There is no more watching. There is no more following. Say goodbye to Hazel for me. And say it to yourself too. None of us has much time.

It is this extended plea for empathy, from one version of Cotard to another, which in a way becomes a critical epithet of the film. In the shattering remains of his fiction, as actors are lost, or they die, or they simply escape, he finally draws incredibly close to this point as the meaning of his play, and as such the meaning of his life. But before he can articulate it the screen fades to white. He has died before he can finish.

Though the film is relentless in its portrayal of one man's self destruction, it is interesting to watch Caden rely so heavily on his synthetic and exact replicas of New York City (Cities), and the warehouse stage as mnemonic devices; as ways for him to represent time and space both as it has happened and as it is happening; to reinforce the limitations of such a literal and exact act of juxtaposition. [12]

By talking about Spitalfields less in terms of its actual spatial conflicts and more so in terms of the possible synecdochic relationships that those spaces have with their dominant materiality provides a way of avoiding the trappings of Cotard's drama. Material synecdoche dwells on the inherent complexity of the neighbourhood, but generalizes it in such a way as to develop an approachable architectural dialogue.

The neighbourhood consists of multiple fragments of history, which have become superimposed onto each other, which exist, or are perpetuated collectively through the bricks of the Georgian and Victorian houses. Inversely, speculative development by its very name and nature assumes or actively proposes certain scenarios that may or may not come to pass. Through glass, a multiplicity of futures is projected. Both are held together by their respective material associations, with synecdoche acting as the fiction which ultimately binds them together. Like a scaffold, it supports the contradictions that comprise Spitalfields. And curiously enough, this categorization of past and future into brick and glass respectively is augmented further by each material's physical properties.

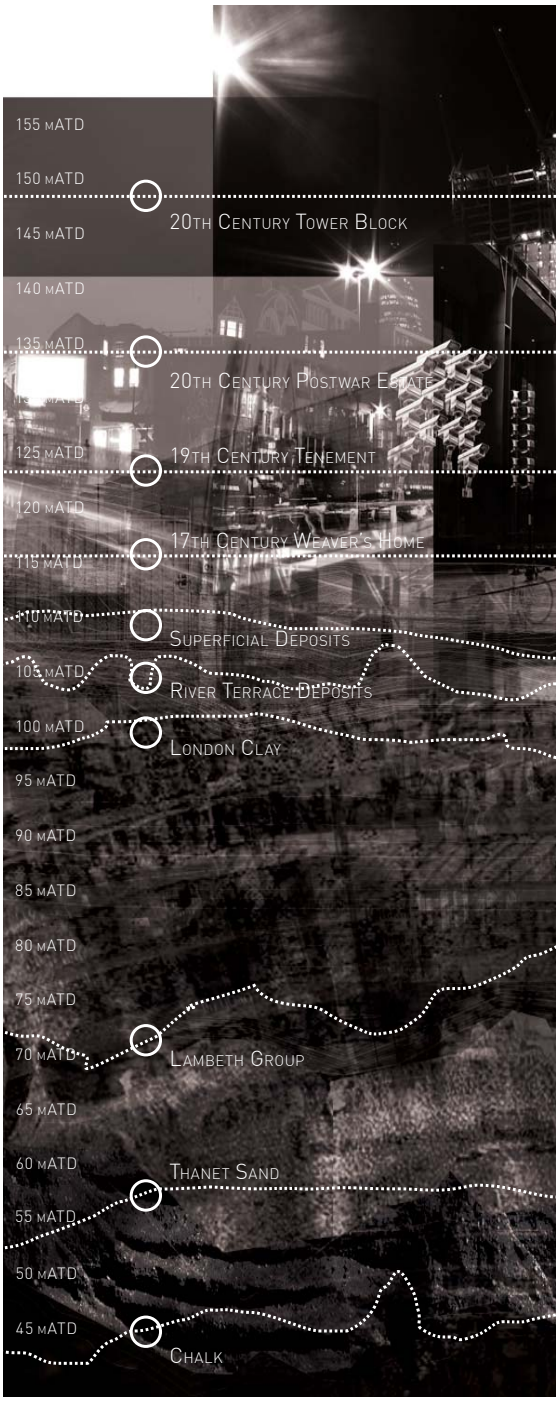
FIG_19:In these stills from Charlie Kaufman's film *Synecdoche, New York* (2008), the protagonist Caden Cotard's New York City set is seen in relation to the external limits of the warehouse in which it created again and again. Each of his worlds are fully self contained copied of one level higher.

> In an act of constructing that presents itself as contingent, as something unnecessary yet at the same time desired, the contemporary architect, in his or her solitude, individually confronts history. Their encounter will not be ingenuously contextual of facilely imitative, but a solitary rendezvous made before spectres, the phantasmata, of Architecture. When analyzing a particular place, the architect will encounter a simulacrum in personal memory- through strictly autobiographical episodic suggestions- of a trace on the basis of which he or she can establish the *differences* that avoid *repetition*.[13]
>
> *Ignasi de Solà-Morales, 1997*

CITY OF BRICKS/CITY OF GLASS: The city of bricks, for instance, is conceptually regressive because, in theory each brick is an archaeological artefact. Primeval. It is a product of the dense layering of clay, sand and chalks which form the Thames river basin. And if isolated from

any residue of cultural meaning, even a single brick exists and participates in its own particular duration.[14] From the moment of firing, when the slow heat of a kiln at 1200°C evaporates the last traces of moisture in the clay, there commences a slow and inevitable process of decay. A clay brick erodes, and its ruination backwards toward dust is simply a reminder of our own eventual fate. The nature of this relationship makes a brick a very stoic and romantic material. It occupies a time and space between us and the natural world, retaining a mysterious and *phantasmic* quality.[15] Furthermore, a brick can be understood as an index or register of a genuine historical interaction with the clay from which it was formed. As suggested by the British historian Raphael Samuel it becomes *"the proof of authenticity."*[16] Even after the introduction of techniques for mass fabrication, and the mechanization of the process of forming from the nineteenth century onwards, brick construction still relies on the necessary and deliberate placement of each unit. In terms of its historicity, a brick will always be rigidly fixed in the past.

By comparison the city of glass migrates in opposition. Though like the brick it is true that it too emerges from out of dust, that it is a product formed from silicates and minerals, and that glass production requires an extreme level of heat in order to force the proper molecular reaction, the process is much more violent, much more active and intensive. From the moment that silica is liquefied, it inherits an incredibly perplexing and highly debated material state. As glass vitrifies it is understood to be meta-stable; in essence a 'super-cooled' liquid which has a consistent and embedded potential to become solid if only it had that last bit of energy. Furthermore, by not crystallizing it remains transparent.



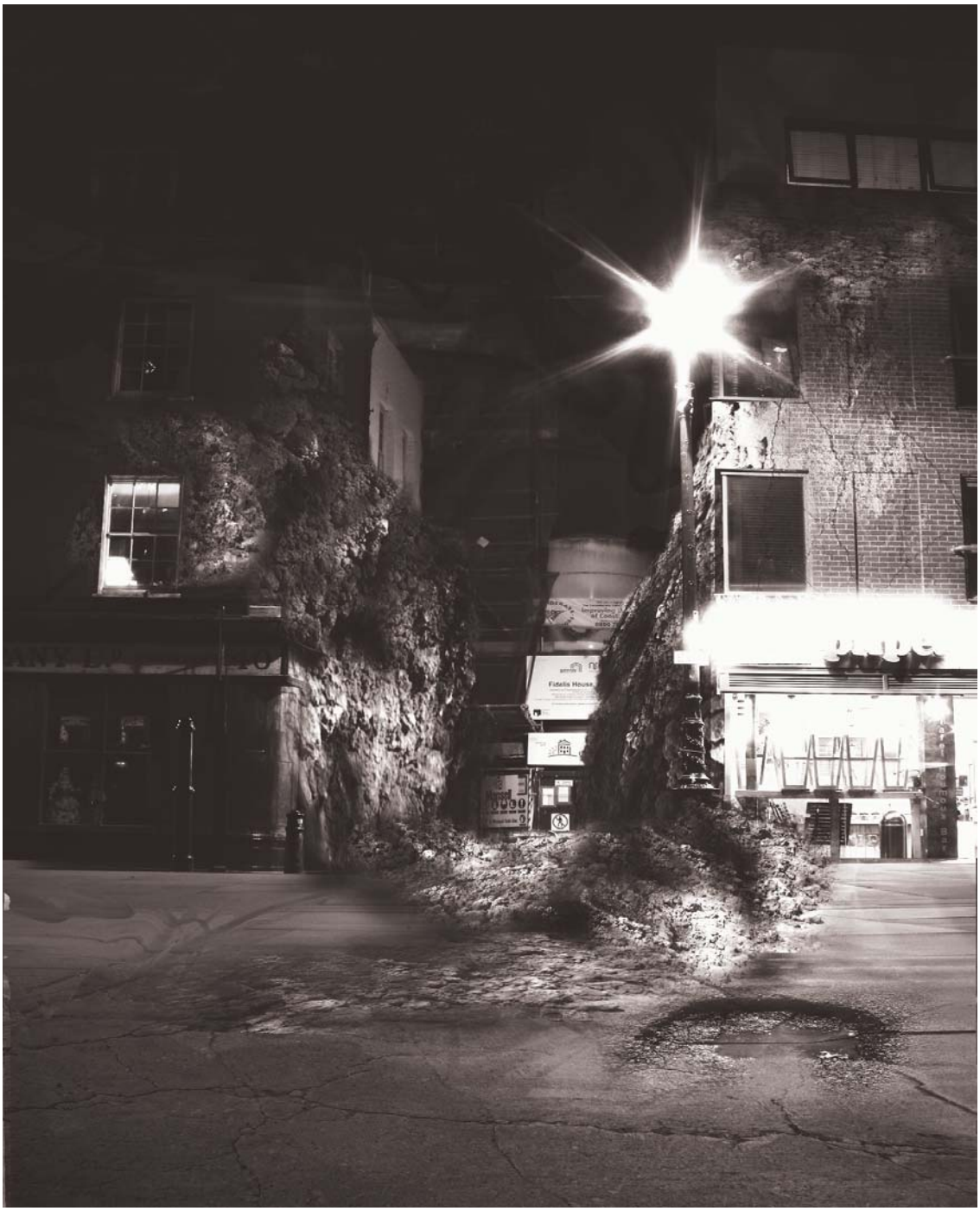
What this unchanged molecular structure implies is that window glass, in its seemingly rigid state, has actually moved through its cooling point, thereby becoming technically *too cold to freeze*.[17] It is only in recent history that such fluidity is even exposed. Though now almost completely disproved scientifically, it is still widely imagined that well outside the limits of our perceptual awareness glass is theoretically performing like other liquids; deforming and flowing with gravity. Before the late twentieth century, it is long debated whether or not over periods of centuries windows left vertical will develop a greater thickness at their bases than at their head as the material slides. But the actual variations in thickness of pre-modern glazing come from the flaws in production, uneven cooling, the pooling of molten silica in the early stages of production, and the non-uniformity in cutting of panes from rudimentary sheets of glass. In 1998 the Brazilian physicist Edgar D. Zanotto published a now somewhat seminal text that calculates the actual time required for glass to flow as roughly 10^{32} years.[18] And yet glass maintains an innately ambiguous quality that matches its extremely high viscosity, by theoretically remaining a solid in slow-motion.

To understand both brick and glass as containing embedded movements, to consider them in terms of their alchemical migrations and to apply that consideration back to the line between the western and eastern halves of Spitalfields, reveals not a simple convergence but perhaps instead a dynamic tension between the two faces of the city that is even more extreme and even more prevalent than one might expect. The space that exists within that pull is a conceptual space of vacuity; its quality predicated on the absence of each material. Imagining the dust that is left in the wake of their repulsion as being representative of something much more than just years of decline or dereliction in Spitalfields, creates a third narrative field.

> All matter exists in the continuum of time; the patina of wear adds the enriching experience of time to the materials of construction. But the machine-made materials of today- scaleless sheets of glass, enamelled metals and synthetic plastics- tend to present their unyielding surfaces to the eye without conveying their material essence or age. Buildings of this technological age usually deliberately aim at ageless perfection, and they do not incorporate the dimension of time, or the unavoidable and materially significant process of aging. This fear of the traces of wear and age is related to our fear of death.[19]
>
> *Juhani Pallasmaa, 2005.*

The thick line where brick and glass repel assumes a space containing the neighbourhood's *prima materia*, the dust of its formless beginnings from which transformation occurs.[20] At a threshold as complicated as this, where there is no such thing as a simple division, the dust belongs to neither one side nor the other exclusively.

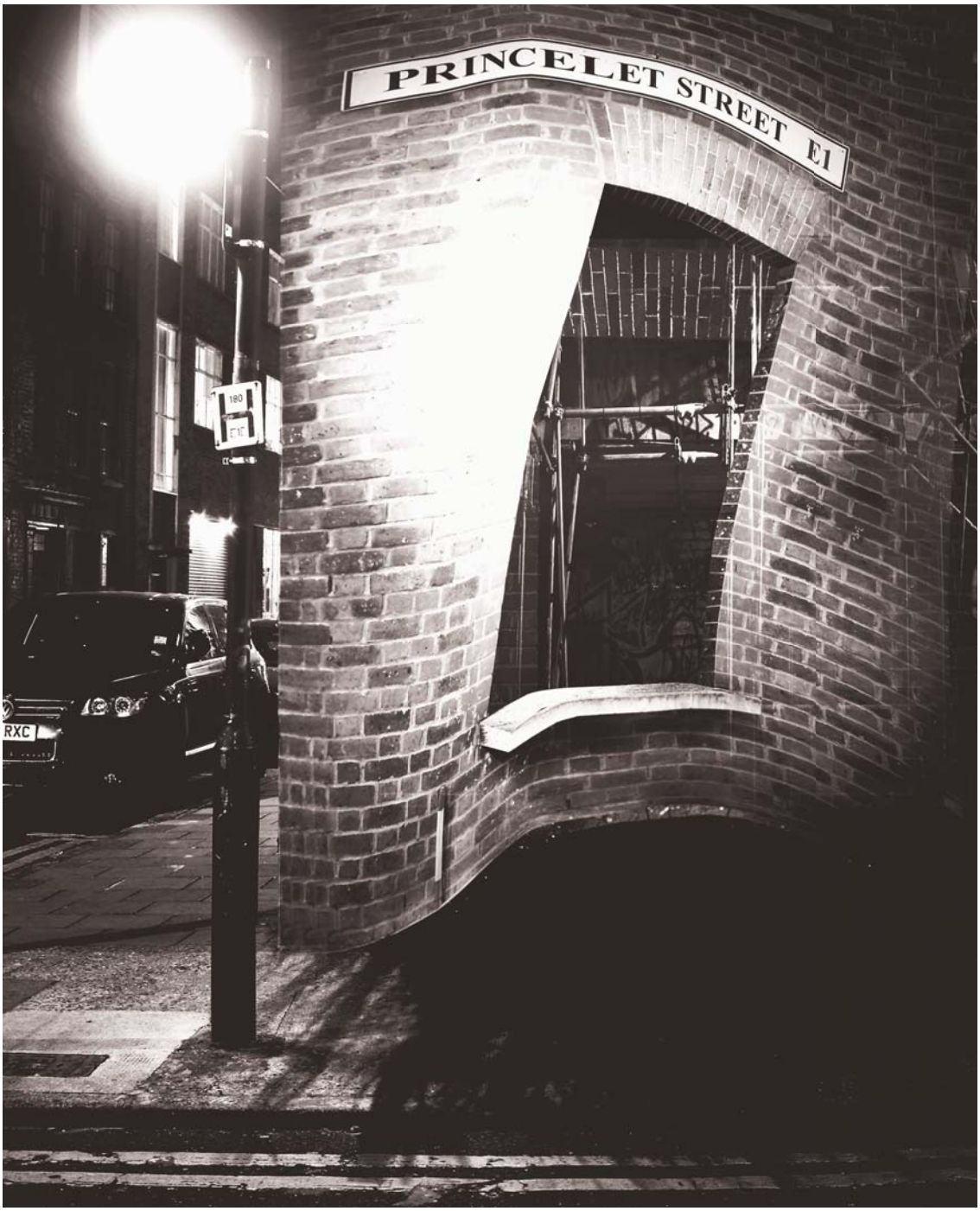
FIG_20: Schematic section taken through the terrain around Liverpool Street Station, showing relative heights and depths of brick and concrete typologies versus sedimentary strata. Relative distances are measured in mATD (Above Tunnel Datum) which for the area in question is 100m below sea level. (right)


Fidelis House

Whatever is inflicted on the surface of London will, eventually, be absorbed and rendered invisible. The brash offices that are also galleries and living spaces will fade into the dusty fabric.[21]

Iain Sinclair, 2007

FIG_21:Between the pull of the two cities is the dust from which both materials are made. The alchemical metaphor is not destructive but rather relates to the potential creation and transformation of a 'field' in the present. Photograph and image by author.


PRINCELET STREET E1
180
RXC

the brick labyrinth_

We have to imagine ourselves in the painting- either by identifying with a character already depicted, or by projecting ourselves into its fictional landscape. Both senses rely on memory traces. Either we have to imagine the actions being taken by one of the characters and the expressions adopted, and relate these to our own experiences, thereby identifying with that character, or we have to read ourselves into the setting, and recall what it is like to walk down "a narrow path with some foliage," to turn round and smile, before slipping through a half open door, and re-create that experience, as it were, in the space of the painting. Both gestures, however, are the same. They depend upon a memory that allows us to identify with a given situation, even if that memory be a fictive memory.[1]

Neil Leach, 2006

FIG_22:As the walls of Princelet Street are engaged, they begin to billow and tear, they embellish their superimposition. Photograph and image by author. (left)

FIG_23: Two hundred years of maps superimposed as the shadowed morphology of the East End. (following spread)


OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

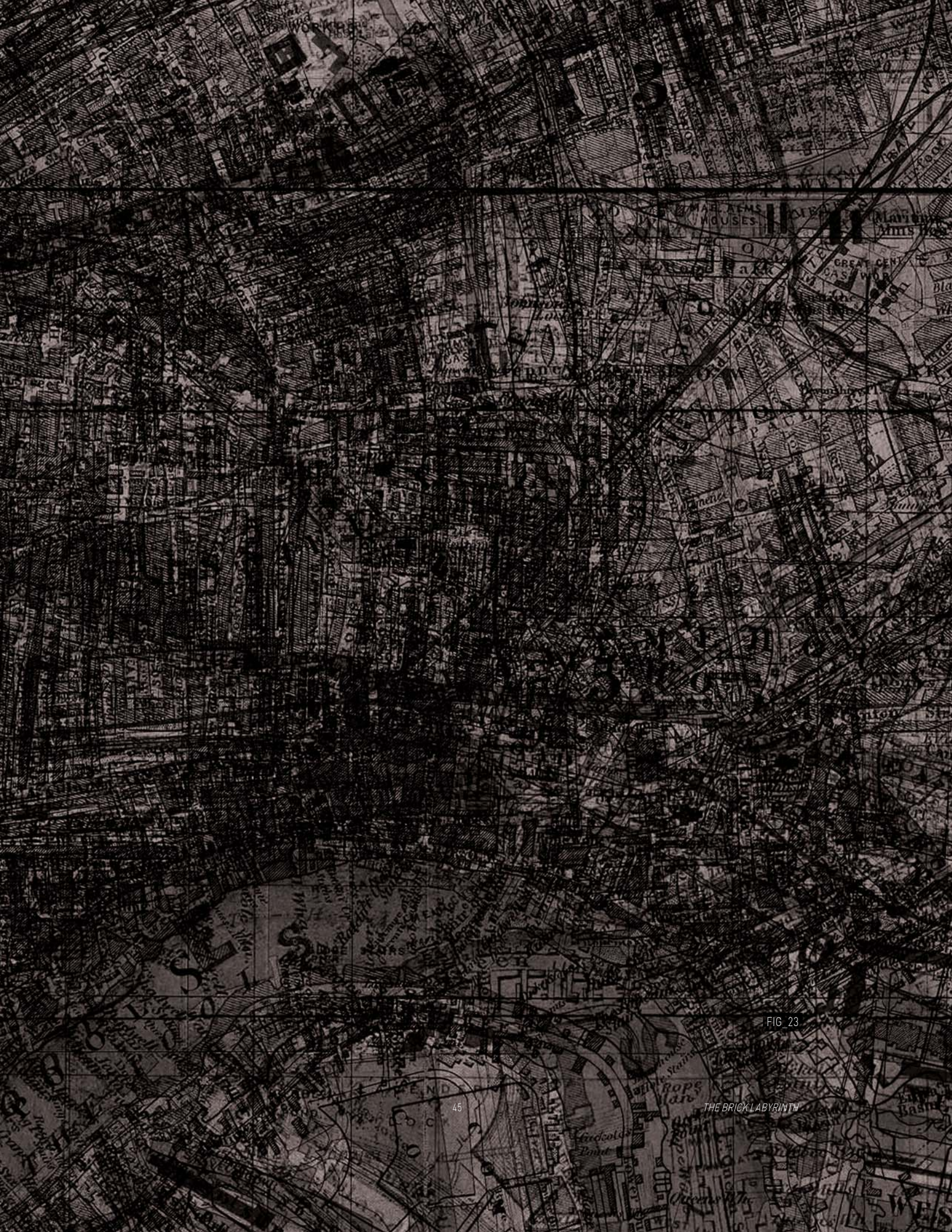


FIG_23


FOR SALE

…the houses of Fournier Street and Princelet Street, those quaint loci of Spitalfields' humbler occupation, have a look about them that is distinctively artificial, a little bit plastic. The grains of dust seem to be lovingly distributed in window sills, the cracks in the glazing suspiciously deliberate. The candle in the window is throwing its light like a sixty watt bulb and the foreign cars out front all question the authenticity of this attempted illusion, this historical simulation. Maybe Sinclair was right: maybe this is just a *theatre of ghosts*…[2]

…I am sure that if you were to view the street in elevation that the performance would seem flawless, but on these narrow streets rarely is anything other than this oblique view permitted. And from such an indirect approach, it is ever more apparent that the layers of bricks in these dwellings consist of many selves, they routinely fragment into their conflicting memories….

FIG_24: Toynbee Street, London. Image by author. (above)

The surfaces of Spitalfields may not be as stable as they appear... imagine the billowing of brick walls, a delamination into a variety of selves. It is the instability of what one perceives in and around Spitalfields to which Sinclair alludes:

The theatre has been staged to assert its own immortality, ... Timeless. Mimicking decay. A warm dust breath. And we, passing rapidly across the stage, are the spooks of the future.

See. Rachel Lichtenstein and Iain Sinclair, *Rodinsky's room*. (London: Granta, 1999), 10.

FIG_25: Fournier Street, London. Image by author. (below)

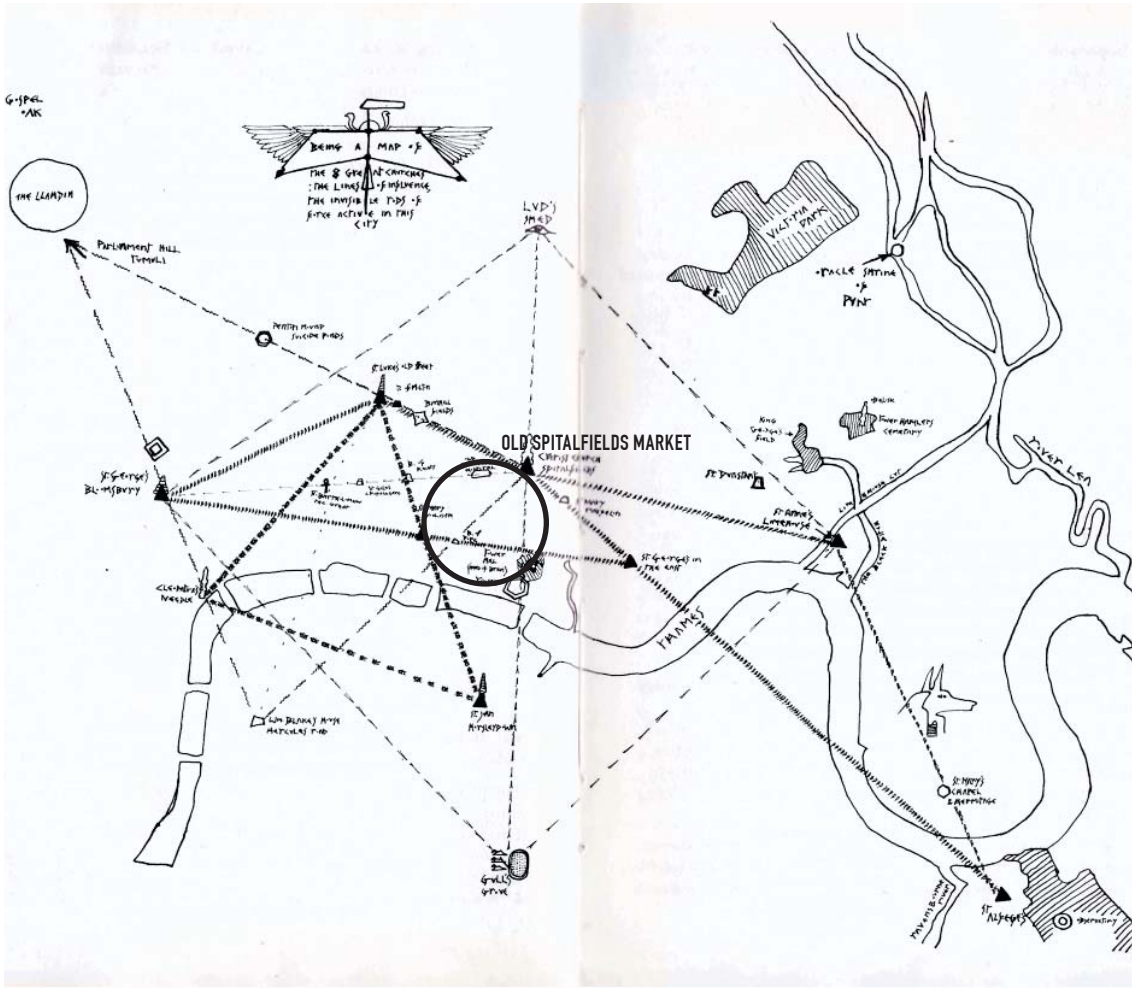
SAFE
YOUTH

PLATE_08

…Though hours before each brick had obviously populated the same coordinates, the same region of façade; each shared the same dimensions, the same tactility and the same surface appearance as its other personalities, it is subtly noticeable that each is asserting an archaeological implication opposed of the others. To move between the inside and outside of every house would, under circumstances in daylight, be an act of moving directly through space and time, but here that possibility is thoroughly augmented. Hidden behind long shadows from the blue and magenta neon emanating from Brick Lane, each brick is migrating through a variety of simultaneous and coincidental pasts. Paper thin facades…

…All it takes is a quick tug at the walls and these surfaces quickly billow and disintegrate. Even if the effect takes hold on its own, these facades are going to delaminate. Dusk is the time of the day when they liberate themselves from alignment. Only at night, when the lights of these and the other Huguenot haunts are left to settle, when the neighbourhood is abandoned once more of the barkers and tourists of Banglatown, do the bricks seem to naturally repel. It is here and now that they relinquish their single and unifying depth. It is here and now, along the streets beneath the mystical spire of Hawksmoor's church, that the clay houses of Spitalfields embellish their super imposition…

FIG_26:Map taken from Iain Sinclair's book *Lud Heat* (1975), illustrating the mythological and numerological linkages between the churches of Nicolas Hawksmoor. Christ Church Sptialfields, which sits at the west end of Fournier Street is the hinge point in a number of overlapping relationships..


OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

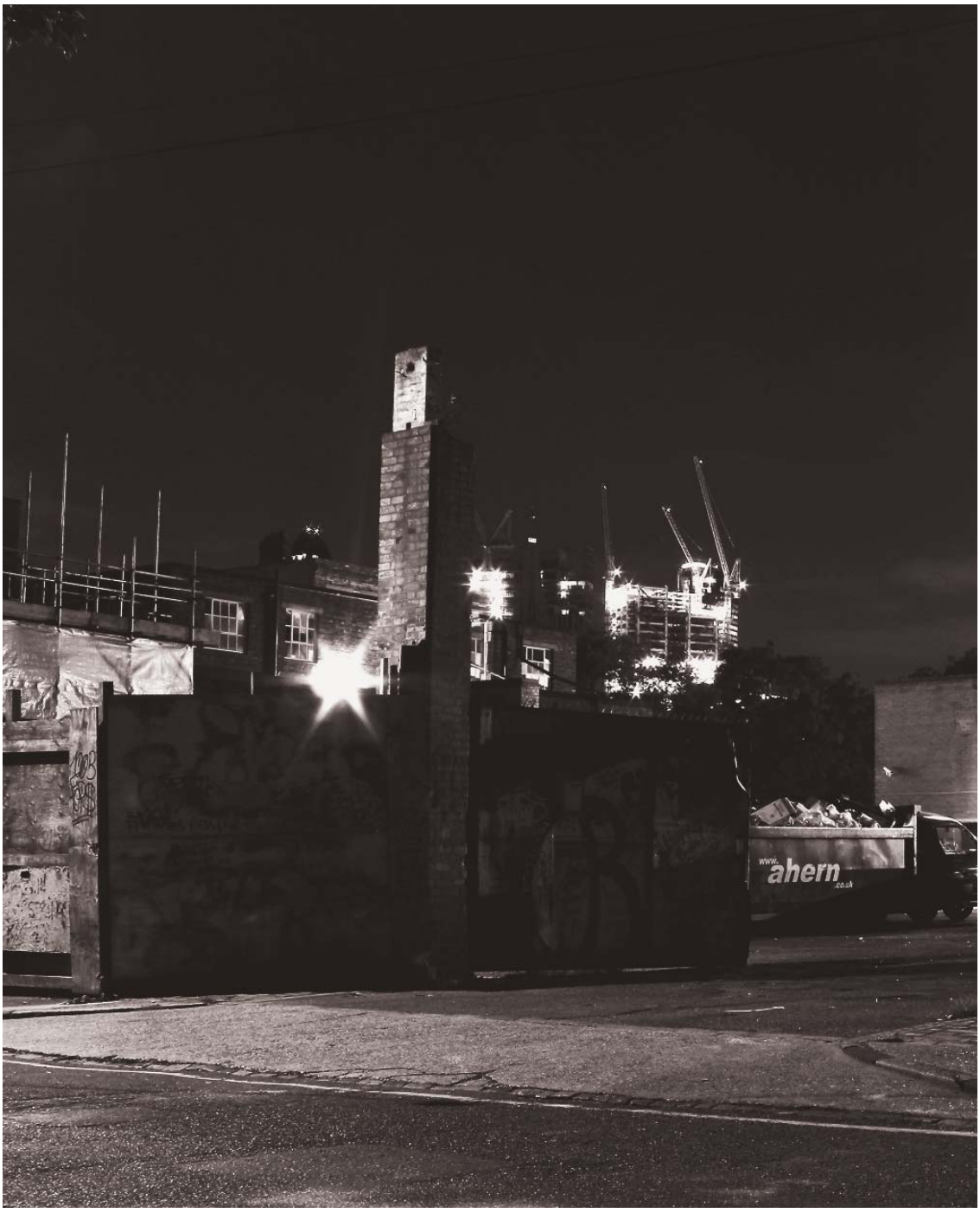


PLATE_09

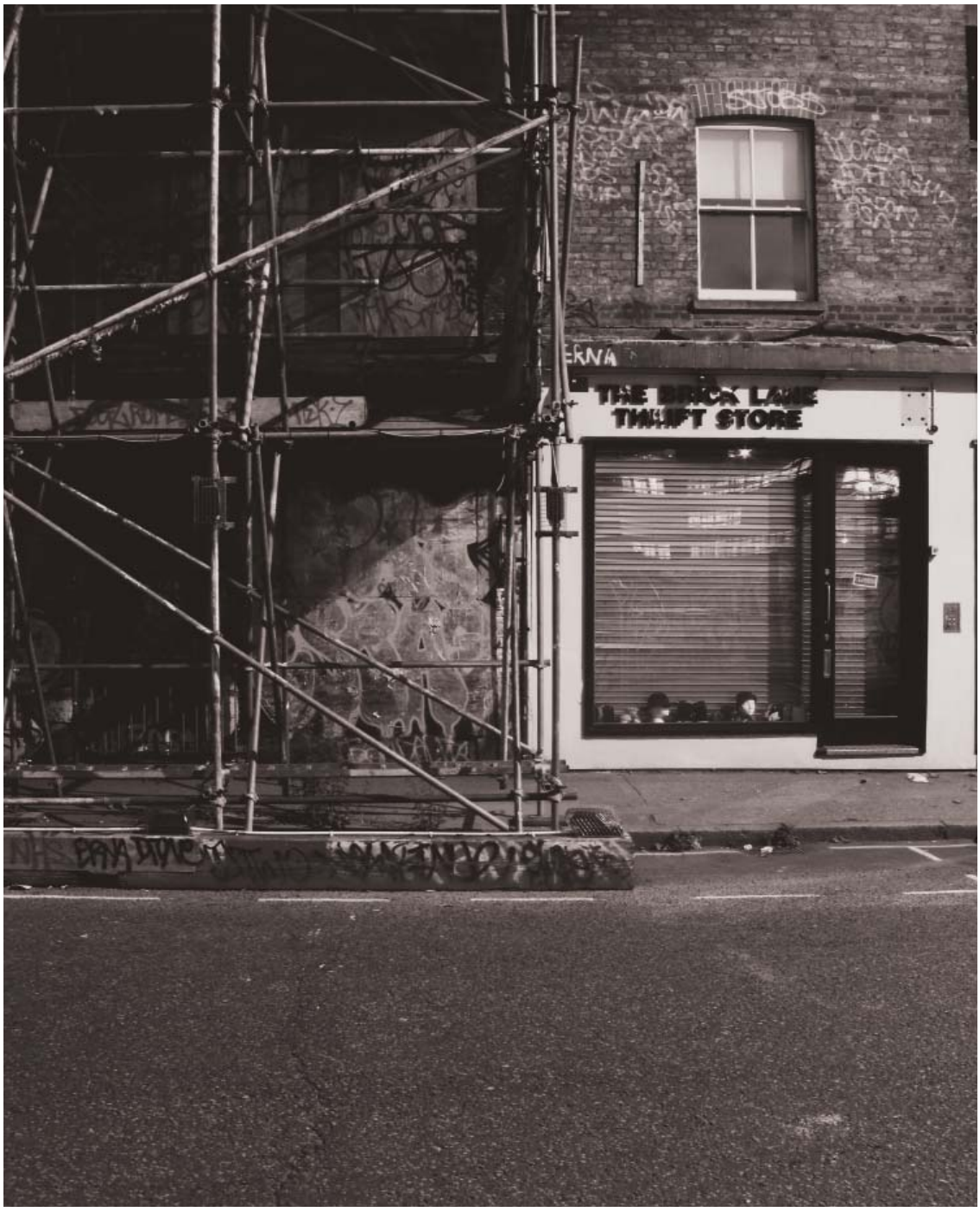


PLATE_10


SCHWARTZ 33

PLATE_11


HACKNEY
ISLINGTON
REDCHURCH- 2008
BOUNDARY ESTATE- 1985
ELDER STREET- 1969
SOUTH SHOREDITCH- 1991
BUNHILL FIELDS AND
FINSBURY SQUARE-1987
SUN STREET- 1987
FOURNIER STREET-
1978(EXTENSION)
OLD SPITALFILEDS MARKET
ARTILLARY PASSAGE- 1973
FOURNIER STREET- 1969
BISHOPS GATE- 1981
WENTWORTH STRET- 1989
NEW BROAD STREET- 1981
FINSBURY CIRCUS- 1974
THE CITY
BANK-1971
WHITECHAPEL HIGH STRET- 1989
LEADENHALL MARKET-1991
LLOYD'S AVENUE
TOWER HAMLETS
FENCHURCH STREET STATION
CRESCENT
TRINITY SQUARE

[Dan Cruickshank of the Spitalfields trust] fears [conserved properties] will be sold to a rich City executive, of the type who will throw money at the house, building a back extension, and put a kitchen in the panelled front room on the ground floor. The current absence of a rear extension is a rare omission: even the finest of Spitalfields houses remain mostly Grade II listed, as a result of being categorized in the 1950s, when 18th-century townhouses were not highly regarded. That such listing has not been reviewed to Grade II* leaves the homes more vulnerable. Cruickshank says: "There are architects working round here who think the backs of these houses are expendable."

Will the buyer be interested in a statement home — or the spirit of the place? Either way they should be aware before they put down a deposit that the second battle of Spitalfields has begun already.[2]

Marcus Binny & Judith Haywood, October 9, 2009.

FIG_27:Dates and locations of conservation areas located in Spitalfields at the intersection of Tower Hamlets, City of London, Islington and Hackney. The original three conservation areas proposed for the neighbourhood - following a 1950's survey of the area- are the Fournier Street Conservation Area, the Elder Street Conservation Area, and the Artillary Lane Conservation Area

FIG_28: *At the Tower of Fornicata (Rome, Italy)*; onsite slide projection by the American photographer Shimon Attie, 2002 (left)
FIG_29: *On Via S. Angelo in Pescheria (Rome, Italy)*; onsite slide projection by the American photographer Shimon Attie, 2002 (right)

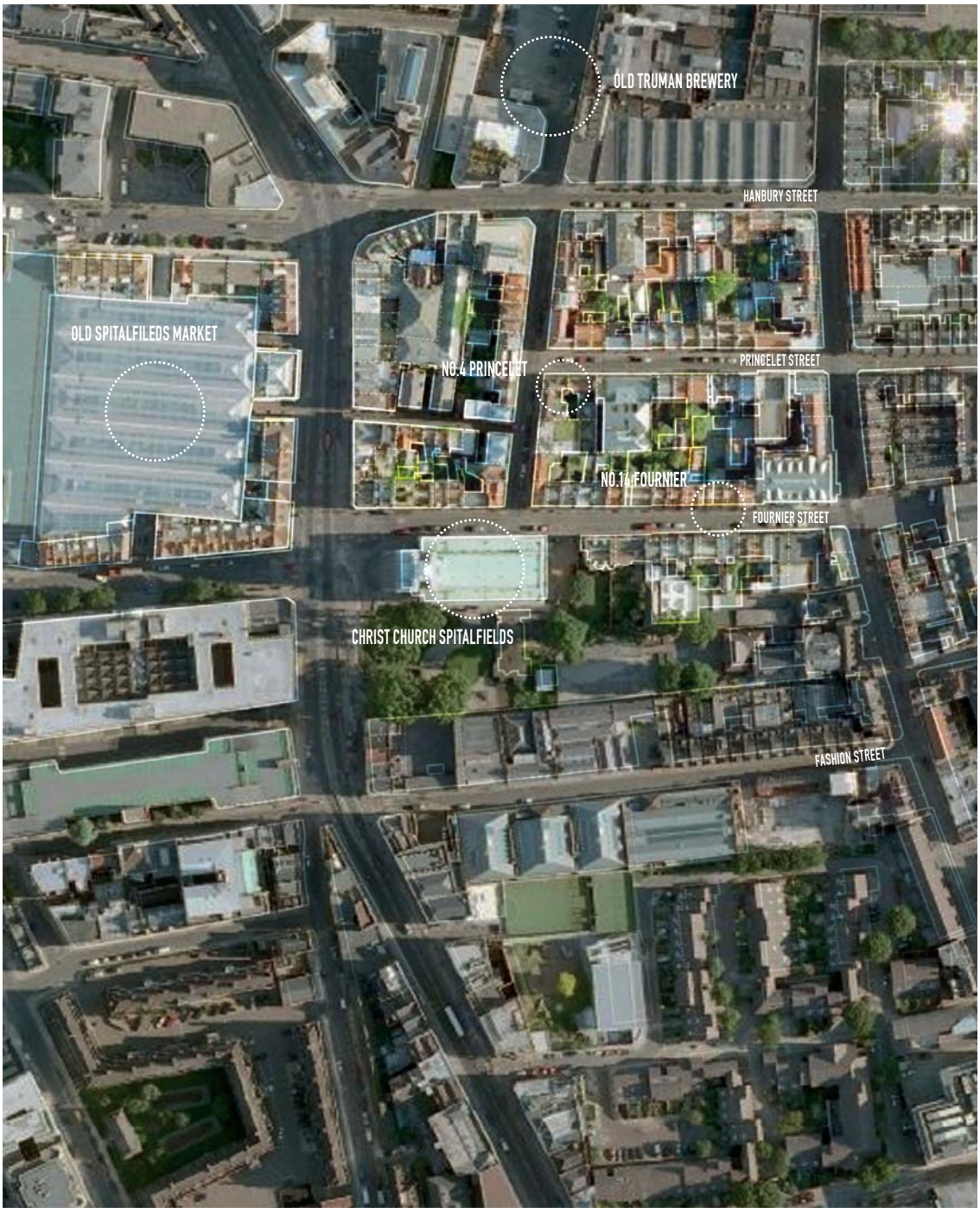
SUPERIMPOSITION: The photography of Shimon Attie, an American born artist, has a very provocative aesthetic to it. Using digital projection, he superimposes photographic evidence of past occupation onto the abandoned and abject remains of the buildings from which they were originally taken. In a very literal manner, he exposes and visually illustrates the latent connectivity between the fragments of the past and unifies them in a state of constant presence:

The time that is the duration of transition [between building and photograph] is not simply the present; it is the eventfulness of becoming and of emergence. The time of transitional phenomenon is the duration of action and participation. Attie's projections hold the potential of activating the felt reality of being in the time of transition- that sensation of being contemporaneous with events as they are in the process of coming to pass.[3]

What is most interesting about his work is the way in which it forces a very serious questioning of historical responsivity. Each individual work is a specific essay on the act of responding to context, and here serve as useful models for illustrating a particular crisis contained within the bricks of Spitalfields. It seems that the more Spitalfields ages, the more it accumulates branches of often conflicted identities.

Despite sustaining a reputation as being one of, if not *the* poorest neighbourhoods in the city for nearly two hundred years (roughly between the late eighteenth century and the mid twentieth century) an assessment of Spitalfields from 1957 by the Survey of London plants the seed of a very different story. A story about an area that has *not fallen into ruin, but rather present[s] an emergent heritage aesthetic [which] portray[s] decay and negligence as 'benign' and allow[s] 'rotting brick' to speak not of 'social blight' but of a more radiant earlier age.*[4] In the rhetoric of postwar reconstruction, it is deemed necessary to preserve certain narratives which can aid in solidifying a strong and modern vision for London by being symbolic of a more prosperous past.

The list of 'culturally significant' buildings in Britain sits today in the range of approximately 500,000; with London alone accounting for nearly a tenth of that number.[5] The city maintains a catalogue of nearly 18,000 entries for 'listing', however *a single 'entry' might cover several buildings and it is estimated that individual listed buildings in London may exceed 40,000.* [6] In England and Wales, the system of designation is divided into three universal categories. Grade I indicates a building that is of outstanding interest to the city as a whole; in Spitalfields this includes Nicolas Hawksmoor's *Christ*


OLD TRUMAN BREWERY
HANBURY STREET
OLD SPITALFILEDS MARKET
NO.4 PRINCELET
PRINCELET STREET
NO.14 FOURNIER
FOURNIER STREET
CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS
FASHION STREET

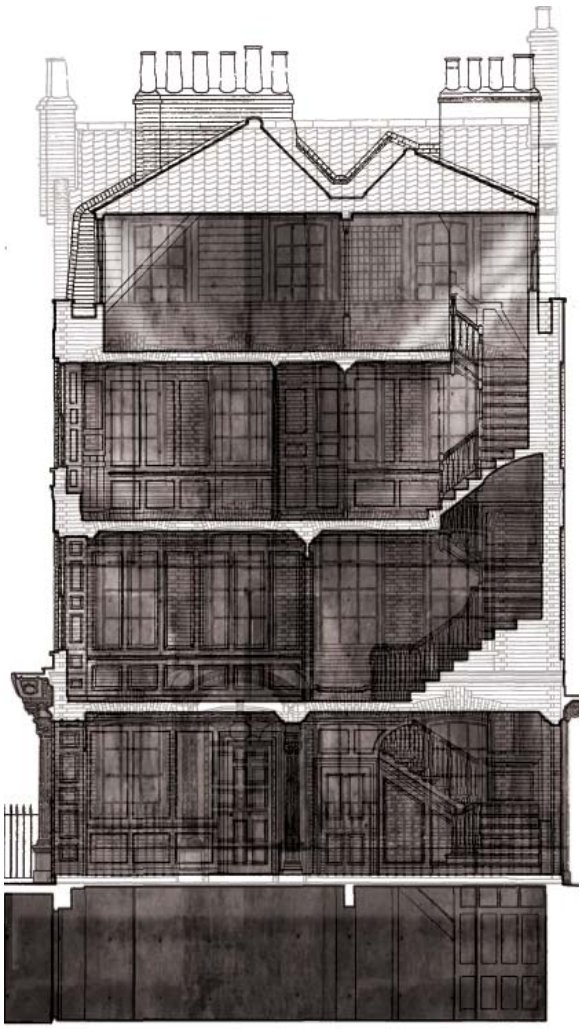


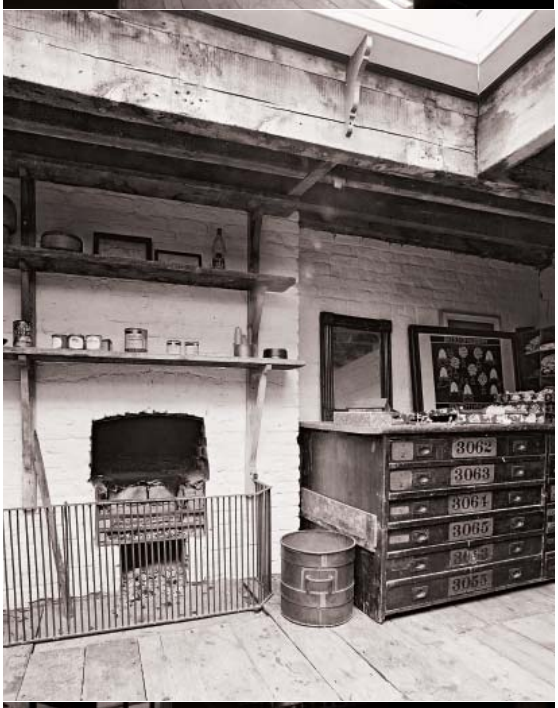
FIG_30:Aerial showing a concentration of Huguenot housing just east of the Old Spitalfields Market (left)

FIG_31: Combined section and elevation of no.14 Fournier Street (above)

Church (1715-1729) because of its notoriety and relation to the other works by the architect scattered throughout the city. A Grade II is a building that has more localized importance, a specific 'special interest' within the context of the area in which it is situated. Grade II* is given to those buildings that fall in an intermediary category between the others.[7] What seems like a very vague and subjective set of criteria for distinction drastically impacts the likelihood of any alteration of the existing building. Each of the three categories is indicative of a varying intensity of architectural petrifaction.[8]

Within that extensive registry, Spitalfields remains of particular interest- something residual of the mid 1970s- because of its large quantity of Grade II listable brick and stone housing dating back to the first decades of the eighteenth century. The stock that occupies the territory between Commercial Road and Brick Lane- on the east and west respectively- and bound by Hanbury Street and Fashion Street to the north and south are all descendent of a Georgian and Victorian working class society. These began as housing for a primarily French Huguenot community (and later, Jewish migrant population); dwellings scattered in a relatively small area. Against the backdrop of the current financial district, they modestly recount a utopic narrative of a successfully hard working and prosperous society, of exotics able to escape the tyranny of their homeland by inhabiting the periphery of London's old city wall.

The buildings are a mixture of three and four story brick living and working spaces. What is typical amongst them is the division between a moderately ornate lower half- with a number of idiosyncratic moulding and wood panelling


3062
3063
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3053

details- and a much starker, visibly utilitarian upper half. The open plan and street orientation, as well as the fenestration in the garret suggest not only the accommodation of large looms, but also that natural light penetrates into the studio. It is a working space ideally suited to the needs and productivity of the silk weaver (at least until the onset of sweatshop manufacturing and the collapse of the artisan silk trade in eighteenth century Britain).

Unlike later built and oppressive row housing which characterized the industrial belts of the major industrialized British cities, these houses are all quite individuated spaces. Every deviation of one from the other is insurance of a space that is more than just a factory. Each projects a domestic quality; they are registers of a strange mixture between a commercial and an alien culture. They are preserved narratives which support a multiplicity of the city's own history at a human scale.[9]

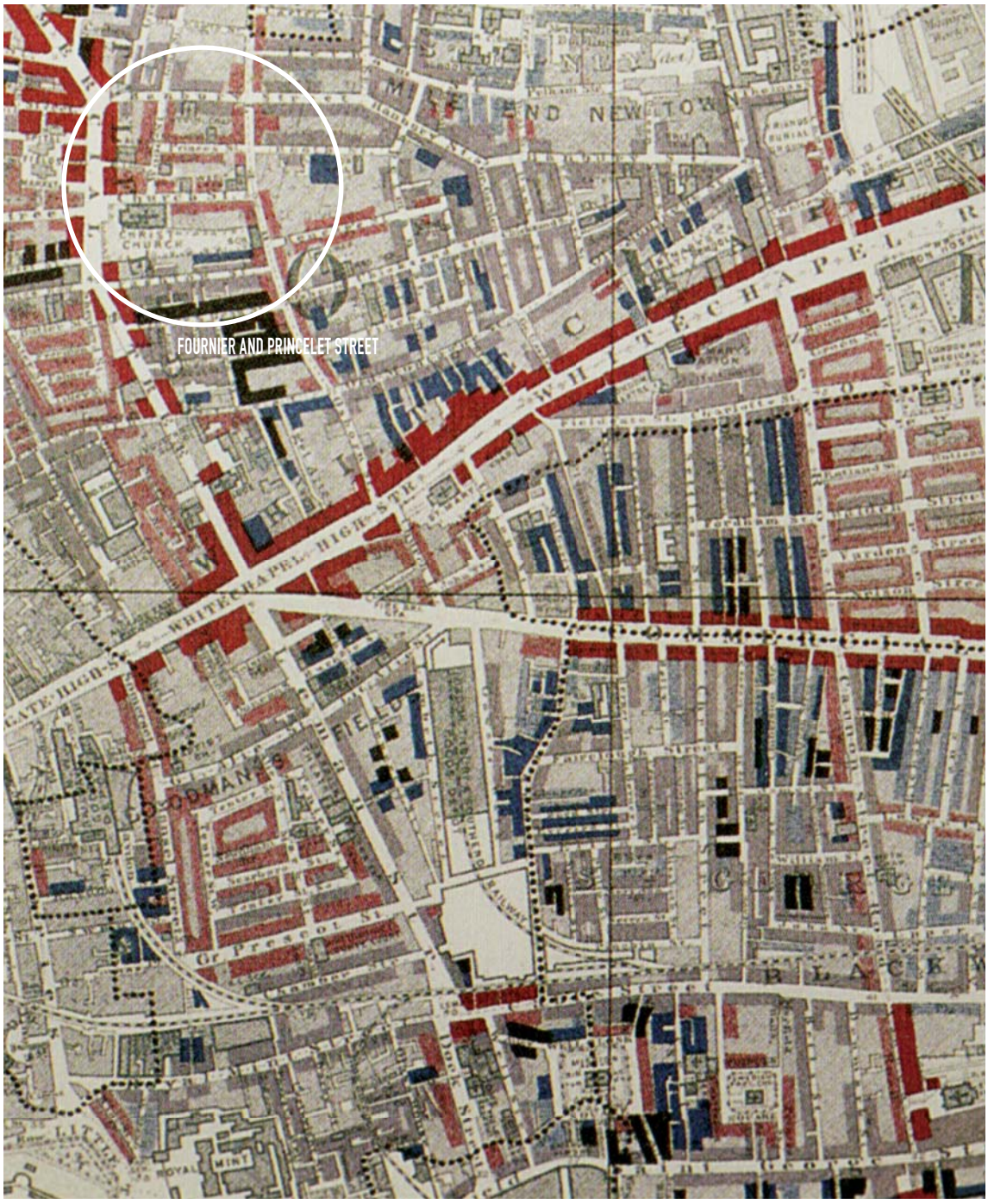
In the last several decades both conservation and preservation have become considerably contentious topics in Spitalfields for a very valid reason. This is the same neighbourhood that even in the late twentieth century had embedded within it incredibly corrosive racial tensions, rampant homelessness and unemployment. It, in almost every way, was a genuine slum ironically located in direct adjacency to one of the world's financial capitals.

Conservation represents an inherent moment of crisis, introducing a thickness to history. It is a practice often described in terms of its pathos, as a means to 'save' history, to solidify in time- or perhaps remove from time- a representation of a very specific fragment of the past so as to recursively simulate it. Not surprisingly, conservation is engaged in Spitalfields as a means to maintain an artificial version of an approachable version of history. At the level of a fetish, even those renovations and additions that are not historical recreations must be considered in context to those that are, right down to the meticulous level of detailing and materiality.

FIG_32: No 4. Princelet (clockwise from lower left) Interior stair detail; interior landing detail with wood paneling, garret workshop;second floor rear extension with glazed roof; basement level (photos by Robert Shakleton).

> The weaver's moral fabric was viewed as the foundation for their civic independence, another mark of community respectability. William Hale noted a proud streak in the weavers' character; 'The weavers in Spitalfields have neither been accustomed to apply for parochial relief being well paid; but they would submit to the greatest privations, and go without the necessaries of life, and even bread itself sooner than apply for relief'[...]
>
> The intellectual perspicacity of the silk weavers was not lost on those that peered into the Spitalfields community from beyond Bishopsgate.[10]
>
> *Marc Steinburg, 1999.*

In terms of establishing a selective or fictive memory, a collective social memory, it has become far easier to fabricate an identity for Spitalfields by ignoring the fundamental crises from which it has recently emerged, and by erasing significant layers of its less attractive past.


FOURNIER AND PRINCELET STREET

In terms of human values, the slums of Victorian London were three dimensional obscenities as replete as any ever put out of sight by civilized man; in terms of the urban economy, they were part of the infrastructure of a market for menial and casual labour; in terms of urban society, they were a lodging for criminal and vagrant communities; in terms of real property, they were the residue left on the market, the last bits and pieces to command a price; in terms of the dynamic of urban change, they were the final phase in a whole cycle to human occupation which could start up again only in the razing of the site.[11]

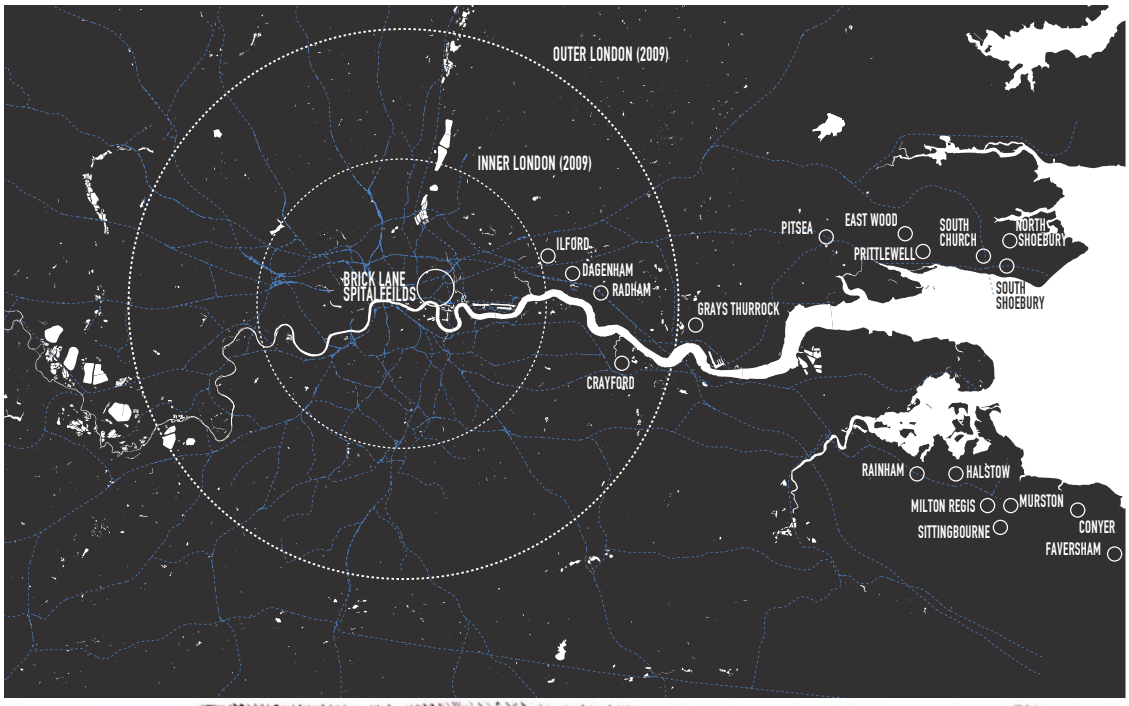
Dyos and Reeder, 1973

CENSUS GHOSTS: The introduction of larger operations of garment production in the early nineteenth century, and the economic strength of the import and export industry in Britain are the catalytic drive behind the development of the East End slums. With many seeking the allure of the new urban culture, and most barely obtaining the meek wages of the sweat-shop, in a period of only thirty years the population of the city nearly doubles.[12] And resulting from such an influx, the brick housing that once modestly satisfied a community of skilled artisans is aggressively subdivided, or hastily erected, under the strain of accommodating a new breed of working-class.

Brick is a fairly expensive material to produce before the nineteenth century- due, in part, to the laboriousness of pre-industrial brick making and the limitations of transporting the finished product- but compared to the refined stone of mansions and institutions west of Bishopsgate, it evolves into a relatively economical choice for mass housing because of the availability and abundance of clay in the surrounding Thames River Basin.

Throughout the nineteenth century, large production centers are set up in outlying areas of London. Introducing new types of mechanization into the production process, these industries reduce the necessity of physical labour that had once typified the making of brick. Rail cars are used to carry clay from the pit to moulding areas, and steam is put to work in driving the machinery required to pug (knead) the clay before it is cast into dyes. After the development of extensive rail and canal networks in and between industrialized cities in the nineteenth century, large quantities of bricks can be loaded and shipped across the country directly from the factory- stock can be

FIG_33:At the end of the nineteenth century, the English philanthropist Charles Booth developed a now infamous set of city maps. as a graphic registries of the misery associated with industrial life in London at that period. In the detail to the left, those buildings rendered in light blue, dark blue and black indicate areas of increased poverty repsectively. Alternatively, reds and yellows indicate increasing affluence. If the booth maps weren't concrete affirmation of a narrative of the class friction that plagued Spitalfields, they were, at the very least, indicative of the film of distate that the English Heritage Survey wanted to so eagerly circumvent


OUTER LONDON (2009)
INNER LONDON (2009)
ILFORD
DAGENHAM
RADHAM
BRICK LANE
SPITALFEILDS
GRAYS THURROCK
CRAYFORD
PITSEA
EAST WOOD
PRITTLEWELL
SOUTH
CHURCH
NORTH
SHOEBURY
SOUTH
SHOEBURY
RAINHAM
HALSTOW
MILTON REGIS
SITTINGBOURNE
MURSTON
CONYER
FAVERSHAM

brought into the city to satiate the desperate need for construction materials.[13]

However, that same demand for cheaper materials, introduces the problem of competitive distribution and undercutting. Though the bricks themselves are a fairly economical choice for construction, the limited availability of other necessary materials such as lime for the mortar leads to an increase in poor quality assembly.

Lime mortar was nevertheless an excellent, easily applied material, when carefully made [...] but too often it proved in lesser work a friable mixture always on the point of dropping out. Apart from the builder's wish to scamp and put more pounds in his pocket, there was the real difficulty of transporting the right materials to an urban site. [14]

Questionable craftsmanship of a brick wall can be easily hidden -and was in many cases- behind a veneer of stucco, or used in interior divisions where it might not be so quickly noticed. Though by most means brick is conceived as a democratic material with which to build, its association with industrialism engrains a certain sense of despair into the urban fabric of the East End.

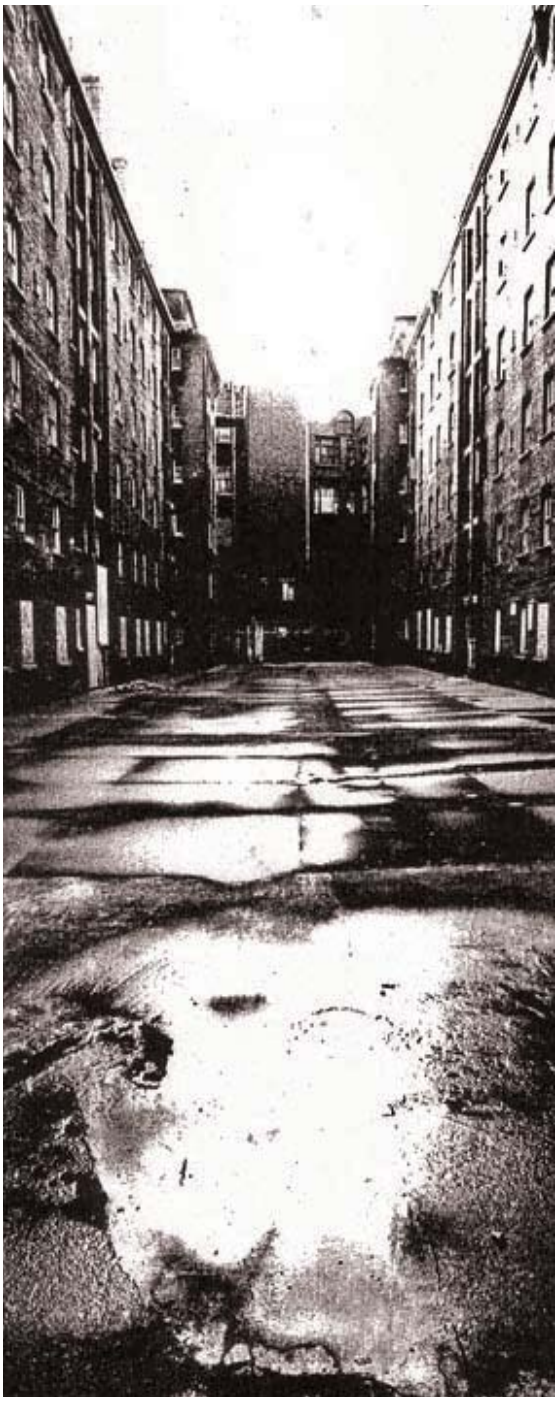
In the late 1890s, as a gesture of welfare from a socially conscious (or curious) group of philanthropists, large multi-unit tenement blocks are created with the intention of solving the growing crisis of housing an increasingly displaced labour force. But simultaneously these disperse the crowds of those who cannot afford the rent in such a project. The largest of these, the *Charlotte de Rothschild Buildings,* is somewhat infamous in Spitalfields for the radical approach it takes in the problem of mass housing. Constructed just south of the original weaver's homes, and funded through a consortium of investors known as *The Four Percent Industrial Dwelling Company,*[15] these are six to seven storey warehouses for the misfortunate, and a further locus of corruption by local landlords advantageously exploiting those that had been rejected accommodation. To residents living inside, the rigidity of rules is an equally dehumanizing environment:

The monolithic ugliness of these 'towers of Babel 'provoked a profound reaction in the minds of many contemporaries. Buildings so large, housing so many people in flats of identical design, hemmed in by rules and wrought iron railings, would surely destroy the very cornerstones of Victorian society. They would become the burial place of the individual man. The block dweller had already lost his identity; his children are part of a flock, there is no more distinction among them than in a flock of sheep. This had frightening repercussions on society as a whole.[16]

Simply imagining the scale and monotony of the brick environment during the height of the industrial activity in Victorian Spitalfields, it is hard not to distort the image of the idyllic neighbourhood into something incredibly claustrophobic. Dark and seedy, the industrial city is a texture both melancholic and oppressive. The feeling of sweat and dirt, the noise of London reverberating through the light-wells and estate yards is more evocative of Dante's *Inferno* than a philanthropic extension of good-will. And compared to the narrative of industriousness and prosperity of eighteenth century weavers approved by modern conservationists, this image of the East End slums is instead one of *passivity and suffrage*.[17]

FIG_34: Locations of major brick production areas east of London during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; major rail lines shown in blue (above left)

FIG_35:A political cartoon published in *Punch* from 1875 during a scandalous period of 'mortar tampering', when the quality of housing suffered due to poor construction and materials. The caption accompanying the image read "the way we build now" (lower left)



[The Charlotte de Rothschild Dwellings] presents the most intensive development in the area[...] the site was therefore almost totally enclosed, [the] building being continuous on three sides around a central court which was below street level [...] the effect was of huge towering cliffs, divided by a long, narrow concrete yard. There was no sense of space or progression because of the continuous 'U' shaped building, and the general effect was of spatial finality, oppressive and overpowering.[18]

John Nelson Tarn, 1993.

No hot water, no inside toilet, no bath. With slight variations, this is how many hundreds of Bangladeshi families were living in the 1970s and even the 1980s. The whole family would sleep in one room and use the other room for cooking, eating and living in. In the large three room tenements, the family would still normally sleep in one room [...] even if there had been the money, there was no space for a bathroom.[19]

Charlie Forman, 1989

FIG_36:Internal courtyard of the Charlotte de Rothschild Buildings (far left)

FIG_37:Same site after 1980 demolition (above left)

FIG_38:Construction of new housing estate in 1983 (lower left)

With the population increase showing little sign of decline by the turn of the twentieth century, the British government begins to impose legislation in an attempt to ease pressure in the East End. The *Alien Act* (1905) restricts any recourse of migrants to both employment and government support. Combined with a steady decline in Spitalfields' industrial production, and the additional development of commuter infrastructure, the act effectively disperses the previously condensed population, with the only cost being the negation of an entire epistemology of immigrant occupation. Only a few decades after their construction, the same tenements that once struggled to sustain the housing needs of a rejected population, are themselves becoming discarded and left to ruin.

It is only after World War II, during a period of intensive slum clearance, that a Bangladeshi community- a very prominent demographic which today comprises a vast majority of the neighbourhood- emerges from out of the rubble of a tarnished Spitalfields. Many of the first immigrants are naval ship-hands fleeing their posts or are simply abandoned on the shores of the Thames by freighters. And though they are all technically citizens of the British Empire, the Alien Act ensures that the workers can have no recourse to social aid, including housing. Some are forced to seek refuge in the only available, privately owned properties that can be afforded. Meaning, either the dilapidated remains of Spitalfields or the sweatshop/ boarding houses in which many found themselves employed, are the only options. The brick slums of Spitalfields once again receive a marginalized population, a community of census ghosts seeking a new life at any cost. As described by Charlie Forman, *Spitalfields' present [seems] to merge into Spitalfields past.*[20]

BRICK LANE 1978

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

Blood on the Streets - The Trades Council book on racist attacks £1.20

Brick Lane 1978; A community under attack - Photographs by Paul Trevor £0.35

Blair Peach funeral - 20"x30" poster by Dan Jones; full colour £3.00

Brick Lane Whitewash - A critique of the CRE report on Brick Lane and the racist onslaught, by Rev.Ken Leech £0.80

UNION - Tower Hamlets Trades Council bimonthly journal £0.30

All available from Tower Hamlets Trades Council c/o 2 Cable Street, London E.1

Prices include £0.20 for postage and packing

in which civil liberties are not only being eroded, but are in danger of being 'washed away' on the tide of so called 'law and order'. The arrests documented here are simply part of a much broader offensive.

The recognition that it is not possible to rely for protection on the Police and the courts has led to a growing mood of self-confidence and determination among the Asian community, and as a consequence of last summer the fight against racialism has been taken up seriously by the Trade Union movement, with the TUC announcing a major initiative to combat racialism in the workplace, beginning in the East End of London. However, the key to solving the problem outlined in this report can only be a fight back organised in response to, and based on the broadest possible unity. This must be the lesson above all to be learned from the events of the summer of 1978 in Spitalfields and East London. It was such unity which in the Brick Lane events, allowed us the successes we had. We learned that an onslaught against a community can only be fought, as fought it was, with unity. The anti-racist movement must remain vigilant for the attacks to come..

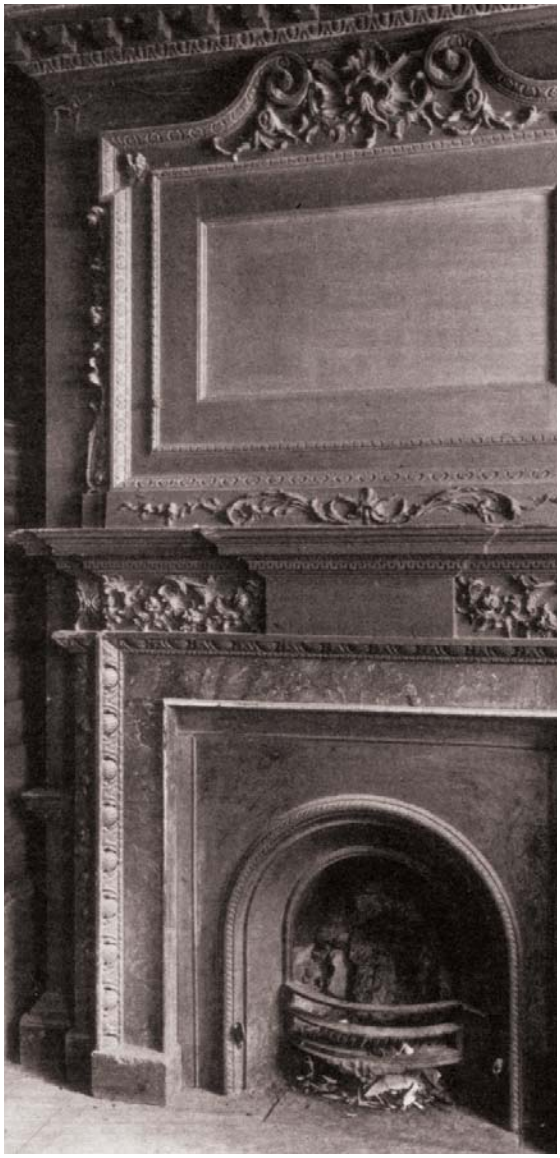
DEDICATION

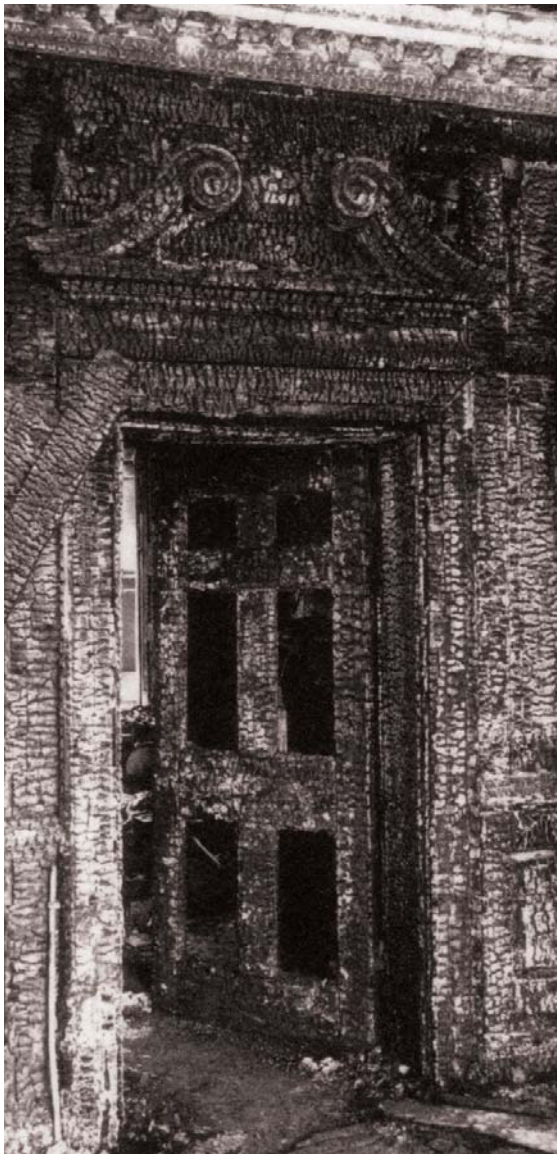
This pamphlet is written in memory of Blair Peach, President of East London Teachers' Association, delegate to Tower Hamlets Trades Council, member of the Anti Nazi League, killed during the Police riot in Southall, April 22nd, 1979, who played an important role in East London's fight against racism. Blair is remembered amongst many other things for his work in the campaign to rid East London of the nazi National Front's headquarters in Great Eastern Street, Shoreditch.

The risk of casual racial attack has never really departed, and it is accepted that any house left empty is likely to attract a brick through the window and a pile of dog excrement through the letter box. [...] Ishmot Ali, 51, was stabbed to death in his quiet, well-kept council house in Flower and Dean Walk, just off the Lane. Waris Ali, his nephew, is still in the intensive care unit of the London Hospital. [21]

Iqbal Wahhab
(The Sunday Times),1989.

FIG_39:A 1979 pamphlet publication chronicaling racial tensions in Brick Lane, and the violent agression against the Bangladeshi community.





PETRIFYING TIME: In 1969, nearly two decades after the original Survey assessment, three separate conservation areas are designated within Spitalfields- the Elder Street Conservation Area, the Artillery Passage Conservation Area, and the Fournier Street Conservation Area. Within each of these, it is only the housing stock consecrated as being officially (and legally) significant. The ultimate irony of that decision by local government is that the shells of slum housing are now protected from the very inhabitants who rely on them the most. Conservation is insurance that despite the affects of globalization on the city, and the continued modernization of London, there will not be a distortion of the renewed reputation of an idyllic and identifiably British East End.

The most prominent voice in support of preservation in Spitalfields is a group of affluent architects, architectural historians, artists, and other patrons of arts and culture, looking to defend the historical integrity of the residential fabric. Acting under the moniker *The Spitalfields Building Heritage Trust*, the group develops a mandate to purchase and distribute properties amongst upper middle class individuals and artists from the same social circles as Trust members; all while strictly enforcing guidelines as to the exact nature of restorations. These are individuals who can not only boost the presence of 'culture' in such a neglected area, but crucially, they can also incur and sustain the costs of maintaining both the physical structures and the prestigious directive of cultural heritage. According to Jane M. Jacobs:

the Trust became an active agent in the process of transferring the historic housing stock in the area into the hands of sympathetic and strictly vetted buyers who undertook a voluntary obligation to restore the houses in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Trust […] The Trust's project of conserving the built environment of Spitalfields relied upon the buyers who were both financially and aesthetically equipped to conform with the Trust's vision of a restored Georgian Spitalfields. The Trust consciously sought to attract the 'right sort of people' to the area. The newsletters are very explicit in informing the readership of who was moving in and their 'credentials' to undertake the task of sympathetic restoration. Thus the trust was not only active in creating a revalorised urban fabric, but also in the creation of a new social and cultural enclave. The Spitalfields case is one of self-conscious, engineered gentrification.[22]

The Trust has considerable sway in shaping the context of the neighbourhood. The disturbances of modern activity in the Old Spitalfields Market, for example, and the scale of operations in the Brewery, do not fit into their scheme of a preserved Georgian enclave, and so are left outside the original and aggressive protection of the group. In 1986, when a debate arises over whether or not to relocate the Market operations outside of the inner city area to accommodate the expansion of the financial and service sector immediately to the west, the Trust offers their full support of the move, but only on the condition that whatever is to be put in its place should maintain a historical sensitivity.[23] Once the relocation occurs, the remaining hall becomes vulnerable to re-appropriation and equally aggressive redevelopment.

This anachronistic attitude to architecture (judiciously and selectively locating it in the past) is an example of one of the fundamental problems

FIG_40:In 1953 an entire wood panelled room from nearby No. 58 Artillery Lane is deaccessioned and shipped to the Chicago Art Institute as an example of a typical British Rococo interior (left)
FIG_41:58 Artillery Lane suffers a devastating fire in 1971 (right)

with the conservationist agenda; that it involves an experimentation with time itself.[24] And in the case of the Trust, it is an experiment with a questionable method of validation.

In the early days of its inception, around the mid 1970s, the Trust relies on squatting as a guerrilla tactic to physically prevent the demolition of poorly maintained, condemned and damaged buildings left untouched in the aggressive period of twentieth century. To protect their romantic version of history, members adopt the actions of desperate migrant and working class individuals. Squatting affords the members two other simultaneous and equally romanticised narratives; one being the self satisfying and sublime image of inhabiting an abandoned ruin, the other a fabricated and media-exploitable image of the political activist holding steadfast against the large multi-phased developments emerging west of Bishopsgate Road. In doing so, they are also effectively protesting the very side of the city that had once afforded the original weavers their means.

In the social atmosphere of London by the early 1980s, one dominated by a rift in the public's opinion of both the local and national government's effectiveness and motivations, the conditions remain favourable for public support of the Trust's approach.[25] In glossing over the nearly two hundred years of slum history that did not fit into their caricatured image of the neighbourhood, the Spitalfields Historic Building Trust compresses the actual temporal thickness of the city's history to near invisibility, and established in its place a number of surface narratives, historical façades.

Today, larger building types have become assimilated into this type of 'fictive memory'.

Who or what will we find in this time of transition, inviting us into relation? We find [in Attie's photos] what conditions the present. We find the projected uncanny shadows of historical others. As they come to pass through us, they are neither alive nor dead [...] we find ourselves in a moving present that is uncertain and still in the making. We find ourselves at a temporal hinge where past and future fold into the proximity and create the time between past and future: the interval of change'[26]

Elizabeth Ann Ellsworth, 2005.

FIG_42:A Group of Spitalfields Building Heritage Trust members squatting in protest of demolition

The warehouses of the Docklands which line the Thames have been recently called an *apotheosis of successful commercialism;*[27] stoic reminders of London's capitalist identity (and developed into exclusive luxury flats under that very ideal). In reality they were the rough ports; literal and literary harbours for thieves and exiles; dark alleyways which captured the imaginations of poets and authors alike. The Truman Brewery in the northern end of Spitalfields, and even the Old Spitalfields Market Hall itself are also remnants of a productive past, the longest running of industrial operations in the neighbourhood. Yet today, each has become controversial in the imagination of local residents because they have been the catalysts for aggressive exploitation by developers over the last three decades. These buildings are all maintained as 'collective historical necessities', for better or for worse. Their fictive potential far outweighs their contrasting realities of social deprivation, poverty and disillusionment. This has become the mantra, of sorts, for conservation enthusiasts.

It is just another inherent paradox embedded in the bricks of Spitalfields: that they represent petrified time while at the same time a plastic history. Even too, the more aggressively they are preserved, the less authentic they will remain. And it seems that the only way to reconcile such contrasting questions of social and economic accountability is either to constantly agree on historical significance as every passing moment occurs- embody a process similar to that of Shimone Attie and recognize the beauty and legitimacy of superimposition. Or else, as suggested perhaps more influentially by Rem Koolhaas in a critique of the practice of conservation, recognize that preservation may no longer be a *retroactive activity* but *proactive* instead. [28]

THE SPITALFIELDS TRUST

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email: spitalfields.trust@virgin.net

Allie Moore
Planning Department - London Borough of Tower Hamlets
5th Floor Anchorage House
Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
London E14 2BG

Dear Ms Moore,

13th November 2006

3 Varden Street, Whitechapel. Application No: PA/06/01825

It was good to speak to you today. I am writing to confirm my suggestions re: the proposed roof extension.

The reason for our interest, is, that we, the Spitalfields Trust are currently working with the London Development Agency upon the restoration of the 10 (derelict) Georgian houses at the other end of the block where Varden Street meets Turner Street. We therefore feel that any other addition or alteration to a building on the same block within the same conservation area should be of the highest quality. That is why we are asking that the proposed mansard roof be covered in 'real' slates, and not simulated slates. With the other conservation work happening in the area, it seems likely to us, that either the present owner or a future owner of 3 Varden Street will in the future upgrade the building and reface it along the lines of my enclosed sketch. It therefore would seem sensible to put more traditional dormer windows – bar-divided painted softwood sashes or casements than those proposed. Presently the building has plastic UPVC windows – not good in a conservation area.

We are not asking that the present elevations of the building be altered now, but that the roof extension should be of the very best traditional design. As I said, I sit upon the Tower Hamlets Conservation Area Advisory Group CAAG and deal with similar cases daily. I am personally very happy to help the owner (free of charge) of 3 Varden Street, his agent or architect over detailing, just as I have recently with owners of other small buildings in Walden St nearby.

Many thanks for your help.
Yours sincerely,

Tim Whittaker

Tim Whittaker
Director, the Spitalfields Trust
Cc: Mark Hutton, Tower Hamlets Conservation

History is a strong myth, perhaps, along with the unconscious, the last great myth. It is a myth that at once subtended the possibility of an "objective" enchainment of events and causes and the possibility of a narrative enchainment of discourse. The age of history, if one can call it that, is also the age of the novel. It is this fabulous character, the mythical energy of an event or of a narrative, that today seems to be increasingly lost. Behind a performative and demonstrative logic: the obsession with historical fidelity, with a perfect rendering [...] this negative and implacable fidelity to the materiality of the past, to a particular scene of the past or of the present, to the restitution of an absolute simulacrum of the past or the present, which was substituted for all other value - we are all complicitous in this, and this is irreversible.[29]

Jean Baudrillard, 1985

FIG_43:A letter from Trust director Tom Whittaker, to the Tower Hamlets planning authority, advising on recommended provisions for historical sensitivity.

In the course of describing this remarkable post-reformist vision readers [of the architectural review were asked] to imagine Fournier Street alive with song as it must have been in the eighteenth century; there would have been trilling song birds such that weavers liked to keep, the songs they themselves sang as they toiled at their looms; and on Sundays, passionate hymns would have issued from the churches at both ends of this short but characterful street.[30]

Patrick Wright, 1991.

FIG_44: No. 4 Princelet Street with etching of Huguenot weaver superimposed. Photograph and Image by author.

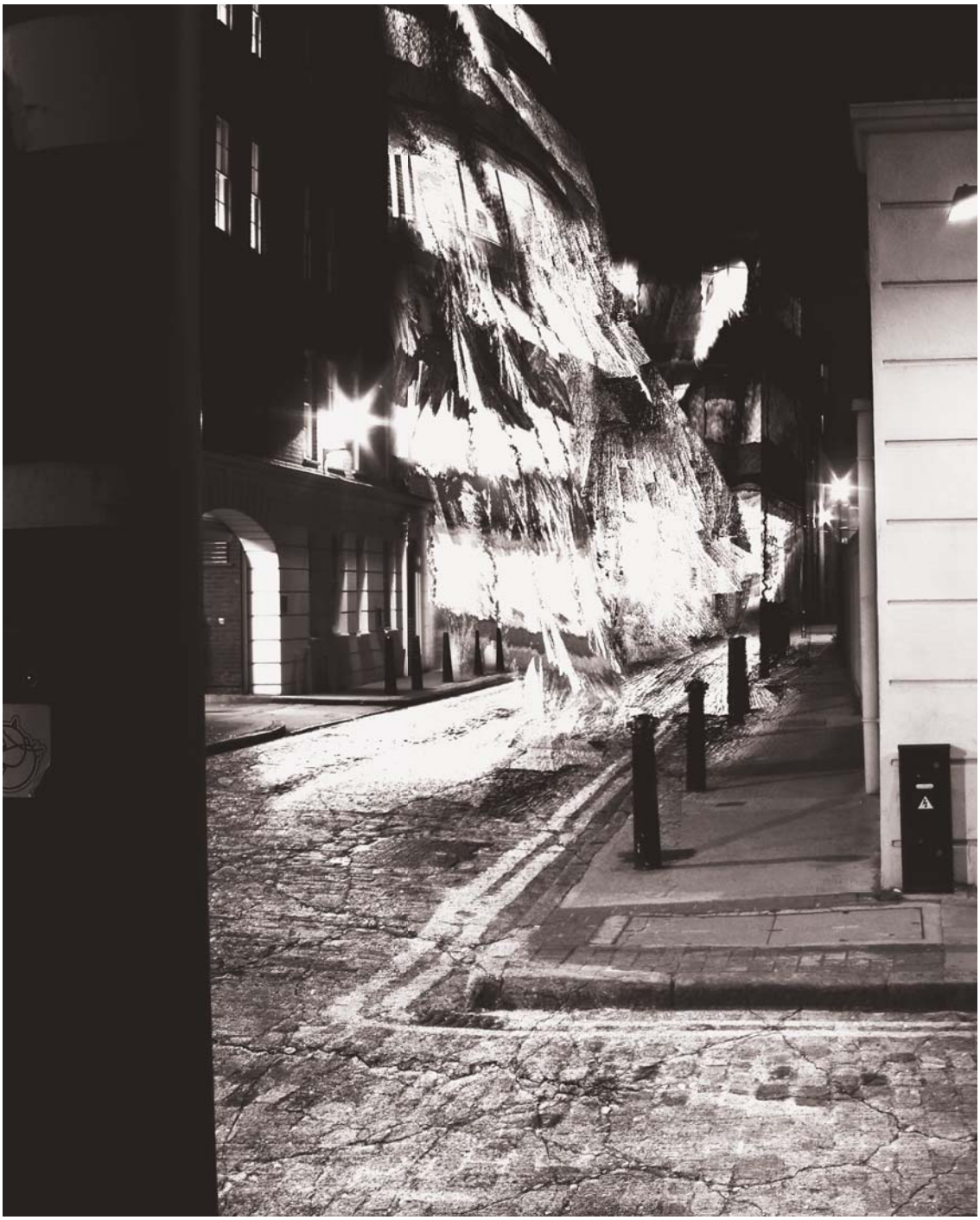
FIG_45:historical photograph overlayed on to Fournier Street. Photograph and Image by author. (following spread)

FIG_46: historical photograph overlayed on to Sclater Street. Photograph and Image by author. (82-83)

FIG_43


BOUTIQ

FIG_44



the distorting mirror_

The towers of Docklands, that city within a city, will not be blown away by a North Sea gale. And if a few panels of Lord Foster's intrusive Swiss Re "Gherkin" shake free it is not a catastrophe. It is an urban memory, of the IRA bombs that freed up space in the overbuilt, multilayered and ancient City of London: the money market protected by segments of Roman wall. A memory beyond this, of earlier catastrophes, myths of ruin- the german Blitz of 1940, the great fire of 1666. But the new London is confident in its double identity, virtual idyll and dystopian actuality.[1]

Iain Sinclair, 2008

FIG_47: A dramatic rift opens up in the fabric of Folgate Street, as the glacial development forces its way into the annals of Spitalfields. Photograph and image by author.

PLATE_12

PLATE_13

… the towers which punch through the skyline of the city are visible from almost anywhere in this field of bricks. Compared to the stoic bits of fabric that happen to be untouched after thirty or forty years, that disappear after dark and devour what little light is permitted to touch their surfaces, the size and mass of these shards is made less deceiving and more elaborated by their glow. Even on the rainiest night- an all too cliché cinematic moment when the dampness and fog finally decides to roll into the city, only to attack at your bones by way of your lungs- do the newer developments circumscribing Spitalfields still shine on as bright as ever in the east, south and west of London, as if somehow removed from their miserable context…

…the antipodal dangers of the nineteenth century city are whisked into an ignored memory and replaced instead with a more enduring and cosmopolitan image of North American chic; of models of urbanism expressed through homogeneous seas of granite and slate tiling, the pyramidal cap of Canary Wharf's *No.One Canada Square*, the public plazas at the base of Foster's *Swiss Rea* in Aldgate, or the illuminated alcoves of London Wall. All are neither uninviting nor are they particularly interesting, they simply *are.* They exist as good, clean and safe public space devoid of the crowds promised in their original renderings…

FIG_48: A modernizing wave of 'public space' finds its way into the East End; its cast of characters a simple acetate overlay. Base photograph and image by author.

…from a vantage point at the north end of the neighbourhood, where Commercial street evacuates and is swiftly fractured into Hackney and Islington, the concert of red blinking lights hovering over the old city is a surprisingly beautiful phenomenon for something as harshly contested as fifty storeys of 'Prime Office Space'. It is from here too that the glacial wall of the modern city is made absolutely present. What to some may seem only the faintest glimmer on the horizon is to others an incredibly charged force threatening to pry and plough apart the centuries of sediment through which I have been meandering. But it moves so slowly. Determined. At a nearly imperceptible pace. And what is more, the hard edge that might be expected at its base becomes less and less definitive upon closer inspection…

FIG_49:A wall of glass pushes against the brick fabric of the older neighbourhood around the former Shoreditch rail station. Base photograph and image by author. It seems to be fulfilling the crystal metaphor of the German Expressionist Pau Scheerbart, when he suggests:

So many ideas constantly sound to us like a fairy tale, when they are not really fantastic or utopian at all. Eighty years ago, the steam railway came, and undeniably transformed the face of the earth. From what has been said so far the earth surface will once again be transformed, this time by glass architecture. If it comes, a metamorphosis will occur, but other factors must naturally be taken into consideration.

The present 'brick' culture of the city, which we all deplore, is due to the railway. Glass architecture will only come if the city as we know it goes. It is completely clear to all those who care about the future of our civilization that this dissolution must take place. To labour the point is useless.

See. Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut, Dennis Sharp. *Glass architecture.* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 71.

PLATE 14

PLATE_15

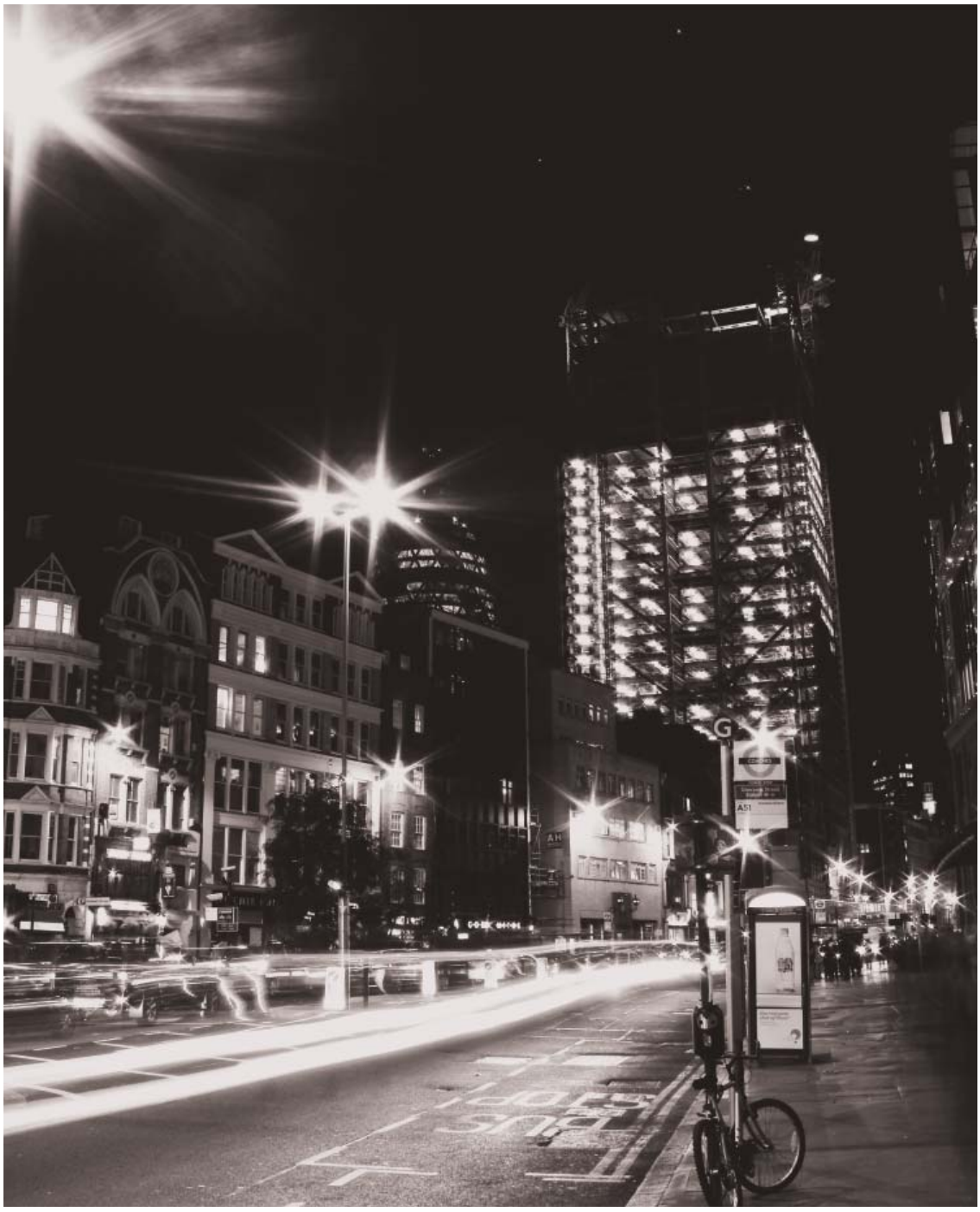


PLATE_16

SAVE OUR STREETS

‘Smash this wall of glass’

A part of London so important it is listed as an ancient monument is under threat from developers, warns **Jane Barry**

SURELY one of the delights of living in London is how the environment can change from street to street. Cross Bishopsgate from Liverpool Street station and you used to leave behind the chilly concrete-sided canyons of the City to enter Georgian Spitalfields, with its elegant brick buildings set to an 18th century street pattern.

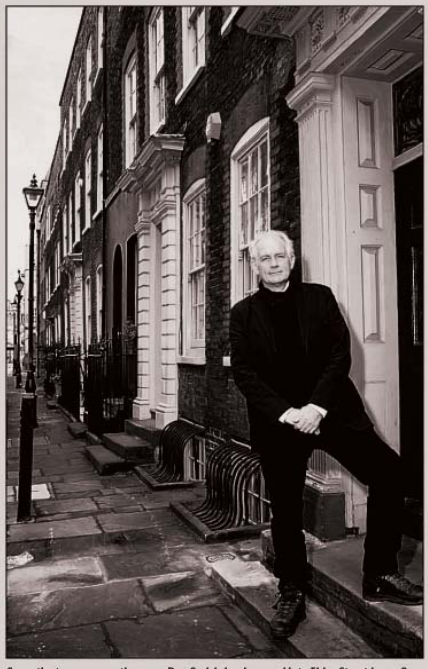
But not any more. Spitalfields is now, in agents’ speak, a “City-fringe opportunity” for developers. Already, if you walk from Spitalfields Market down Bishopsgate towards Shoreditch you encounter a wall of glass-and-steel office buildings.

In Spital Square, an icy wind whips the soulless modern piazza as the towers create the sort of microclimate once confined to Sixties council estates. The listed historic buildings are still there, of course. A 1740s house and a Victorian gothic hall cling precariously to the edge of Spital Square, shunned by the surrounding towers. Look back at Folgate Street from the Elder Street conservation area and a glass monolith dwarfs its Georgian houses.

The conservation area also lies in the shadow of the 35-storey Broadgate Tower, on the opposite side of Bishopsgate. And, with the development of the Bishopsgate Goods Yard Regeneration

‘Given the current banking crisis, there could soon be a glut of these office buildings of uncertain usefulness’

Monolith: Folgate Street, part of the Elder Street conversation area, is dwarfed by new neighbours



Come the tower, come the man: Dan Cruickshank moved into Elder Street in 1978

Dan Cruickshank: ‘A magical part of London turned bland and greedy’

THE Spitalfields Society, a local residents’ group, opposes the City’s plans to redevelop part of the Elder Street conservation area in Spitalfields. Conservationist and broadcaster Dan Cruickshank, an Elder Street resident since 1978, belongs to both the Society and the Spitalfields Trust, a conservation group, and can recall the area when it was a busy fruit and vegetable market.

“It was a surviving piece of the 18th century, Hogarthian, and a very magical, strange part of London.” Now he feels: “Nothing is safe really, a few streets perhaps but generally speaking it’s become a very bland, greedy development area. The City is taking a rapacious view.”

He finds it ironic that, while his current BBC2 television series Adventures in Architecture charts how development threatens great cities all over the world, this is also happening “within an eyeball” of his own front door.”

Area, stretching up to Bethnal Green Road, soon historic Spitalfields will be little more than a meagre filling in a monstrous glass-and-steel sandwich.

The Elder Street conservation area, which is also a listed ancient monument, is itself under threat. As well as containing Elder Street, Spitalfields’ most complete street of early Georgian houses, and, in Folgate Street, Dennis Severs’ House, a popular tourist attraction that recreates the living environment of an 18th century weaver’s family, the area includes some interesting 19th century buildings and warehouses. But the City of London has bought the part of the conservation area once owned by the builders’ merchants Nicholls and Clarke, and hopes to redevelop it with a design from Avanti architects for an 11-storey office block that will handily continue the glass wall from Bishopsgate up Norton Folgate to Shoreditch High Street.

Norton Folgate’s unlisted 18th and 19th century buildings would be demolished and only the façades of its Victorian warehouses would remain. Conservation bodies against the plan include the Georgian Group, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), the Victorian Society and the Spitalfields Trust.

“What’s the point of having a conservation area if they want to fill most of the site with a large-scale office development,” asks the Spitalfields Trust’s Tim Whittaker. “This is a very ancient and multi-layered site.”

The planning authority, Tower Hamlets, turned the proposal down on the grounds that, by reason of its bulk, scale and height, it would “fail either to preserve or enhance the appearance of the conservation area”. But, though no date is yet fixed, the City is shortly to appeal.

The Spitalfields Trust is fighting the appeal by presenting a scheme of its own, designed by architect Richard Griffiths, creator of the very successful Regents Quarter at King’s Cross.

Like the Regents Quarter, the mixed-use scheme would combine restored historic buildings with low-rise new buildings in sympathetic materials, opening up a courtyard for shops and cafés with alleyways for pedestrians. Since an appeal is under way, the City will not comment.

Conservation bodies support the Trust’s alternative scheme. SPAB’s Matthew Slocombe says: “It would be much better for the area than yet another block of uncertain usefulness. And, given the banking crisis, will there not soon be a glut of office space?”

But even if the Spitalfields Trust wins, there is a wider issue. What is the point of saving listed buildings or conservation areas if unsympathetic surroundings are allowed to crush them? The 1740s house perched awkwardly in Spital Square is SPAB’s headquarters. Its central courtyard is now entirely starved of light because of the surrounding towers. Slocombe adds: “The fact that we were a listed building counted for nothing. Listed building control has no adequate control for setting.”

The Georgian Group’s Robert Bargery agrees. “The law requires us to be consulted only on the fabric of listed buildings, their environment can be completely trashed,” he says. St Paul’s appears to be the only building in London whose surroundings are specifically protected, and then the aim is only to preserve views.

PERHAPS the new Heritage Protection Bill will be amended to contain extra measures to protect endangered areas such as Spitalfields? The Department of Culture, which oversees conservation areas, believes the current requirement for planning authorities to ensure developments “protect and enhance” listed buildings and conservation areas is protection enough.

Sarah Buckingham of English Heritage says: “The present provision is fine but it’s how it’s applied.” It is researching the issue, to strengthen guidance for local authorities.

But will guidance be enough to halt the City’s locusts? Spitalfields now, Shoreditch next?

Pictures by David George

Charlie Hopkinson

Head turner: Spitalfields Trust’s Tim Whittaker (left) outside Dennis Severs’ House, a popular tourist attraction in Folgate Street. He fears for the future of it and of neighbouring Elder Street (right), which are part of an “ancient and multi-layered” historic area threatened by encroaching office-block development

…following Norton Folgate and Bishopsgate south along the edge of the market, it is the steady staccato of mullions that try to pass surreptitiously on the right hand side which slightly distort the illusion of the reflected brick city. The caked exhaust accumulating on curtain wall adds a second layer of tarnish to the already well worn fabric; a camouflaging patina. The sudden appearance of an office worker at their desk is all that is required to confirm that the image is indeed alien and fragile…

…despite what the billboards and feasibility reports may say, despite the generated photomontages, the dreams of these beacons are all still subject to the same realities of the present city. Windows and mirrors simultaneously, each is just as likely as the other to shatter when confronted…

FIG_50:: Newspaper article by British journalist Jane Barry which summarizes the tension between the 'city of bricks' and the 'city of glass' as a product of contextual differences. Highlighted to the left: *In Spital Square, an icy wind whips the soulless modern piazza as the towers create the sort of microclimate once confined to Sixties council estates. The listed historic buildings are still there, of course. A 1740's house and a Victorian gothic hall cling precariously to the edge of Spital Square, shunned by the surrounding towers.*

Jane Barry. "Smash this wall of glass." *The Evening Standard*, April 9 2008.

PLATE_17

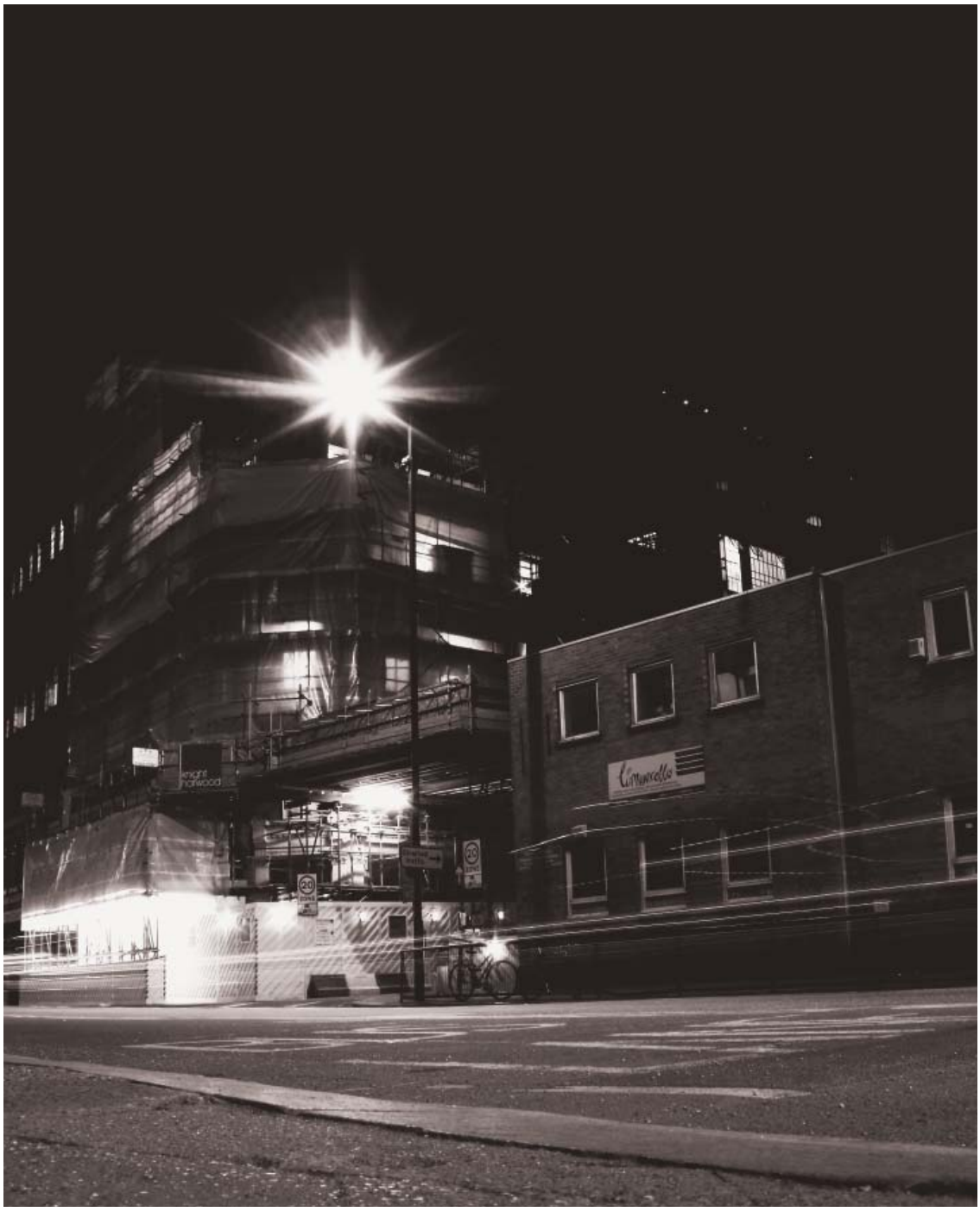


PLATE_18

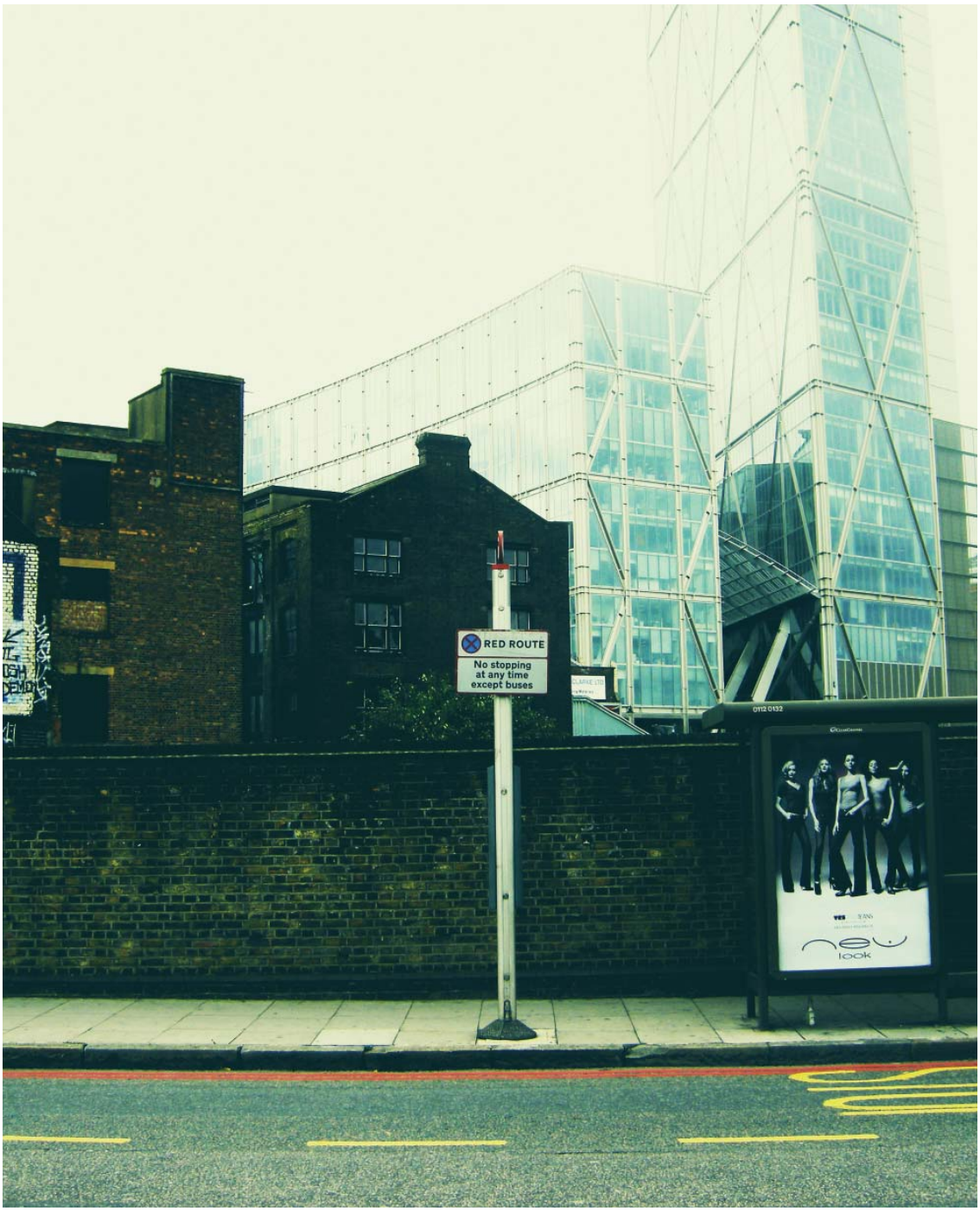


PLATE_19

PLATE_20

FIG_51: Public protest flyer against the proposal for 50 storey wall of glass by Hammerson Inc., effectively separating Shoreditch from Spitalfields and casting permanent shadow on properties to the north of the developments. (www.open-shorditch.blogspot.com; 01.12.08)

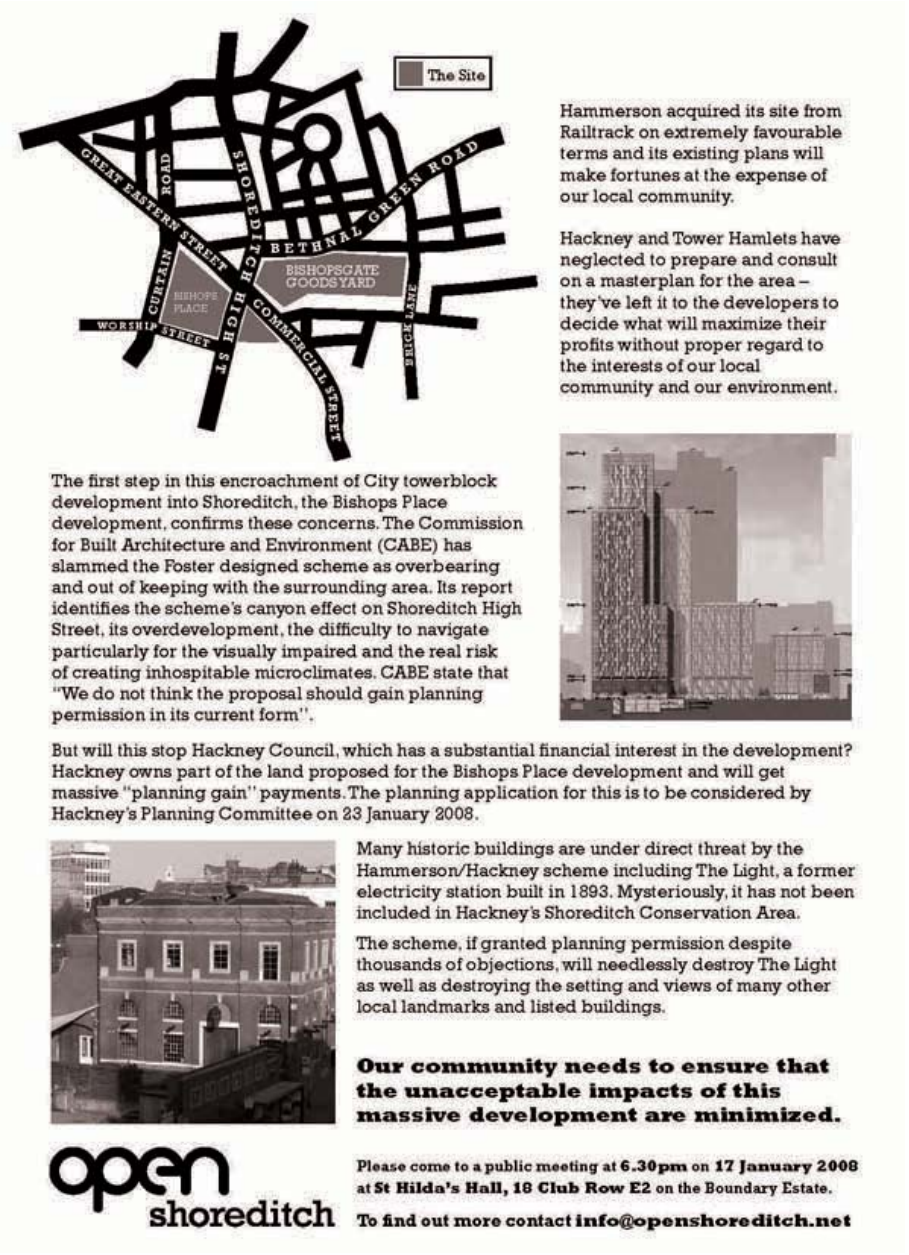


FIG_52: Alternative poster provided by the community activists for a public meeting to protest Hammerson's development scheme. (www.open-shorditch.blogspot.com; 01.12.08)


BISHOPSGATE
PRIORY OF ST. MARY SPITAL
THE 'SPITAL FIELDS
BISHOPSGATE

PLATE_21

THE GLASS WALL: The length of road known as Bishopsgate, a nine hundred meter stretch of the A10 motorway extending between Bethnal Green Road to the north of Spitalfields, and London Wall to the south has in recent years been widely regarded as a relatively unstable point of confluence between two very different identities of the city.

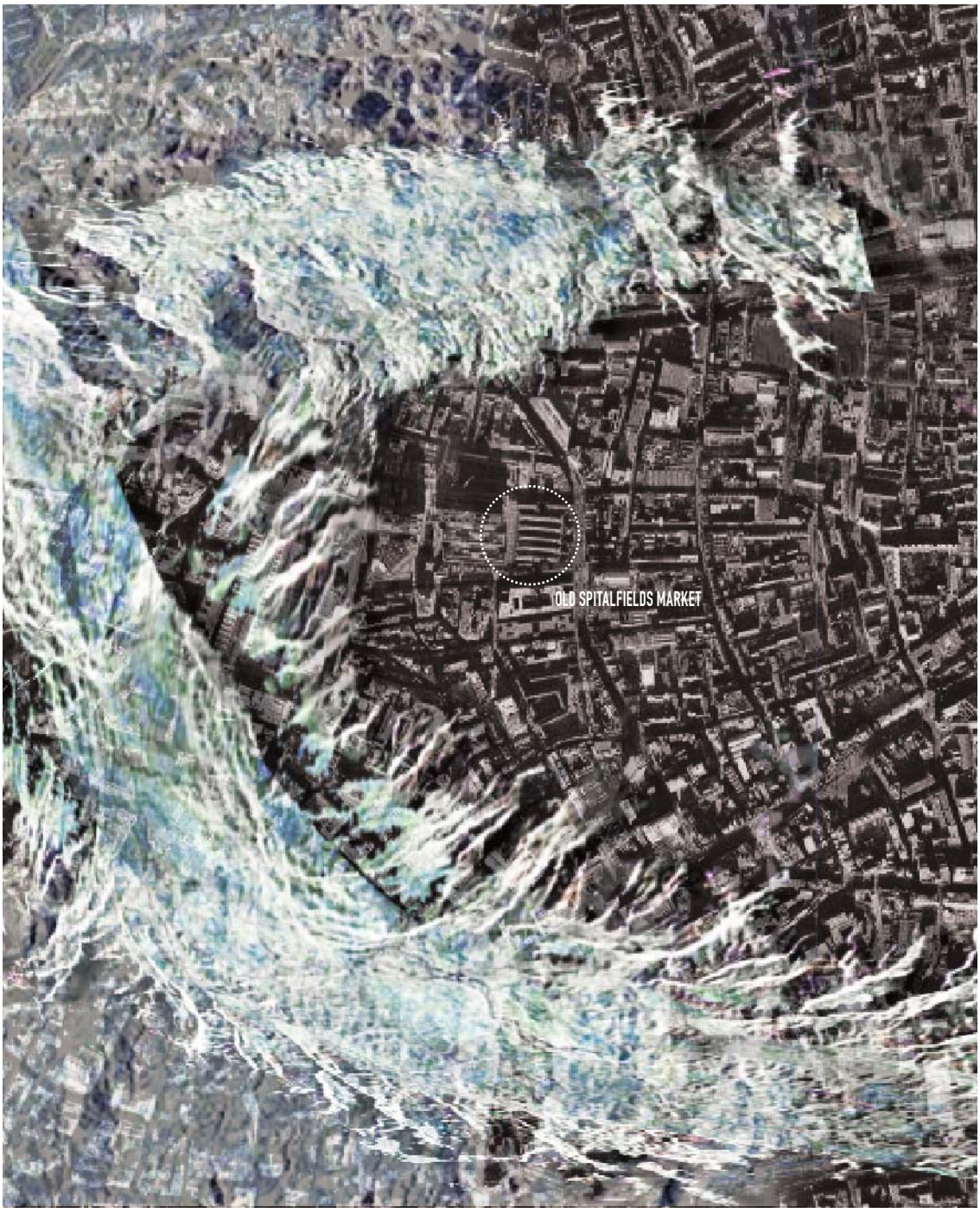
Two of the most neglected boroughs in London, Tower Hamlets and Hackney, collide with a very affluent and very prominent business and financial district. And aside from being a literal physical division, Bishopsgate represents a very real socio-economic threshold between a traditionally lower income East End, and Broadgate; a sprawling mass of ten to twelve storey granite and glass office blocks that have devoured Liverpool Street Station, and which remains as one of the city's largest single urban development schemes since the mid seventeenth century.[2]

For hundreds of years, Bishopsgate exists as one of the seven points at which the protective wall surrounding London selectively breeches; a gate through which the ancient city is no longer separated from the uncontained wilds of the uncharted Empire. It is a critical threshold which, even today through namesake alone, affirms the two hundred and fifty acres that comprise Spitalfields as consciously alterior. And it is around this underlying identity of the social 'other' that its histories are consistently fabricated. Even for those who are not wholly supportive of the conservationist agenda in Spitalfields, the conceptual image of a 'glass wall' surrounding the neighbourhood has become an architectural entendre providing the means to qualify the emergence and voraciousness of such large scale developments along the periphery of the inner city (including projects both under construction and proposed).

The etymology of the phrase 'the glass wall' is rooted in a common and unifying metaphor from a blog-savvy public who stand opposed to the specific breed of typically corporate architecture that they see as particularly lacking; as an architecture manifested purely in the image of capital gain. The recent completion of *Bishops Square,* the formal planning approval for additional redevelopment schemes in the north-west corner of Spitalfields and the re-introduction of glass towers into the skyline of the city in general, do little to help dissuade such a reaction.

Maybe it is in the resonance with the similar term in corporate jargon that the idea of a glass wall at the scale of the city has embedded within it a certain irony. Like the understood and frus-

FIG_53: *Londinium Feracissimi An Gliae Regni Metropolis*, Braun and Hogeburg, 1572 (left)


OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

trating acknowledgement that a promotion is visible but kept just out of reach, that there is a limitation on advancement, both the commercial property developers in and around Spitalfields and those local residents who stand furiously against them judiciously concoct their own utopian plans for what the future of the neighbourhood will be, while remaining unsympathetically stalemated in persuading the other of each scheme's viability or integrity.

Of the most prominent and aggressive proposals in recent years, a project known as Bishop's Quarter is now in the process of negotiating a verdict of rejection by local officials. Residual of that plan is an anxiety and tension reinforcing the image of a looming and almost glacial infiltration of glass into the annals of the East End. The fear by local residents of their brick tenements and council estates either crystallizing or in reality being thrown into shadow by a fifty storey wall of towers, indicates that the original cultural border of Bishopsgate is something unfixed, unsecured.

A *river* of glass clad developments- to borrow the image from Iain Sinclair- cutting a fluid path through the city fabric vividly and ominously suggests a migration of globalized London which has, until relatively recently, been physically diverted around Spitalfields. An area once labelled as the inner city fringe, that critical nexus of Bishopsgate-and the clearly visible contrasts on either side- is actually a dynamically expanding and fluctuating space of crisis. Only here it might be more appropriate to call it a spatial realm of speculation; a place where an inherent dualism of a 'glass wall' can present itself.

FIG_54: Globalizing London moves into the East End like a massive glacier, or as Sinclair calls it *a brilliant river of glass*. Image by author.

> The Regents Canal, that busted speculation, is changing beyond recognition. A brilliant river of glass joins Hackney to Docklands. The old alligencies,- Dalston, Haggerston, Bow, Poplar- no longer play. New architecture confirms a new spirit, a new city: the confidence of private commissions and public works. There is a future in which we all feel slightly dizzy, not-quite-at-home.[3]
>
> *Iain Sinclair, 2008*

VIRTUALLY IDYLL: Conceptually, glass on its own is a vacant material; it is spatially and temporally neutral. Described in a *super-modern perspective* by Hans Ibeling, contemporary glass architecture is seen to some as facilitating *the disappearance of the compulsory tendency to construe everything in symbolic terms. [Which] has not only freed the designer from an onerous duty to keep on producing 'meaningful' architecture, but has also made it possible for architects, critics and historians to view architecture differently in that things are now accepted phenomenologically for what they are.*[4] But because of that same neutrality, glass is a material which is ultimately subject to tendencies. It is, and has been, easily absorbed into contradictory narratives by those who see its properties as especially fitting to an explanation of the modern city.

It is not so much the physical material itself which takes precedence, but rather what comes to be seen through it, what is seen in it. The fact that it is held concomitantly as both socially liberating and democratizing while at the same time

Glass is no longer synonymous with tectonic clarity but with the sensation of complexity at every level.

Regarding glass's architectural scope, this complexity might mean a radical departure from the old utopian belief in the value of mere transparency as a means to revealing some hidden truth in need of exposure and thus improve the order of things and the performance of society [...] perhaps we are abandoning this ideal. If we are still fascinated by transparency, we tend to recognize the notion that it might reveal some previously hidden truth as fallacious [...] it is as if the tectonic truth of the material and the truth about ourselves were merely one and the same.[5]

Antoine Picon, 2009.

an expression of consumption and capitalism, is an incredibly unstable property. And it is a dialectic reminiscent of the consciousness, speed, and ephemerality of Victorian London from more than a century and a half ago. The early presence of glass in the city radically transforms the reading and interpretation of a considerably rigid relationship between time, history and the urban landscape, all while simultaneously reinforcing *the curious double-sidedness to [a] portrait of modern technology as both rational and enchanting.*[6]

The lightness and transparency of the arcades and exhibition halls of London, projects which embrace glass as being absolutely significant in their expression, become instrumental in eliminating the authority of history for the *openness of historicity.*[7] The scale and fabrication of glassed spaces like Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace (originally erected in London's Hyde Park in 1851, and probably the most widely cited example of Victorian glass architecture in the city) dematerializes an entire ontology of architecture into its most abstract and liminal elements: structure and skin; both completely visible and separated.

For Marxist philosophers, a glass wall is understood in terms of its antithetical stance to historical reference. It is the lens through which an unobstructed view *into* the world might disqualify the traces and residues of a situated bourgeois society. Glass is the material which encourages and facilitates the desires of a socially transparent Europe. And for many of the European avant-gardes, the transcendent potential becomes emblematic of a very utopian cultural, spiritual and political revolution.[8]

FIG_55:Upon its completion in 1851, Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace begins erasing the aesthetic hierarchies of classical architecture that had been dominating the identity of the city. (left)

FIG_56: By comparison, around the same time that the Crystal Palace is completed, a large stone addition is added to Buckingham Palace to broaden and strengthen the monarchies public face onto the Mall which leads to Trafalgar Square.(right)

But simultaneously, the same advancements in engineering and technology affording the construction of such spaces also seeds and catalyze London's fascination with the mass-marketing of glass as a cultural affect, and the interest in glass as a symbol of modernization, reflecting the progression of a capitalist society.

The most immediate and visible beneficiaries of these technological developments were retailers who used glass for their display windows. These windows radically transfigured the experience of walking through commercial sections of London, fashion the streets into gas-lit spaces of utopian splendour […] this world of show became the occasion for elaborate fantasies of consumption, sensuous experiences of imagined acquisition, and almost immediately these sheets of glass and the fantasies they encouraged were used as evidence displaying the material progress of the nation and its capitol…[9]

The generative beginnings of new and artificial environments in London set into the density of the darkened urban landscape enamour a population with the novelty and sensual contrast of alien spaces within the visceral and tactile setting of the Victorian city. The typologies transform the traditional conception of the ideal 'public realm' dramatically, bifurcating established spaces of collective gathering into the cathedral and a more alienating and self satisfying *cathedral of commerce;*[10] a critical division between the past and the future.

Although met with protest, the glass and iron roof above Old Spitalfields Market, for instance, is added in 1883 by the market proprietor Robert Horner not only to extend the available hours of operation -countering issues of weather and temperature- but also develop and consecrate a distinctive destination, a space and a volume, dedicated solely to the wholesale distribution of goods; which until the renovation, had been predominantly ad hoc and lost in the density of the neighbourhood.

The incremental *glassing of the city*, as described by the British academic Isobel Armstrong, is *a fantasy answering [a] landscape of glass aura that repeated the intensity of urban experience even when it [seemed] to promise release from it. Serving at once the need of commerce and the cultural imaginary […] transcendental domes in air and the squalor of 'Victorian Babylon' were structurally related.*[11] It is the ambiguity in the aesthetic of glass which is the seed of the equally ambiguous relationship between an absence of architecture and the presence of a surface, between liberation and isolation, between clarity of view and the complexity of diffraction as the modern city is reflected back onto itself.[12]

...the quality, or state of being transparent is both a material condition- that of being pervious to light and air- and the result of an intellectual imperative, of our inherent demand for that which should be easily detected, perfectly evident, and free of dissimulation. Thus the adjective transparent, by defining a purely physical significance, by functioning as a critical honorific, and in being dignified with far from disagreeable moral overtones [...] is richly loaded with the possibilities of both meaning and misunderstanding.[13]

Rowe & Slutzky, 1964.

OPAQUE ACTUALITY/ A SHADOW FROM GLASS:

Around the same time that Spitalfields is being assessed for its historical value (and the mythology of its preindustrial roots being resurrected) the remains of the Victorian city around it (including the Market hall) begin morphing into one predicated on the exchange of both information and capital. The combined destruction of commercial and industrial space during the Blitz, the eviction of light industry and manufacturing from the inner city throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and the closing of Docklands in the 1960s and 1970s, forces London to dramatically shift away from hundreds of years of its historical economic development -as well as its underlying culture of industrialism. New types of office space are introduced into the city that house and trade abstract commodities behind glass facades.[14] And while experimentation in housing looks to sociology as justification for a radical redefinition of how to reinvent a uniquely British city life, the development and density in the City core is pushed at pace with American precedents like New York City; precedents driven by the primary factors of economy and commerce:

Where it could, the City Corporation backed progressive architecture, It was not itself responsible for the dismal architectural standard of so much new building in the City […] Above all, it was the developers and the companies responsible for commissioning the new buildings who determined the architecture of the city.[15]

Unlike other urban centers, the development of the corporate aesthetic to which the current identity of the 'glass wall' refers is something which arrives quite late in modern London. Before the late 1960s most buildings constructed in the city are still quite limited in height, with the city not only imposing limitations on the ratio of plot size to development square footage (*roughly 1:5*) [16], but also strictly maintaining control on the skyline to avoid distracting from the key views toward of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Tower of London.

> Take the idea of transparency for example. It's something extraordinary that expresses the play of light, with something that appears and disappears, but at the same time, you get the impression that it also involves a subtle form of censorship. This search for 'transparency' with which our era is fascinated is at the very least ambivalent in its relation to power.[17]
>
> *Jean Baudrillard & Jean Nouvel, 2002.*

But developers negotiate the restrictions, and finagle the details of planning regulations to exchange smaller foot prints for an increased number of storeys. And in the late 1960s, the first two of London's real 'sky-scrapers' (the Centrepoint Tower at Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road, and the National Westminster Tower at Old Broad Street almost adjacent to Spitalfields) are designed and begin construction in opposite, but surprisingly similar ends of the inner city limits- in two areas east and west of the City, sitting on the cusp of very disparate economic and social priorities. Against the austerity of St. Paul's, they both announced through glazed facades and sheer verticality, their stature as the city's first modern towers.

Their legacy, however, is in their failure. Centrepoint, upon completion sits empty for a full decade while the property owner holds out for a single occupant to take the entire building; becoming a haven for squatters in the 1970s as homelessness in the city rises. National Westminster becomes victim to the global market crash and subsequent recession of 1987 and is brutally damaged by an IRA bomb in 1993. Combined, both examples typify some extreme risks of speculative development in general: that it is ripe with uncertainty.

And yet, in the social and economic climate during the incumbency of Margaret Thatcher those risks become secondary to an aggressive political agenda. There is an acknowledgement that Britain's democratic social state- a failing and financially stagnant postwar utopia based on social unity and public sector institutions- is dying a slow death and that the rise of the nation as a neo-liberal utopia- in which private development and capital accumulation become the key generators of social prosperity- is the only solution.[18] The establishment of urban development corporations (non-governmental agencies given the allowance to both write and dramatically circumvent planning regulations) is conceived as the vehicle for such a transformation in the East End.[19]

Essentially, the underlying ethos of Thatcher's version of the glass wall is to reclaim the 'lost' territory of the outer city and bring some sense of value back to it; that being monetary value prioritized ahead of moral or social value:

FIG_57:National Westminster tower; now known as Tower 42, Bishopsgate, in London's East End (left)
FIG_58:Centrepoint Tower, Oxford Circus in London's West End (right)

> There is [Thatcher] famously declared, 'no such thing as society, only individuals and,' she subsequently added, 'their families.' All forms of social solidarity were to be dissolved in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility and family values. [...] 'Economics are the method,' she said, 'but the object is to changes the soul'.[20]
>
> *David Harvey, 2006.*

> The sense of 'aura', the authority of presence, that Walter Benjamin regards as a necessary quality for the authentic piece of art, has been lost. These products of instrumental technology conceal their process of construction, appearing in ghost like apparitions. The increasing use of reflective glass in architecture reinforces the dreamlike sense of unreality and alienation. The contradictory opaque transparency of these buildings reflects the gaze back unaffected and unmoved; we are unable to see or imagine life behind these walls. The architectural mirror, that returns our gaze and doubles the world, is an enigmatic and frightening device.[21]
>
> *Juhani Pallasmaa, 2005.*


THE BROADGATE TOWER
BOARDWALK HOUSE
10 EXCHANGE SQUARE
201 BISHOPSGATE
8-12 BROADGATE
1 APPOLD STREET
4 BROADGATE
3 BROADGATE
NO.1 BISHOPS SQUARE
EXCHANGE HOUSE
6 BROADGATE
175 BISHOPSGATE
OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET
LIVERPOOL
STREET STATION
155 BISHOPSGATE
1-2 BROADGATE
135 BISHOPSGATE
100 LIVERPOOL STREET
ANDAZ HOTEL

Following from this was a belief that the improvement of the area would come from the 'trickle-down' of benefits from this market led redevelopment. Planning had a very limited role to play; the market was to determine what should be built and where it should be built […] it also involved marketing and advertising the benefits of the area to attract development interest.[22]

While areas outside the threshold of the inner city fringe are given regulatory freedom to construct large glass towers and new luxury housing in a previously depleted landscape, in the wake of the scandals surrounding the shortcomings of London's early attempts at a vertical expression of globalized modernity, it is decided by that same Conservative government the construction in London's core should be subject to some limitations, one such being that developments should be thrust laterally:

By 1990 the City planners too had fallen out of love with skyscrapers […] Under different leadership by the mid-1980's, they had veered towards a conservation stance, advocating the refurbishment of old buildings and the retention of old facades in front of new serviced floor space. In order to reopen historic vistas they authorized the demolition of 1960s office blocks and declared conservation area to protect the status of older buildings over 60 percent of the area of the city.[23]

The confused narrative of corporate development and conservation does little to assuage the tensions in Spitalfields. The intensive redevelopment catalyzing the glass wall around the neighbourhood commences in 1986 with the realignment of major rail lines towards Liverpool Street Station and then intensifies with the phased construction of Broadgate. The project, master-planned by Arup Associates, contains approximately three million square feet of new commercial and retail space but- in accordance with the planning regulations set out by government officials- it is to be distributed across the site at a varying datum between six and twelve storeys. Though forced to limit height, the developers are satisfied in being given nearly unrestricted access to neglected (and therefore cheaper) property at the periphery of the City. Designed and constructed right to the plot line on Bishopsgate, this behemoth utilizes every available square meter, and sets the defining benchmark against which the metamorphosis of the neighbourhoods to the east will be gauged.

FIG_59: The development at Broadgate is a continuing multiphase project owned by British Land- one of the largest property development companies in the UK. Phases 1-4 are designed by ARUP, 5-14 by Skidmore Owings & Merril

This was the beginning of Broadgate, the first truly massive financial services development of the 1980s boom, and destined to be the greatest success of the decade. In her speech Ms. Thatcher told her invited audience, `You have much to achieve in this great development, but you must always remember that it will be placed amidst the City architecture of Christopher Wren, Robert Adam and Inigo Jones.'[24]

Martin Pawly, 1998.

SMOKE AND MIRRORS: Almost immediately after the talks of development are underway for Broadgate, plans are devised for the relocation of the Spitalfields Market to the suburbs outside Hackney and the re-appropriation of the site as an extension

The supposedly endlessly open and benevolent qualities of some utopian social process, like market exchange, have to crystallize into a spatially-ordered and institutionalized material world somewhere and somehow. Social, institutional, and material structures [...] are either made or not made. The dialectic of either-or is omnipresent [...] Struggle as we might to create flexible landscapes and institutions, the fixity of structures tends to increase with time making the conditions of change more rather than less sclerotic [...] Materialized utopias of process cannot escape the question of closure or the encrusted accumulations of traditions, institutional inertias and the like, which they themselves produce.[25]

David Harvey, 2000.

of the city; all under the guise of urban regeneration. However, because the land is formally owned by the Corporation of the City of London, but falls in the political jurisdiction and conservationist agenda of Tower Hamlets, a certain attitude had to be adopted in order to avoid the costly rejections of planning permission. The winning development team, operating under the name the *Spitalfields Development Group* (later overtaken by Hammerson Plc.), are forced to adopt a persuasive and collusive rhetoric in support of conservation in order to push various iterations of the scheme through the proper approvals. It is a move in speculative development that has come to be known as 'Trojan Horse' architecture, whereby a scheme is designed by one practice to gain a permission and then redesigned by another to cut costs and increase commercial appeal.[26]

In trying to manipulate such a varied mix of agendas and battle a very active voice of dissent from competing developers and conservation groups attempting to use the building listing system as political leverage, it takes seventeen different architects and nineteen years (including a six year archaeological dig) to metamorphose the originally modest scheme prepared by British Architect Robert Macormac into the stock corporate aesthetic of glass and steel by Foster and Partners hovering today in four large blocks above Horner's original roof. And in that same period of time between concept and completion, the presence of 'the glass wall' that had appeared on the western horizon of the neighbourhood in 1986 has been allowed to flourish; appearing again and again in the mandatory digital renders for subsequent planning documents and applications of appeal.

Not to be dissuaded, additional plans for a

masive mixed-use extension on the scale of millions of square feet to north of the Broadgate development are still being brought to the table. Of greatest fear to the neighbouring boroughs is the further paradox that this latest 'glass wall' threatens to not only physically segregate a marginalized landscape but also cast it in permanent shadow. And though currently plans have since been rejected and are in the process of public debate, it is the audacity and persistence of the process involved in extending this shimmering perimeter that is most astounding.

Like the first designs for the city following WWII, there is today that same struggle with how to approach development in the context of the historical fabric to the east of Bishopsgate, and each side remains just as steadfast in their rejection of the other as ever. Any proposal east of the market hall will undoubtedly be turned down outright, as the land now adjacent to the recent construction is held as legally protected, as historically significant. Perhaps then that original crisis of migration is one of context. As Jane Barry notes in an April 2008 article for the Evening Standard: *what is the point of saving listed buildings or conservation areas if unsympathetic surroundings are allowed to crush them?*

> In the late 1980s 'Toffs Out', 'Yuppies to Chelsea' and, more alarmingly, 'Boil a Trendy' could be seen scrawled on railway embankment walls which had once carried Fascist slogans and anti-Semitic obscenities. There is no doubt that the development of Docklands has brightened east London, at least to tourists eyes, but it has brought once more into sharp focus the contrasts which Disraeli noted in the 1840s and which the exiled Lenin decried sixty years later [... as] 'Two nations!'[27]
>
> *Alan Palmer, 1989.*

It seems that the historical fabric becomes unauthenticated by the presence of glass and that in return the questionable future of speculative development becomes pressured against the presence of history. It is as if the more that each version of 'the fields' is clashed here, the more uncertain, and less likely it is that each will ever materialize.

FIG_60:The 1987 scheme by British Architect, and founding member of the Spitalfields Trust, Richard MacCormac (for the British Planners Fitzroy Robinson) is seen as the way into a mediated exchange between the architecture of the City to the west and the historic fabric to the east, providing a *soft edge* to the city (above). [See. Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of empire: postcolonialism and the city*. (London: Routledge, 1996.) 89.] Commissioned by the Spitalfields Development Group (SDG), the scheme is based off of the existing typological dimensions of the tighter knit Georgian fabric, proposing a number of internal streets and arcades to cut through the office programme. With the inclusion of a third group of architects (the American firm Swanke Hayden Connell) for 'administrative' duties, MacCormac resigns from the design.

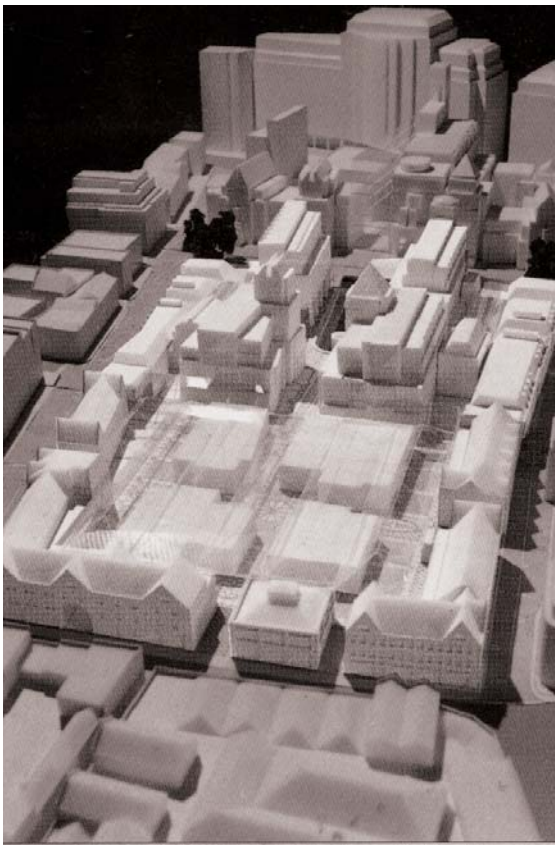


FIG_61:Following the resignation of MacCormac the design is handed over to Swanke Hayden Connell and pushed to include more office space. Existing buildings are proposed to be demolished and the overall mass of the buildings begins to grow beyond the approved scale by local conservationists. Under threat of a costly enquiry into the historical sensitivity of the proposal, the SDG considers a scheme prepared by the British postmodern architect Terry Farrell (1990) for the watchdog group *SAVE Britain's Heritage*. The Farrell Scheme (above) is as modest as the original MacCormac design, maintaining the surrounding market buildings and narrow streetscapes, while still permitting office space to accumulate in the center of the western half; *respond[ing] in scale and characteristic to the existing fabric...the buildings were arranged around a central court that provided a route from Bishopsgate to the retail facilities at the center of the site...establish[ing] a high level of penetrability through the site, and an irregular non-orthogonal plan...that relate[s] to and reflect[s] the layout of the existing streets.* See. Terry Farrell, *Terry Farrell: Urban design*. (London: Academy Editions, 1993.), 101.]

FIG_62: Farrell's design is adopted by the American urban designer Ben Thompson who is appointed the lead urban designer (1991). The new scheme includes 14 medium rise office blocks. While Foster and Partners are awarded two schemes - and subsequently denied planning approval for both- the controversial Bishops Square redevelopment is not proposed until 2001. An equally controversial counter-proposal by the avant-garde architect Will Alsop (above) is presented by a very vocal activist group called the Spitalfields Market Under Threat (SMUT), who accuse the local government and developers of collusion, by not consulting with local area residents on the design and master planning process. The mission statement of the group is published in BD (2001), stating: *if Spitalfields Market is not to be overrun by City offices, the ideals and objectives of the current urban debate must be put into practice. It embodies government objectives for what the urban renaissance should be: innovation and enterprise, employment opportunities for all, the involvement of local people, diversity, stainability, character and historic identity.* [See."Big names back SMUT," *Building Design*, June 2001, 5.] Alsop's proposal sees the existing market remaining completely intact and instead floats the 92000 m2 feet of office space above on 100 foot *piloti.* Fearing lost public support by outlandish design, SMUT begins distancing themselves from the architect, working instead with local environment and government officials.

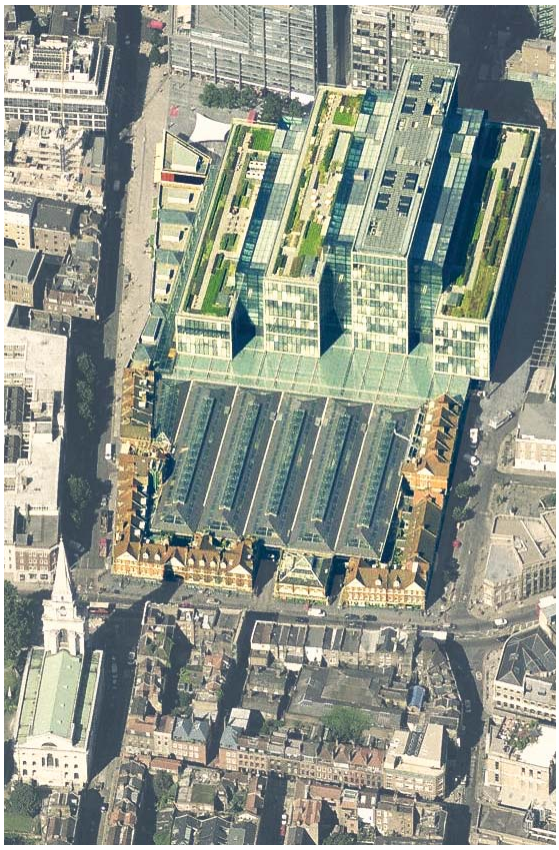


FIG_63: During an extensive six year period of archaeological digs, the first iteration of the Foster design for Bishops Square is presented and rejected harshly for poor architectural considerations after proposing a large undulating glazed arcade with a poor connection to the existing market. The scheme is revised and gains planning consent in 2002; construction is completed three years later. The final constructed project is openly criticized by local residents and journalists for its banality in the face of such a vibrant community, and it's mass in comparison to the rest of the neighbourhood. The original master planned ideal of the 'neighbourhood typology' is abandoned in favour of *the imposition of a characterless corporate environment on a successful local diverse sustainable community that is of equal importance to the success of London as a 'world city'* [See Martin Spring, "Bishops Square, Spitalfields - The City Marches East", Building, September, 2005, 65] In the following winter of 2006, a young architectural intern working for the British firm Jestico &Whiles is asked to begin documenting the existing conditions of the eastern portion of the site. At the far north-east corner of the existing market he finds the sentence "*this will all be fields again*" scratched into the pavement.

PLATE_22

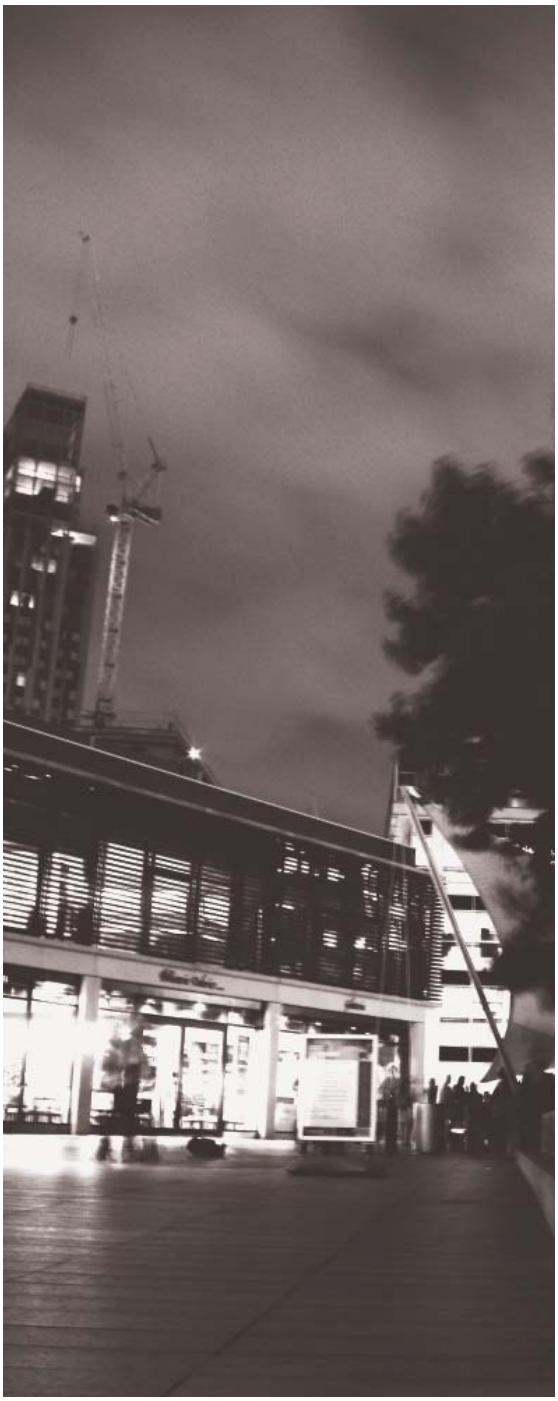
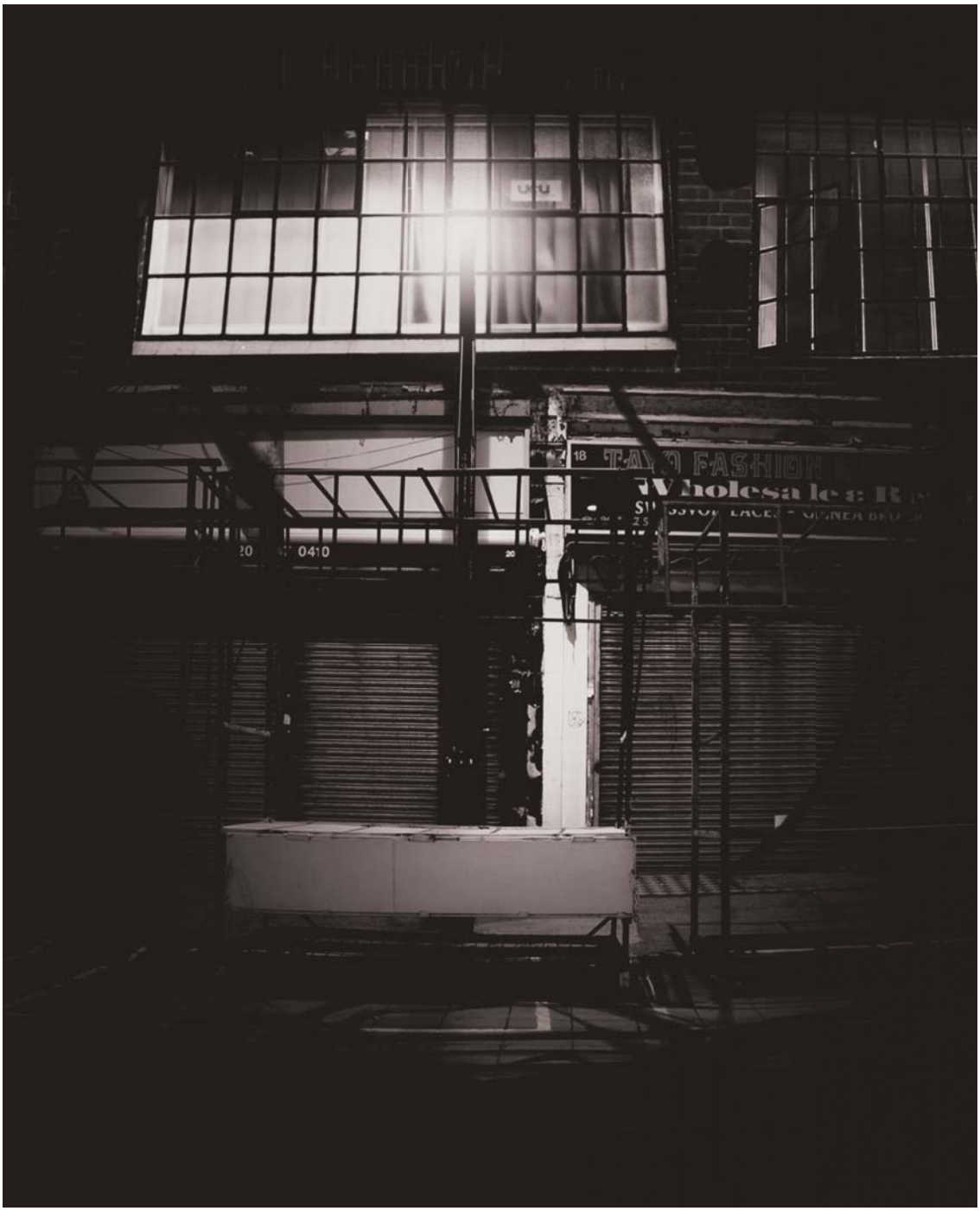


PLATE_23

PLATE_24

PLATE_25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unknowing_

...And sometimes in my attempts to steer homewards, upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye to the pole star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumventing all the capes and headlands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleyways, such enigmatical entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares, as must, I conceive, baffle the audacity of porters, and confound the intellects of Hackney-coachmen. I could almost have believed at times that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terræ incognitæ* and doubted whether they had been laid down in modern charts of London.[1]

Thomas de Quincey, 1886

FIG_64:With the night progressing, the materials of the neighbourhood begin their regression into the unknown. All that is known is what one can see and sense; it is a synaesthetic experience. Photograph and image by author.

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Mail Online

Police ban yellow witness appeal signs... to reduce our fear of crime

By Neil Sears and Rebecca Camber
Last updated at 12:10 AM on 18th July 2009

They have long been accepted as a sensible way of helping to solve crime.

But bright yellow police signs appealing for witnesses to serious offences are no longer such a feature of grim city streets - in London at least.

For in an attempt to reduce 'fear of crime', the Metropolitan Police has effectively banned the use of the distinctive signs in all but exceptional circumstances.

Vital aid: Officers value the signs, but they're being scaled back in the capital

Privately, however, senior policemen say the ban is 'ridiculous'.

One Met officer said: 'The yellow signs have always been a useful way of encouraging witnesses to crimes to come forward.

'They were placed where the crimes actually happened, so were very much targeted at people who might have seen something. Now that source of information has been cut off - and it is utterly ridiculous to do that in a bid to reduce people's "fear of crime".

'By stopping us solving crimes the move is increasing the risk that more crimes will happen.'

Another senior policeman said: 'I think someone upstairs became aware that in crime hotspots several yellow signs were being put up at once. They presumably thought it showed us in a bad light, as if crime was out of control.

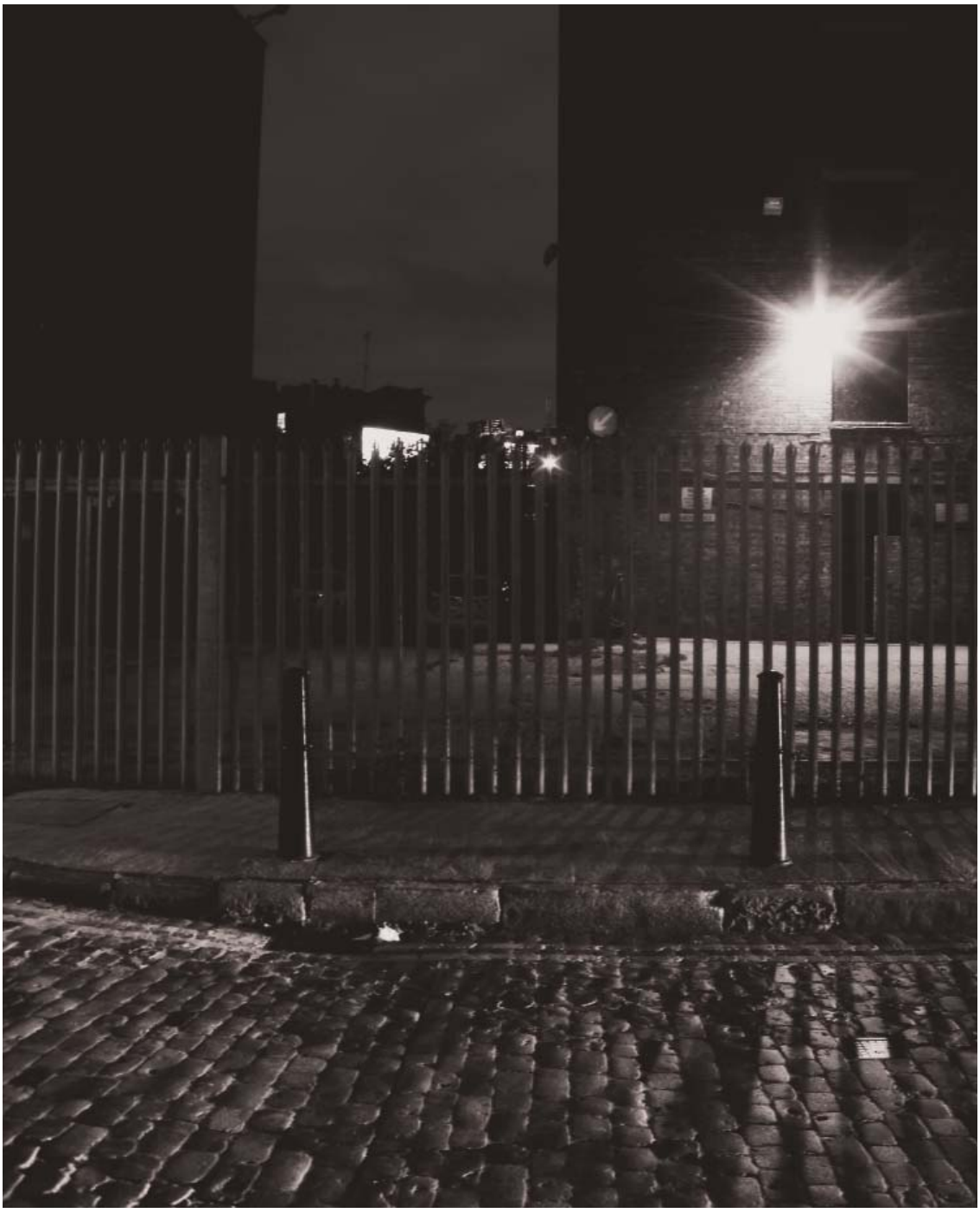
'In fact, they were just an indication of what was going on, and of the fact that we were trying to get some witnesses. I'm furious that we can't do that any more.'

…there is something unsettling about the dusk in London, those strange few hours when you witness the disappearance of things, the evaporation of all the traces of daily activities which, until this moment, has comprised a knowing of the place. Dusk is when the stereotypes of British politeness and the reticent facades of civility overseen in cue lines at lunch times fade into the same darkness that now brings with it an increased sense of suspicion…

…this is the time of day when the plastic yellow sandwich boards- once distributed at a vending machine pace throughout the neighbourhood by local police to broadcast assaults from the night before, signs that would have been passed inauspiciously otherwise during the daylight as if no more than some concert poster hocking the next 'big' indie band- flash into the imagination as a synaptic reminder that despite the watchful eyes of the CCTV the nocturnal transgressions of the city can be taken for granted. This is still a landscape of mischief and uncertainty, of random acts of violence which demand a certain respect. It demands a heightened sense of responsivity…

FIG_65: An online article for the Daily Mail about the recent ban on yellow 'witness appeal' signs in the city of London. The same article continues: *"A Metropolitan Police spokesman said that the use of yellow witness appeal boards had been heavily restricted after research last year suggested they raise fear of crime..."* (photo altered by author.)

See. Neal Sears and Rebecca Camber, "Police ban yellow witness appeal signs... to reduce our fear of crime." News| News Home, *Daily Mail Online*, July 18, 2009, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1200473/Police-ban-yellow-signs-reduce-fear-crime.html# (accessed June 29, 2010);



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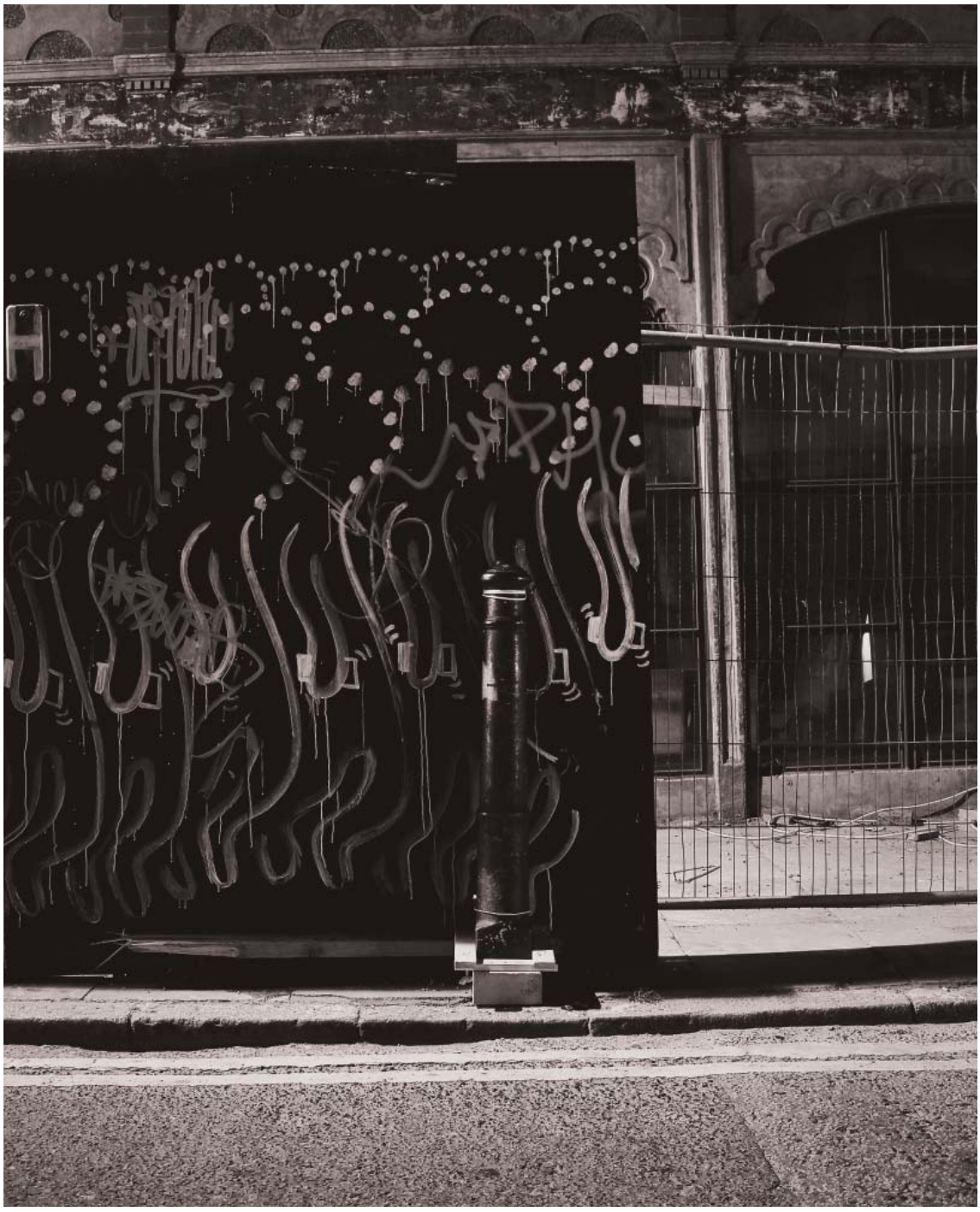

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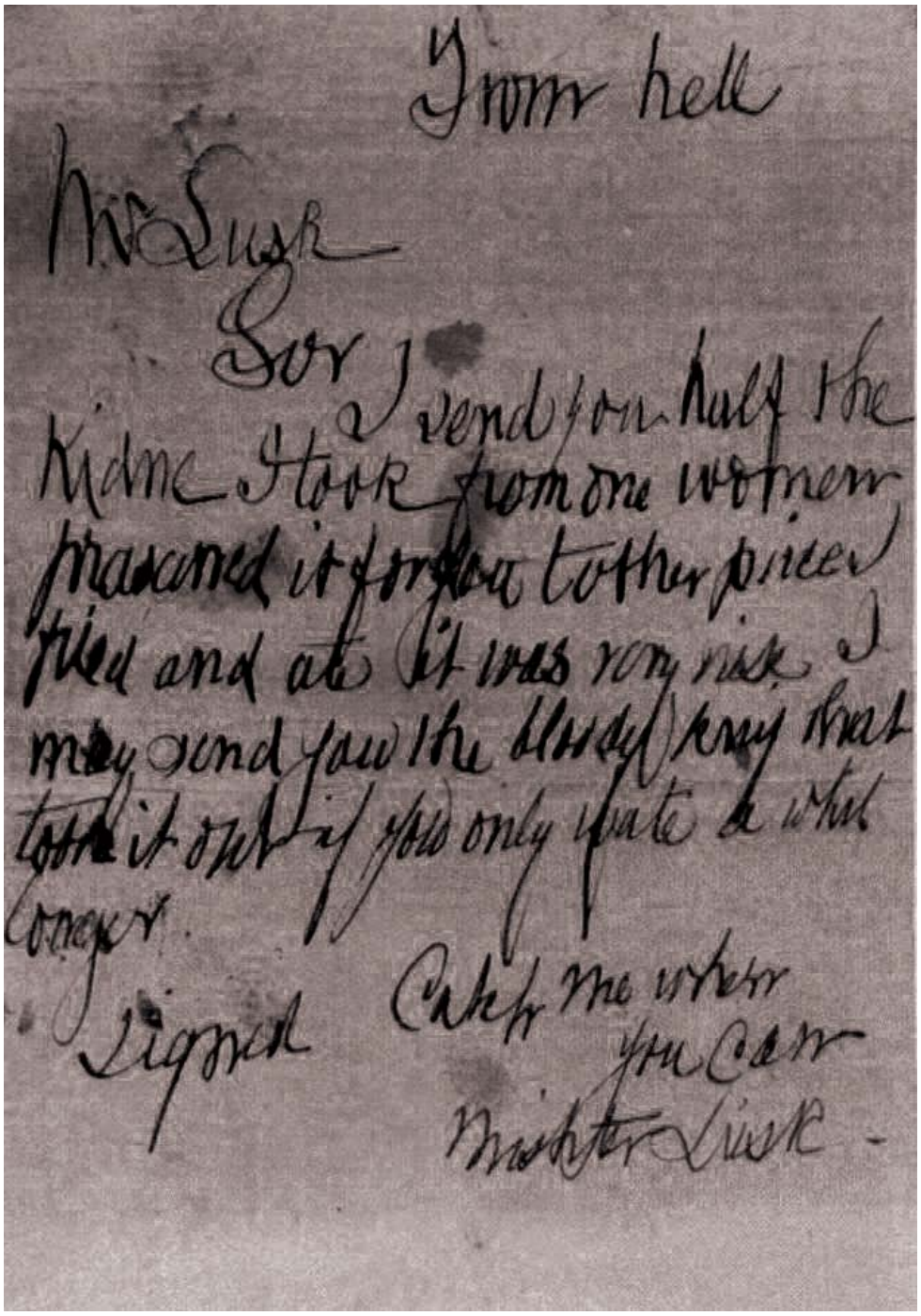

From hell

Mr Lusk

Sor I send you half the
Kidne I took from one woomen
I roasted it for you tother piece
I fried and ate it was very nise I
may send you the bloody knife that
took it out if you only wate a little
longer.

Signed Catch me when
you can
Mishter Lusk -

...wading though the fully illuminated faces of Broadgate, absorbing the white noise of lingering financial deals and choruses recanting something about dividends, it is easy to forget that the sun has long set. It has been wisped away into the empty greyness of the evening sky. Days and nights come and go but the shadows of benches and bollards here never change...

…moving from west to east through the 'field' of the old market hall, the displaced residues of haunting and a paranormal past are sublimated in the light of Broadgate and then frozen in time like an ethereal architecture. Curious groups gather round and pay the ten quid fee to hear the stories and witness the exorcism. If given the opportunity, those same shadows would easily vanish into the porosity of the remaining east end. Until that moment comes, the sinister affects of the neighbourhood, the stimuli that produce the required adrenaline to make the heart race and keep the feet quick, are exposed; themselves casting shadows exponentially into the thickness of the air. It is in the eastern entrances, on the precipice between two cities that hipsters and hell begin to blend; the real and the imagined cities become less defined…

FIG_66: The letter to Whitechappel authorities from Jack the Ripper addressed "From Hell"

… slowly, the buzz of the pubs on each corner: 'the Duke-of-this' and the 'George-and-that', the wine bars and Pizza Expresses designed to retain the lingering population of office workers waiting for their train to the boroughs from Liverpool Street Station, the sound of money being swallowed in arcades and betting agencies and the audible and recognizably European siren of police and ambulance, all make their presence known. They warble with Dopplar effectiveness and then they slip into the periphery of an attenuated gaze…

…in the older parts of Spitalfields, the physical city feels evacuated. Agoraphobic and lonely. These were the paths where the cadence of street lights had been more sporadic. These were houses and walls and windows: populated places. But in the stealth conditions of dusk, the opaqueness of the brick city gets even blacker, and the transparency of the glass city starts to give up its secret worlds behind. By virtue of their physical attributes they have simply vanished, or are vanishing. Dematerializing and decaying. They are returning back to the alchemical chaos of the unknown. Lost in the night, these parts of Spitalfields are becoming a game, a riddle solved only through the interpolation of memories…

FIG_67: Sublimating shadows. Photograph and image by author. Jean Baudrillard, in a critique of the Baroque trompe l'oeil, writes of them: *Here things have long lost their shadow. Something other than the sun shines on them, a brighter star without atmosphere, or with an ether that doesn't refract. Perhaps death illuminates these things directly and that is their sole meaning? These shadows do not move with the sun; they do not grow with the evening; without movement, they appear as an inevitable edging [...] they suggest the transparency of objects to a black sun.* At the base of Norman Foster's *No. 1 Bishops Square,* the shadows of a permanent and artificial sun are sublimating and then solidifying in air.

See. Jean Baudrillard, Francesco Proto, and Mike Gane, *Mass. Identity. Architecture: Architectural writings of Jean Baudrillard.* (Chichester: Wiley,2003), 89.


THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY MINIS.
VISIT YOUR DEALER FOR THE

PLATE_28

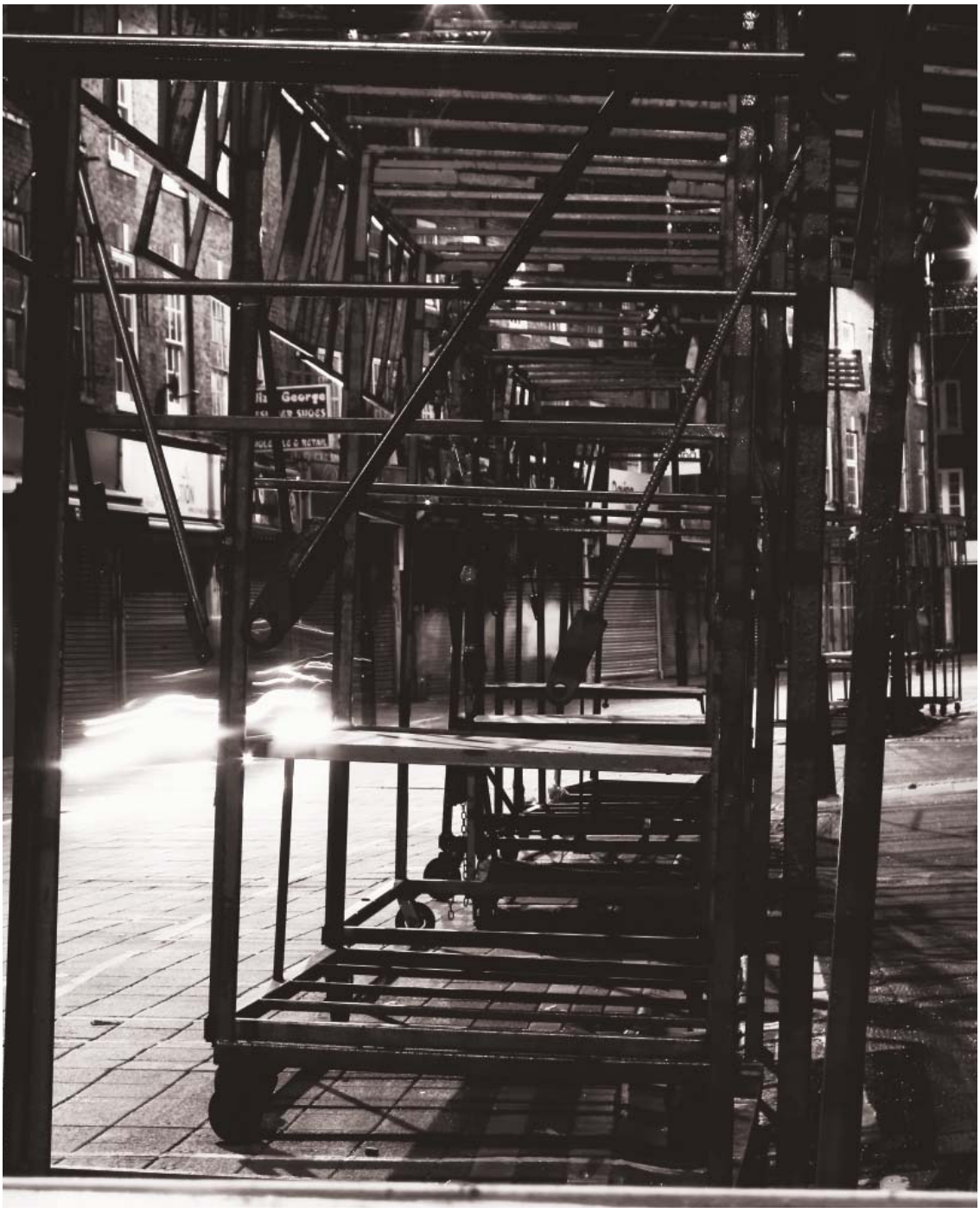

PLATE_29

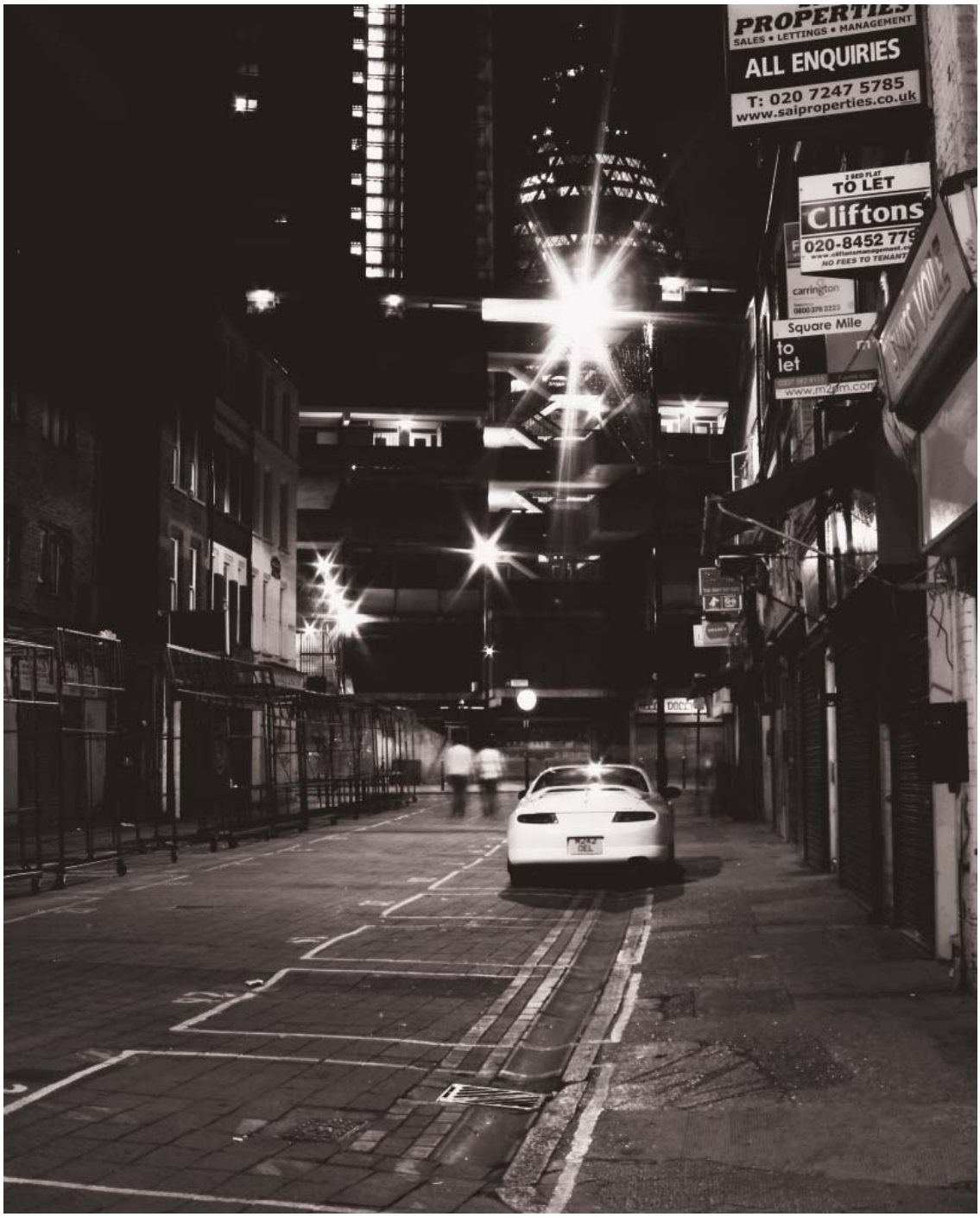
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PLATE_30

PLATE_31

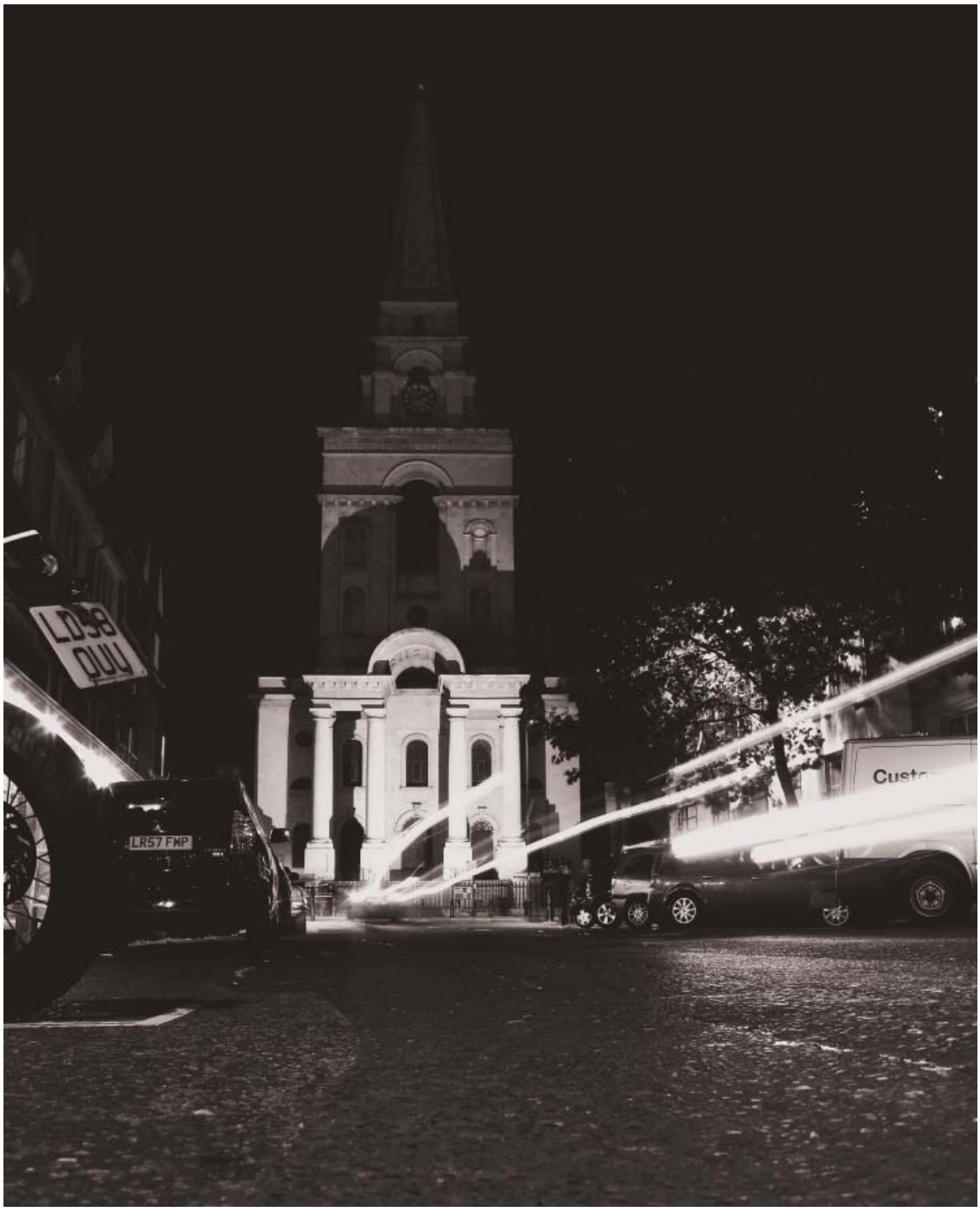
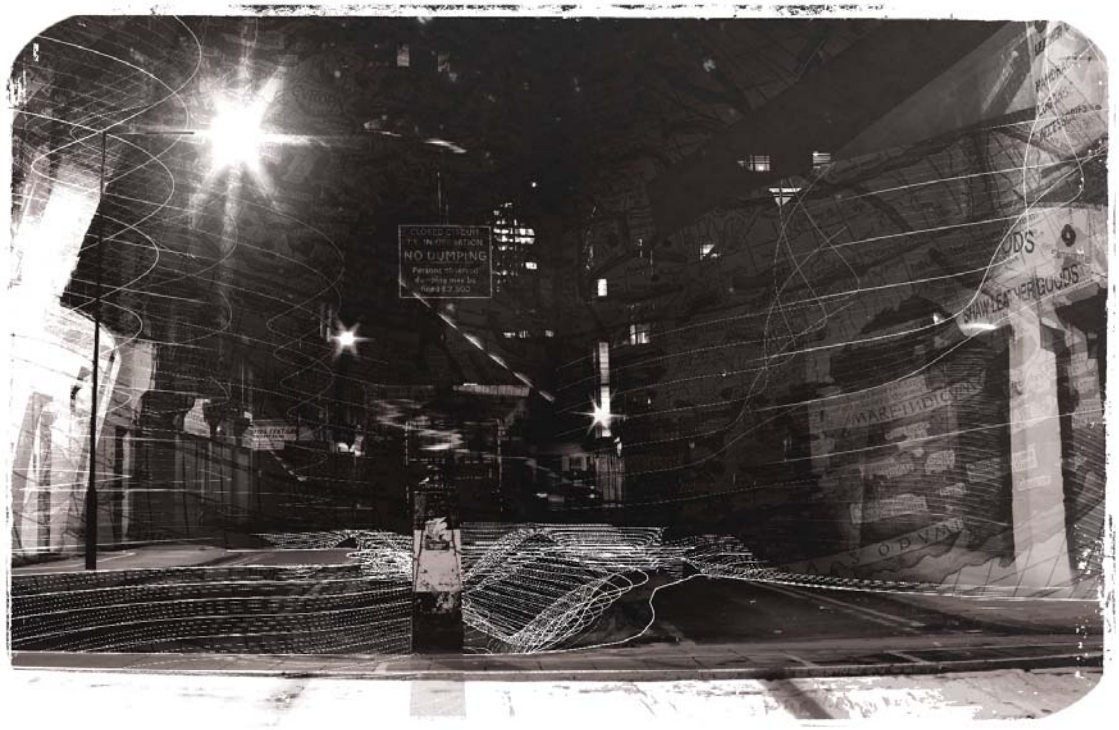


PLATE_32


NO DUMPING

…once the neighbourhood has progressed into its ritual transformation, it begins to shift around the defining throw of light from street lamps. Along stretches of Petticoat Lane, the market stalls that hours ago were full of 5£ jeans and 2£ pashminas sit orderly, but abandoned. They wait like empty scaffolding, vulnerable to the fact that they may well be the last resort should the remains of the transfigured streetscape need reinforcement, as anything over two stories regresses into the shadows…

…the now invisible regions of even a single street that was once vividly detailed to the eye will soon become lost to both the *leones* and the *dracones*; such that all the neighbourhood is missing is the Ptolemaic disclaimer that this is *terræ incognitæ:* the space of unknowing. And just as Ptolemy's was the ultimate fiction- based on the paradoxical desire to physically and metaphorically complete the globe while still leaving just enough room at its edges for the projection of uncertainty- so too here, under the glow of burning sodium, does the sidewalk become an island and the rest of the Spitalfields an archipelago of things not yet happened…

FIG_68:The area around Petticoat Lane begins to fade into the darkness of the narrow streets of Spitalfields. Photograph and image by author. (left)

FIG_69: Map of the globe after Ptolemy's *Geographia*, reprinted 1496. The southern pole is labelled with 'terra incognita, indicating a speculated realm of the unknown. Metaphysical and anthropological beings alike were dreamt into the space of the terra incognita for hundreds of years following Ptolemy's vision.(following page)


FAVONIVS ZEPHIRVS
Sinus hesperius
EVROPA
DATIA
LIBIA INTERIOR
AFFRICA
ARABIA FELIX
ETHIOPIA INTERIOR
Terra incognita
Sinus Barbaricus


·CECIAS APELIOTES·
·SVBSOLANVS·
·ASIA·
·ARIA·
Scythia extra montem
Scythia intra montem
Sericus regio
Indiam extra gangen fluuium
Indiam intra gangen fluuium
Sinus gangeticus
Sinus magnus
Taprobana
MARE·INDICVM
MARE·INDICVM
PRASODVM·I
·MARE·
Terra incognita secundum ptholomeum
Gradus longitudinis ab occidente orientem
100 104 110 116 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 160 165 170 174 180

FIG. 63

SPITALFIELDS INCOGNITÆ: Leading into the dawn of the twentieth century, the East End of London manages to incubate and maintain for itself a fairly intense stigma. In particular, the areas east of Spitalfields become synonymous with the imagery of a wasteland; a grotesque landscape of violence, pollution, aggression and indifference, all surrounded by the brown fog of T.S. Eliot's '*unreal city*'.[2] It is an identity solidified by physical evidence, just as much as it is by urban legend.

The nineteenth century is a period in the development of the city which involves a surge of interest in the dual sciences of anthropology and sociology, a period where the studying of societal origins meets the study of how societies behave, respectively. Meaning, the segregation and misery of the industrialized areas of London can be approached empirically; the city theoretically transforms into *an object of study*.[3] But lacking in the adequate vocabulary to articulate both the living and working conditions of the disenfranchised Londoners found therein, associations with traversing mythological spaces like the Labyrinth or the uncharted and easily mythologized territories of an African continent still under discovery, become instead some of the ways in which experiences are loosely characterized.

For two hundred-plus years, this imagery of London as the *terræ incognitæ*- an ambiguous social or mythical topography- allows the upper class of the city to become both justified in their opinion and ignorance towards the opposing lower class, while still satisfying a thirst for the knowledge of and the desire to experience something as visceral and terrible as the alternate reality of their own city:

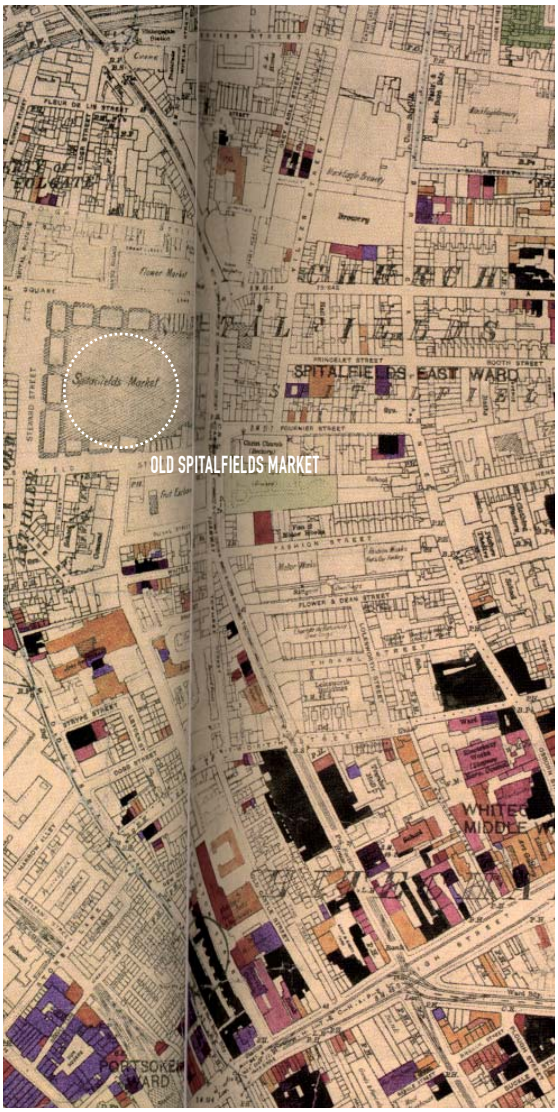
What is so remarkable about the image of terra incognita is that it could express and sustain all of these attitudes at once, conveying a different meaning to different readers, and to different needs of the same reader, without excluding any of the others [...] the image embodied an effort of distancing and avoidance; it suggested that these areas needed to be discovered, because heretofore no one had [really] known them.[4]

That thirst to 'know' the city, to learn it, is the same rich material latent in works of fiction like De Quincy's opium induced prose, the melancholic wanderings of James Thompson or Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries; scores of famous British writers leading the wanderlust to seek Spitalfields as the gateway into the wilds of the East End, to drift towards the unknown. It is the same dystopic novelty which a couple hundred years later is attracting flocks of tourists by night to meticulously recreate the stalking paths of Jack the Ripper, to simulate the danger of chasing spectres through the empty parking lots and loading docks of Whitechapel. And it is a persistent curiosity-a crucial division- nearly expelled by both Luftwaffe bombers during the eight months of the Blitz and

FIG_70: Two residential towers are demolished in Hackney in the 1980's as part of the continuing practice of removing failed postwar estate housing in the city. The footage is shot by Iain Sinclair as a part of his daily ritual of documenting the borough (left):

"Forty years and I've learned nothing. Nothing useful about the people, factories, politics and personalities of Hackney. The name has declined to a brand identity; a chart topper. Worst services, best crime, dump of dumps. I have walked over much of it on a daily basis, taken thousands of photographs, kept an 8mm diary for seven years, and what does it amount to? Strategies for avoiding engagement, elective amnesia, dream paths that keep me submerged in a dream [...] I've got footage of going up to the top of these tower blocks in the late 60's. And the tower blocks were just not well enough built, and they just became an environment for cockroaches. Later in the day I have got footage of them, I sat on our roof and I recorded them being blown up. Great clouds of dust, pigeons swirling about and now again, in the kind of pre-Olympic development era, orange shutters are being clapped over all of the later period developments"

See. Shehani Fernando, . "Iain Sinclair: At large in a fictional Hackney", Books, *Guardian.co.uk*, March 03, 2009 *http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/video/2009/mar/03/hackney-iain-sinclair* (accessed March, 11, 2010)


SPITALFIELDS EAST WARD
OLD SPITALFIELDS MARKET

A town, such as London, where a man may wander for hours together without reaching the beginning of the end, without meeting the slightest hint which could lead to the inference that there is open country within reach, is a strange thing [...] I know nothing more imposing that the view which the Thames offers during the ascent from the sea to London Bridge. The masses of buildings, the wharves on both sides, [...] the countless ships along both shores, crowding ever closer and closer together, until, at last, only a narrow passage remains in the middle of the river, a passage through which hundreds of steamers shoot by one another; all this is so vast, so impressive, that a man cannot collect himself, but is lost in the marvel of England's greatness before he sets foot upon English soil.[6]

Friedrich Engels, 1844.

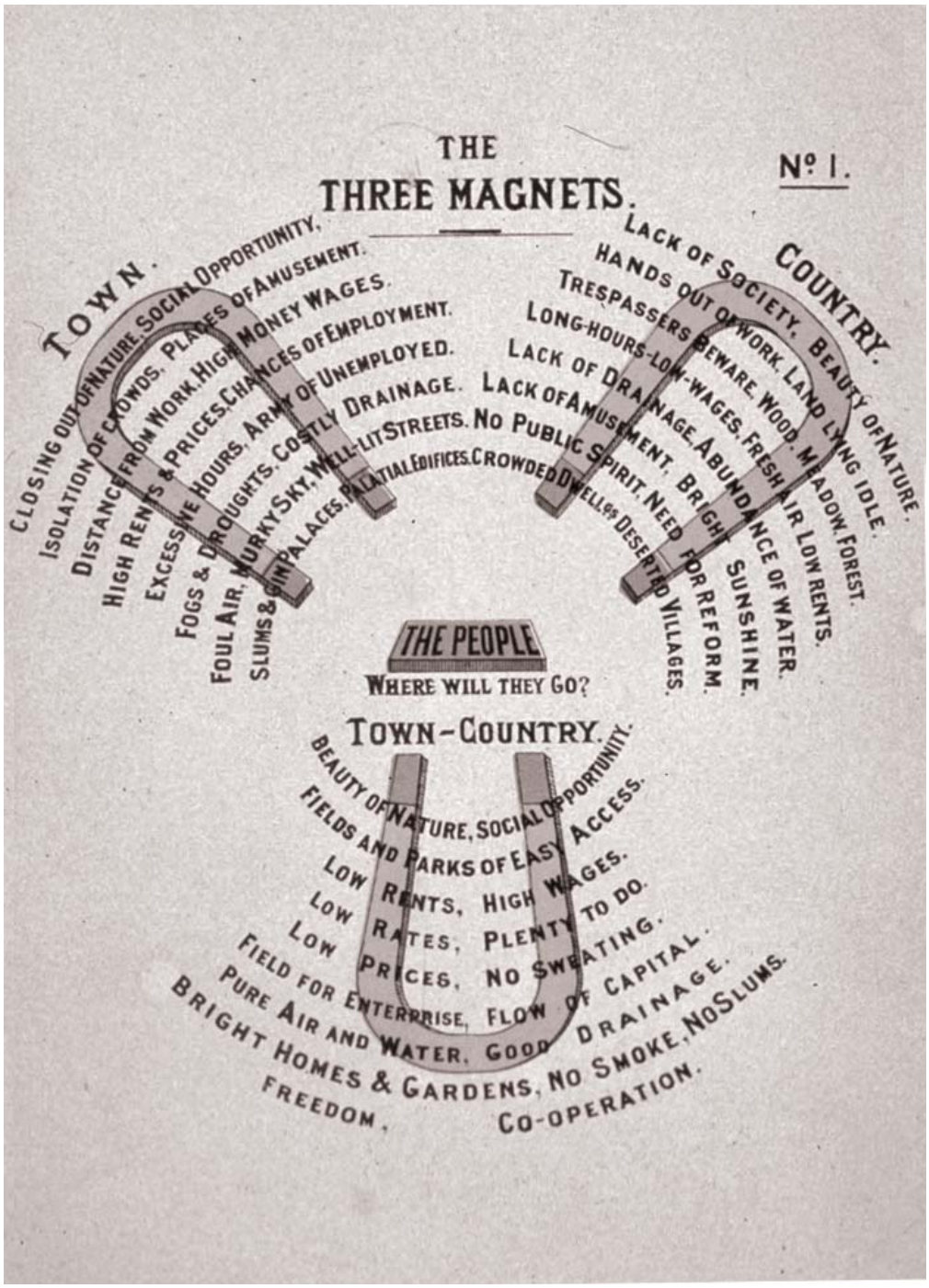
FIG_71:A detail of the London County Council Bomb Damage Maps (1939-1945) showing Whitechapel and Spitalfields after the Blitz. Buildings shown in *black* are completely destroyed, *purple* are beyond repair, *dark red* are doubtfully reparable, *light red* are reparable at a cost, *orange* are general blast areas, and yellow suffer only minor damage. (left)

FIG_72: A Heinkle 111 is shown in flight over the Isle of Dogs, 07.09.1940 (right)

the subsequent process of rebuilding the city. *Cities are a product of time […] in the city, time becomes visible,*[5] writes Lewis Mumford in the introduction to *The Culture of Cities* (1938), but the circumstances of postwar London attempt to prove otherwise.

A factor retrospectively accredited with the large scale rebuilding plans is the speed with which they are implemented, having neither the time nor the luxury to allow for a slow and complex evolution. Far from the process of accretion that had slowly over the centuries defined the city, the language of regeneration is predicated on restriction and prescription. The desire to reclaim control over the labyrinth is a distinctively modern project. To erase not only the physical and ideological traces of depravity and social inequality, but just as importantly expunge the cultural climate of WWII- to start completely anew- means the exorcism of London's demons at any cost. The issue at hand, and one which arguably persists in contemporary Spitalfields, is the exchange of one type of illusion for another; one based in supposing what tendencies from the past should be avoided, and the other in projecting weak assumptions of what the city should conceivably become.[7]

ASSUMING: The nature of assuming is that it projects hypothetical boundaries into the future. It is a dual act of blind faith and security that instils a narrative of stability and protocol. But even as early as the 1960s, modern sociologists like Ruth Glass are confirming the city once more as something *too vast, too contrary and too moody to become entirely familiar*[8] in both its material and social structure, and in doing so raising serious and necessary questions about the limitations of imposing rationality on something as irrational and complex as a city.


THE
THREE MAGNETS.
No. 1.
TOWN.
COUNTRY.
CLOSING OUT OF NATURE, SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY,
ISOLATION OF CROWDS, PLACES OF AMUSEMENT.
DISTANCE FROM WORK, HIGH MONEY WAGES.
HIGH RENTS & PRICES, CHANCES OF EMPLOYMENT.
EXCESSIVE HOURS, ARMY OF UNEMPLOYED.
FOGS & DROUGHTS, COSTLY DRAINAGE.
FOUL AIR, MURKY SKY, WELL-LIT STREETS.
SLUMS & GIN PALACES, PALATIAL EDIFICES.
LACK OF SOCIETY, BEAUTY OF NATURE.
HANDS OUT OF WORK, LAND LYING IDLE.
TRESPASSERS BEWARE, WOOD, MEADOW, FOREST.
LONG HOURS-LOW WAGES, FRESH AIR, LOW RENTS.
LACK OF DRAINAGE, ABUNDANCE OF WATER.
LACK OF AMUSEMENT, BRIGHT SUNSHINE.
NO PUBLIC SPIRIT, NEED FOR REFORM.
CROWDED DWELLINGS, DESERTED VILLAGES.
THE PEOPLE
WHERE WILL THEY GO?
TOWN-COUNTRY.
BEAUTY OF NATURE, SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY.
FIELDS AND PARKS OF EASY ACCESS.
LOW RENTS, HIGH WAGES.
LOW RATES, PLENTY TO DO.
LOW PRICES, NO SWEATING.
FIELD FOR ENTERPRISE, FLOW OF CAPITAL.
PURE AIR AND WATER, GOOD DRAINAGE.
BRIGHT HOMES & GARDENS, NO SMOKE, NO SLUMS.
FREEDOM.
CO-OPERATION.

> The modern spirit is but a natural enlargement of the 18th-century spirit which in its turn was a rationalization of the traditional vernacular English way of looking at the world, the characteristic common to all three being that tendency to take the functional approach to build up the human background in those visual terms the layman calls the Picturesque [...] thus it is *precisely because of their functional approach* that modern architects have rediscovered picturesque theory. It is *precisely because of their functional approach* that they appreciate, unlike most academic architects, that London is a product of the picturesque approach.[9]
>
> *Architectural Review, June 1945.*

Immediately following World War II, the rhetoric of how to approach the complexity of London enters into a very aggressive, transitory period of swift and radical changes. The decades between the 1940s and 1960s has become the hinge years between the beginnings of the reconstitution of a national identity and the first signs of decline in the city's industrial stability, when the nation rallies around the collective ideology of London as the model of a new and prosperous European capital.

Under the pretence of fabricating a new model of democratic and diversified urban life (one avoiding the trappings of the labyrinthine city from the nineteenth century), the immediacy with which London is re-imagined and the inherent bureaucracy of completing a vision at this scale, catalyzes the first real attempt to exorcise the ghosts of the city's darker past, using one very general and basic guideline. Having gone through the terror of the Blitz, it is generally conceived that this narrative can only be achieved without any form of *tortuous introspection*.[10] As explained further by Glass:

> *[there was] first, a considerable measure of consensus on major decisions affecting land use and the economic and social organization involved; second, a widely accepted definition of the 'public interest', in terms of which these decisions are supposed to be made; third, the conceptual, institutional and technical equipment which would enable us to apply such a definition in practice to plan-making and development control. In short, planning as an institution, and as a process, is supposed to be essentially 'rational' [...] seen resting on a demonstrable 'objectivity'.*[11]

Drawn by the architect and urban planner Patrick Abercrombie, the most infamous attempt at such objectivity is found in both the *County of London Plan* (1943) and the *Greater London Plan* (1944). The solution to a perverted landscape (as proposed in these documents) is to imagine a peaceful community grafted onto the older stock of the city;[12] to engrain the story of an opposite personality into the collective imagination of London. Ultimately, the permanent night of the Victorian city, the industrial smog of the East End Docklands, the memory of poverty and dereliction is thought to be simply and easily dreamt away, veiled from the broader consciousness of the city by promises of a cleaner and more civil society.

FIG_73:Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, becomes the contradictory model of 'rural urbanism' from which Patrick Abercrombie draws his ideological approach to refiguring London.

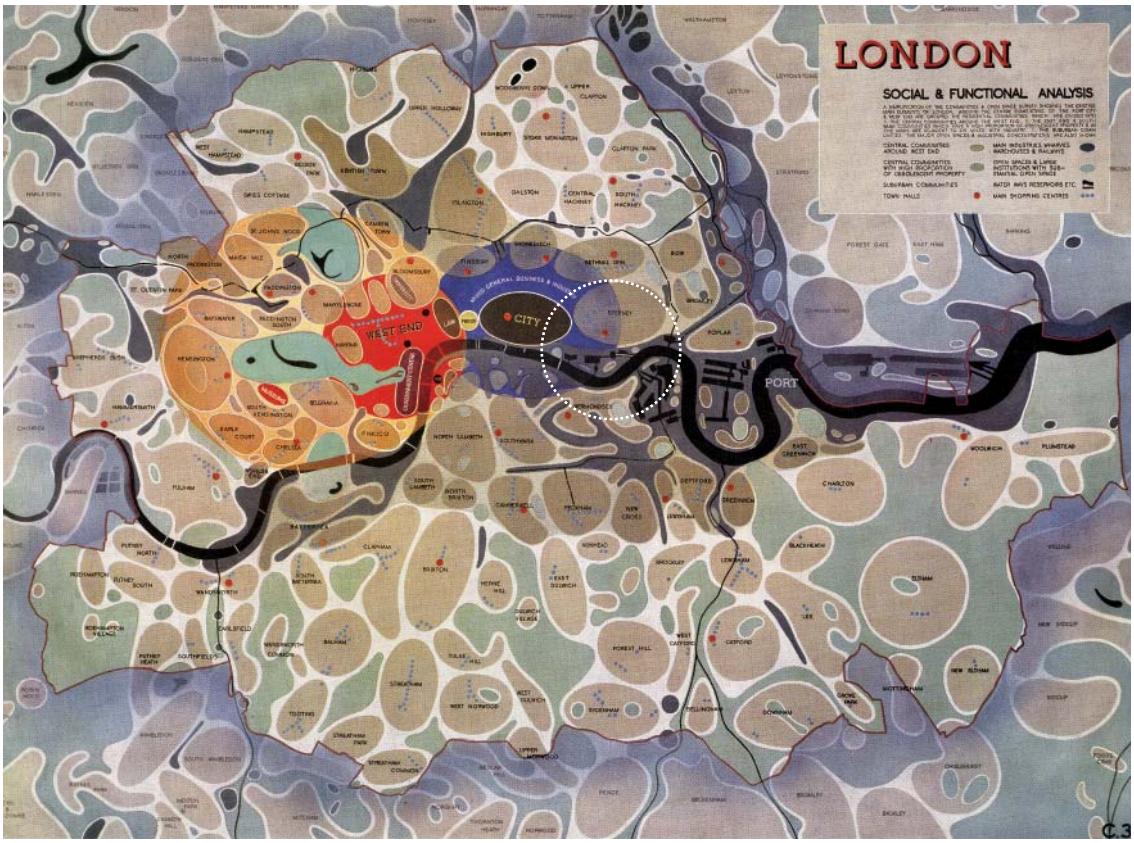


FIG_74:The social and functional analysis map of Patrick Abercrombie's 1944 *County of London Plan*. The areas that comprise Spitalfields are re-imagined as the liminal threshold between the Port lands (a vestige of London's history in shipping) and the ambiguous territory rendered in blue denoting a new '*general business and industry*' district.

Both of Abercrombie's plans rely on a very speculative utopianism, a persuasive and arguably British idea about a type of city founded on only the best of British traditions. Situated quite heavily in the ideals of his contemporary Ebenezer Howard and the *Garden City* approach to city planning, the logic borrowed for a new London by Abercrombie is that *radical hopes for a co-operative society could be fulfilled only in small communities embedded in a decentralized society.*[13] Nikolaus Pevsner, the editor of the *Architectural Review*, runs a number of articles in his magazine that promote an even stronger case for decentralization as a particularly *English* way of rebuilding the capital.[14]

The traditions of the English Picturesque offer a synthetic praxis which mixes the aesthetic image of an aggregated and diversified community with the possibilities and rationalism of a new modern society as the core recipe for a democratic London. Bound by a large green belt and interconnected with arterial infrastructures, the expansion of London is restricted while simultaneously promoting a new and contradictory model of an almost 'rural' urbanism, literally striating the typologies and cosmologies of city and country life.[15] The modern city of London, once remade can no longer sustain or project the image of the labyrinth but instead perpetuates the necessary fragmentation of its former *unbroken slab of development*[16] into smaller constellations, such that it can move through its crisis of illimitability.[17] Paradoxically, to move towards the future requires the retention of a composite fiction of the nation's own history as a collection of rural hamlets and agrarian enclaves.

The outcome of the *County of London Plan,* is that it in reality confuses that initial narrative linking the severed fragments that it promotes. It engenders the same division that it sought to prevent; a contradiction acknowledged in its opening pages:

To ignore or scrap these communities in favour of a new and theoretical sub-division of areas would be both academic and too drastic; the plan might look well on paper but it would not be London. The planning of an existing town should stimulate and correct its natural evolutionary trends. The Plan now submitted is designed to include the best of existing London, to enhance its strongly marked character, and to respect its structure and spheres of activities, but at the same time, and drastically if need be, to remedy its defects.[18]

Within that idyllic narration of reconstruction, areas of the East End industrial belt (including Spitalfields) that had long fallen into slum conditions, the tailings of the pre-modern city, become expendable in the name of progress, and social-spatial remediation (a mantra to be later repeated by Thatcher in her spirit of '*no alternative*' from the 1980s, and once more in the redevelopment of the Lea Valley in Hackney by the 2012 Olympic Organizing Committee).[19]

DYSTOPIAN LEGACIES: Between 1960 and 1990 cracks began to show in that rhetorical *communitas* of the immediate postwar period. The early presence of Brutalist architecture in the city emerges in reaction to the hybridization of modernist ideologies with those same British traditions; a reaction against the *simultaneous [and somewhat contradictory] longing for radical change and tangible continuity.*[20] For a younger, disillusioned generation of architects, the only way to thoroughly affect the modern city is to design environments that are morally transparent;

environments that rely much less on the aesthetic and politic of nationalism and are instead more honestly in touch with the harsher realities of the modern age.

But even this ideology is mutated into an aesthetic conception of the modern life. A democratized 'nuclear' urbanism envisioned by architects like the Smithsons, in their board-form concrete estates begin to metamorphose into homogenous and monolithic concrete towers; large and imposing estates designed to hold densities above and beyond the historical precedents of the East End.

> Idylls end in thunderstorms.[21]
>
> *Iain Hamilton Finlay, 1986*

It is little wonder that Ruth Glass is so critical of the practice of planning in London following the war. At the time these schemes are conceived, the city relies quite heavily on a blinding ethos of unity. Planning is seen as the institution sustained on, or rather characterized by the ability to prefabricate an objectified 'public interest', and objectified present condition. In Glass' own words, the utopian plans had not depended on facts to legitimize change, but rather *like a deus ex machina,* they project *an environment that would remould society.*[22]

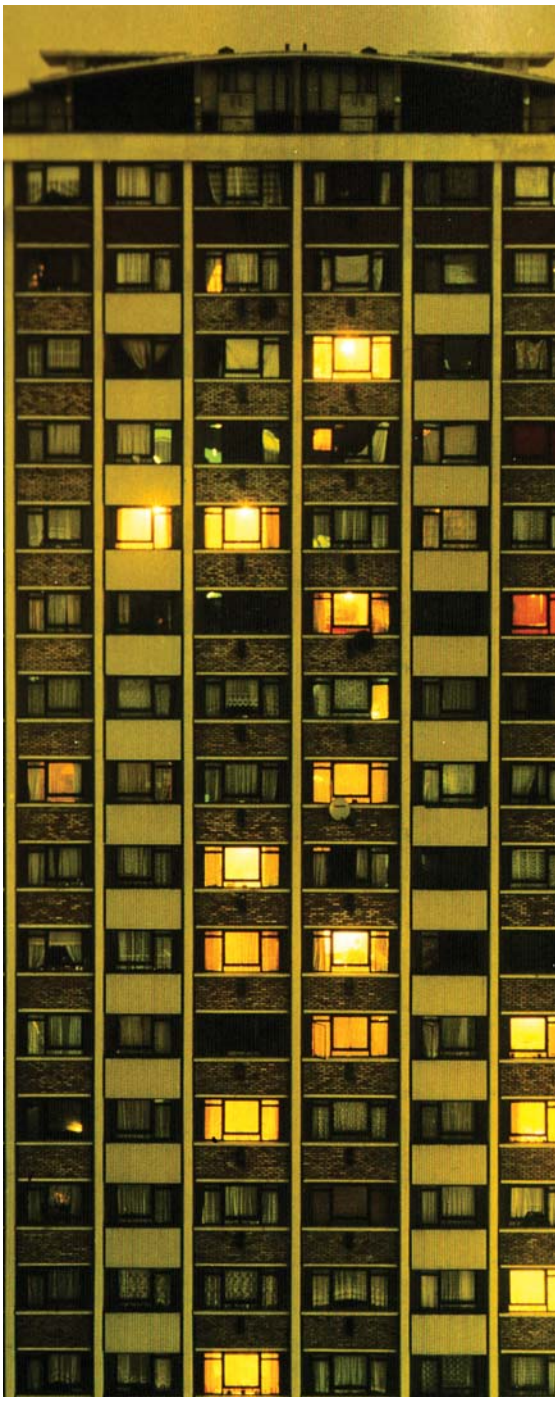
In Spitalfields and Hackney, the remedy to dereliction is much more collusive. Despite the desperate need for housing, land is purchased and held for speculation and private development. By the 1980s if residents can afford to vacate the abject conditions surrounding the market, then they are quickly directed to the adjacent boroughs.[23] It is a neglect which is telling of a major failure in the city housing strategy, in that it is an economic model which is just as susceptible to exploitation as its late nineteenth century counterparts.

Where once the intention of the projects was to maximize the social value for residents, it too mutates into a process of minimizing the overhead costs of construction. Consequently, the wilds of the Victorian 'inner city fringe', a territory that over time has developed its own intricate genetic as a way to cope with the realities of slum living, becomes dotted with, what is at first glance, a stock catalogue of equally dystopic apartment blocks. Each surrounded by an unprecedented amount of ambiguous open 'public space'; objects literally shifting the dynamic of an existing field.[24]

> In this gold-rush land-grab of flexible futures […] legacy is all important. It's like reading the will and sharing the spoils before the sick man is actually dead. 'The legacy the [Olympic] Games leaves is as important as the sporting memories,' Tony Blair said. And the legacy is: loss, visions injected straight into the eyeballs, lasting shame. We have waived this disaster through, we have colluded.[25]
>
> *Iain Sinclair, 2008*

At the bases of these towers, and along the wrought-iron and brick fences protecting one property from the other, are variations on the

FIG_75:A postwar political cartoon promoting a new rationalism for the city after hundreds of years of decline. The papers laying over the city refer to the County of London Plan by Abercrombie, and the Uthwatt report: a radial document which suggests that parcels of land should be distributed based on best possible use, and not on the market value of the property, and calls for the establishment of a national fund to compensate those who might be affected by development value fluctuations.



message of *No Ball Games* or *Warning: CCTV in Operation,* constant reminders of a marginalized urban experience, reminders of more restrictions. It is a lament of late modernism in the city: an immediate distaste for the concrete environment not only because its material solidity and homogeneity, but also because of its place in the expulsion of the mythologized *terra incognita*. The setting of Thamesmead from Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) is still stereotypically prophetic of this cultural crisis. It is an inevitability that concrete is the scapegoat for such an overwhelming and perpetual urban boredom.[26]

The legacy of some of these towers is a combination of a couple of commensurate realities. First, in a movement heavily influenced by the Conservative government's widely criticized 1980s *Housing Act* (whereby tenants were given the option to purchase the units that they occupied) there is the sustainment of substandard housing by those who can afford to maintain neither their homes nor the expensive mortgage payments. Second, that following a huge swing in the cultural demographic of the inner city areas (wards once abandoned by those seeking the peripheral suburban lifestyle), a rising middle and creative class have sought out cheaper property investments to renovate and resell, pushing once more against an immigrant and working class population. Essentially it is the universal symptom of gentrification- that ubiquitous 'death-sentence' which originated as the description of the exact same process two boroughs west in Islington- except it extends into the products of a modern experiment rather than the more romanticized warehouses and lofts of the docklands. [27]

FIG_76: Detail of *Towering Inferno*, from Rut Blees Luxemburg, *A Modern Project- London* (left)
FIG_77:Detail of *Vertiginous Exhilaration*, from Rut Blees Luxemburg, *A Modern Project- London* (right)

> Robin Hood Gardens went down in history as an utter failure. It was horrifically vandalised by its residents, and it spelled the end of its designers' international status as star architects. The Smithsons' greatest mistake may have been their exaggerated and possibly naive confidence in the capacity of architecture to provide a solution to social problems [...Charles Jencks] equated concrete with social deprivation. [...] In a mood of social pessimism, [Allison Smithson] identified a fragmentation of society and asked whether any Northern European country was still truly itself after the migration of workers to the major cities and their emancipation. She argued for a search for models that took into account this fragmentation, so that everybody could find the place that suited their deepest needs.[28]
>
> *Dirk van den Heuvel, 2003*

The other alternative is that some towers have become large monuments to a future - an optimism of the welfare state - which never fully transpired. Viewed in reproach after only forty years, they are being demolished due to neglect or inherent design flaws (as was the case with Ronan Point: a tower in east London that partially collapsed after an explo-

PLATE_33

sion compromised the precast concrete panelling system from which it was made).

The hushed objection to the demolition of the 'new' city should be seen as a further testament to the lack of a personal connection with the imposed objectivity of the modern environment, a silent protest against the rhetoric of assuming that an identity can just be so easily manipulated. What the *County of London Plan* necessarily denies is that there is a whole aspect to the city that cannot be articulated. There is some truth in suggesting that in the wake of the instability of war the existing instabilities of the city should be given face; that no matter how sincere in intention, mapping and planning are the naïve strategies repressing the image of a scarred and grotesque city. And as demonstrated in the postwar approach, this narrative is satisfied by a very selective and literal assumption of being able to *know* exactly what 'the fields' of the East End will become.

There is something more than *identity* at work here, something less known, something that goes much deeper than surfaces. The nature of the city is that the ghosts of the past cannot simply be ignored. Now in the early years of the twenty-first century, the city has once again affirmed its underlying stigma; manifested in large portions of the East End as an unspoken anxiety rendered in spalling cement, and rust stained stucco, in a landscape of fly-tipped waste, late-night pub brawls, graffiti, hash-peddlers and 'happy slapping'- a practice where gangs of youths, armed with cell phone cameras, roam the city engaging in random attacks on the public, claiming empty streets and the indifferent landscape as their territory.[29]

> ...In that Empire, the art of cartography attained such perfection that the map of a single province occupied the entirety of a city, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a province. In time, those unconscionable maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following generations, who were not so fond of the study of cartography as their forebears had been, saw that vast map was useless, and not without some pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the inclemencies of sun and winters. In the deserts of the west, still today, there are tattered ruins of that map, inhabited by animals and beggars; in all the land there is no other relic of the disciplines of geography.[30]
>
> *Jorge Luis Borges, 1972*

THE PARADOX OF BORGES: There is a famous parable written by Jorge Luis Borges titled *On Exactitude in Science* (1972) which is a single paragraph addressing the limitations of 'knowing'. In it, both the sciences of geography and cartography become such quintessential significations of an Empires culture, that a mile for mile map of all the known land is undertaken, and all at the impos-

The imaginary homogeneous time is [...] an idol of language, a fiction whose origin is easy to discover. In reality there is no one rhythm of duration; it is possible to imagine many different rhythms which, slower or faster, measure the degree of tension or relaxation of different kinds of consciousness and thereby fix their respective places in the scale of being.[31]

Henri Bergson, 1896

Exploring the unknown city is a political act: a way of bringing to urban dwellers new resources for remapping the city. Nevertheless, the unknown might resist such attempts at disclosure. It could be that what is really unknown about the city is known all along. Indeed, sometimes the discovery of the unknown can be quickly repressed.[32]

Steve Pile, 2001

FIG_78: Detail of *09.08.2001-07.06.2004,* Museum of Modern Art, New York City, Michael Wesely (left)
FIG_79:Detail of *27.09.1997-13.12.1998,* Potzdamer Platz, Berlin, Michael Wesely (right)

sible scale of 1:1. But despite a rigorous investment in complete accuracy, the map is an artefact which is abandoned upon its completion. In approaching perfection of detail at every level, it is inevitably illustrating its own immediate redundancy. It can never maintain its accuracy.

And while the image of the tattered ruin with which Borges concludes (a ruin *inhabited by animals and beggars [... to which] there is no other relic of the discipline of geography*) might at first suggest the abandonment of an act of monumental construction, in this tattered state the map opens itself up to constant reconstruction from memory. It indirectly addresses fragmentation and '*unknowing*' as establishing a more complete understanding of the latent flux of the empire, while simultaneously allowing for the missing parameter of the passage of time.

Conceptually, the work of the German photographer Michael Wesely is an attempt to visually register such a state of being; approaching the city *over* time (and thereby accounting for something that the map of the empire could not). Although the photograph typically affords an ability to render in perfect detail an instantaneous and exact likeness of its subject, Wesely's chronicling of construction work in Podsdamer Platz, Berlin (1997-1999) and his MoMA series *Open Shutter* from New York City (2001-2003) are both examples of a particular technique expanding this by using an unprecedented length of exposure.

In both of these series, the camera is required to blink only once after a two and three year period respectively. As comprehensive illustrations, each example contains within it aspects of simultaneity, allowing the mundane elements of construction, pieces we take for granted (the

scaffolding, rebar, exposure to the elements) to be expressed at the same time. Essentially, the reading of 'architecture' (or what we physically categorize as architecture) becomes ghosted as an illusory veil. The city in this state is fragile, in a state of crisis between being and becoming.

These, as with his own earlier experiments in portraiture (which use a similar process) are works *[provoking] the possibility of a more complete likeness- one that would reveal not just what his subject looked like, but what it would have been like to be in [its] presence.*[33] But in the same way that the map of a space at the scale of 1:1 is limited by the paradox of being necessarily unfaithful to the original, or the city of London being unable to expel the traces of its darker self through rational planning, each photograph is too ultimately limited in its capacity to illustrate the duration of its subject matter in its totality, no matter how long the exposure.[34] The reality of both the Potzdamer Platz and MoMA series is that the fixed gaze of each lens simply collects a thicker fraction of time. Each plate is still only a selective fragment of knowing what the city had been.

To *unknow* those same places, that is a strange but pertinent metaphysic to conclude on in this attempt to come to terms with the nature of Spitalfields. In his theological teachings, St. John of the Cross evokes *unknowing* as an apophatic paradox -the *Via Negativa* or negative theological process- of ascending through levels of the material world into a union with something of the *highest science.*[35] By interrogating all the things that are categorically *not* God, one might in theory be closer to an ineffable understanding of the presence of God:

The limits of our usual consciousness are not necessarily the limits of all consciousness; the limits of what one person finds intelligible or real are not the limits of intelligibility or reality […] where we have no rational understanding of something, or are unable to fully describe or explain it, we can nonetheless experience it, and the experience- and a certain type of 'knowledge' gained from it- can be strikingly real.[36]

As opposed to simply *not knowing* or an expression of the *unknown*, a secular definition of *unknowing* is more to the effect of: a complex state recognizing the simultaneous presence of space and an unabstracted passing of time. It is a synthetic expression of both concept and affect and the inarticulateable process of operating within that experiential moment of crisis between them.

I came into the unknown
And stayed there unknowing
Rising beyond all science.

I did not know the door
But when I found the way,
Unknowing where I was,
I learned enormous things,
But what I felt I cannot say,
For I remained unknowing,
Rising beyond all science. […]

I was so far inside,
So dazed and far away
My senses were released
From feelings of my own.
My mind had found a surer way:
A knowledge by unknowing,
Rising beyond all science.[37]

St. John of the Cross, 1542-1591

...so when a message as ambiguous and open ended as '*this will all be fields again*' is found scratched into the pavement of the Old Spitalfields Market, providing a way into the unfolding of the sites pasts and futures, an invitation into the unknowing of the city is made available to those who might take it on. And it involves one simple task: find the latent connectivity between the different fields, simply look for what is still missing...

PLATE_34

afterword__
fields

Getting lost is what you do- it is what the dawdler does when he is in no way lost; when he know exactly where he is going and how to get there. Getting lost and the creation of the labyrinth is the work done when there is an object of desire. You get lost because you are not lost. So at first we can say; we are lost when there is no object of desire, and we make ourselves lost when there is an object of desire. We get lost. It is what we do.

Adam Phillips, 2010.

This investigation began with a very simple intention: I wanted to write about a particular photograph that (at the very least to me) told an incredibly compelling story about a small neighbourhood in London, and in turn make it the core of an architectural intervention. Operating for the longest time under one simple assumption – that it would be possible to synthesize a huge array of variables at work in the neighbourhood into a comprehensive artefact – I hoped that I would be able to easily and beautifully craft an architectural response to parameters pulled from the site of the Old Spitalfields Market. But deciding exactly what to respond to became problematic.

The conflict that occurs in the neighbourhood is not a simple division. It is a field of charged realities. Therefore, from my original assumption onward it became evidently clear that that a traditional response of designing a building would not be appropriate, instead I would have to invest my energy in trying to simply *know* the place. This in reality became my obsession, and is something that I am still in (and I think will always be in) the process of pursuing. The need to articulate the relationship that I have formed to Spitalfields over the last several years has become, in effect, my *object of desire;* it has brought me to that point of becoming lost.

Through this same realization, I have come to recognize for myself that there is something beautiful in the idea of the built world being only half the picture of architecture. The notion of urban fatalism to which Hugo alludes in the opening pages of *Notre Dame de Paris* suggests to me that there is something absolutely fragile about the level of assurance that we embed into it, simply because it is physical and real and tangible.

In response, this thesis became a rhetorical questioning of those *fields* that lay somewhere beyond what might be generalized as 'context.'

But to offer a concretized and personal definition of the word 'field' is something that, even now, I am still ambivalent about doing. To be truthful, I think that it is an impossible task due to the ambiguous nature of what the word implies.

As a spatial metaphor, a field is where elements collect into an array of potential relationships. A field is the ground on which something effable and common materializes from conditions that are otherwise ineffable. *The nature of the relationship [between objects and the spaces between]* is, as suggested by the architectural theorist Dalibor Vesely, *a world which is always present as a latent world waiting for articulation*."[1] Likewise there is an aspect to a field that is infinite, that operates in the realm of experience and instinct. As a temporal metaphor, it is into the field that we actively search for those connections, where we go to look for answers.

What this thesis became is a struggle to realize the two, to manifest the field as both concept and affect. What it provides is four attempts at approaching the mysterious fields to which the message in the slickened pavement referred as both a spatial and temporal condition, as a place in-between. Each became an investigation of Spitalfields as it exists in the present, past, future and in an anachronistic fourth position somewhere both *inside* and *outside* of time respectively. By no means do the chapters exist exclusively of each other, they are instead mutually supportive.

Likewise, every one of my images and photographs offered in this work become an attempt to visualize the process of getting between those different realms; to not just simply record evidence of the neighbourhood's content, but more importantly register the conditions that might be strangely familiar to all the different extremes of Spitalfields. Both brick and glass.

Sometime ago I was given an incredible piece of advice: that in the moments when I found myself most questioning the purpose of my research, I should start writing about why that was. Ultimately that has evolved into a way of talking about the physical realities of the neighbourhood in the hopes of revealing or addressing its inarticulateable and uncanny qualities.

In the end this is what fascinates me about paradox of architecture as a process. That within the designing of the material world, we invariably search for something immaterial; that there is always a hidden incompleteness to what we do.

Architecture, it would seem, might just be the agency which both permits us to and inevitably keeps us lost.

endnotes_

THIS WILL ALL BE FIELDS AGAIN:

1. Victor Hugo and John Sturrock, *Notre Dame de Paris*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1978), 25.

THE NECESSITY OF FICTION:

1. Iain Sinclair, *City of disappearances*. (London, Hamish Hamilton, 2006), 5

2. Ole Bouman and Roemer van Toorn. *The Invisible in architecture*. (London: Academy Editions, 1994), 200.

3. The term cosmopoietics is here used in a literal translation from the Greek for '*world-making*', taken in context from an essay on the relationship between the act of representation and the medium through which a representation occurs by Marco Frescari : *Architecture is then a cosmopoietic representation that trades between the 'idios kosmos' (the combination of individual reality and private dreams) and the 'koinos kosmos' a shared reality coalescing in dreams that all of us share. This joining of individual and shared realities restricts and modifies assessments, and result in a denial of the line separating past, present and future, since architectural translation is an elegant event within the multiple interacting temporal spheres of cosmopoiesis* . See Marco Frascari, "Lines as Architectural Thinking," Architectural Theory Review 14, no.3 (2009), 200–212.

4. David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope: California Studies in critical human geography, 7*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 185.

5. Ted Hughes and William Scammell, *Winter Pollen: Occasional prose*. (New York: Picador USA, 1995), 138-139.

6. This is the same realization shared by Mark Wigley of Columbia University, who determines that which we call crises are simply *the failure of a spatial system*. It is the lack of boundaries, and is as such an architectural problem. But he rightly admits *that they are also ultimately productive, they force invention*. Furthermore, *declaring a crisis is declaring that the limit of a problem is not clear and that a radical intervention needs to be done in the hope of re-establishing limits*. See. Mark Wigley, "Space in Crisis," *C-Lab Columbia Laboratory for Architectural Broadcasting*. http://c-lab.columbia.edu/0158.html (accessed May 15, 2010)

7. Bertolt Brecht, *Saint Joan of the stockyards: a drama*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969). 59.

8. Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubio, ed. Sarah Whiting, *Differences: topographies of contemporary architecture. Writing architecture*.(Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1997), 23.

9. E. A. Grosz, *Architecture from the outside: essays on virtual and real space*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2001), 93.

10. H. V. Morton, *H.V. Morton's London: being The heart of London, The spell of London and The nights of London*. (London: Methuen, 1949), 307.

11. Julian Wolfreys. *Writing London: the Trace of the Urban Text from Blake to Dickens*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan,1998). 4.

12. From an excerpt written by Dickens. See. W.H. Wills, *Old Leaves: Gathered from household words*. (London, Chapman and Hall, 1860), 233-234.

13. Crystal Downing. "Architecture as synecdoche: A poetics of trace". *Pacific Coast Philology* 23, no.2 (Nov. 1988), 13-21.

14. *Roma,* prod. Turi Vasile, dir. Frederico Fellini. 128 min. MGM Home Entertainment, 2007 [1972]. DVD

15. Iain Sinclair. "A city revised: purple clouds and ladders of glass." In *Gritty Brits: New London architecture*, ed. University of California, Santa Barbara, 19-23 (Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, 2008), 23.

16. Iain Sinclair and Oona Grimes, *Hackney, That Rose-red Empire: a Confidential Report*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2009), 51.

17 . Pamela K. Gilbert. *Imagined Londons*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 1.

18. Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974), 9.

THRESHOLDS:

1. Gaston Bachelard, ed. M. Jolas, *The Poetics of Space*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 215.

2. Ibid. 224.

3. In the actual plan the phrasing is for *integration with the surroundings and respect of the characteristics of their locality*. See. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, "London's Great Outdoors," http:// www.london.gov.uk/greatoutdoors/docs/londons-great-outdoors.pdf (accessed May 05,2010)

4. Bachelard , 215.

5. Bachelard references a lecture given by the French Philosopher Jean Hyppolite in which he states: *you feel the full significance of this myth [of outside and inside] in alienation, which is founded on these two terms. Beyond what is expressed in their formal opposition lie alienation and hostility between the two.* See. Bachelard, 212.

6. Sigmund Freud,. *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, trans. W. J. H. Sprott. Great Books of the Western World, Volume 54* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952 [1932]), 770.

7. Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "synecdoche"

8. *Synecdoche, New York*, prod. Anthony Bregman, Spike Jonze, Charlie Kaufman, Sidney Kimmel., dir. Charlie Kaufman, 104 min, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2008

9. Jonathan Raban, *Soft City*. (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1974), 24.

10. *Mise en Abyme* is a French term referring to the recurrence of an image within itself. It is also known as the Droste effect in modern connotations in reference to the original packaging Droste brand Cacao from the Netherlands, which depicts a nun holding a tray supporting a box on which a nun is holding a tray etc. Translated to Cotard's film it is the warehouse containing a replica of New York City, containing a warehouse which contains a replica of New York City, etc.

11. In the introduction to Civilization and its Discontents, Freud adds to his fantasy about the mental simultaneity of Rome's historical fragments that an observer in this scenario would *need to merely shift the focus of his eyes, in order to call up a view of either one [fragment] or the other.* In Kaufman's film, Cotard is almost forced into such a position as each successive New York City is created. See, Freud, 770.

12. In a lecture titled "Multiplicity", Italo Calvino writes that Proust, in writing À la Recherché du Temps Perdu, was unable to end his book *because of its density and organic vitality, [because] the world expands until it can no longer be grasped, and knowledge, for Proust, is attained by suffering this intangibility.* Similarly, Caden is unable to learn anything from his play until he suffers through the splitting of himself into simultaneous selves. The difference between synecdoche and multiplicity however, is that the former is a representation of the layer of multiple meaning and expresses them in a singular body or metaphor .See, Italo Calvino, *Six memos for the next millennium*. The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, 1985-86(New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 110.

13. Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió and Sarah Whiting, *Differences: topographies of contemporary architecture. Writing architecture.*(Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1997), 111.

14. The idea of comparative duration is a concept drawn from an earlier reading of Henri Bergson's Matter and Memory, wherein he talks about the imperceptibility of red light-waves *and the relative time it would take to separate the vibrations sufficiently to allow our consciousness to count them or at to record explicitly their succession, and we should then have to inquire how many days or months or years this succession would occupy […]Thus the sensation of red light, experienced by us in the course of a second, corresponds in itself to a succession of phenomena which, separately distinguished in our duration with the greatest possible economy of time, would occupy more than 250 centuries of our history.* See Henri Bergson, Nancy Margaret Paul, and William Scott Palmer. *Matter and memory.* (New York: Zone Books, 1988.), 205-06.

15. Julian Wolfreys summarizes this politic of the brick city in an interpretation of the poem London by William Blake. He calls the work '*ideophantasmic*', meaning it invokes simultaneously the idiomatic (the figurative meaning), the ideological (the cultural implication) and the phantasmal (the mythical) qualities of the early industrial city. Just as Blake's poem is a city text which tries to express in totality the beginnings of industrialism, so too does brick contain an ideophantasmic quality by retaining a contest of histories. See. Julian Wolfreys, *Writing London*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998.), 36.

16. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of memory.* (London: Verso, 1994), 119.

17. F. J. Terence Maloney, *Glass in the modern world; a study in materials development*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 10.

18. Edgar D. Zanotto, "Do Cathedral Glasses Flow?", *American Journal of Physics 66* (May 1998), 392-396.

19. Juhani Pallasmaa, *The eyes of the skin: architecture and the senses*. (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 31-32.

20. Noted by Michael White: The 'prima materia' was *the holy spirit of alchemy, the essence that lay at the heart of matter, the spirit pervading the material, and it had to be released from 'dead, inter, metals via transmutation*. See. Michael White, *Isaac Newton: the last sorcerer.* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley,1997), 142.

21. Iain Sinclair. "A city revised: purple clouds and ladders of glass." In *Gritty Brits: New London architecture*, ed. University of California, Santa Barbara, 19-23 (Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, 2008), 23.

THE BRICK LABYRINTH:

1. Neil Leach, *Camouflage*. (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 29.

2. Marcus Binny, and Judith Haywood, "Are Spitalfields Georgian Homes Under Threat Again?" *Property News & Features, Times* Online, October 9, 2009, http://property.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/property/buying_and_selling/article6865899.ece (accessed June 10, 2010)

3. Elizabeth Ellsworth, P*laces of learning: media - architecture - pedagogy.* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge,2005), 67.

4. The survey of London is a branch of English Heritage that maintains records and the official architectural history of the city. See. Jane M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Post colonialism and the City.* (London: Routledge, 1996), 75.

5. Robert Tavernor, "Visual and cultural sustainability: The impact of tall buildings on London" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 83, no.1 (Nov 2007), 7.

6. Planning and Social Development Committee, *Accommodating Change: Listed Buildings Serving London* (London, Planning and Social Development Committee, 2007), 7.

7. See table 8.3 "Listed Building Categories in the UK", in J. B Cullingworth and Vincent Nadin, *Town and country planning in the UK*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 241.

8. It is highly unlikely, for example that the Hawksmoor church will be ever torn down or re-appropriated in the way that other buildings in Spitalfields have.

9. Patrick Wright, *A Journey through ruins; the last days of London*. (London:Radius, 1991), 119.

10. Marc W, Steinberg, *Fighting Words: working class formation, collective action, and discourse in early nineteenth century England*. (Ithica, NY; Cornell University Press, 1999), 45.

11. H.J Dyos and D.A Reeder, "Slums and Suburbs" in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities Vol. 1*, ed H.J Dyos and Michael Wolfe, 359-86 (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1973), 326.

12. Dyos and Reeder. "Slums and Suburbs", 326.

13. It was the railways that had opened a new phase in brick manufacture and supply, facilitating the rapid, cheap transport of bricks made from new sources of clay. See. David C Goodman and Colin Chant. *European cities & technology: industrial to post-industrial city. The cities and technology series*. (London: Routledge in association with the Open University, 1999), 87-90.

14. Additionally, a summons published in The Builder reported that in one case: *the defendant, instead of using mortar compounded of lime one part and sand three parts, a very inferior substitute had been used, composed mainly of vegetable soil, slightly charred by the process of burning bricks upon the ground. He had complained that the good sand, with which the neighbourhood abounded, had been dug out and sent away, instead of being used in the buildings […].* See. John Woodforde, *Bricks to build a house*. (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976), 95-98.

15. The name *Four Per Cent Industrial Dwellings Company Limited* refers to the method of funding the development of workers tenement housing. Shares were sold to individuals who were guaranteed a return of at least 4% on their investment.

16. Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block. 1887-1920. History Workshop Series*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 32.

17. P.J. Keating "Fact and Fiction in the East End" in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities Vol. 2*, ed. H.J Dyos and Michael Wolfe, 585-602. (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1973), 593.

18. John Nelson Tarn, *Five per cent philanthropy; an account of housing in urban areas between 1840 and 1914.* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 88-89

19. Charlie Forman. *Spitalfields: A Battle for Land*. (London: Hillary Shipman, 1989), 56.

20. Ibid.56

21. Iqbal Wahab, "Trouble is brewing in Banglatown" *Features*, The Sunday Times, August 20, 1989,

22. Jane M. Jacobs. "Cultures of the Past and Urban Transformation: The Spitalfields Market Redevelopment in East London" in *Inventing Places: Studies in Cultural Geography* ed. Kay Anderson and Fay Gale, 194-211 (Melbourne, Australia: Longman Cheshire, 1992), 201.

23. From Jacobs analysis of the Trust's reaction to the market hall, The redevelopment came to be seen as an opportunity in the Trust's ongoing efforts to transform Spitalfields into a restored monument to early Georgian London and to rid the area of a local feature which was seen as increasingly incongruent with this vision. See. Ibid, 202.

24. Wright, 118.

25. What squatting also afforded the Trust was the time required to secure funding to purchase the properties that they sought to protect. Additionally operating as a charitable organization, they were able to also purchase the buildings at a significantly reduced cost.

26. Ellsworth, 67.

27. Peter, Ackroyd, *London: a Biography*. (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 2000), 545.

28. Rem Koolhaas, "Preservation is Overtaking Us," *Future Anterior* 1, no. 2 (2004), 1-4.

29. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and simulation*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 47.

30. Wright, 119.

GLASS WALLS:

1. Iain Sinclair. "A city revised: purple clouds and ladders of glass." In *Gritty Brits: New London architecture*, ed. University of California, Santa Barbara, 19-23 (Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, 2008), 19.

2. Hugh J. Gayler, *Geographical Excursions in London*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 24.

3. Sinclair, 23.

4. Hans Ibelings, *Supermodernism: architecture in the age of globalization*. (Rotterdam: NAi, 1998), 133.

5. Antoine Picon, "Glass at the limits, " in *Engineered transparency: the technical, visual, and spatial effects of glass*. Ed. Michael Bell, and Jeannie Kim. 69-71 (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009). 71

6. Detlef Mertins. "The enticing and threatening face of prehistory: Walter Benjamin and the utopia of glass." In Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project. Walter Benjamin studies series, ed. Beatrice Hanssen, 225-39 (London: Continuum, 2006), 230.

7. Ibid, 235.

8. Seminal projects like Paul Scheerbart and Bruno Taut's *Glasshouse* (1914) rely on the literal illumination afforded by glass as a metaphor for the transcendence of modern culture into a new age of glass architecture. According to the art historian Rosemarie Haag Bletter: *At the outset of [Scheerbart's] career in the 1890s […] crystalline architecture is introduced as the metaphor of individual transcendence. But in his writings of the early zoth century (Scheerbart died in 1915) this symbolism is less solipsistic. As his proposals for glass structures grow more architectonic, there is a concurrent increase in these buildings' flexibility. Scheerbart describes a mobile glass architecture of rotating houses, buildings that can be raised and lowered from cranes, floating and airborne structures, and even a city on wheels. This interest in the literal flexibility of architecture is further augmented by the suggestion of apparent motion through the use of constantly changing lights, reflecting pools of water, mirrors placed near buildings, or glass floors which reveal the movement of waves and fish of a lake below […] Such actual and apparent transformations of glass and crystal architecture-terms used interchangeably by Scheerbart-in his later works come to stand for the metamorphosis of the whole society, an anarchist society, which through its exposure to this new architecture, has been lifted from dull awareness to a higher mode of sensory experience and from political dependence to a liberation from all institutions*. See. Rosemarie Haag Bletter, "The Interpretation of the Glass Dream- Expressionist Architecture and the History of the Crystal Metaphor" in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 40, no. 1 (1981), 20-43.

9. Andrew H. Miller, *Novels behind glass: commodity culture and Victorian narrative*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

10. Michael Wiggington, *Glass in Architecture*. (London, Phaidon, 1996), 42.

11. Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian glassworlds: glass culture and the imagination 1830-1880*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 133.

12. The British architect Brent Richards calls this a polemic of *constructing with light* and *lightness of construction*, and it is a dualism which has dominated the modernist approach to constructing with glass. See. Brent Richards and Dennis Gilbert, *New Glass Architecture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 15-17.

13. Colin Rowe, Robert Slutzky and Bemhard Hoesli. *Transparency*. (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1997), 22.

14. This shift is noted by the geographer Chris Hamnett: *as the importance of manufacturing industry has declined so to the physical infrastructure of industrial production and good distribution developed in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century has become increasingly redundant. At the same time, the requirement of post-industrial production and consumption have led to a demand for new types of space, both commercial and residential*. See. Chris Hamnett, *Unequal City: London in the global arena*. (London: Routledge, 2003), 6.

15. Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern architecture and the reconstruction in Britain*. (London: Routledge, 2002), 255.

16. Ibid. 253.

17. Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel, *The singular object of architecture*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 61.

18. According to David Harvey: *the fundamental mission of the neo-liberal state is to create a 'good business climate' and therefore to optimize conditions for capital accumulation no matter what the consequences for employment or social well being. This contrasts with the social democratic state that is committed to full employment and the optimization of the well-being of all its citizens subject to the condition of maintaining adequate and stable rates of capital accumulation*. See. David Harvey, *Spaces of global capitalism*. (London: Verso, 2006), 17

19. In 1981 the London Docklands Development Corporation is given license to amass property along the Thames towards the Isle of Dogs in hopes of reinvigorating the local and national economy through the immigration of international business. But in reality, *development activities were focused almost exclusively on the creation of office space for City firms and very expensive waterside housing developments for their employees*. See. Ash Amin, Angus Cameron, and Ray Hudson, Placing the social economy. Contemporary political economy series. (London: Routledge, 2002), 95.

20. Harvey, *Spaces of global capitalism*, 25

21. Juhani Pallasmaa, *The eyes of the skin: architecture and the senses*. (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005)

22. Andy Thornly, *The crisis of London*. (London: Routledge, 1992), 149.

23. Martin Pawley, *Terminal Architecture*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), 57.

24. Ibid, 58.

25. David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope: California Studies in critical human geography, 7*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 185.

26. Thornely, 80.

27. Alan Warwick Palmer. *The East End: four centuries of London life*. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 173.

UNKNOWING:

1. Thomas de Quincey and William Sharp, *Confessions of an English opium-eater.*(London, W. Scott Publishing Co., 1886), 60.

2. T. S. Eliot and Lawrence S. Rainey, *The annotated waste land with Eliot's contemporary prose.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 59.

3. F.S. Schwarzbach, "Terra Incognita: An Image of the City in English Literature, 1820-1855" in *The Art of Travel: Essays* on Travel ed. Phillip Dodd (London, England; Frank Cass. 1982), 61.

4. Ibid, 84.

5. Lewis Mumford *The culture of cities.* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1938), 4.

6. Friedrich Engles and Victor Kiernan, *The condition of the working class in England.* (London, Penguin Books, 1987), 68.

7. The reference to "weakness" is based on the philosophy of Gianni Vattimo, alluded to by Ignasi de Sola Morales' in his essay *Weak Architecture*. Morales proposes the term *'weak architecture' as a diagonal cut, slanting, not exactly as a generational section but as an attempt to detect in apparently quite diverse situations a constant that seems to me to uniquely illuminate the present juncture. The interpretation of the crisis of the modern project can only be effected from what Nietzsche called 'the death of God'; that is to say, from the disappearance of any kind of absolute reference that might in some way coordinated, or 'close' the system of our knowledgeand our values at the point at which we articulate these in a global vision of reality.* See. Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió ed. Sarah Whiting, *Differences: topographies of contemporary architecture*. Writing architecture.(Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1997), 58.

8. Ruth Glass, *Clichés of urban doom and other essays*, (Oxford [England]: B. Blackwell, 1989), 133.

9. This appears in the article "The English Planning Tradition in the City" from the June 1945 edition of the Architectural Review, but is borrowed from: Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern architecture and the reconstruction in Britain*. (London: Routledge, 2002), 255

10. Glass, 161.

11. Glass, 159.

12. George Nicholson, "The Rebirth of Community Planning," in *The Crisis of London*, by Andy Thornley (London: Routledge, 1992), 119.

13. Howard's vision was a hybridized system of planning which took its foundation in the traditions of the rural village but maintained the prosperity of the industrial town. For London this became the precedent for the New Town legislation in twentieth century Britain; legislation that literally prescribed the creation of new enclaves in the outer ring of the city. See. Robert Fishman, *Urban utopias in the twentieth century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier.* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 37.

14. Bullock, 35.

15. The architectural response to the city plan was equally sociological, but just as structured and rationalized. The 'street-scene' became the unifying trope through which those enclaves could be further broken down in scale. Examples such as Robert and Allison Smithson's proposal for the housing projects *Golden Lane Estate* (1952) in the East End of the City, and the late built *Robin Hood Garden* (1966-72) on the Isle of Dogs both perpetuate this type of 'nuclear' thinking by implementing an elevated street typology instead of the typical corridor. It was naïvely believed that the *comprehension of the city's structure through its patterns of movement* was the way to achieve flux and chance, facilitated through the careful and deliberate choreography of social interactions. See. Alison Margaret Smithson and Peter Smithson. *The charged void--architecture*. (New York: Monacelli Press, 2001.), 83.

16. John Henry Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie, *County of London plan*. (London: Macmillan and Co. limited, 1943), 2.

17. At the time this plan was seen as quite revolutionary because it was a direct and opposite response to the negative aspects of both London's recent and prolonged history. But that act of self destruction (mutilation) is interesting to hold in parallel with the aforementioned idea of crisis in architecture given by Mark Wigley. He describes architecture as the process of establishing limits in a moment of crisis, stating: *crisis management is the attempt to maintain the integrity of a system under radical threat by producing the effect of emergency rather than crisis, the effect of an urgent but contained problem, which is to say, the effect of a defined and stable space. Architecture is essentially a fiction of containment*. See. Mark Wigley, "Space in Crisis," *C-Lab Columbia Laboratory for Architectural Broadcasting.* http://c-lab.columbia.edu/0158.html (accessed May 15, 2010)

18. Forshaw and Abercrombie, 3.

19. In the Abercrombie plan, *working class areas were to be rebuilt with a mixture of houses and widely spaced high-rise flats with large open spaces in between…in all, 1900 acres of the East End were to be razed to the ground. This wasn't a bomb site like Dresden or Tokyo. In Abercrombie`s special study of Shoreditch, only 6 percent of the housing was irreparably bomb damaged. For Abercrombie, all working class housing was unfit to live in and had to be wiped off the face of London.* Charlie Forman. *Spitalfields: A Battle for Land.* (London: Hillary Shipman, 1989), 16.

20. Katherine Shonfield, *Walls have feelings: architecture, film, and the city.* (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.

21. Finaly's work consists of the title statement written in acrylic lettering the gallery wall. See. Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Idylls End In Thunderstorms*, London, Tate Britain (1986).

22. Glass, 167

23. Forman, 92.

24. And all of this too while the city continued its expansion. According to Chris Hamnett: *the interwar years saw the contining rapid outward expansion of London, primarily in the form of speculatively built owner-occupied suburban houses around a privately rented nineteenth-century core. The scale of this expansion was remarkable (Johnson, 1964; Jackson, 1974; Jenkins, 1975) and the area of Greater London doubled between the wars. This was the era of John Betjeman's 'Metroland' and it saw the development of a 'semi-detached London' unlike the terraced houses of Inner London.* See. Chris Hamnett, *Unequal City: London in the global arena.* (London: Routledge, 2003), 132-33.

25. Iain Sinclair, "The Olympics Scam," *London Review of Books* 30, no.12 (June 2008), 17-23

26. This is a reaction to concrete that Mark Kingwell has called *of the urban moment […] not wrong, exactly, just one sided. In the right setting, Brutalism has its own particular appeal, and sometimes bunker-style institutions or looming office buildings are just what we want in a hard-bitten urban landscape*. See, Mark Kingwell, *Concrete reveries: consciousness and the city* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), 4-5.

27. The idea of the 'death-sentence' is just a way to articulate my own frustration with the unsolvable paradox of neighbourhood identity that results from the process of gentrification. The nature of the Housing Act means that the physical structure of the council estate would appear dilapidated while intermittent interiors become fashionable dwellings with high resale value. Like the destruction of the message in the pavement, I was also involved in this process through with my brief residency in an overhauled council flat in Bertolt Lubetkin's *Dorset Estate* (1951-57), on Diss St. in South Hackney.

28. Dirk van den Heuvel, "Recolonising the Modern: Robin Hood Gardens Today." *Architecture is not made with the brain: the labour of Alison and Peter Smithson. Architecture landscape urbanism, 9.* by Pamela Johnston, Rosa Ainley, and Clare Barrett, 30-37 (London: Architectural Association, 2005), 32-33.

29. Thought to have originated in south London, happy slapping is a modern fad where gangs of teens armed with camera phones and enormous amounts of aggression engage in random attacks while being filmed. The video is then uploaded and distributed across the internet for entertainment. In 2005, David Morely was attacked and killed at random by four teens in South London, who filmed the event on personal phones. See. Chris Summers, "Violent Path of 'Happy Slapping'," *BBC NEWS | News Front Page*, January 23 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4478318.stm (accessed June 09, 2010)

30. Jorge Luis Borges, *A universal history of infamy.* (New York, Dutton, 1972), 139.

31. Henri Bergson, Nancy Margaret Paul, and William Scott Palmer. *Matter and memory.* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 207.

32. Steve Pile, "The Un(known) City…or, an Urban Geography of What Lies Buried below the Surface." In *The Unknown City: Contesting architecture and social space*" ed. Iain Borden, Joe Kerr, Jane Rendell and Alicia Pivaro, 262-279 (Cambridge Mass., London: MIT Press, 2001), 264.

33. Although here Hermanson Meister is making specific reference to Wesely's early work with pin-hole portraiture, his technique (still evident in his current ethos) comes as a reaction to photography as a means of capturing the 'single' moment of an event. See. Michael Wesely and Sarah Hermanson Meister, *Open Shutter.* (New York: Museum of Modern Art: Distributed by D. A. P., New York, 2004), 10.

34. This is if we are to understand the concept of duration as suggested by Bergson in the mid-twentieth century; *as a continuation of what no longer exists into what does exist*. In this continuum, it is the memory and the imagination which fabricate our perception and awareness of the material world. See Henri. Bergson, trans. Leon Jacobson. *Duration and Simultaneity: With reference to Einstein's Theory.* (New York City: Bobs-Merril Company, 1965), 49.

35. Willis Barnstone, *To touch the sky: poems of mystical, spiritual & metaphysical light*. (New York: New Directions, 1999), 181.

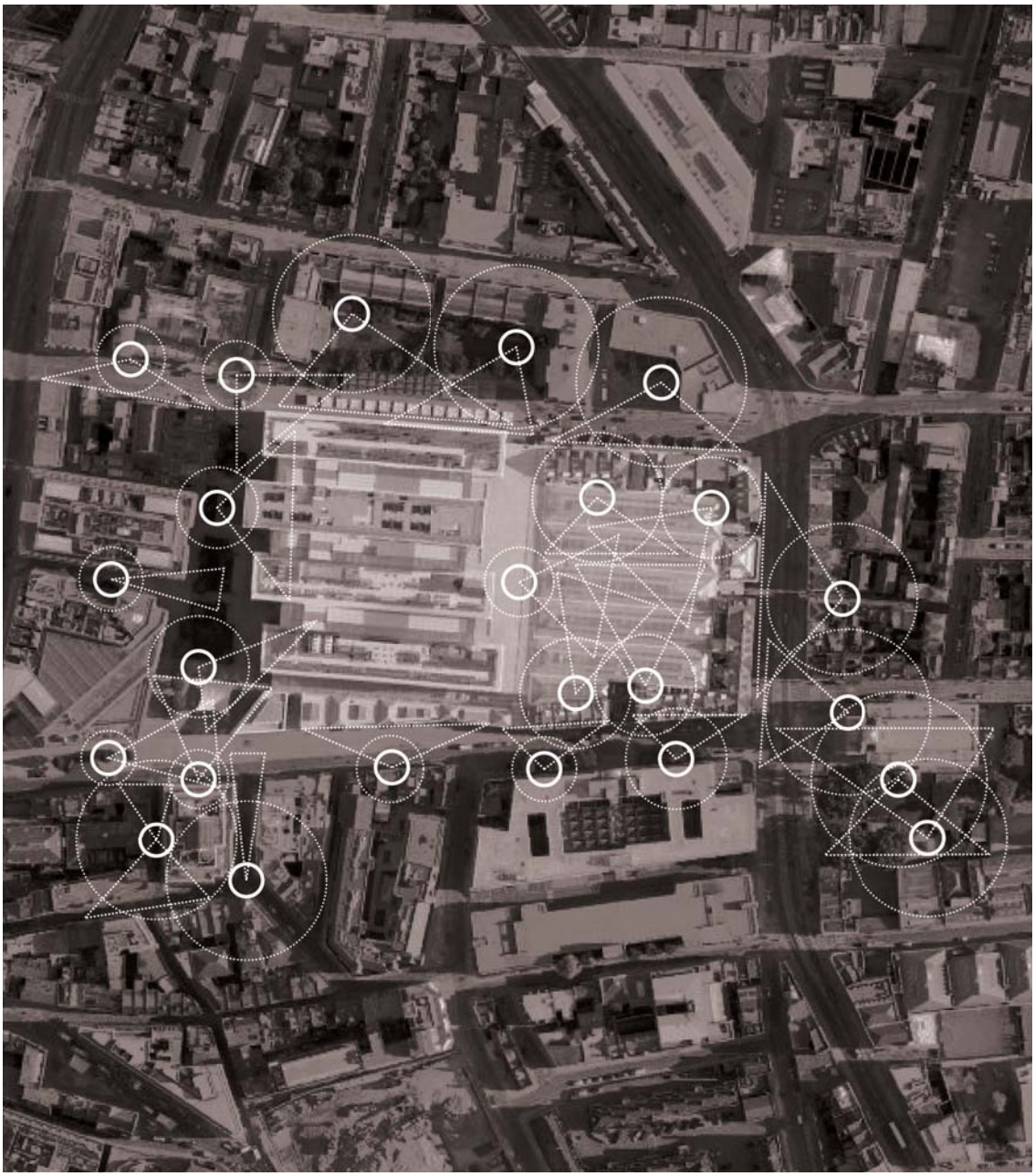
36. Green, Deirdre. 1986. "St. John of the Cross and Mystical 'Unknowing'". *Religious Studies*. 22, no.1 (1986), 29-40.

37. Barnestone 182.

AFTERWORD:

1. Adam Philips, "On Losing and being lost again", *AA Files* 59 (2010), 12-17.

2. Dalibor Vesely, "Architecture and the ambiguity of the fragment." In. *The idea of the city: [symposium*]. By Symposium 'The Idea of the City', and Robin Middleton, 108-121, (London: Architectural Association, 1996), 114.



appendix a_
long-exposure photography

One of the first images made during this research is a large graphic collage used as an illustrative tool to describe the confusion of studying the flux associated with Spitalfields. However, after researching into the photographic method of the German artist Michael Wesely, an alternative, yet unrealized, project for covertly documenting the Old Spitalfields Market is conceived:

Using the discarded plastic canister from a typical roll of 35mm film as the body of a pinhole camera, a perimeter around the market is established. Photographic paper (being slightly more resilient to light than standard film) is sealed in the canister and strategically 'discarded' in alcoves, near garbage cans, in the crevasses of brick walls etc. around the public spaces. They are retrieved several hours later, yielding a protracted and densely layered swath of information.

What follow are the preparatory test shots taken at the University Of Waterloo School Of Architecture Cambridge, Ontario in March, 2010.

FIG_80: Anticipated canister locations and viewpoint orientation. The inner circle denotes the 35mm pinhole camera while the outer circle hypothesizes the available relative duration of the shot based on location and likely hood of removal by street cleaners or security guards.

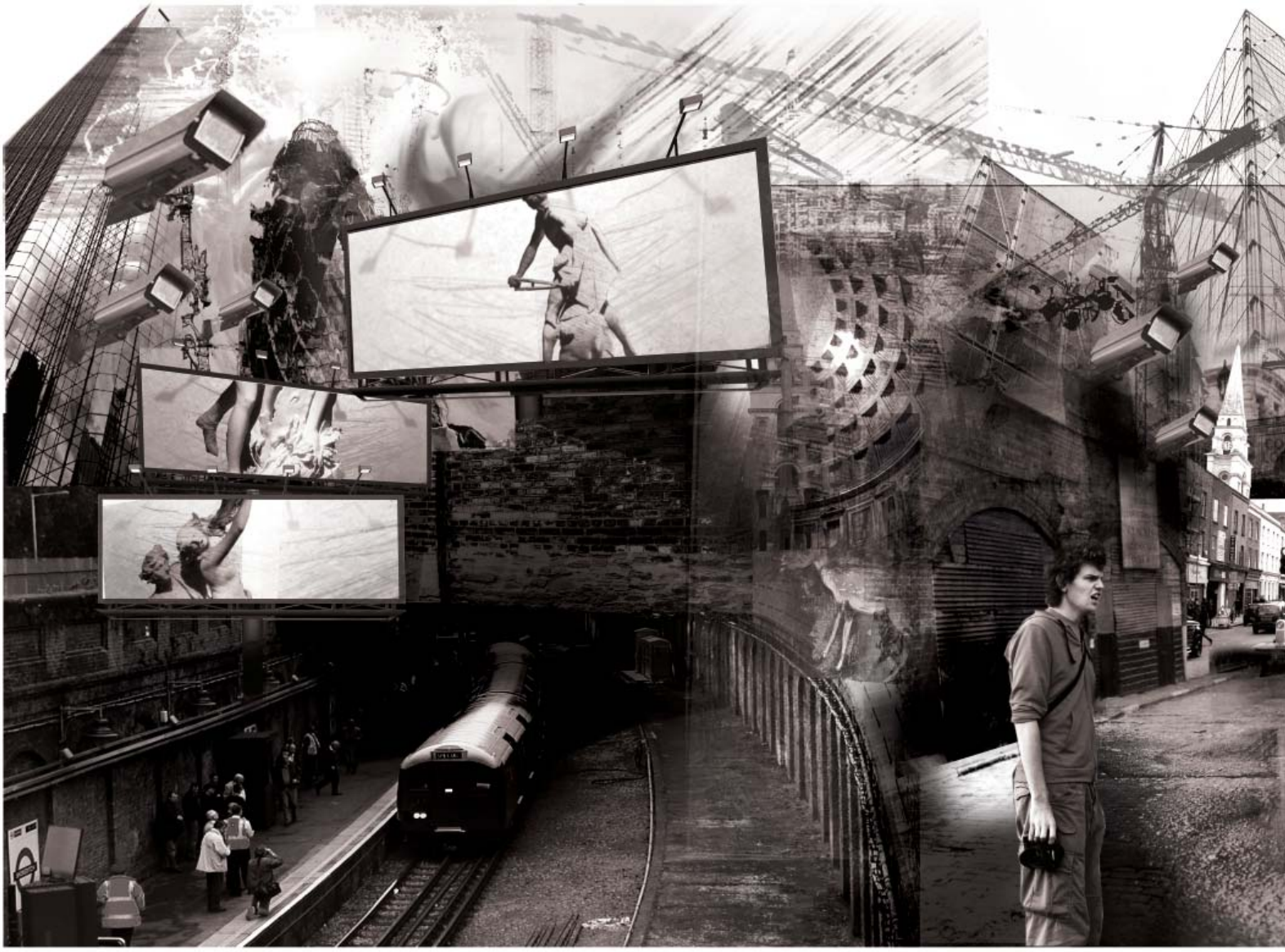


FIG_81: The first Image produced for 'Necessary Fiction' is a large graphic collage, combining the contradictory and conflicting city of brick, the city of glass, the residues of mythology, crime drama and banality etc.

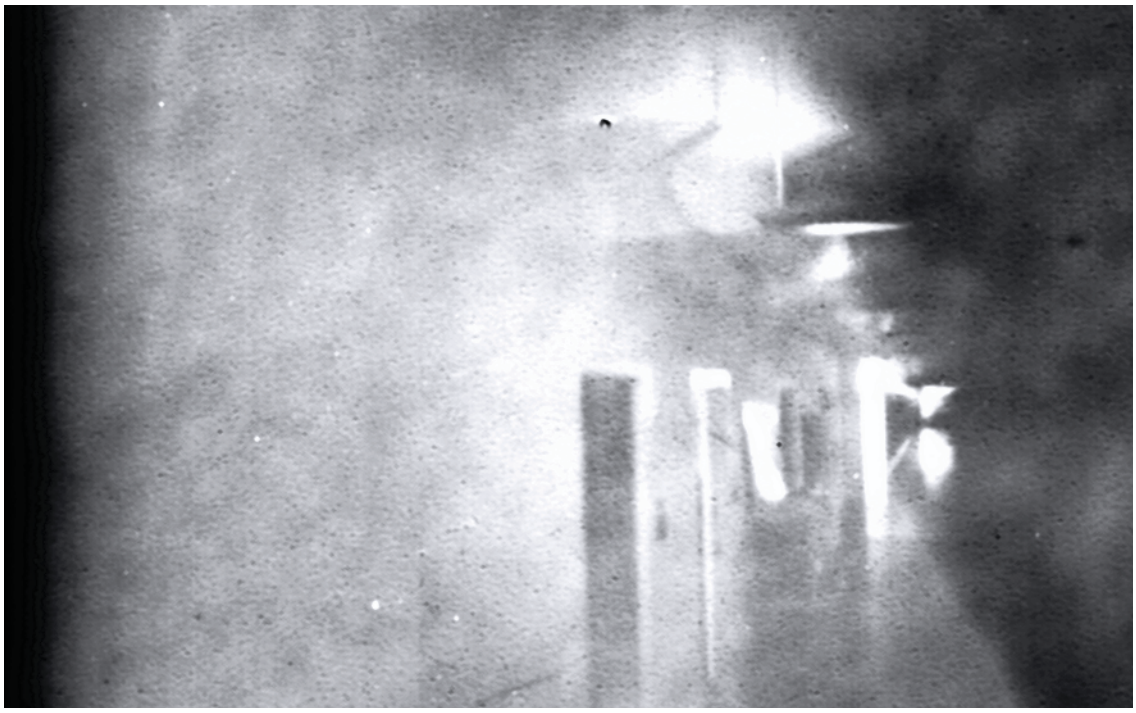


PLATE_35: Corridor_1 (single pin hole/ 30 minute exposure)

PLATE_36: Atrium_1 (single pin hole/ 30 minute exposure)

PLATE_37: Atrium_2 (single pin hole/ 540 minute exposure)

PLATE_38: Lecture Hall_1 (single pin hole/ 2880 minute exposure)

PLATE_39: Lecture Hall_2 (single pin hole/ 2880 minute exposure)

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