



Urban Regeneration

edited by
Peter Roberts
Hugh Sykes
Rachel Granger

2nd
edition



Urban Regeneration

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In memory of Paul Drewe and Barry Moore.
Two excellent friends and colleagues, and major contributors to
the theory and practice of regeneration.

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We wish to thank all those who have helped in the preparation of this book, including the authors of the various chapters and the editorial team at SAGE. In addition, we wish to acknowledge the assistance of the many regeneration practitioners and researchers who have generously given of their time and wisdom. Finally, we owe a particular debt of gratitude to Lyndsay Muschamp who has provided secretarial and organisational support to the editors.

During the course of the preparation of this second edition, two of our authors have passed away. Both Paul Drewe and Barry Moore made many important contributions to the theory and practice of regeneration, and we wish to dedicate this book to them.

Part I

The Context For Urban Regeneration

I Introduction

*Peter Roberts, Hugh Sykes and
Rachel Granger*

In the introduction to the first edition of this book we observed that urban regeneration is a widely experienced but little understood phenomenon. Although subsequently much has been done to rectify this lack of understanding, it remains the case that more needs to be done to provide insights and inspiration, based on advances in both theory and practice. Then, as now, it is important to emphasise that there is no single prescribed form of urban regeneration practice and no single theoretical explanation that can be used to analyse all urban problem situations and develop appropriate solutions. In the much changed circumstances of the twenty-first century, time and place both matter, and urban regeneration has to reflect the particular local circumstances which define it.

As ever, circumstances both constrain and support urban regeneration. Despite the constraints of sometimes unduly rigid policy or the extreme difficulties encountered in a particular place, there is substantial evidence to demonstrate the ability of innovative and well-managed regeneration initiatives to take root even in the most unsuitable conditions. What much of the experience of the past decade has demonstrated is that there is no universal or 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the problems encountered in urban areas. This would appear to be true in both advanced and less-developed nations, and it surely represents the enduring importance of economics, geography, politics and history in determining what needs to be done to secure effective and lasting regeneration.

The aim of this book is to distil the evidence of good practice and combine this evidence with explanations of why urban regeneration is necessary and how it functions. A mixture of theory, explanation, evidence and the direct experience of implementation provides the practical philosophy which has guided the preparation of the second edition of this book. The intention is to offer the reader a guide to urban regeneration which is comprehensive, accessible and practical. In particular, the book aims to provide an insight into the reasons for the occurrence and persistence of urban problems, the successive changes that have occurred in the theory and practice of urban regeneration and the lessons of good (and bad) practice.

By contrast with the situation which obtained a decade ago, when there was a much more limited quality literature encompassing the whole of the organisation

and functioning of the urban regeneration process, there is now a wealth of research and practice evidence. In addition, there is a wide array of more fragmented information on 'fashionable' topics such as partnership, promoting economic revival, tackling social exclusion, the targeting of investment, supporting urban sustainable development and the old faithful of promoting 'flagship projects'. Despite these enhancements to the literature, there would still appear to be substantial demand for a book that brings together the basic elements of regeneration, such as the physical, economic, social and environmental dimensions, alongside the implementation, management and evaluation of the urban regeneration process and then illustrates them through examples drawn from different jurisdictions. This book builds on the first edition and through a comprehensive survey of key topics and cases it provides guidance based on both the theory and the practice of urban change and regeneration. As was the case when the first edition was published, the aim is to provide assistance to those who are engaged in a variety of urban regeneration policy areas and in the active management of urban transition.

The Structure of this Book

The material contained within this book is organised in a way that allows the reader to either dip into those sections that are of particular interest, or to read the text in full.

Although each part and chapter is self-contained to the extent that it deals with a particular theme or subject, the material presented is organised in a manner which allows the reader to gain a rapid overview of the enormous span of urban regeneration issues and activities. Even though the scope and content of this book is wide-ranging in an attempt to provide a comprehensive treatment of the field of urban regeneration, it would be wrong to suggest that it is a complete treatment of a subject that is extensive in terms of its practices and applications. Because urban regeneration is by its very nature a dynamic rather than a static phenomenon, it is almost impossible to capture all of the features of current practice or to predict the future evolution of the subject with any degree of certainty.

In order to assist the reader, and to set the context for the remainder of the book, an introduction to the origins, challenges and purposes of urban regeneration is presented in Chapter 2. The material in Chapter 2 is cross-referenced to later chapters in order to guide the reader to the more detailed discussions which they contain. Chapter 3 introduces the reader to basic notions such as partnership, strategy and the lessons that may be gained from the study of best practice. These are recurrent features that can be seen in many aspects of urban regeneration practice, and the discussion attempts to identify common elements which help bind together the diverse subjects that are contained in the following chapters. Chapter 2 chiefly provides an introduction to the individual topics that are considered in Part II, whilst Chapter 3 introduces the management issues contained in Part III.

Most of the chapters in this book have been prepared by authors who between them represent the required blend of practice experience and academic explanation considered necessary to tackle the complexities that are inherent in any individual aspect of urban regeneration. In Part II, the contributions of the various authors have been organised in such a way as to provide the reader with an introduction to each of the basic ‘building block’ themes and topics that are fundamental to an understanding of urban regeneration policy and process. These chapters deal with:

- economic and financial issues;
- physical and environmental aspects of regeneration;
- social and community issues;
- employment, education and training;
- housing and associated issues.

Cutting across all attempts to stimulate urban regeneration are a number of other important issues. These issues govern the ways in which urban regeneration proceeds and how it is organised. Three ‘cross-cutting’ issues that are of particular importance in all urban regeneration schemes are examined in Part III of this book:

- the legal and institutional basis for regeneration by land development;
- the monitoring and evaluation of regeneration programmes;
- questions of organisation and management.

In order to provide lessons from best practice and offer examples of how to construct and implement strategies for regeneration, all of the chapters in this book contain a variety of case studies. Other valuable experience can be gleaned from the experience of urban regeneration in countries both within and outside the UK. The first three chapters of Part IV offer an insight into some of the major features and important characteristics of efforts to promote urban regeneration in the towns and cities of the mainland of Europe, in Australia and in North America. Chapter 13 in Part IV is somewhat different; the purpose of this chapter is to offer examples from the three Celtic nations of the UK.

A final chapter attempts to distil the major lessons from the past and present experience of urban regeneration, to identify the sources of strength and weakness which are evident from such experience, and to propose an agenda for the future. This concluding chapter draws upon the analysis contained in the earlier parts of the book in order to clarify the future role of, and prospects for, urban regeneration as it enters a new century. In addition, the final chapter also considers the extension of urban regeneration to the metropolitan and regional levels.

At the end of each chapter, except in the case of the present chapter and Chapter 16, a summary of key points is provided. These points either indicate some of the major issues and actions arising from the discussion, or provide some contacts and sources of further information.

Most books of this nature are selective. Other authors and editors would choose different themes and cross-cutting issues for inclusion in a volume on the subject of regeneration. This book inevitably reflects the skills, experience and preferences of the editorial team and the individual authors: this combination of factors provides the rationale for the selection of material presented here.

Next Steps

Whilst it is apparent that a book of this nature can only ever expect to provide an introduction to urban regeneration theory and practice at a given moment in time – in this case mid-2015 – we hope that this second edition will offer guidance and advice to all those who are embarking upon the task of regenerating urban areas. The value of such a book is that it can provide immediate help and support, and also stimulate the exchange of experience. It is likely that your experience of urban regeneration will confirm some of the messages contained within this book and it is certain that the material contained in the book will also suggest new ways of approaching difficult and complex problems. We welcome your response to the content and style of this book and, in addition, we seek your experience – both successes and failures – in order to help us in preparing future editions.

As editors we have gained considerable knowledge and understanding about the subjects addressed in this book during the course of its preparation. We have come to realise how daunting the task of urban regeneration must appear to many who participate in it, and we have discovered that what may seem to be self-evident to one participant in the regeneration process may never have occurred to another. Most importantly, we have come to appreciate the need to view urban regeneration as a continuous process. No sooner has one problem been solved, another emerges.

This suggests that it is essential to view the process of urban regeneration as a long-term cycle of activity; there are no ‘quick fixes’, ‘one-size-fits-all approaches’ or permanent solutions here. Each generation faces its own particular set of problems, has its own priorities and works in ways which reflect these priorities and the availability of resources. However, whilst each successive generation will face its own particular challenges, the value of learning from previous experience cannot be denied. We hope that this book will help to document our state of knowledge at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century and that it will provide a basis for good practice in urban (and regional) regeneration during the coming years.

Too much time and energy has been lost in the past through ‘reinventing the wheel’ or through the needless destruction of expert teams that are, in the British way, discarded as one policy initiative and structure succeeds another. More significantly, between the publication of the first edition of this book and now, we have also lost significant elements of ‘institutional capacity’, especially the much-lamented British Urban Regeneration Association, but also other organisations, such as the Academy for Sustainable Communities. This book will have served its purpose if

some of the negative consequences of this erosion of capacity are avoided and the accumulated experience of urban regeneration is captured for all to use. The importance of this task cannot be emphasised enough; most policy cycles last a relatively short length of time and the wheel of urban and regional regeneration policy has turned full circle twice during the past 60 years.

In addition, we realise that institutional and spatial frameworks for regeneration will vary both over time and between places, reflecting both the policy preferences and priorities of government and a changing perception of the span of the field of action within which regeneration problems can best be addressed. Thus, for example, whilst much urban regeneration effort in the mid-1980s was directed at the physical regeneration of individual problem sites and small areas, the emphasis in the late 1990s shifted to the regional level, to communities and to soft infrastructure, and in the twenty-first century, under conditions of austerity, it has moved to focus on economic regeneration. The message this sends to the keen observer or practitioner is that regeneration problems and opportunities should best be considered within a spatial-temporal continuum. The spectrum of regeneration activity varies from the individual site to the nation-state; there is no single or fixed field of action that represents the ideal spatial level for the practice of regeneration over time.

Looking Forward

It is evident at a late stage in the publication of this book that some of the material is already out of date or is close to becoming time expired. However, there is much contained in the book that is enduring and represents good or best practice, irrespective of the specific detail of an individual policy initiative. In order to assist the reader, the main areas of policy development that are of particular relevance to urban regeneration include the following:

- in relation to the future development of wider regeneration strategy, the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies (with their strategic role at the regional and sub-regional levels) initially led to a vacuum of both thinking and action, but this is now increasingly filled by the work of the Homes and Communities Agency, Local Enterprise Partnerships and sub-regional joint local authority initiatives;
- in relation to economic and financial aspects of regeneration, the revised funding arrangements and the provision of resources under new initiatives including locally generated resources and the Regional Growth Fund;
- in relation to physical and environmental regeneration, varying emphasis on urban design and quality, a continuing commitment to sustainable development, the provision of resources for the reuse of brownfield land;
- in relation to social and community issues and to associated aspects of regeneration, a reduced level of central government resources for social housing and a greater emphasis on locally determined and voluntary and private sector approaches to regeneration;

- various associated advances in policy and practice can be identified, including an increased level of emphasis on local democratic accountability, enhanced devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (and a series of consequential developments that are intended to allow for new policy initiatives and the fine-tuning of existing policies), and the redefinition of a number of key policy objectives and responsibilities for matters such as community and commercial regeneration schemes.

Whilst these issues are not dealt with in any detail herein, the material contained in the following pages provides many of the basic tools that are required in order to design and implement regeneration strategies. Although the details of policy may vary over time, sufficient supplementary literature exists to allow the reader to project forward from the position stated in this book. We will, of course, seek to incorporate the detail of new aspects of policy in a third edition.

2 The Evolution, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration

Peter Roberts

Introduction

Urban areas are complex and dynamic systems. Towns and cities are centres of political power and they also reflect the many processes that drive physical, social, environmental and economic transition. In addition, towns and cities are themselves prime generators of many of these changes. No town or city is immune from either the external forces that dictate the need to adapt, or the internal pressures that are present within urban areas and which can precipitate growth or decline.

Urban regeneration can be considered as the outcome of the interplay between these many sources of influence and, more importantly, it is also a response to the opportunities and challenges which are presented by urban degeneration in a particular place at a specific moment in time. This should not be taken to suggest that all urban problems are unique to a particular town or city, or that solutions advocated and attempted in the past have little relevance to the circumstances of the current day. However, it is the case that each urban challenge is likely to require the development and implementation of a specific response.

It is also important to acknowledge that urban regeneration is not solely a reaction to changed circumstances. In some instances regeneration is proactive and seeks either to avoid an emerging problem, such as the consequences of decline of a basic industry, or to improve the prospects of a particular neighbourhood. An additional consideration that should be recognised at the outset is that there will be considerable variation within an urban area; even in prosperous cities some communities will be dominated by poor physical, environmental and socio-economic conditions, whilst even less prosperous towns will have their wealthy areas.

Despite having argued that an individual example of urban regeneration is likely to be particular to a specific town or city, or neighbourhood within an urban area, a number of general principles and models of good practice can be identified. Such

lessons from current and previous experience can be applied in order to assist in the development and implementation of approaches to the task of regeneration.

This chapter:

- provides a brief history of the origins of urban problems and policy responses;
- defines urban regeneration and identifies the principles which guide its operation;
- provides a brief introduction to the theory of urban regeneration;
- identifies the purposes of current urban regeneration;
- outlines the development of urban regeneration policy.

The Evolution of Urban Areas and some Key Themes

The purposes of this section are to trace the origins of attempts to identify and resolve urban problems, and to isolate the major features and characteristics of the solutions that have been developed and applied. Whilst it is impossible in the space of a few pages to provide anything but the most superficial commentary on some of the major events in the history of urban areas, the most important contribution of this section is to identify the factors that have influenced the emergence of the modern-day practice of urban regeneration. This section also provides the reader with a reality check; a realisation that what may appear to be new challenges may in fact be simply the recurrence of older problems that have not been dealt with fully or correctly in the past. Lawless (2012), for example, makes the point that many past attempts at area-based regeneration have not been implemented fully and, as a consequence, the problems which such initiatives were designed to address have re-emerged.

Previous eras of urban policy have seen the introduction of many innovative and well-intentioned schemes aimed both at the resolution of particular problems within existing urban areas and at the establishment of new settlements within, adjacent to or remote from existing towns and cities. As will be seen in the following paragraphs, whilst some of these policy innovations have been based upon advances in technology, others have resulted from political concerns, new economic opportunities or from the adoption of attitudes to questions of social justice which recognise the likely consequences of allowing urban problems to remain unresolved. Whilst changes in technical capability, political awareness, economic opportunity and social attitudes have been important factors in determining the pace and scale of urban progress, a number of other, often individual, issues have exerted a significant influence over the form and functioning of particular towns and cities. The following paragraphs briefly trace this history and identify six major themes that have dominated previous eras of urban change and policy. These themes are:

- the relationship between the physical conditions evident in urban areas and the nature of the social and political response;
- the need to attend to matters of housing, health and well-being in urban areas;
- the desirability of linking social improvement with economic progress;
- the containment of urban growth and the management of urban shrinkage;
- the growing awareness of environmental issues; and
- the changing purpose and nature of urban policy.

Physical Conditions and Social Response

Urban areas have always performed a wide range of functions. Shelter, security, social and political interaction, and the sale and purchase of goods and services are among the traditional roles of a town or city. The relative importance of each of these functions has changed over time and between places, and such changes have created new demands for land, floor space, infrastructure and the provision of a range of accompanying facilities. Not surprisingly, some traditional urban areas, either in their entirety or in particular districts of a town, may discover that a previous function or sectoral specialisation is no longer required and that the facilities associated with this function are now redundant. In addition to the role of urban areas as a location for the human functions of living, working and recreation, the physical structures of towns and cities also represent a massive source of wealth. As Fainstein has observed, the distinction between the use of the built environment for human activity and its market role can be 'summarised as the difference between use and exchange values' (Fainstein, 1994: 1). This difference, which is reflected in the presence of a tension between urban areas as places for human activity and as assets, lies at the heart of a number of urban problems and also helps to define the limits within which solutions can be constructed and applied.

Towns and cities change over time, and this process of change is both inevitable and can be viewed as beneficial, especially if such transition is managed. It is inevitable because the operation of political, economic and social systems constantly generates new demands and, as a consequence, fresh opportunities are presented for economic progress and civic improvement. It is beneficial because, although many may deny it, the very existence of these substantial forces of change creates opportunities to adjust and improve the condition of urban areas. As Mumford argued, 'in the city, remote forces and influences intermingle with the local: their conflicts are no less significant than their harmonies' (Mumford, 1940: 4). It is the desire to respond positively to such influences that has caused politicians, developers, land-owners, planners and citizens alike to search for an answer to the question of how best to improve and maintain the condition of towns and cities.

The responses made to this challenge have varied over time, mirroring the socio-political and economic values and structures of urban society. In previous centuries, new towns and cities were imposed upon communities and other settlements were altered by feudal lords and monarchs with no reference to their pre-existing

inhabitants – the ‘bastide’ towns of Gwynedd, to this day, demonstrate their military and colonial origins (Smailes, 1953). However, and reflecting chiefly the history of the past two centuries, most British towns and cities represent the outcome of a series of attempts to create or reorder urban areas in a manner that best serves the requirements of a continually evolving industrial or post-industrial society.

Expanding the boundaries of urban areas, together with an associated increase in the diversity of land uses present within pre-existing built-up areas, has been the typical and dominant response to the need to provide additional space for houses, factories, offices and shops. Although there are many examples of grand schemes of civic renewal and the establishment of new industrial settlements, the Victorian slum ‘city of dreadful night’ (Hall, 1988: 14) was the product of a society that paid insufficient attention to the living conditions of the majority of urban residents. For reasons of public health and a genuine desire to improve urban living conditions, the slums of the nineteenth century were eventually acknowledged as an unacceptable end-product of a process whereby industrialisation had dictated the pace and quality of urbanisation. The belated recognition during the last decades of the nineteenth century of the consequences of unregulated urban growth reflects one of the messages that has been carried forward to the present-day practice of urban regeneration: this is the relationship between urban physical conditions and social response. In Joseph Chamberlain’s Birmingham of the 1870s, urban improvement was promoted through a ‘civic gospel’ (Browne, 1974: 7) aimed at eradicating living conditions, which, in Chamberlain’s view, had created a situation whereby ‘it is no more the fault of these people that they are vicious and intemperate than it is their fault that they are stunted, deformed, debilitated and diseased’ (Browne, 1974: 30).

Despite the many advances in urban living conditions achieved over the past two centuries, town and cities, especially in less-developed countries, remain as the primary source of concern with regard to poor living conditions. Whilst these enduring problems are most evident in cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, they are also present in some European towns and cities. The response to these challenges can be seen in the growth of sustainable city initiatives, which seek to link physical difficulties to social, economic and environmental issues (Joss et al., 2013).

Chapter 5 deals with issues related to the physical and environmental condition of towns and cities.

Housing and Health

Following the recognition and acceptance of the link between poor physical conditions and social deprivation, a series of policy interventions emerged from the mid-nineteenth century onwards in an attempt to improve the living conditions of urban residents. The eradication of disease, the provision of adequate housing, the supply of pure water and the creation of open space were early priorities, and these areas of activity have proved to be enduring necessities and essential elements of regeneration.

Whilst this second dominant theme, which is still present in urban regeneration, had its origins in the response to the slum conditions of the Victorian era, there is a constant need for physical intervention in order to replace outdated or unsatisfactory dwellings and premises. During the Victorian era *in situ* renewal was common, although in many cases at densities far too high to ensure a permanent improvement in living conditions, and this was matched, chiefly due to improvements in transport technology, by rapid suburban growth. In addition, and serving as a reminder to the present day of both the possibility and desirability of creating urban conditions in which social, economic and physical improvements can go hand-in-hand, there was a growing acceptance of the lessons and benefits to be gained from the enlightened experiments in ‘model village’ living established at Port Sunlight, Bournville, New Lanark and elsewhere.

These concerns regarding the relationship between housing, health and planning continue to demand attention. Today it is not so much the physical state of housing that tops the list of regeneration priorities, as the need to promote healthy living in urban (and rural) areas. In the words of a recent report from the Town and Country Planning Association, ‘economic growth requires places that promote good health’ (Ross and Chang, 2013: 5).

Chapter 8 discusses the housing dimension of urban regeneration in greater detail.

Social Welfare and Economic Progress

Whilst it was not always the case that physical renewal alone could provide an answer to the many problems which beset the Victorian city, the public health objective of reducing overcrowding and disease did bring about a gradual improvement in the condition of urban areas. Moving beyond this limited objective, and seeking in addition to create an environment in which a third element of urban regeneration – the enhancement of economic prosperity – could be more closely allied to enhanced social welfare and improved physical conditions, Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement experimented in the creation of communities which combined ‘all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country’ (Howard, 1902: 15). Although only a limited number of garden cities were constructed according to Howard’s original conception – Letchworth (1903) and Welwyn Garden City (1920) – the influence of the Garden City Movement was considerable and what survived from the experiment in the form of the post-1945 new towns was ‘the essence of the Howard vision’ (Hall, 1988: 97).

Suburban growth, and especially the rapid growth which followed the building of suburban railways and the later introduction of the bus and car, was a distinctive feature of the late Victorian era and the first part of the twentieth century, and, as noted above, whilst this escape to the suburbs provided a relief valve for the more affluent and mobile, it did little to relieve the problems of the inner parts of towns and cities. In the period after 1870 most British urban areas acquired a cheap and

efficient public transport system, followed later by the introduction and increasing use of the private motor car. The impact on urban growth of these new transport technologies was rapid and widespread. As Hall (1974) notes, up to the 1860s densities in London were rising and the city was contained – the population doubled between 1801 and 1851, but the area of the city did not increase in proportion. However, following the introduction of new transport technologies the city began to spread, especially in the period after 1918 – in 1914 the population of London was 6.5 million, by 1939 8.5 million, whilst the built-up area had trebled in size.

As was the case in relation to the earlier themes, this is a matter which has continued to demand the attention of both policy-makers and practitioners, especially in conditions of austerity. In the second decade of the twenty-first century the emphasis in many urban regeneration programmes has once again shifted to the promotion of economic growth and this priority needs continually to be connected to the wider social agenda. From the Victorian era to the present day, there has been a constant search for practical ways of delivering social justice alongside economic progress, including approaches that attempt to strengthen social ties in order to revitalise disadvantaged communities (Crisp, 2013) and support new forms of economic activity.

Chapters 4 and 6 provide further information on questions of economic and social change.

Containing Urban Growth and Managing Urban Shrinkage

This introduces the fourth theme from the past that can be seen to have influenced and shaped the current purpose and practice of urban regeneration. This theme has its origins in the perceived need to restrain urban growth and to make the best possible use of the land that is already used for urban functions. Urban containment provided a rationale both for the *in situ* renewal of urban areas and for the balanced expansion of settlements beyond the green belts, which were increasingly imposed around the major towns and cities from the 1930s onwards.

Attempts to contain urban sprawl, and to ensure the maximum beneficial use of land already within the urban area, have dominated urban policy during the past century. Although this theme is still of considerable importance and provides an immediate stimulus for much urban regeneration, an opposite challenge has emerged in recent decades: the management of urban shrinkage.

Even though the best known cases of city shrinkage are North American, with Detroit often cited as the extreme example (Binelli, 2013), the physical adjustment of towns and cities to new roles and the needs of a diminished population is a common regeneration challenge. Whilst much of the discourse on shrinking cities has tended to focus on the causes of economic collapse and the consequences for both physical and social decay, there is also a growing body of academic and practical evidence which indicates how best to address the need to re-size urban systems (Couch and Cocks, 2013). This requirement for regeneration to enable the adjustment of the urban system is likely to become more rather than less important,

especially in the older post-industrial nations and in resource-based economies where the 'ghost town' is a common phenomenon.

Growing Environmental Awareness

Although, as noted in the first theme discussed in this section, the desirability of improving the urban environment has been evident for over a century or more, it is only in the past three decades that this theme has come to the fore. As the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) noted, the degradation of the urban environment is an important element in the degeneration of many urban areas – witness the collapse and decay of many old industrial towns and cities in both the first and third worlds.

However, the deterioration of the urban environment is not always associated with economic decline; atmospheric pollution in cities is often an accompanying feature of economic growth and rising prosperity, whilst the urban growth 'magnets' in the developing world attract migrants who often live in extremely poor environmental conditions (Roberts et al., 2009). Concern to deal with these and other environmental consequences of urbanisation has grown over the period since the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, and action on the full range of issues has progressed at variable pace. Some of the issues which affect urban regeneration are more advanced than others, including restrictions on certain atmospheric and water pollutants and the protection of species and designated areas, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Urban regeneration has a major role to play in promoting higher environmental standards and the better management of resources. Key issues include the promotion of better urban drainage and flood management, the provision of open space and the use of enhanced design in order to mitigate the effects of climate change (Gill et al., 2007).

Chapter 5 provides further information on environmental matters.

Changing Urban Policy

So the scene is now set for a brief description and assessment of the evolution of urban policy over the past half century, and for the identification of the sixth and final theme from the past that has influenced the current theory and practice of urban regeneration. This final element reflects the changing assignment of responsibility for the improvement and management of towns and cities. From post-Second World War reconstruction to the present-day model of partnership, power and responsibility for the discharge of the tasks of urban regeneration has changed hands in line with the broader conventions of social organisation and the dominant forces of political life. The pattern of evolution of urban policy, together with the characteristics of each era of policy, is summarised in Table 2.1.

In the immediate period after 1945, repairing wartime damage and reconstructing the fabric of towns and cities, many of which had been neglected for years, initially

took priority. This process of reconstruction was seen as a task of national importance. The pace was set by central government, with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning even offering detailed guidance to local authorities 'on the principles and standards that should govern the preparation of redevelopment plans for (central) areas' (Ministry of Town and Country Planning, 1947: 1). With detailed prescription of this kind it is little wonder that so many of the end products of the post-war schemes of central renewal look depressingly alike (Hatherley, 2010).

Other policy prescriptions were launched alongside central redevelopment. Urban constraint through the designation of green belts still permitted substantial peripheral expansion within the urban fence, and further suburbanisation also occurred at the edges of many existing towns and cities. Beyond the green belt were the new and expanded towns, together with rapidly growing free-standing county towns. The emphasis in the 1940s and 1950s was on reconstruction, replacement and the eradication of the physical problems of the past. Government-led, with enthusiastic support from local authorities and the private sector alike, the priorities of slum clearance and reconstruction led to the embrace of 'high-rise housing and industrialised building techniques' (Couch, 1990: 29).

By the mid-1960s it was already apparent that many of the immediate post-war so-called solutions had simply transferred the location and altered the manifestation of urban problems. Growing dissatisfaction with slum clearance and the resulting decanting of population to peripheral estates, together with a more participatory and decentralised approach to government, led to a series of adjustments to policy. In the urban policy field this shift in priorities resulted in an increased emphasis on improvement and renewal. This 'discovery' of the inner city, together with the first tentative steps towards the introduction of urban regeneration policy, led to a major expansion of urban initiatives during the 1970s. Associated with the proliferation of initiatives in this period were a series of attempts to ensure greater co-ordination between the previously separate economic, social and physical strands of policy.

Many of the urban policy initiatives of the 1970s initially continued into the 1980s, although substantial modifications and additions were subsequently introduced (Turok, 1987). Most significantly, during the 1980s there was a move away from the idea that the central state should or could provide all of the resources required in order to support policy interventions. This new policy stance was matched by a greater emphasis on the role of partnership. The more commercial style of urban redevelopment evident in the 1980s reflected yet another set of changes in the nature and structure of political philosophy and control.

Further adjustments to the form and operation of urban policy occurred in the 1990s, with a gradual move back to a more consensual style of politics and the recognition of new problems and challenges. This change in stance has continued to influence the form and content of urban policy. One example of the new policy direction, which is evident both in the general domain of politics and in urban policy, is the acceptance of the need to work in accord with the environmental objectives of sustainable development. Although not yet fully reflected in what we now define as

urban regeneration, this is a clear illustration of the way in which the inheritance of the past and the challenges of the present have helped to shape urban regeneration. Although the new challenge of environmentally sustainable development has not yet fully imposed its characteristics on the overall functioning of urban areas, there is little doubt that it will dominate the theory and practice of urban regeneration and urban management in the future. In the interim, at least in the United Kingdom and other advanced nations, the consequences of the economic crisis of the first decade of this century have dominated much of policy and practice.

The new contextual conditions in which regeneration is now situated reflect both the causes of, and the responses to, the economic collapse of 2008. As regards causes, regeneration could be seen as a contributor to the crisis: it stimulated and fed on the ready availability of funding, often provided with inadequate security and predicated in part on a continuously upward spiral of property values. In terms of response, the restrictions imposed on public and private sources of funding have caused both the reconsideration of regeneration policy and the adjustment of practice: public funding and public agency support have changed dramatically; private lending is generally only available if capital assets exist and communities have increasingly taken responsibility for regeneration. As Jones and Evans emphasise, the recession 'is the most dramatic example of how regeneration is tied into broader economic and social processes' (Jones and Evans, 2013: 9).

The Basis for Urban Regeneration

These six themes from the history of urban problems and opportunities – the relationship between physical conditions and social response; the continued need for the physical replacement of many elements of the urban fabric; the importance of economic success as a foundation for urban prosperity and quality of life; the need to make the best possible use of urban land and avoid unnecessary sprawl; the need for regeneration to reflect the priorities of sustainable development; and the importance of recognising that urban policy mirrors the dominant social conventions and political forces of the day – are themes which will be developed elsewhere in this book.

As is demonstrated more fully in the following section of this chapter, there is a high degree of coincidence between the history of the content, structure and operation of urban policy, and the general evolution of political attitudes, social values and economic power. However, although the style and characteristics of successive rounds of urban policy reflect the evolution of political, economic and social values, and although particular urban problems and some aspects of urban policy have come and gone over time, a considerable level of professional and technical capacity and competence has emerged in response to the challenge of urban regeneration. This capacity and competence has continued to evolve irrespective of the particular political fashions of the day. From new settlements to suburbanisation, and from comprehensive redevelopment to *in situ* regeneration, the urban challenge continues to tax the ability and ingenuity of policy-makers, planners, developers and citizens alike.

What is Urban Regeneration?

Having identified and traced the evolution of some of the major issues and factors that have been evident in previous eras of urban change and policy, the preceding section of this chapter isolated six important themes which represent the origins and outcomes of past problems and policy responses. Although they reflect the enduring and continuous nature of economic, social and physical change, they do not yield, by themselves, the basis for a comprehensive definition of urban regeneration. In order to help to construct a working definition of urban regeneration it is also necessary to identify emerging areas of concern and likely future challenges. As was argued above, the most important of these challenges is that which is represented by the need to ensure that all areas of public and private policy operate in accord with the economic, social, environmental and political principles embodied in the notion of sustainable development.

A Definition of Urban Regeneration

Although the very nature of regeneration makes it a constantly evolving and varied activity, the six themes provide the basis for an initial definition of urban regeneration as:

comprehensive and integrated vision and action which seeks to resolve urban problems and bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change or offers opportunities for improvement.

This somewhat ideal definition encompasses the essential features of urban regeneration identified by Lichfield, who points to the need for 'a better understanding of the processes of decline' and an 'agreement on what one is trying to achieve and how' (Lichfield, 1992: 19); by Hausner, who emphasises the inherent weaknesses of approaches to regeneration that are 'short-term, fragmented, ad hoc and project-based without an overall strategic framework for city-wide development' (Hausner, 1993: 526); by Donnison in his call for 'new ways of tackling our problems which focus in a co-ordinated way on problems and on the areas where those problems are concentrated' (Donnison, 1993: 18); and by Diamond and Liddle (2005) who emphasise the need for action across all relevant policy spheres.

The definition given above represents urban regeneration designed and delivered in a total package and to the final point of completion. However, as Tallon (2010) observes, the reality is that regeneration often operates in a fragmented manner and not all problems are solved.

Urban regeneration moves beyond the aims, aspirations and achievements of urban renewal, which is seen by Couch as 'a process of essentially physical change' (Couch, 1990: 2), urban development (or redevelopment) with its general mission and less well-defined purpose, and urban revitalisation (or rehabilitation) which,

Table 2.1 The evolution of urban regeneration

Period	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Policy type	Reconstruction	Revitalisation	Renewal	Redevelopment	Regeneration	Regeneration in recession
Major strategy and orientation	Reconstruction and extension of older areas of towns and cities often based on a 'masterplan'; suburban growth	Continuation of 1950s theme; suburban and peripheral growth; some early attempts at rehabilitation	Focus on <i>in situ</i> renewal and neighbourhood schemes; still development at periphery	Many major schemes of development and redevelopment; flagship projects; out of town projects	A more comprehensive form of policy and practice; emphasis on integrated policy and interventions	Restrictions on all activities with some easing in areas of growth
Key actors and stakeholders	National and local government; private sector developers and contractors	Move towards a greater balance between public and private sectors	Growing role of private sector and decentralisation in local government	Emphasis on private sector and special agencies; growth of partnerships	Partnership the dominant approach with a growing number of government agencies	More emphasis on private sector funding and voluntary effort
Spatial level of activity	Emphasis on local and site levels	Regional level of activity emerged	Regional and local levels initially; later more local emphasis	In early 1980s focus on site; later emphasis on local level	Reintroduction of strategic perspective; growth of regional activity and interventions	More localist initially with developing sub-regional activity

(Continued)

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Period	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Policy type	Reconstruction	Revitalisation	Renewal	Redevelopment	Regeneration	Regeneration in recession
Economic focus	Public sector investment with some private sector involvement	Continuing from 1950s with growing influence of private investment	Resource constraints in public sector and growth of private investment	Private sector dominant with selective public funds	Greater balance between public, private and voluntary funding	Private sector dominant with selective government funding
Social content	Improvement of housing and living standards	Social and welfare improvement	Community-based action and greater empowerment	Community self-help with very selective state support	Emphasis on the role of community	Emphasis on local initiatives and encouragement of third sector
Physical emphasis	Replacement of inner areas and peripheral development	Some continuation from 1950s with parallel rehabilitation of existing areas	More extensive renewal of older urban areas	Major schemes of replacement and new development; 'flagship schemes'	Initially more modest than 1980s and then increasing scale; heritage emphasised	Generally smaller scale schemes, but larger projects returning
Environmental approach	Landscaping and some greening	Selective improvements	Environmental improvement with some innovations	Growth of concern for wider approach to environment	Introduction of broader idea of environment in context of sustainable development	General acceptance of sustainable development model

Sources: Stohr (1989); Lichtfield (1992); Pugalis and Liddle (2013)