Saving Spitalfields: 
The Politics of 
Opposition to Redevelopment in East London.

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the opposition to the redevelopment of a fruit and vegetable wholesale market in Spitalfields, east London. I argue that such opposition has not received the attention it deserves in the literature on urban redevelopment. The thesis examines the origins and establishment of the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, and examines its discourse in order to ascertain where the roots of the Campaign’s opposition lay. After outlining the methodology used in the research, the history of the market is examined within the context of the Spitalfields area. Previous plans for redevelopment are discussed and attention then focusses on plans put forward in 1986. The role of the City of London Corporation, the government and the Spitalfields Development Group are explored and stress is laid on the ways in which these three institutions portrayed redevelopment as a mechanism for inner city renewal, for the benefit of all interested parties. The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers is then studied, looking at its make-up and its arguments over the impact of redevelopment on Spitalfields. Its origins within the local Labour Party and the local voluntary sector are traced and the influence of these bodies on the Campaign in terms of its arguments and ideas on redevelopment are illustrated. The ways in which the Campaign represented redevelopment in the area are then discussed. The portrayal of Spitalfields as a multicultural community area and immigrant area are discussed, and the images the Campaign constructed of the City of London and of the likely face of Spitalfields examined. I argue that these representations are important in elucidating a reason for the Campaign’s opposition. I then examine these representations of Spitalfields in the light of the Campaign’s claims to representativeness. I examine the ways in which the Campaign dealt with the emergence of another group in the area, and indicate what I understand to be the sources of the Campaign’s discomfort with this group. I conclude by arguing for further study of opposition movements that emerge to protest against urban redevelopment, and by arguing for an intensive qualitative research methodology.
Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................. p.2
Table of Contents ........................................................ p.3
List of Illustrations .................................................... p.4
List of Abbreviations ................................................... p.6
Acknowledgements ....................................................... p.7
Chapter One: Motivations and Method .............................. p.8
Chapter Two: Spitalfields, the Market and Plans for Redevelopment .... p.30
Chapter Three: The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers.. p.80
Chapter Four: The Origins of the Campaign ........................ p.125
Chapter Five: Representations and Redevelopment ................. p.153
Chapter Six: Speaking for Spitalfields .............................. p.184
Chapter Seven: Conclusion ............................................. p.202
Appendix One: List of Interviews ................................... p.210
Appendix Two: Members of the Spitalfields Local Committee ....... p.211
Bibliography and Sources ............................................. p.212
List of Illustrations

2.1 Map showing the location of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets within Greater London. Taken from London Planning Advisory Committee Strategic Planning Advice for London. June 1988.

2.2 Detail from Old OS map showing Spitalfields. Taken from Old Ordnance Survey Maps: Whitchapel, Spitalfields and the Bank, 1873.

2.3 Photograph - Welcome to Tower Hamlets. Courtesy of Dan Cohen.

2.4 Photograph - Spitalfields Market from the West. Taken from City of London Corporation Spitalfields Market Offer Document. October 1987.

2.5 Photograph - A different view of Spitalfields Market. Dan Cohen.

2.6 Map showing the location of Spitalfields Market. Taken from London Borough of Tower Hamlets Spitalfields Market Development Brief. October 1986.

2.7 Detailed map showing the extent of the Market. ibid.

2.8 Photograph - The Market in operation. City of London Corporation.

2.9 Photograph - The Market in operation. City of London Corporation.

2.10 Photograph - The 1930s extension to the Market. Dan Cohen.

3.1 Notice advertising a public meeting on the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market.

3.2 The Campaign's logo.

3.3 Photograph - Decorating SDG hoardings. Jane Jacobs.

3.4 Drawing - The Threat hanging over Spitalfields. Taken from the Spitalfields Defender.

3.5 Photograph - Man and Child. Phil Maxwell.

3.6 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Rachel Woodward.

3.7 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Dan Cohen.
3.8 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Rachel Woodward
3.9 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Rachel Woodward
3.10 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
3.11 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
3.12 Photograph - Impressions of Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
4.1 Photograph - Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
4.2 Photograph - Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
4.3 Photograph - Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
4.4 Photograph - Spitalfields. Dan Cohen
5.1 Introduction to Maxwell's exhibition. From catalogue.
5.2 Photograph - Their beautiful launderette. Phil Maxwell
5.3 Photograph - Looking hopeful. Phil Maxwell
5.4 Photograph - Chicksand Estate. Phil Maxwell
5.5 Photograph - Resistance. Phil Maxwell
5.6 Photograph - The Whitechapel Open. Phil Maxwell
5.7 Photograph - Warning - Developers. Phil Maxwell
5.8 Photograph - Street Life. Phil Maxwell
5.9 Photograph - Playing in Hanbury Street. Phil Maxwell
5.10 Photograph - Allen Gardens. Phil Maxwell
5.11 Photograph - Overcrowding in Spitalfields. Phil Maxwell
5.12 Photographs - various. Phil Maxwell
7.1 Press cutting - 'Spitalfields traders finally call it quits'. Guardian 13th May 1991
List of Abbreviations

BGNC
Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee

CDG
Community Development Group

CSSD
Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers

GLC
Greater London Council

LBTH
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

LET
London and Edinburgh Trust

SDG
Spitalfields Development Group

SHAPRS
Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service

SLC
Spitalfields Local Committee

SSBA
Spitalfields Small Business Association

THET
Tower Hamlets Environment Trust

THARE
Tower Hamlets Association for Racial Equality
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There is no way in which this thesis could have been written without not only the co-operation but also the support and encouragement of all the members of the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, for which I am eternally grateful.

"Well it certainly looks so bloody organised for a start! As if we had a big plan! For heaven's sakes, what we did was to respond to issues!"1

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1 Jil Cove, Campaign Co-ordinator, in interview, 12th July 1989, whilst we were discussing the contents of John Eade's book, The Politics of Community, in which she appeared. I think her comment probably has relevance for this thesis, in which she also appears.
Chapter One
Motivations and Method

This thesis is concerned with a critique of oppositional action in response to redevelopment in East London. It explores the activities of a locally-constituted group of people, the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, in their attempts to prevent the relocation of Spitalfields fruit and vegetable wholesale market from its present site by its owners, the City of London Corporation, and the construction in its place of an office complex by a development company called the Spitalfields Development Group.

Redevelopment in urban areas is currently changing the face of cities worldwide, a process exemplified in London. The City of London and its fringe - areas such as that to the east - are being rebuilt and transformed on a hitherto unprecedented scale. The redevelopment of areas of docklands downriver from Tower Bridge in London, being redeveloped under the auspices of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) are an example of this. Inner urban areas are being redeveloped for the needs of the finance sector, that renewal being promoted by the government and developers alike as a solution to the problems of the inner city. That promotion is undertaken through a discourse which legitimizes such activities. The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers (CSSD) was established in October 1987 with the aim of preventing the redevelopment planned for Spitalfields and the removal of its 300 year old fruit and vegetable wholesale market. They opposed it on the grounds that such a development would have dire consequences for the area and its people. In opposing the relocation of the market they countered a set of arguments justifying the redevelopment with arguments of their own. It is those arguments and the representations of the area that the Campaign constructed, and the consequences of that which constitute the focus of this story.

An original aim of this thesis was to look at the Spitalfields redevelopment and its opposition and to theorize a democratic alternative as to how the future form and function of inner urban areas could be decided by the people who live there. In conceptualizing the roots and construction of such oppositional action, the task was to contribute to that action. However, in the course of the research it became clear that the activities and discourse of the opposition group under study
required closer examination because of the questions that arose concerning the power relations between not only the Campaign and its opponents (the City, the developers and the Government) but also between the Campaign and its constituency that appeared and were mediated through its discourse. These questions form the basis of this thesis. The aim is to provide a critique of the political discourse of this opposition group. But why this research topic?

The Motivation

The redevelopment - economically and physically - of urban areas has received copious attention within urban studies. Some accounts seek to explain the processes transforming the face of cities, and their associated social, economic and political implications, with reference to the restructuring of the global economy. A recent collection edited by Smith and Feagin, which could be viewed as part of the urban political economy school, exemplifies this approach. The collection documents changes in global economic restructuring and its impacts in various places throughout the world with the aim of highlighting the various responses at a number of scales and in different sectors of social, economic and political life. The overall aim is to theorize the links between macro economic processes and responses at the local level. Another collection edited by Parkinson, Foley and Judd examines urban renewal in the US and UK in a similar vein.

Other accounts are directed more towards the policy initiatives taken by the government and its predecessors towards the inner city, which have included in recent years an encouragement of redevelopment financed by the private sector, promoted as an ameliorative strategy to the governmentally-perceived problems of inner city areas. Assessments have been made of ideological considerations notably concerning the ways in which the role of the market and public sector

interests have impacted on urban policy with unforeseen and limiting results. Alternative strategies proposed by bodies such as the Greater London Council (GLC) have also been assessed.

As these and other accounts of urban redevelopment illustrate, the engagement of the people living in areas affected by redevelopment with such schemes has received little attention. For example, the regeneration of London Docklands by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), and the experiences of other Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in Britain have received a great deal of attention within urban studies. The actions of people opposing the developments facilitated by the development corporations and other organisations have not. This is strange and lamentable. Perhaps it is explained by urban geography's concentration on theorizing spatial form and process, and with a concern shared with other areas in social science for policy-orientated research. Either way, the reactions of people to urban redevelopment have to a great extent been ignored. Redevelopment in urban areas affects a lot of things - an area's form, its function, its social, political and economic milieux - it has a direct impact on the people who live in affected areas. It has been an aim of this research to start to redress this imbalance.

The redevelopment of urban areas is often contested and thus is often political because it involves the struggle between groups for the imposition of particular forms and meanings on an area. For Wilson and subsequent writers, the process known as urban redevelopment or urban renewal (I use the terms interchangeably) is recognized as being inextricably political by definition:

[Urban renewal is] the redevelopment or rehabilitation of the older parts of towns and cities, including their central business areas. In practice, urban renewal, so described, has often

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meant the displacement of an existing low income population, creating space for more profitable office, commercial and luxury residential development or the provision of transport facilities.\(^8\)

That displacement can cause reaction from those affected by it. Redevelopment is therefore political because people affected by it engage with it. People can take action against the things that they feel will affect them; they join movements in order to change things at the local level, because that is the scale at which they are affected and at which they experience the consequences of change in urban areas. As Castells has rightly, I think, pointed out:

> They may be unable to control the international flows of capital, but they can impose conditions on any multinational wishing to set up in their community... They will support representative democracy, but they go to the city council meeting en masse both to remind their representatives that they are there to represent them, and so to exercise some control. So when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community.\(^9\)

I am not suggesting that all people affected by urban redevelopment schemes do engage with that redevelopment process. What I am suggesting is that when such reaction occurs it is worth studying and the conditions of action assessed.

Some geographers have looked at social process using Castell's theorisations on urban social movements as a basis.\(^10\) Such a framework was not considered for this thesis because of the incompatibility between the empirical evidence of this research and the criteria for identifying and examining urban social movements developed by Castells and subsequent writers. Monographs documenting the action taken by people in opposition to unwanted changes in their areas illustrate another way in which such studies of oppositional action may be

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undertaken - by descriptive accounts, documenting stuggles and actions of resistance.\textsuperscript{11} For example, the opposition that arose in response to the relocation of Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market and the redevelopment on that site has been documented by Anson, a planner initially involved in the redevelopment plans who changed sides and helped organise the residents group that attempted to have an impact on the plans for the area.\textsuperscript{12} Anson's account provides valuable evidence of the reactions of a group of local residents to the redevelopment plans, and an example of the way in which this research could have been written up. His account is however, uncritical of the group with which he was associated and lacks any substantive conceptualisation of the logic and actions of that organisation, beyond vague appeals to class analysis as an aid to understanding the origins and trajectory of that movement. Similarly the redevelopment of Tolmers Square in Euston is documented by Wates, again an 'insiders' account of opposition to unwanted plans for redevelopment and the formulation of alternatives.\textsuperscript{13} Again, this account, whilst a valuable record of events, does not develop questions concerning the formation of the Tolmers Square Village Association and the construction of its arguments.

This research has aimed to document opposition to the redevelopment of Spitalfields in East London, quite simply on the grounds that opposition to redevelopment had never been examined fully and critically. This thesis is therefore primarily a contribution towards the literatures on urban redevelopment.

The Case Study

Given that I wanted to study opposition to redevelopment, on the grounds that it has been all but ignored, or at best simplified, the question then arose as to how it should be studied. What methodologies should be employed, what questions should be asked of the material and how should that material be conceptualised? A case study approach appeared to be suitable for this research. Case studies are generally accepted as being good descriptive devices from which

\textsuperscript{12} Anson, B. (1981) \textit{I'll Fight You For It! Behind the Struggle for Covent Garden}. Cape, London.
to illustrate the inter-related nature of the elements in a situation\textsuperscript{14}, or as a way of organising social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied.\textsuperscript{15} As Castells points out, they are praised in that they permit in-depth analysis and blamed for their singularity and their disallowance of extrapolation. However, the general value of any observation depends on the purpose of its use.\textsuperscript{16} The general strategy has been to seek out relations in order to explain or develop theory, as Pahl suggests.\textsuperscript{17} For as Burgess and Mitchell both note, the case study can yield complexly inter-related facts and information, from which certain theoretical principles can be abstracted.\textsuperscript{18} Some types of inquiry in social science are not usefully explored with case studies. If the aim is a search for typicality and the exposure of trends and patterns, case studies may be avoided because it is so difficult to discern the extent to which they are typical.\textsuperscript{19} The search for representativeness is not necessarily the aim of such intensive research strategies.\textsuperscript{20} Although there are certain features of this case study that will be applicable to similar situations elsewhere, the importance of this case study lies in the conceptual ideas developed from this research. What is important is not the applicability of the research findings to other cases. The validity of the case study, as Mitchell points out, lies with the cogency of the theoretical reasoning behind it and the mode of conceptualization of the material.\textsuperscript{21}

I chose therefore to base my examination of opposition to redevelopment on a single case study, that of the experiences of the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers. Through my examination I have aimed to pick out certain points and develop particular ideas concerning the study of opposition to redevelopment. These will be clear during the reading of my study. But the question still remains concerning my arrival at those conclusions. Given that I have been unable to find any clear maps or plans to help guide my way through the material, any indications in the literature as to how this material might be approached beyond illustrations of what I should not do, how did I arrive at the questions I have asked of this material? The methodology that I adopted used an

\textsuperscript{17}Pahl, R.E. (1987) \textit{Divisions of Labour}.
examination of the discourse of the Campaign, and I shall now explain why I thought this helpful in examining my material and finding questions to ask of it.

My first concern with examining my material was to find a way to assess what the Campaign did, how they did it, and why. The first two questions could be answered easily enough through a narrative and commentary on the Campaign's actions. But explaining the Campaign's actions in terms that referred to their context and explained their actions without reference to a hidden 'reality' or set of formations outside their own 'reality' seemed difficult until I started to consider the possibilities for my examination of the Campaign that would be opened up through an examination of the Campaign's discourse. As Connolly notes:

> Because the discourse of politics helps set the terms within which that politics proceeds, one who wants to understand and assess the structure of political life must deliberately probe the conventions governing those concepts.22

If an examination of discourse is helpful in understanding political life, we must first define what we mean by the term 'discourse', and then ascertain why it should be so helpful in understanding the logics of political action.

It seems to me that definitions of discourse abound, but that most agree on certain points. Thompson, for example, sees discourse as the 'actually occurring instances of expression which appear in the flow of a conversation, text or similar form'.23 Discourse and thus its analysis is therefore primarily concerned with the study of language:

> The language of politics is not a neutral medium that conveys ideas independently formed; it is an institutionalized structure of meanings that channels political thought and action in certain directions.24

Laclau and Mouffe take that definition further to equate discourse with that totality which includes within itself the linguistic and the non-linguistic.25 Thus anything that signifies or has meaning can be considered as part of the discourse. Meanings can be embodied in technical processes, institutions, patterns of general behaviour,

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forms for transmission and diffusion and pedagogical forms. For Macdonell, any technique in and through which the social production of meaning takes place may be considered part of the discourse. For Laclau and Mouffe, this means that every social configuration is meaningful. 'Objects are never given to us as mere existential entities; they are always given to us within discursive articulations'.

The work of Foucault is most useful in determining guiding rules for the detection of discursive formations. He has emphasised the rules of formation through which groups of statements achieve a unity. Foucault proposes sets of criteria for determining whether or not a group of statements constitute a unity. Reference may be made to a common object of analysis. A certain manner of preference or mode of statement may be present. A system of permanent and coherent concepts may be deployed. An identity or persistence of theoretical theme may be identified. A discursive formation may be identified where an order exists, this regularity being constituted by the presence of a systematic dispersion of elements within these criteria.

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In actually attempting discourse analysis as a methodology with which to examine the material collected during the research for this thesis, I relied heavily on Edward Said's interpretation of discourse as expounded in his work on Orientalism.\(^1\) Said himself recognises the debt he owed to Foucault's writings on discourses and their examination.\(^2\) Said's conceptualisation of discourse was useful in that it allowed an ordering of the material to take place which allied closely with the categories in the data which I had constructed semi-intuitively whilst that data was collected, categories such as the construction of the Campaign by themselves as a group representative of the area within the context of the local political milieu of Spitalfields, and to the construction of a set of images and ideas about Spitalfields by the Campaign. It was possible to identify in relation to the Campaign a discursive formation. A discursive formation may be defined as a system of concepts which acts as a framework which in turn incorporates specific combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and practices, and which then in turn refer, and are relevant to, social action. To return to Foucault's prescription above, I would argue that the Campaign might be identified as sitting within and constructing a discourse because they referred to a common object of analysis, in a specific manner, underpinned by a particular system of concepts and a specific theoretical framework for interpreting the social world.

With this analytical framework in mind, using Said's study of Orientalism I made the decision to draw from his work two themes around which I could base my examination of the Campaign's discourse. Firstly, Said uses in his work the idea that the examination of discursive formations might reveal the power relations which those discourses support. This is because any discourse will concern itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts at the expense of others. A discourse will delimit specific topics for consideration and has the power to include them within its remit, or conversely, to exclude them. It is this aspect of discourse which renders its study fruitful with regard to any aims for a consideration of relations of power and their operation. An examination of discourse involves questioning how that linguistic and non-linguistic totality of meanings may serve to control, dominate, include and exclude.\(^3\) In addition, and as Macdonell points out, a discourse takes effect directly and indirectly through its relation or address to another discourse.\(^4\) With the aid of discourse analysis, therefore, it is both possible

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\(^2\) ibid. p.3.
and necessary to ascertain how one discursive construction may be negated by another.

Secondly, Said also points to the importance of identifying within discursive constructions the representations of material and social entities that are constructed as a means to an end. Discourses have the power of inclusion and exclusion; they also have the power to name things as they wish. During analysis, Said asserts, one should accord priority to the idea that that which is circulated within a discourse will not be the 'truth' about an object but rather representations of that object. A set of statements of whatever kind relating to an object will contain within them a set of meanings, the examination of which will indicate a purpose behind them, a set of arguments about the purpose of that object. An awareness and sensitivity towards language is crucial here; language is a highly organized and encoded system, employing many devices to express, indicate, represent and exchange messages and information. The value, efficacy, strength and apparent veracity of a written statement about the object with which the discourse is concerned relies very little on the original subject of the discourse, but rather on the representation that is carried within that discourse. Discourse is about representation as a means to an end. Underlying all the different units of a discourse - the vocabulary used whenever the subject of the discourse is spoken or written about - is a set of representative figures. It is those representations, their position and their significance, which constitute the focus for inquiry within discourse analysis, with the ultimate aim of establishing the outcome for that discourse (and for the users and constructors of that discourse) of that representation.

Therefore following Said the task appeared to be to identify the sites of confrontation between discourses, and the construction of representations or images within these discourses. This would then mould the material in such a way as to enable the construction of a text which would allow the power struggles within the story - the confrontations between the Campaign and groups such as the developers and other groups active in the area - and the representations constructed by different actors in the story - the images constructed of Spitalfields, for example - to become apparent as the reader progressed through the text. This was undertaken, in crude terms, by examination of both the medium and the message of the story - the ways in which positions and arguments were proposed and expounded, in both the public

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6 ibid. p.71.
and private domain, and the ways in which the messages, the arguments and representations of the parties concerned were delivered.

The methodology used to both identify the discourses important to the story, their sites of confrontation, their representations, their mode of delivery and their messages, was very straightforward. The material at my disposal was diverse, ranging from notes and documents relating to the background of the story, through to observations from meetings, via interviews of varying types with people connected with the redevelopment story. That material was systematically examined with the aid of highlighter pens and certain groups of statements relating to particular material or social entities defined. For example, collections of statements on the representation of women, on portrayals of the City of London, on images of Spitalfields, and on perceptions of other so-called community groups working in the area were drawn together. Much of this activity was intuitive; having spent a great deal of time with the Campaign, I knew that certain ideas were very important to them as a group, for example, the importance of the Labour Party in their minds both to Spitalfields and to the Campaign. Sometimes the results of this activity were suprising to me, for example, in relation to a particular group of statements on the history of the area and the meaning of immigration for some members of the Campaign. I called these groups of statements, very loosely, discourses, on the grounds that these statements worked together systematically to reveal ideas about power relations and the use of representations that otherwise remained obscured when they lay embedded in the mass of material collected.

A second stage, involving the actual analysis of these discourses, was far more difficult. It involved not only working through these discourses and attempting to ascertain what they said, but also debating consistently (and mostly with myself) the validity or otherwise of the interpretations I was imposing on them and attempting to construct and structure a text which would reveal these discourses whilst telling a story. Actually describing that process in any detail, perhaps for the purposes of replication by another, is problematic, because with the benefit of hindsight one glosses over or forgets the problems entailed in this process, but which were integral - crucial, even - to the success of this process. In brief, I took those statements relating to the power relations entwined within the Campaign's discourses and separated them out from those relating to the construction of representations and images by the Campaign. Once a collection of statements and positions was assembled, relating to conflicts and tensions between groups, it was

7I detail these types of material and their collection below.
then possible to identify discourses of redevelopment and opposition which interacted with one another, and to note how this interaction resulted in developments that produced further aspects of the story under study. Chapter Six, dealing with the confrontations between the Campaign and another group at work in the area, was written as a documentation of the consequences of the conflict between two discourses. A similar technique was used in Chapters Two and Three in order to highlight the sites of conflict between the discourses of redevelopment and opposition of the developers and the Campaign respectively. In Chapters Four and Five, I focus on the construction of discourses as a means of representation, looking at the conventions, codes of understanding and traditions that were constructed around the idea of Spitalfields, which included elements of the area's history and comment on the population composition of the area. The focus here is weighted more towards a consideration of the construction of particular representations of Spitalfields for specific ends. Whilst there is some overlap between the two categories in the final text, this crude division still holds; Chapters Three, Four and Six relate mainly to the Campaign's relations with other groups in the area, opposed and supporting, current and historical, whilst Chapter Five concentrates on the representations of Spitalfields constructed by the Campaign for its own ends. Once separated out, and often with no clear idea of any conclusions that I would draw, I then constructed a text using the material gathered during the fieldwork, broken down into sections and subsections. In many cases, only when this process was complete, (and often after extensive writing and re-writing) was it possible to then summarise the conclusions about the Campaign's discourses that were being examined at each point, and insert those conclusions into the text.

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8 It is to my regret that a closer inter-weaving of the two views by way of analysis of conflict between the two discourses was not possible because of the lack of parity in my material on the developers when compared with that on the Campaign.

9 Again, my lack of material on the construction of Spitalfields by the developers meant that I could not undertake a direct comparison of the discursive strategies of both the developers and the Campaign as they interacted.
This idea of representation and its power gave me a conceptual tool with which to examine the matrices of power in which the Campaign sat. It helped me, as Chapter Five will demonstrate, to examine the ways in which Spitalfields was portrayed by the Campaign and from those representations find a way to conceptualise power relations that I could observe to be in operation. In short, by examining the Campaign's discourse I have been able to determine where the roots of the Campaign's arguments lay, and tackle questions concerning the motivations, functions and consequences of their political action. I have been able to examine the material collected in the course of the research and produce my interpretations of what, how and why the Campaign argued what they did.

Methodology and Research Techniques

So far in this introductory chapter, I have explained why I chose to research the topic of opposition to redevelopment, and explained how my choice of methodology indicated to me the questions I should start asking of my material. I shall now explain how that research was undertaken.

This thesis may be termed an ethnography - a text about people. Writing ethnographies is concerned with the inscription of social action. We describe and explain what we see and understand. Writing however is not just the presentation of research results from that ethnographic work. As Clifford has pointed out, writing is properly experimental. It involves attempts to find new ways of presenting and understanding that which comes out of the research. Writing as the presentation of ethnographies is also caught up in the invention of cultures rather than their representation. A text cannot claim to present reality; it must be seen one of a possible number of realities. Yet the author has power to describe and explain what she or he sees. The author has power over the field. S/he is the one holding the pen, writing it down and perhaps ultimately getting it published.

This thesis, then, is my interpretation of the activities and arguments of the Campaign that I have studied. I have the power to write what I like about the Campaign. This is balanced in part, although not mitigated, by my and the

35Ibid.
Campaign's decision for them to produce a parallel account of their activities, and a critique of my thesis. But the fact remains that this is a subjective interpretation. I do not consider this to be a contentious point, due to the maturity of the debate on questions concerning the validity of qualitative research, so I shall not dwell on that per se. Rather, I wish to take note of advice offered elsewhere on the establishment of validity in qualitative research such as this, and devote the remainder of this chapter to an explanation and exposure of my role in the research.

To list the activities undertaken in the course of the research is insufficient. Nancy Miller has pointed out the way that the theories we use in academic writing and research contain fragments of autobiography; those fragments require exposure. Biographical details are important, as is the researcher's relationship with the fieldwork, as are relationships with 'respondents' in determining the data collected, both in terms of access to information in the first place, and in terms of the type of ethnographic material collected. There is however more to the use of an interpretative methodology than acknowledging the presence of the researcher, or noting his or her attributes and status, such as age, background, gender, or race, and noting how they might affect the interpretation offered. Said quotes Gramsci with reference to the need to produce an 'inventory' of such personal attributes:

The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory... therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.

I am twenty-six years old, I am a white woman research student at present living and working in London. I am educated to degree level and would define myself as

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38 Nancy Miller, The Critic as Author; Getting Personal. Paper presented at Queen Mary College Centre for European Studies Seminar, 22nd February 1990.

middle class both in terms of my current social position and background. Politically I am a socialist.

Yet that inventory, that 'exposure' is insufficient. As Clifford argues, writing the ethnographer into fieldwork accounts is essential.\textsuperscript{40} It shows the interpretation to be the creation of an individual, exposes the power of the individual and whilst this may not reduce it, at least acknowledges its effects. Yet there has been a certain resistance to this idea within writing in the social sciences, possibly springing from the discipline's positivistic heritage and its stress on the neutrality and objectivity of the researcher.\textsuperscript{41} As Pratt comments:

\begin{quote}
Fieldwork produces a kind of authority that is anchored to a large extent in subjective, sensuous experience. One experiences the indigenous environment and lifeways for oneself, sees with one's own eyes, even plays some roles, albeit contrived ones, in the daily life of the community. But the professional text to result from such an encounter is supposed to conform to the norms of a scientific discourse whose authority resides in the absolute effacement of the speaking and experiencing subject.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

As Pratt notes, the use of a personal narrative in the text potentially mediates the contradiction between fieldwork's engagement and description's self-effacement. It inserts into the text the authority of the personal experience out of which the ethnography is made.\textsuperscript{43}

How is that undertaken? The strategy adopted here has been to include an autobiographical account of my involvement with the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers. The purpose is to expose my own role, and also to indicate which research techniques have been used. I am cautious of including in this thesis a personal account of the research experience. Intuitively and theoretically I can justify it, but such narratives can run the risk of descending into indulgence and perhaps unnecessary catharsis.\textsuperscript{44} Further, as with the thesis (and indeed most writing) this is an invention, and I as author have the power to include or exclude what I will. Some things are too private or personal either to myself or


\textsuperscript{41}A notable exception is Eyles' mini-biography in Eyles, J. (1982) \textit{Senses of Place. Silverbrook, Warrington.}


\textsuperscript{43}ibid.

\textsuperscript{44}Porteus advocates writing as catharsis; I am not sure I agree with his whole argument although I broadly support the spirit in which it was written. Porteus, J.D. (1989) \textit{Katharsis: Academic Writing as Self-Therapy. Area} 21 pp. 83-85.
others to merit inclusion, whilst other aspects of my research I find myself unable through lack of a suitable vocabulary to inscribe or articulate. As ever, the reader is the ultimate judge of the use of such an autobiography and its use in affirming the validity of my subjective and individual interpretation and critique of the Campaign's opposition to the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market.

A short autobiography of a research experience.

My involvement in the opposition surrounding the redevelopment of Spitalfields started with a fortuitous and perhaps serendipitous encounter in March 1988 with a broadsheet produced by the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers. The choice of this particular case study came from a combination of this initial chance, gut feeling once the research was underway that this case study would be worth investigating in as much depth as I could manage, and the realization that this was a good example in purely empirical terms of redevelopment and opposition.

Small events can shape, determine and change the course of much larger ones. I found the broadsheet produced by the Campaign during a meeting of the East London History Society, which I had attended to in order to hear Caroline Adams talk about her book on pioneer Sylheti settlers in Britain. I contacted the Campaign's co-ordinator, and was invited to attend the next Campaign meeting. Previous to this I had searched through the archives of both the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and the Bishopsgate Institute for information and press cuttings on the redevelopment of the market.

At that time Jane Jacobs, a postgraduate research student at University College, London, and I started our collaboration. We had heard through mutual friends that we were both interested in studying Spitalfields Market, albeit from very different perspectives. We agreed to go to the next Campaign meeting together on 17th May 1988. We arrived and were invited to join in proceedings, got involved in the discussions and put on the mailing list for further information. At that time the Campaign was preparing to go to the House of Commons Committee to petition against the Private Bill that would relocate the Market from

Spitalfields. In response to a request for people to attend the House of Commons Committee sessions made in the mailing letter, both Jane and I agreed to sit with the Campaign. We both needed to attend the proceedings in connection with our Ph.D research, and most of the other members of the Campaign at that time were unable to attend because of work commitments. We were therefore able, as well as being willing, to show our commitment to the Campaign in terms of active input.

So I attended the House of Commons Committee sessions and found myself involved in the Campaign. The Campaign kept going through the summer months, and I wrote a small report for them documenting our activities to date. This report was accepted and sent round to various groups including the Labour Party and the Trades Council, who had given the Campaign a small amount of funding in the early days. I also started a series of interviews with people associated with various aspects of both case studies. These interviews were conducted as semi-structured, information-gathering exercises in the main. At that time I was not interested so much in elaborating on the underlying features of the oppositional discourse, but merely finding out what was going on, and what people thought and understood of those immediate events. These interviews were important as they made me known in the area to a number of voluntary sector professionals. I considered, briefly, a larger questionnaire-based survey of attitudes in the area towards the relocation of the market but decided that I had insufficient time.

The Campaign continued over the winter months of 1988/89, mostly involved with issues surrounding the market. We delivered large quantities of newsletters in November 1988 and went flyposting in December, to make our presence known. We decided, when the time came, to petition against the Bill when it moved to the House of Lords. In March and April 1989 I went round with other members of the Campaign collecting signatures for a petition to present

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47I shall use 'I' rather than 'we' from now on in my account, although much of what I describe was shared by Jane. Throughout our research we attempted to enjoy a non-competitive collaboration over our research. During the first year of this, we shared material resources, exchanged information, and discussed at great length our ideas about our work. This was a very useful exercise for both of us. As we both started writing we felt a need to distance ourselves from each other's ideas, not through concerns of direct 'theft' of ideas, but rather through a concern to protect our own originalities and to try and stop the subtle osmosis of ideas that inevitably occurs through discussion of a shared research interest. We felt this strategy, hard as it was, to be necessary for the demands of our Ph.D.s as original pieces of work. Whilst writing we therefore discussed many aspects of writing, how we structured our work and so on, but tried to avoid discussing our ideas, although this was tempting. For a more detailed account see Woodward, R. and Jacobs, J. (1989) Researching Common Ground. Praxis 16 pp. 14-16.

48See below for a fuller explanation.
as evidence in the House of Lords Committee. When the House of Lords Committee sat in May 1989, I attended the Committee sessions, taking notes and helping formulate questions.

The decision in the House of Lords Committee went against the Campaign and the Bill received Royal Assent. The Campaign continued, becoming increasingly concerned with new plans that were produced for the Market site and the consultation that was initiated by the developers and the local authority. At that time the Community Development Group, a local organization aiming to work with the developers in order to obtain 'community gain' from further redevelopments, came into being. The Campaign became involved with that and with the discussions over other sites due for redevelopment in the area. I continued to take an active part in the Campaign until I moved away from London in December 1990.

**On Being a Participating Observer**

As this brief account of two years' involvement with the CSSD implicitly indicates, I became very involved with my fieldwork. This involvement raises several points concerning what is commonly known as participant observation. Participant observation is defined as 'the method by which a researcher observes the social life of the subject by participating in that life'.49 The researcher actively takes part in the entity under consideration and passively observes that entity. The term is used as a catch-all for any research involving participation and observation. As such it is perhaps of little use other than as an indicator of a basic research strategy. Participant observation is a strategy usually used for research where experiential data and quite a deep level of involvement are required in order for that data to be obtained. It may also be seen as a means of gaining information without recourse to more de-personalising or dehumanizing research techniques such as questionnaires and large-scale surveys. In each research situation, the mixture of participation and observation will differ according to the circumstances of the research situation, the researcher's wishes and aims, and those of the group (as it usually is) under study.

In this research situation, participant observation entailed attendance at regular Campaign meetings between May 1988 and September 1990. Because I

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attended meetings so regularly, I became well known by the group and my face was recognised by people outside the group; I became a member of that Campaign. The ratio of participation to observation changed over time. During the first eighteen months of my involvement I was an active participant, which was useful in terms of the amount of information I was able to obtain. My role as observer was minimal, through necessity; I had to be seen to be participating rather than watching from the sidelines in order to make it clear to the Campaign that I was not just interested in attending meetings because I needed some material for a Ph.D thesis, but that in addition I was supportive of their goals and wanted to contribute to the construction of their arguments. During the later stages of the research after I had decided on a cut-off point for data collection, and during the writing-up period, I still attended meetings but was less willing to become so actively involved in group activities. This was due to the need for a certain amount of 'distance' between myself and the subject. Writing a critique of something so close to me necessitated this. I did not formally 'exit' from the field, on the grounds that it would have been churlish to remove myself after the collection of information. Furthermore, I enjoyed the company of the people who constituted the subject of my research and did not want to cut myself off from them totally.

One often reads in accounts of participant observation a set of intentions formulated by the researcher prior to entering the field. I must admit to having had no clear-cut idea of precisely how I would carry out that research, and was guided instead by certain notions of the ethics of such research strategies. I made my position clear to all members of the Campaign at the start of my involvement with them, on the grounds that dishonesty about my intentions would have been highly unethical. I also felt that in such a research situation I had to 'do as I would be done by'. That is, I had to approach them with the same degree of of honesty that I would expect were I in their position. An upshot of this was my efforts towards the end of the research period to explain my critique of the Campaign. I did this by giving people papers that I had written, and those portions of the thesis which contained quotations from interview transcripts.

As to the feelings of the group towards me, although it would be arrogant for me to claim any great knowledge of each individual's precise feelings towards me and my involvement in the Campaign as a researcher, in general I understand my involvement with the Campaign to have been welcomed. Not only was I another member, boosting numbers at meetings, and an active one at that, but I had certain uses to the Campaign. As a member of the Campaign with an alternative persona (a research student) I was able to to get information for them, at
times through rather devious means. I was able to attend Committee sessions in Parliament at times of day when other members were working. I was able, because of the nature of my work, to produce short reports for the Campaign, for distribution.

In summary, I was an active participant. I would not however term my research strategy 'action research' which has been defined by Byrne as:

a form of social scientific practice in which investigation is carried out in order to inform and facilitate a programme of social change as part of that self-same programme of social change.\(^5\)

To my mind the term implies a more conscious, systematic and institutionally sanctioned involvement with the subject and the research topic than was the case in this research. I was highly involved, but did not consciously plan my involvement to that degree or decide which actions I would take once I had achieved that involvement. Further, I did not actually have the power to induce change through my efforts alone, either within the group or with regard to what that group was fighting for. I was, after all, only a research student.

The ease with which I became a participant observer, and my experiences with the Campaign were fundamental to the other aspects of the research and data collection, namely which documentary sources became open to me, and how the interviews I conducted were carried out and used. I shall discuss each in turn.

A variety of documentary sources were used in this research. Firstly, there were those on open public access in various record offices, such as the Tower Hamlets Local History Library. These included newspaper cuttings about the market, council and planning documents from the local authority and publicity material from the SDG and other development companies.\(^5\) Certain voluntary sector groups such as the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service were also integral to the story, yet their records were not available in full to me. Workers from that organization, and others, did however give me copies of all the documents that they felt to be of relevance. A systematic search was made through the files of the Spitalfields Project and Spitalfields Local Committee which were very useful in providing information on the background to the Campaign and its

\(^5\) Contained in the bibliography is a complete list of all the documents used and where they may be found.
arguments against redevelopment. Unfortunately, full minutes of the Spitalfields Ward Labour Party were not available. All that existed was a floppy disc containing very brief minutes and agendas of meetings.

Other sets of documentation were made available to me by the Campaign. These included the papers produced by all parties during the Parliamentary Committee sessions, including transcripts of the proceedings. I also had access to the vast pile of papers accumulated by the co-ordinator since the inception of the Campaign, which included letters, minutes of meetings, reports, newsletters and petitions, and newspaper cuttings.

My experiences as an active participant with the Campaign shaped the way in which my interviews were carried out. My interviews were of two types. Firstly, there were those undertaken with around twenty different individuals over the course of two years, conducted in order to solicit opinion and obtain factual information. They were recorded by way of notes during the interview and written up in full immediately afterwards. They were not taped because at the time I did not have access to a tape recorder. They were semi-structured, and all questions were tailored to that specific individual's position. Interviewees were chosen on the basis of the role that they played in the Spitalfields Market story, and were contacted either because I had heard about them, because they were key figures (planners, for example) or because other interviewees had suggested I contact them. I did not know these people prior to interview, and they were accordingly quite formal. There was also a definite power relation at work during the interview, which I felt to be their power over me as a research student. Because I was in some instances unknown to these people, I was able to present my involvement with the Campaign as I wished, either concealing it or making it explicit. There is of course an ethical question here - perhaps I should have been more open about my position, but I was not because in most cases I was not asked about my own position on the redevelopment.

Secondly, eleven in-depth interviews were undertaken during the summer of 1989 with Campaign members, the local MP and a representative from the

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52 The Spitalfields Project and Spitalfields Local Committee were state-aided non-statutory bodies which undertook a variety of activities in Spitalfields between 1974 and 1986. They will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.
53 These are referenced in the text as follows: House of Commons/Lords Committee, date, ME (Minutes of Evidence) day, page.
54 At time of writing the intention is to deposit this entire collection with the Tower Hamlets Local History Library, Bancroft Road, London E1.
55 A full list of interviews undertaken for this research is given in Appendix 1.
development company. Most members of the Campaign were interviewed with
the exception of a couple of people who had by that time moved away from the
area. Due to my familiarity, and in some instances friendship at that time with the
people concerned, they were quite informal and relaxed occasions. They were
semi-structured, and in each interview the same key set of questions were asked.
In addition, at each interview questions specific to that persons' knowledge and
experience were asked. Certain leading questions were asked on the grounds that
due to my familiarity with the people and their opinions, the interviews were to act
as a source of clarification and recording of things I already knew. The interviews
at times contained an element of farce, for example, when asking questions that I
knew my respondent knew that I knew the answer to. The interviews lasted
from between 45 minutes to two and a half hours. They were all tape recorded.
They were transcribed in full, but with the exclusion of totally irrelevant parts of
the conversation which were noted briefly. The interviews were edited slightly.
Because I was not going to undertake conversation analysis on my transcripts,
some of the 'ums' and 'ers' were removed, except where such figures of speech
were integral to the sense of the phrase or sentence.

These interviews are a key source in this examination of the Campaign's
discourse. Quotations from the interviews are used throughout this text, in order
to allow for greater accuracy in the presentation of the discourse under scrutiny, in
order to make my interpretations of that discourse as open, clear and obvious as
possible, and so as to allow people to speak in the text, albeit with my power
giving them space in which to do so. In the text the reader will be able to observe
for herself those comments which occur in public, those which constitute
reflection on the activities of the Campaign, and will be able to distinguish between
them. I have not separated the two rigidly, because I did not feel that I could make
such a clear distinction between the two; many quotations back up or confirm
public statements. All respondents were given copies of their transcripts and told
to inform me of any points they wished to reword or clarify. Three people, I later
discovered, discussed their transcripts between themselves, finding a great deal of
similarity between responses, which they later reported back to me. One person
annotated her transcript and one, dissatisfied with his performance during the

56c.f. Oakley on so-called feminist interviewing strategies, which aim for the involvement of the
interviewer with the interviewee. Oakley, A. (1981) Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in
One interview which does not fit neatly into either of the above categories is that carried out with the man in charge of the SDG’s plans for the redevelopment of the Market. This interview was carried out in the summer of 1989, and arranged by way of letter and telephone. I presented myself as a research student undertaking work on the opposition to the Spitalfields Market redevelopment, and he agreed to speak to me. When I stepped out of the lift at his plush Knightsbridge office he immediately recognised me as a member of the Campaign. My treatment during that interview is indicative of the way the presumed power relation of interviewer over interviewee can be reversed. Because he saw me as a Campaign member, and thus part of a rather annoying but not really threatening opposition, he was rude and patronizing both about the Campaign, but also about what he assumed to be my attitudes and understandings about the issue. I was treated - and dismissed - as a member of what he saw as a rather stupid little group. Luckily I was able to record it all.

I spent a lot of time with Campaign members and achieved a great degree of familiarity with certain members in particular. This led to a third important ‘data source’ - conversations, either in person or on the phone with people, discussing various aspects of the Campaign and its activities. Whilst these were not necessarily noted down or used in this text, they provide a source of background material and information about people that combines over time to form an understanding of that person, their beliefs, politics and so on (this is a two-way process of course!). It is this background knowledge which has also been essential to my ability to make the interpretations that I have, and whilst it is not necessarily noted explicitly in the text it is integral to that interpretation, even through actually writing that into the text proved virtually impossible.

**Conclusion**

Redevelopment of cities such as London has received copious attention in geography. People living in areas affected by redevelopment have engaged with redevelopment processes, yet that action has not received the attention it merits. The aim of this thesis is to begin to redress this imbalance by presenting an

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57This particular source is denoted throughout the text as ‘Essay following interview with ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989’.
account of the opposition to the relocation of Spitalfields Market and the redevelopment of the site by the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers.

I have chosen to examine this opposition - what, how and why the Campaign argued the things that they did - by examining the discourse of that Campaign. It is through the use of discourse analysis that I have been able to conceptualise some of the themes that appear in this thesis. The themes that I develop here were chosen because they were points that appeared to me to be the most obvious ones to investigate whilst collecting my material for this case study. The thesis is structured around their investigation as follows.

In Chapter Two I provide all the essential background information required for my examination of the Campaign. I introduce Spitalfields in East London, and present a brief history of the Market. I discuss previous plans to relocate the market, and I then go on to describe the plans that appeared in the mid-1980s for redevelopment and the processes by which they were implemented. I set these within the context of the Conservative Government's policies on inner urban redevelopment. I conclude this section by examining the ways in which the developers presented their redevelopment plans.

In Chapter Three I examine the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers. I look at its formation within the local Labour Party and the reasons why it was taken out of the Party. I discuss the ways in which the Campaign organised itself and attempted to gain support from the local population. I then examine the arguments it presented in opposition to the relocation of the market and the redevelopment of the site.

In Chapter Four I look at the origins of the Campaign in more detail. I examine three organisations - the Spitalfields Project, the Spitalfields Local Committee and the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service, and locate the Campaign's arguments as arising from ideas held by workers with these groups as to the type of redevelopment needed in Spitalfields. I then return to the Labour Party, looking at the way the Party changed in the 1980s and questioning the reasons for the appearance of the Campaign from these origins.

In Chapter Five I look at the ways in which the Campaign represented Spitalfields and the redevelopment. Using a variety of sources I examine the portrayal of Spitalfields as home to a distinct group of people, a community, a migrant place, and as a multicultural place, raising questions about that
representation. I then discuss images of Spitalfields in a more general sense as produced through reflection on the image held by the Campaign of the City of London.

In Chapter Six, I develop the questions of the representation of Spitalfields, tying this in with questions concerning the Campaign's own representativeness. I set the Campaign's arguments on redevelopment alongside those produced by another group who entered the debate on the future form of Spitalfields, the Community Development Group. I conclude this chapter by discussing the hostility from the Campaign towards the CDG and finding explanation for this with the logic of the Campaign's portrayal of itself as representative of the wishes of the population of Spitalfields with regard to redevelopment.

In Chapter Seven, I conclude the thesis by summarising the main issues raised. I then look at the ways in which material from this study might be relevant to other debates within geography and the social sciences. I conclude by asserting the partiality of this account because of the audience for which it was written, and by asking for the story to be taken up and examined by the Campaign itself.
Chapter Two

Spitalfields, the Market and Plans for Redevelopment.

In this chapter I shall discuss the plans for the relocation of Spitalfields Market. I shall go into the background of the redevelopment plans in some detail in order to provide as full a context as possible to the examination of the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers and their arguments against the relocation of the Market and the redevelopment of the site. I shall start by introducing the area, and will then present a brief history of the Market. I discuss older plans to relocate the Market, and I shall then examine the redevelopment proposals that precipitated the eventual relocation by setting them in the context of the expansion of the City of London. I shall then expand the focus of the chapter by examining the redevelopment of Spitalfields in the context of inner city renewal and redevelopment, drawing out the links I see as relevant between the Spitalfields redevelopment project and Government policy towards inner city areas, particularly with regard to East London. I conclude this chapter with an examination and assessment of the Spitalfields Development Group's claims for the redevelopment of the Market site.

Spitalfields

Spitalfields, identified by the people who live there as a parish, a ward and a locality in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, is an area of London's East End bordering the City of London to the east. As London's 'first industrial suburb' it was settled by Huguenot refugees in the late seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth century. They established themselves in the area by building up the silkweaving industry using skills brought with them from France. Using the wealth from that enterprise they were responsible for the construction of the urban fabric of the area, much of which survives today in the form of Georgian houses

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1 In various interviews with Spitalfields residents and Campaign Members all three definitions were given and used.
in the Conservation Areas, dominated by Nicholas Hawksmoor's architectural masterpiece, Christchurch Spitalfields.

The settlement in the area in the later nineteenth century by Jewish refugees fleeing pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe is usually explained by the availability of cheap (and substandard) accommodation and the area's proximity to the London docks, the point of disembarkation.\(^3\) By that time the physical fabric of the area was decaying, the area was overcrowded and congested, dirty, noisy and smelly - labelled by historians as the ghetto.\(^4\) Jewish refugees were forced through poverty to live in overcrowded and insanitary slum conditions, a great many earning a living in the rag trade. After the First World War a population movement away from the East End began as the inhabitants of the area became able to find and afford accommodation in the outer London suburbs, a movement that accelerated after the end of the Second World War when evacuees stayed away, and families continued to move out.

In the late 1950s and early 1960 Spitalfields became the home of large numbers of Bengali men, economic migrants coming to Britain in search of work and settling in Spitalfields.\(^5\) They acted on a precedent set by a previous generation of Bengali settlers - Lascar sailors who are credited with the establishment of Bengali settlement in East London.\(^6\) In the 1970s the numbers of Bengali residents grew as impending immigration controls caused further migration of whole families joining their husbands and fathers. Currently, in terms of 'ethnic' composition, people of Bangladeshi origin account for around 57% of the total population of the ward, with slightly lower figures in adjacent wards; this figure is probably an underestimate.\(^7\) Other groups in the area estimate the Bengali population to be around 75%.\(^8\) The economy of Spitalfields, and hence of the Bengali population, rests on the clothing and restaurant trades. The area has been characterized in the media as a ghetto but also as a place of colour

\(^5\)I use the term Bengali to denote people of Bangladeshi origin, although others use the term Bangladeshi. I use Bengali on the grounds that I was informed that it is the term Bengali people use most often to describe themselves.
\(^8\)For example the Spitalfields Small Business Association (SSBA), various conversations with Co-ordinator; Spitalfields Community Development Group (CDG), various meetings, March - August 1989.
and vitality. This is frequently contrasted with the wealth of the City of London over its western border.9

Spitalfields is an area of intense poverty and deprivation. According to Townsend’s analyses, unemployment was 21.95% in 1987 although this figure masks the substantial number of people in seasonal employment and the low waged.10 The majority of people rent their homes (96.47%), most of which are in the public sector.11 Current figures for the number of people in private rented accommodation are unavailable; in 1981, 24.2% of all households rented from private landlords.12 The proportion of people in this sector is estimated by housing associations in the area to have dropped substantially. Much of the housing in the rented sector is in a bad state of repair and lacking basic amenities. Townsend gives a figure of 28.26% for overcrowding in the ward; again, the real figure may be much higher, but adequate statistics are not available.13 As Table 2.1 indicates, Townsend’s ranking of 755 wards in London according to indices of poverty and certain social indicators places Spitalfields at the top of the list as the most deprived ward in London. The indices of poverty for wards in Tower Hamlets bordering Spitalfields are also shown. The higher the positive Z score, the greater the level of deprivation experienced by people living in that ward.14

11The concept of housing tenure can be misused. As Barlow and Duncan indicate, assumptions are frequently made that taxonomic collectives of tenure, for example, ‘owner occupation’, necessarily correspond with significant concrete categories, for example, housing quality and social stratification. Further, abstract categories such as housing class and consumption cleavages are clearly identified with specific tenures, and to theorise along these lines and take tenure beyond the relations of occupancy and ownership is to lose information and analytical sensitivity in explanation. If one wished, however, one could identify consumption cleavages and social stratification with reference to housing tenure in Spitalfields. Barlow, J. and Duncan, S. (1988) The Use and Abuse of Housing Tenure. Housing Studies 3 pp. 219 -231.
14The Z score is calculated from the following seven variables:
i) % of economically active employed.
ii) % of economically active and retired who are semi-skilled.
iii) % of households overcrowded.
iv) % of households lacking exclusive use of two basic amenities.
v) % of single parent households.
vi) % of households headed by New Commonwealth or Pakistan-born head.
vii) % of pensioners in one-person households.

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Table 2.1

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<th>Z score</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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2.1 Map showing the location of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets within Greater London.
2.2 Detail from old Ordnance Survey map of Spitalfields, 1873.
2.3 Welcome to Tower Hamlets.
History of the Market

In 1986 the local authority asserted that the presence of a fruit and vegetable wholesale Market in Spitalfields was generally accepted by the people who lived in Spitalfields to do nothing for the attractiveness of the area in environmental terms.¹⁵ A fruit and vegetable wholesale market has been located on a site yards from the eastern border of the City of London for over 300 years, having originated in the vicinity of St.Pauls and relocated outside the city walls because of complaints about rubbish and noise.¹⁶ The Royal Charter officially establishing the market in Spitalfields was granted by Charles II to John Balch, a silk thrower, in 1682 giving him the right to hold a market on Thursdays and Saturdays "in or near to a certain place called the Spittle Square".¹⁷ Historically, speculation has arisen as to the validity of the "dubiously purchased Charter... which, at least, was the bestowing, "for a consideration" of the rights over a market which had grown up naturally long years before."¹⁸ It functioned as a general wholesale market until the 19th century - Defoe mentions it as a flesh market¹⁹ - and existed in its physical form as a grouping of sheds around a congested and essentially still Medieval street pattern, the remains of which can be traced inside the present market buildings.

In 1876 the market rights were purchased on a short lease from a Goldschmidt family by one Robert Horner.²⁰ Horner, 'the largest speculator in the potato trade in England' and a 'man of exceptional eminence and notoriety',²¹ constructed what are now known as the Horner Buildings at the eastern end, designed in a gabled Arts and Crafts style by George Sherrin and completed in 1893. As one commentator noted:

The old Spitalfields is being transformed into one of the finest markets in England, and the many new warehouses, together with the fine covering over the area of the market,

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¹⁶*City Recorder,* 24th October 1985.
¹⁸*East London Observer,* 19th April 1913.
form a pleasing contrast to the old dilapidated and wretched hovels of the past.\textsuperscript{22}

The market was a very profitable concern for Horner, who was able to charge tolls to anyone acting as a horticultural trader within the market area due to loopholes in the charter, it being a market 'without metes or bounds'.\textsuperscript{23} The City of London Corporation (hereafter the City Corporation) became freeholders of the site and acquired powers to regulate the market through the 1902 City of London (Spitalfields Market) Act, obtaining the market in the rates fund as part of an operation to assist Stepney Borough Council. The market buildings were sold by Horner to the City Corporation for the sum of £284,000 in 1920, giving the Corporation market rights and leasehold interests.\textsuperscript{24} The market became officially operational six days a week with the passing of the 1922 City of London (Various Powers) Act. At that time it employed around 1,500 people, housed 150 wholesale merchants, had room for 226 stands, and covered an area of 5 acres.\textsuperscript{25}

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\textsuperscript{22}ibid, p.52.  
\textsuperscript{23}See City Press, East London Observer and Spitalfields Press, 1913 and 1914, for further details on objections raised to tolls and the wealth created for Horner through the existence of this loophole.  
\textsuperscript{24}City Press, 12th June 1920.  
2.4 Spitalfields Market from the west.
2.5 A different view of Spitalfields Market.
2.6 Map showing the location of Spitalfields Market.
2.7 Detailed map showing extent of the Market.

- A-G: Land occupied by the Market
- Privately owned sites adjoining the Market with permission for redevelopment (para. 2.06)
- Borough boundaries
Since that time, the area covered by the market has expanded considerably. In 1928 the western end of the market was extended, joining neo-Georgian pavilion-style market buildings to the Horner Buildings. The Fruit Exchange was built in 1929, Eden House constructed in the 1930s and the Flower Market in 1935. Steward Street and Spital Square were largely cleared of their remaining 18th century Georgian town houses in the late 1950s to make way for a vehicle park. The present market site now covers 11 acres. It houses 100 traders and employs 1,000 people. It is readily accepted by the City Corporation and Spitalfields Market Tenants Association (SMTA) as highly successful, with an average vacancy rate over the past five years of 0.75%. It operates between midnight and midday, six days a week. It yielded a net income of £22,000 to the general rates of the Corporation in 1987/88.26

Views differ as to the relation of the market to the local economy because these different opinions are bound up with certain discourses and aims. According to the Corporation, the Market had no relation to the area, offered no local employment, operated at a time when the rest of the area was asleep, and generated no local trade of any significance.27 For the local authority, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH):

Tower Hamlets council ... would regard its removal as an unnecessarily drastic step and would be reluctant to lose the employment offered by the market or the contribution it makes to the variety and vitality of the Spitalfields district.28

Previous Plans to Relocate

The redevelopment scheme for Spitalfields Market, with which this thesis is concerned, must be discussed as the latest in a line of plans for the relocation of the Market. The question of the removal of the market from its present location has persisted for many years:

27 House of Commons Committee, 8th June 1988, ME 1.
People who’ve lived here a long time say, "There’s always been rumours, fifty years ago there’s been rumours" - it comes up every now and then.29

There appears to have been a general consensus by the mid 1980s amongst people working in the market and living near it that it had outgrown its site, the location being unsuitable for its function, and its function incompatible with the buildings, facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, continual reports by official bodies had emphasised the changing patterns of wholesale fruit and vegetable trade in London, and questioned the continued existence of a number of wholesale markets so close to the city centre. As the Greater London Council (GLC) noted in the 1976 Development Plan,

The Council is not satisfied that redevelopment of London’s markets on their traditional sites will result in an efficient or profitable pattern of distribution. This applies particularly to the case of Spitalfields Market.30

Against this background, in October 1979 Greycoat Estates made a bid for the market site, proposing a £30 million redevelopment scheme. This plan was rejected by the City Corporation,31 and the idea was opposed by the traders who did not want to move.32 Interestingly, reports of the Greycoats bid were vehemently denied by both the developers and the City Corporation at that time.33

Further to GLC suggestions that there should be some sort of rationalisation of the London fruit and vegetable wholesale markets, a report was commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food to investigate declines in throughput, over-staffing and problems of supply in the six London markets (Covent Garden, Spitalfields, Stratford, Greenwich, Borough and Brentwood). The O’Cathain report was never released in full, but a circulated summary did include the recommendation that there should be a planned reduction in the number of markets in London over the next ten years, setting the optimum number as three by 1991. The possible relocation of Spitalfields is unmentioned.34 A draft for a report by the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service (SHAPRS) in 1980 noted that the City Corporation’s Market

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29Interview with Pam Mossman, Campaign member and market resident, 4th July 1989. The term ‘market resident’ refers to tenants living in flats above the Market in the Homer Buildings.
31City Recorder 14th March 1985.
32Hackney Gazette 26th October 1979.
Department was keen for it to stay where it was; the attitude of the City's planners was however felt to be far more ambiguous.\(^{35}\) Further to this, in November 1982, SHAPRS reported that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets wanted to move the market out of Spitalfields and redevelop the area. The LBTH Planning Brief at that time suggested possible ways of developing the site, but the idea was opposed by local groups including SHAPRS.\(^{36}\) The Planning Brief was in fact withdrawn by the Council after criticisms by the City Corporation. SHAPRS also noted that the GLC was in favour of the move, which appeared to contradict the GLC's own Community Areas Policy.\(^{37}\) In December 1982, a GLC Development Committee Report confirmed this by stating that the relocation of the market was under consideration, leaving an attractive site near the City. The Corporation were reported to be of the opinion that 'in principle' the traders were prepared to move, the site having potential for other uses.\(^{38}\) At that time, local newspapers had reported that the leader of Tower Hamlets council was having discussions with the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and the City Corporation about a possible relocation of the market to a site near West India Docks and the new Billingsgate fish market, recently moved from its previous city location.\(^{39}\) Concern was expressed at the time by Spitalfields Local Committee (SLC), over the announcement by press release of plans to move the market.\(^{40}\) The Planning Subcommittee of the SLC later urged discussion of plans at GLC level, noting that decisions on the market should be taken together with the workforce and the Local Committee, recognising the impact the relocation would have on the area.\(^{41}\) There was however no sense of urgency about the proposals, as it was thought that traders would only be prepared to move once an appropriate alternative site had been found, defined as being within the boundaries of Tower Hamlets.\(^{42}\) However, during 1983 the Corporation concluded that the redevelopment of the existing market site would not cover the cost of building a new market on the Isle of Dogs, and concrete plans to move the market again failed to materialise.\(^{43}\)

\(^{37}\)ibid, p.9.
\(^{38}\)ibid.
\(^{39}\)TM 1st April 1982.
\(^{40}\)Spitalfields Local Committee Minutes 16th June 1982. I shall discuss the SLC in Chapter Three.
\(^{41}\)Spitalfields Local Committee Minutes, 24th November 1982.
\(^{42}\)Spitalfields Local Committee, *Letter to GLC Director General's Department*, 24th November 1982.
\(^{43}\)East London Advertiser 5th August 1983.
In February 1985, the Conservative Back Bench Horticulture and Markets Committee released summaries of the confidential Wells Report, written in 1984, which noted that Spitalfields was a 'good market for senders and buyers alike', but pointed out the growing problem of traffic congestion 'over which there is little hope of improvement'. The report recommended the closure of one of the London markets for the good of the trade as a whole, that market being Spitalfields for the above reason. It also cited as a reason for closure the recent failures of four traders, the 'Victorian Aura' of the place, and the value of the site considering that because of the 1979 Greycoat offer 'there must be other bidders'. The Report recommended the amalgamation of Stratford and Spitalfields markets but noted that this would be dependent on a proper sum being obtained for Spitalfields 'with no repetition of the planning blight that had bedevilled old Covent Garden'. When very brief details of the report were released market traders reacted angrily, the Chief Executive of the Spitalfields Market Tenants Association (SMTA) stating that 'The study was a dead duck from the word "Go"', mirroring the mood picked up in other local newspapers at that time, that the market traders were totally against the move of the market. The Corporation's commitment to the continued existence of the market in Spitalfields was shown by a £600,000 refurbishment programme agreed in that year.

The attitude of the market traders towards any proposed move is identified by a GLC survey of East London's four wholesale fruit and vegetable markets undertaken in June and July 1985, covering Spitalfields, Stratford, Borough and Greenwich. In a policy change over the future of London markets, the purpose of the survey was to assess what lead the GLC as strategic planning authority for London could give in planning for the future of these markets, and what assistance might be needed. The GLC at this time did not wish to see the markets decline, nor did it see any reason for them to amalgamate - it wanted to see these markets remain on site. In the survey, 70 of a possible 100 Spitalfields traders responded. The relatively low response rate for Spitalfields was thought to be the result of fears for the GLC heavy lorry ban proposals, on top of suspicion as to

45 Ibid.
why the survey was being conducted - were plans afoot again to relocate? Sixty-nine out of seventy did not reply when questioned about any immediate plans they might have to relocate their businesses. Fifty-nine out of seventy felt they had advantages in their present location.

In August 1985 the market tenants asked the Corporation to conduct a feasibility study into the relocation of the market, and in September 1985 a Working Committee was established. Although details are unclear or unavailable on the precise chain of events concerning a change of mind amongst the traders towards the removal of the market to a new site, it is apparent that the activities of a private development company, the Spitalfields Development Group (SDG) had had initial contacts and negotiations with the traders which had again opened a debate on the future of the market at Spitalfields.51 The ambivalence in the Borough Plan towards the Market must also have indicated to the developers and the Corporation that the LBTH was prepared to consider a possible alternative use for the site. A consensus is reported to have emerged amongst the traders to a move to a new site in north east London with good road communications.52 The SDG were willing to finance the purchase of land and the construction of market premises at Temple Mills, a site preferred by 80% of the 90% of traders who responded to a questionnaire distributed by the Corporation over the future siting of the market.53 The financial incentives offered to the Spitalfields Market Tenants Association (SMTA), £7million, were perhaps sufficient to prompt the traders' sudden willingness to move.

In summary then, there had been a history of uncertainty over the future of the market in Spitalfields. Because previous rumours had never materialized into concrete plans the assumption was that because the market traders wished to stay, and because the City Corporation was reluctant to move the market because of the costs involved, the market would remain. As the MP for Bethnal Green and Stepney observed:

I had no reason, in 1985, to think that there was going to be a shift of policy... There was no impression coming from the City... they themselves gave a very cool appraisal about the present market - no passionate denunciations saying it was no good. ... They gave a genuine appraisal saying it was under a certain amount of pressure but its

51 House of Commons Committee, 8th, 9th, 14th and 15th June 1988, ME 1 - 4.

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doing a reasonably good job and there was no urgency -
and I didn’t feel there to be any urgency in 1985.54

Although it is possible to detect a certain amount of exasperation on the
part of the Market’s owners, emerging from dissatisfaction with the Market’s
location, this dissatisfaction does not explain why relocation plans drawn up by
the Corporation and the SDG came to fruition when they did. Although the traders
and Corporation were dissatisfied with the facilities and working conditions of the
Market, both bodies were reluctant to move the Market unless a move brought
considerable improvements on present facilities and conditions and the tenants
wished to relocate. Further, that relocation would have to be undertaken by a
private development company. A catalyst provided the push to relocate and
provided a development company willing to undertake the redevelopment. This
was the expansion of the City of London. It is necessary to look at that expansion
in order to understand the relocation plans. The justifications produced by the City
Corporation for its expansion also give a first glimpse of a discourse that contained
justifications for relocation and redevelopment.

54Interview with Peter Shore MP, 1st August 1989.
2.8 The Market in operation.
2.9 The Market in operation.
2.10 The 1930s extension to the Market.
The 1986 Relocation Plans and the Expansion of the City of London.

The City of London has changed over the past ten years as it has fought to maintain a place in the increasingly important financial sector of the global economy. There is no need to go into this in great detail. The reasons for that expansion and the options open to the City are explained in literatures on global economic restructuring.\(^{55}\) What is important here is the timing of that expansion over the past decade, which relates directly to the Corporation's decision to relocate the Market, and the City's own assessments of its demand for increased office space. Both of these can be located in a discourse that justified the expansion of the City into Spitalfields.

One aspect of the effect of economic restructuring on London has been changes in the function of the City of London as an international finance centre, and associated effects on the form of the City and the form and function of neighbouring areas. The expansion of the City of London as an international finance centre is often explained with reference to 'Big Bang' - the deregulation of the stock exchange that occurred in practice on 23rd October 1986 and which involved the removal of fixed commissions, changes in the way in which business is transacted, such as the requirement of injections of large capital sums, and the removal of restrictions on ownership of brokers and dealers\(^{56}\). Big Bang was however just one of a number of associated changes in the structure and operations of the City's financial institutions that some have termed a 'revolution' in the City of London. Pressures to force radical changes on the London Stock Exchange included a need to become more competitive at an international level through the threats from international (and to a certain extent, domestic) securities business to bypass the London Stock Exchange. They also involved the increased bargaining muscle of institutional investors, and advances in information technology that have fundamentally altered the ways in which transactions on the Stock Exchange are undertaken, namely with the development of screen-based trading.\(^{57}\) Enabling legislation through the 1986 Financial Services Act resulted in the entry of 'newcomers' into securities trading. The larger Japanese and US banks

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established themselves in the City or environs, and many British banks and financial institutions merged, with a significant increase in and altered demand for office space. This has been realised in physical terms as a demand for a new kind of office environment including larger dealer floors, with column-free space for trading, and cable space between ceilings and floors. These demands rendered obsolete much of the existing office stock available in the City, and led to very great pressures for the redevelopment of existing sites for new office needs within the City and on the City fringes.

The opportunity to undertake large-scale developments in the City was enabled by the City of London Local Plan adopted on 23rd May 1986, which included the following proposals: abandoning most of the special business areas, which had been intended to prop up non-office uses; reducing conservation of buildings of architectural merit outside the Conservation Areas; allowing the use of airspace for building directly over streets, stations and other spaces; and increasing the allowable plot ratio in new development to $5:1$ throughout the City instead of $3:1$ in some areas. These changes facilitated a potential increase of around 20% in floor area in the City, and made developments such as London Wall, London Bridge City, and Paternoster Square possible. Big Bang and associated changes caused rapid alterations in the morphology of the City, with large buildings inserted into the existing urban structure, for example Broadgate, and the shaping of large sites to new design principles. The City Corporation largely abandoned its goals of the retention of small businesses, the conservation of its older buildings, and the maintenance of small sites, all of which had been stated in the City of London Draft Local Plan of 1976.

The creation of a single European market in 1992 may result in major European banks wanting to establish offices in London. The importance of establishing the position of London as an international finance centre remains a priority for the City as a financial institution, a development the City Corporation is keen to encourage. Yet any European city situated geographically and temporally between New York and Tokyo could perform the same function. The Corporation has at times taken an aggressive stance towards the promotion of London as an international finance centre:

The City of London is one of the three financial centres of the world and I hope that by the end of the ten years it will

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59Ibid.
be the financial centre. There's only Tokyo and New York to take out now and, if we do not take them out, then they are going to take us out. We either end up as the financial centre or somebody else will.  

The City of London needs room to expand. Docklands, currently being redeveloped from disused docks under the auspices of the LDDC, is intended to fill this need. Canary Wharf, a massive office development on the Isle of Dogs in London's Docklands, will accommodate some City companies. But some companies still need to be near the centre for convenience, prestige or tradition. So they look over the border to East London - and Spitalfields, St. Mary's, St. Katharines wards in particular. The needs of the City of London regarding office space explains why the relocation of Spitalfields Market was encouraged, and why those plans surfaced when they did.

The Corporation, in justifying the relocation of Spitalfields Market, did so by arguing for the expansion of the City of London. In arguing their case in the two Parliamentary Committees, the City Corporation used evidence from surveyors Hillier Parker to attest to an increased demand in office accommodation in the City in the mid-1980s. The surveyors were critical of the ability of developments on the Isle of Dogs to provide suitable office accommodation. Hillier Parker commented that there would continue to be a substantial demand for new offices in the Spitalfields area into the early 1990s and that supply of new offices that would be constructed between 1988 and 1990 would not substantially exceed demand. With regard to new developments under construction, they estimated that around 4 million ft. sq. of uncommitted developments in buildings in excess of 100,000 ft. sq. were currently under construction in the City and its immediate surroundings. They estimated that 7 million ft. sq. of office space would be required by companies currently known to the surveyors to be considering the acquisition of new premises in units over 100,000 ft. sq. Of this, over 3 million ft. sq. would be required by companies seeking premises at June 1988. Demand for new office accommodation was seen as coming from the occupiers of buildings to be demolished to make way for new developments. There were few opportunities in the City to provide the very large developments (over 500,000 ft. sq.) required by multinational companies in the near future. The total take-up of offices of all size units had increased from 4.6 million ft. sq. in 1984 to 8.6 million sq. ft. in 1987.  


61Hillier Parker, Surveyors, Letter to Deputy Town Clerk of the City Corporation, 2nd June 1988.
Despite the Stock Market crash of October 1987, the take up of offices in the City in the last quarter of 1987 was in excess of two million ft. sq. - 10% up on the previous quarter. Acquisitions of units over 100,000 ft. sq., mainly in the financial sector which should have been affected by the crash, totalled 1.4 million ft. sq. since 19th October 1987.\textsuperscript{62} Yet it is the volatility of the Stock Market that is a crucial determining factor in office demand, as the development of screen-based trading has led companies to require new office facilities.\textsuperscript{63} As a property surveyor for the London and Edinburgh Trust (LET, the SDG's parent company) noted:

We obviously only make money if the offices are taken up. So it's commercial judgement that we think that there will be a demand there in a year - two year's time... Whether [demand is] going to be there, that's our risk at the end.\textsuperscript{64}

The risk was always present. The City Corporation and development companies were all extremely cautious:

The office market is not as bullish as it was, and there's huge risks at stake and listening to the debates in Parliament you'd think that there were no risks at all. There are incredible risks. It's a big gesture of faith really. OK, so they're all big companies and they know what they're doing, but there are big commercial risks at stake...\textsuperscript{65}

Despite that risk, the Corporation was confident that a redeveloped Spitalfields Market site would be commercially successful. They argued for relocation of the Market and they did so on the grounds that the land which it occupied would be better used by providing office space for an expanding City.

The City Corporation was, however, cautious in their promotion and management of the redevelopment. They justified the expansion of the City into Spitalfields by arguing for a need for increased office space so that the City could achieve its potential as an international finance centre. Yet their pronouncements on the form that any redevelopment might take promoted the idea of corporate concern for the future of the area to be affected by redevelopment. The Corporation constructed an idea of redevelopment that appeared throughout the discourse of the 'pro-development' camp. The redevelopment of Spitalfields market was represented as an activity which served all interests and benefitted all

\textsuperscript{62}ibid.
\textsuperscript{64}Interview with Tim Budgen, property surveyor, LET/SDG, 24th July 1989.
\textsuperscript{65}ibid.
groups. By presenting the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market in that way, and by presenting themselves as an institution with concerns for more than just their own profits, a discourse was used which justified their actions and at the same time deflected opposition by incorporating that opposition's concern. This point can be illustrated by looking at the pronouncements of the City Corporation with regard to the SDG's first bid for the rights to redevelop the Market.

Despite two years of negotiations between the Corporation and the SDG, leading the SDG to feel confident in their being awarded the contract for the redevelopment of the market site, on the 13th October 1986, the City Corporation decided to turn down the SDG's bid leaving the question of the future of the market and Spitalfields open:

> There is no point in building slums in the '80s and '90s for the year 2025. The argument is not all about money. The Corporation is interested in people and London as a whole. We will not consider a development until it is shown that the majority of the traders are behind the move; satisfactory arrangements have been agreed for the Corporations' residential tenants; proper regard has been given to the position of the Stratford traders and that the new market will be viable. Only when those issues have been satisfied does the question arise of disposing of the existing site for the best return for the ratepayers.66

The Corporation is presented as concerned not only for its own financial interests and the viability of the Market, but also for the people of the area as well. There were also concerns about the speed at which redevelopment plans were progressing:

> It is felt that, given the vast areas of uncertainty which still exist, it would be irresponsible to launch legislation in the next session of Parliament... Consideration of the offer by SDG was hedged in by the time constraint of making a decision before 27th November 1986 when a Parliamentary Bill would have to be lodged. After many discussions and much work by SDG, the lack of planning consent meant that the bid was simply a speculation based on a consent being given to the mix of development that they hoped for.67

But is also probable that the concerns voiced about the relocation effects were secondary to the desire on the part of the Corporation for the maximum return to be made to them through the redevelopment. In October the Corporation decided

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66Peter Rigby, Chair of City Corporation Policy and Resources Committee, quoted in the City Recorder, 16th October 1986.
67Ibid.
to put the redevelopment of the Spitalfields Market site out to tender in order to elicit a response from the property market as to the value of the site:

There is no compelling need for the Corporation to relocate Spitalfields. We are taking this step to see whether the property market is interested in the site.68

On the 2nd February 1987 the City Corporation published its Spitalfields Market Offer Document, with the comments that:

Interest in the site increased dramatically in 1986 as a number of factors combined to reveal its potential as a natural extension to development which is already taking place in the City... This includes an upsurge in the demand for office space in and near the City.69

The Corporation's stated decision to invite offers to move the market was, according to the Offer Document, prompted by a number of factors including the willingness of a 'significant number' of traders to relocate on the condition that an improved location could be secured which would satisfy their requirements.70 Retrospectively, in 1989, they said the following:

Basically there are two prime reasons; it is an oldish market totally unsuitable for modern use as a fresh fruit and vegetable market, and secondly of course with these enormous jugernauts and general traffic, having 45 - 50 ton lorries coming in so near to the city as a matter of regularity every night it is really absurd; it causes an awful problem. And the final thing is, of course, we actually have the opportunity now to do it; it isn't something that comes up all the time.71

68 Peter Rigby, speaking for the City Corporation, quoted in the City Recorder, 18th December 1986.
69 Peter Rigby, speaking for the City Corporation, quoted in the City News, 6th February 1987.
70 The Offer Document is quite specific about the criteria to be fulfilled in any successful package, these being: the provision of an alternative site satisfactory to the traders; adequate regard for the future of Stratford Market which would be affected by any removal of Spitalfields; the construction of a suitable set of premises for a new market; suitable terms for the Corporation on the granting of a long lease for the Spitalfields site in the case of redevelopment of that site; adherence, in any redevelopment of the market site, to the Development Brief prepared by Tower Hamlets as planning authority of the market; adequate protection of existing Spitalfields Market residents in the Homer Buildings; full consultation with the Spitalfields Market Tenants Association; Corporation control over any legislation promoted by it in the Houses of Parliament through the Private Bill necessary to relocate the market; and adequate safeguards in the event of significant archaeological finds during the redevelopment of the Spitalfields site (City of London Corporation, (1987) Spitalfields Market Offer Document. City Corporation, London.) Offers were to be submitted by the 31st July 1987.
71 David Shalit, Chair of the City Corporation's Spitalfields Market Committee, quoted from The Week in the Lords, BBC2 Television, 9th April 1989.
These reasons, given on television, contrast with those given in the more private
domain of the City's redevelopment industry. The public face was one of concern;
profits and expansion were unmentioned, and the discourse is silent on the
redevelopment of the site. It is necessary to question whether the Offer
Document was in fact released in order to 'test the temperature' of the property
market and gain some indication of the willingness of other developers to come
forward and compete with the SDG for the tender:

It must... be emphasised that there is no compelling reason
to relocate Spitalfields Market. It is a successful wholesale
fruit and vegetable market and whilst many markets are
apparently in decline, Spitalfields still continues to trade
successfully. Relocation can only proceed if a package can
be devised which satisfies inter alia the various criteria
referred to in this document and produces a significant
return to the Corporation.

Rosehaugh Stanhope entered the competition to redevelop Spitalfields as a
second contender in November of that year, having awaited the publication of the
LBTH Development Brief before submitting their proposal. Seen by some as

\[72\text{City Corporation (1987) } \textit{Spitalfields Market Offer Document} \text{ City of London Corporation, London.}\n\]
\[73\text{ibid, p.} 1.\n\]
\[74\text{The position of the local authority requires discussion here as I shall not dwell on it in the
main body of the text. The local authority's role has been one of facilitator; apart from the
ability to grant or refuse planning permission on the site it played no other part in the decision to
move the Market. The Borough Plan, adopted in March 1986, was equivocal on the Market. It
recognised its presence as being a positive one for the area, but was open to the idea of
redevelopment if the traders and Corporation wished to relocate. According to the Borough Plan,
any redevelopment that resulted because of relocation would have to be a mixed use scheme, and
would have to make a contribution to solving the problems of Spitalfields. In 1986 the local
authority produced its Draft Development Planning Guidelines for the market site in response to
announcements that the SDG were preparing plans for the site. The local authority had been
monitoring the progress of the SDG plans. The Tower Hamlets Development Committee had
considered a report in February of that year on the presumed plans of the SDG to relocate the
market and redevelop the site, and further meetings had been held with the developers and officers
of the Corporation. The Local Authority was thought to be in a relatively powerful position,
however, in determining the future use of the site:}\n
The cost of a replacement market will be substantial and, if the City
are looking to the redevelopment of the market site to fund the
moves, the requirements of this Council as planning authority will
ultimately affect the decision to relocate or remain. (LBTH
Development Committee Report on Spitalfields Market. 9th April
1986.)

The Draft Planning Guidelines noted the importance of the market within the context of
Spitalfields:

\[\text{The relocation of the market will have the most profound effect on the}\n\text{character of West Spitalfields, not just in physical and environmental}\n\text{terms, but also economic and social. Activities and relationships}\n\text{built up over three centuries will be removed at a stroke. (LBTH}\n\text{Draft Development Brief for Spitalfields Market, 1986)}\n\]
The tone of the Draft Development Plan Guidelines appears however to indicate a positive view of redevelopment of the site:

The relocation of the market would provide the opportunity to 'mend' the historic fabric of West Spitalfields in a way that would encourage activity and visual interest and allow the area to prosper as a pleasant living and working environment (ibid.)

The Spitalfields Market site is owned by the City Corporation and will be developed by a private developer. The planning brief for the redevelopment of the site will need to recognise the economic context within which the development will take place, and ensure that the mix of uses proposed are sufficiently attractive to allow the development to proceed (ibid.)

A stated aim of these Planning Guidelines was to open up some sort of public debate over the future of the market and of the site. As will be discussed in a Chapter Four, whether this in fact occurred at the levels desired by the planning authority, or whether people felt themselves to have been presented with a fait accompli, and were thus either resigned or disinterested in the future of the market, is a point of considerable interest. The plans for the redevelopment of the market site started to gain some momentum of their own at the same time that the Liberal Group took control of Tower Hamlets after the May 1986 local government elections. They took the view that redevelopment was inevitable, that the market was a drop in the ocean as far as redevelopment was concerned, its relocation encouraged and redevelopment used to regenerate the area (Interview with Jeremy Shaw, BGNC Chair, 13th December 1988). It is probably fair to say that the view held by the planning department did not differ significantly from this.

The local authority produced planning guidelines which recommended that the development should contain uses and facilities which met the recognised needs of the Spitalfields area; that the development should respect the scale and character of the surrounding area; and that the development should be economically viable. The Borough, at the request of the Development Committee, agreed to appoint external consultants to "provide a brief overview of how the changing City office market (particularly the northern extension of the financial services sector) will influence the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market" (Bernard Williams Associates, Spitalfields Market Economic Appraisal. 16th June 1986) The redevelopment of the Market was specifically linked to the needs of the City, in contrast to the later public approach to redevelopment where the discourse of redevelopment emphasised positive local benefits of the scheme. The Report was presented on 16th June 1986 - only a month after it was originally commissioned. The consultants' conclusions were that redevelopment was feasible and could be commercially viable, but that substantial risks would be involved due to the then unknown effect that Big Bang would have on the demand for office space in and around the City.

The Bernard Williams Report was never published. It was accepted and in short space of time, the local authority decided to put the issue of the relocation of the market out to public consultation. The speed with which the local authority started consultation after a nominal assessment of the possibility of moving the market must be called into question. The Report was strictly concerned with the viability of an office redevelopment on the site. It did not question to effects of the market relocation on the surrounding area and its inhabitants. No mention was made of the knock-on effects in terms of rising land values. On such a basis public consultation was carried out.

On 30th July 1986, an Extra-ordinary meeting of the BGNC was convened to discuss the report on consultation. The report stated that the SDG was 'energetically pursuing the relocation of the Market', and offers an analysis of the responses to the idea of relocation, and to proposals of the use of the site (BGNC Spitalfields Market Report on Consultation, 30th July 1986). The report concluded that, judging from responses received, an 'overwhelming majority of local residents and workers would not object to the relocation of the market if the traders were happy to move' (ibid). A mixed usage would be preferred for the site, including housing, open space and retail, and offices should not dominate. The urban design component should be sympathetic to the architectural heritage of the area, and the developers should be mindful of the relationship of the development to the surrounding area. In particular, the Bangladeshi Community were said to
the 'white knight in the lists' in the joust for Spitalfields, the scheme devoted only 45% to office space, and was based originally on the grandiose neo-classical designs of Leon Krier, later adapted by Quinlan Terry. As a worker with Tower Hamlets Environment Trust speculated, Rosehaugh Stanhope are a large enough company to have the expertise to win the tender for the redevelopment of the Market site, if they so wished.

At a meeting of the City Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee on 17th September 1987, it was announced that subject to ratification by the Court of Common Council on 22nd October 1987, the scheme chosen for the relocation of the market and redevelopment of the site was that produced by the SDG. Public pronouncements by the Corporation drew upon a discourse which contained a

In response to the Report on Consultation, the Draft Planning Guidelines were altered. AS to whether the Neighbourhood would support the relocation of the market and the redevelopment of the site, it was confirmed that:

The Council will regard sympathetically proposals from the Market to move and for the redevelopment of the site, provided there are sufficient benefits to people of the Area, and the Neighbourhood Committee will seek adherence by any developer to the Council's development brief (including the provision of planning gain). (BGNC Minutes 20th July 1986).

A motion calling for a Compulsory Purchase Order on the site proposed by the Labour Group was rejected by five votes to three. It was agreed however that mixed usage between offices, housing, workshops, etc. should be used as a basis for the detailed Development Brief, and that the housing element should provide a mix of tenures and types and should cater for all sections of the local community. On the important question of planning gain, it was decided that on-site benefits would be preferred, although off-site options would be considered to the extent that, compared with on-site benefits, they could combine guarantees that the planning gains would actually materialise, would be of greater social return to the community and that the provision of benefits would occur in advance of the redevelopment of the Market. The input of Newlon Housing Association at this stage is important to mention, for it was at their instigation, rather than that of the developers, that the first ideas for housing as part of the planning gain on site started to be discussed (Interview with Newlon Newlon Housing Association Representative, 8th November 1988).

The final Development Brief was submitted to an Extra-Ordinary meeting of the BGNC on the 1st October 1986, and to the Policy and Resources Committee on the 20th October, for discussion and approval. It was approved, and the key objectives were amended. A statement was also made that in order to achieve its planning objectives in relation to the redevelopment of the site, the Neighbourhood would seek to impose conditions on any grants of planning permission or Listed Building Consent, and would make use of its powers in the form of an agreement under Section 52 of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act to restrict or regulate the development and use of land, and obtain planning gains for the local area. The Development Brief received much critical appraisal, both from within Spitalfields and the borough, and from the planning profession.

75Observer, 2nd November 1986.
76Interview with Jon Aldenton, Tower Hamlets Environment Trust worker, 10th June 1988.
representation of redevelopment as the solution to the problems of all parties concerned.

The City will (also) benefit significantly from the long term investment we are providing for it... Crucially it will offer a great many benefits to a very hard-pressed community. That is not the least important element of the scheme.\textsuperscript{77}

As part of the Section 52 Agreement completed between the developers, the City of London Corporation and the local authority, a package of benefits was agreed on to be given to 'the community'. Section 52 of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act gives local authorities the power to make Section 52 Agreements with any person interested in land in their area for the purpose of restricting or regulating the development or use of the land, either permanently or for a period prescribed by the agreement. These agreements may contain provisions, including financial provisions, that may appear to the local authority to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of the agreement. Local authorities have seen these agreements as a means of bargaining for planning gain and developers have at times, according to Cullingworth, viewed them as a kind of sanction in return for planning permission.\textsuperscript{78}

The Section 52 Agreement for the Spitalfields Market redevelopment scheme, legally guaranteeing the provision of planning gain for the local authority, was signed in March 1988. As planning gain 118 residential units would be built on the site by the developers, to be handed over to specified housing associations for a peppercorn. 'Elder Gardens' and 'Horner Square', two of the open spaces included in the scheme, were to be provided for and their maintenance costs met, including the provision of children's play facilities in Elder Gardens and full public access to these spaces. A Fashion centre, community centre, creche and law centre were to be provided and assisted in their management. Provision would be made for access for archaeological investigations. A Community Trust of £2.5 million (later increased to £5 million by the House of Commons Committee) would be established within 56 days of the Private Bill receiving Royal Assent. This Trust would provide funds for developments in the local area, including in particular the laying out of Allen Gardens, a recently-established open space on the northern boundary of the Ward. Initiatives would be taken for the provision of training including construction training, with the provision by the developers of £50,000 (later increased to £150,000 by the House of Commons Committee) for

\textsuperscript{77}Peter Beckwith, SDG Chair, quoted in City Recorder, 24th September 1987.
five years for an agreed training scheme to be supervised by local agencies. Market Garages, a company reliant on the market for custom, would be relocated. Some of the retail units within the new development would be reserved for 'local shopping'. Full public access to all roads and paths would be maintained.79

As the Bethnal Green Planning Department noted, obtaining these benefits, especially after the increases had been called for by the House of Commons Committee, had been like trying to get blood out of a stone.80 The developers and local authority were keen therefore to emphasise the size of the benefits that would be provided to the 'community' by the scheme. The benefits were worth over £20 million, and the SDG emphasised in their publicity brochures their generosity, and their commitment to the scheme and the area through the provision of such planning gains.81 Because certain elements in the Section 52 Agreement had to be given 'up front' such as the £5 million community trust, the developers naturally saw themselves as taking risks by providing so much money with no hard and fast guarantee that the scheme when built would bring the returns envisaged when it was first designed.82 The Liberal Chair of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee admitted on reflection that the benefits, although large, could have been increased because they had let it be known to the developers too early in the negotiations that the local authority was politically prepared to grant planning permission.83 The Chief Planner of the Neighbourhood gave a more cautious appraisal of the benefits, indicating the council's desire to obtain the maximum benefits possible and the developers' motivation to keep such costs to a minimum.84

The Section 52 Agreement, and the concept of planning gain more generally, were thus deemed by the three co-signatories as a positive aspect of the scheme. Planning gains were emphasised as a mechanism by which private money can be used to provide for facilities and amenities in the local area, as part of a larger commercial development. The contribution that the scheme could make towards the regeneration of the area was stressed repeatedly:

80Interview with Peter Studdert, Chief Planner, Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, 1st September 1988.
82Interview with Tim Budgen, consultant surveyor, SDG, 24th July 1989.
83Interview with Jeremy Shaw, Liberal Councillor and then Chair of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee. 13th December 1988.
84Interview with Peter Studdert, Chief Planner, Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, 1st September 1988.

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The redevelopment of the existing site will not only provide additional office accommodation for the financial City, but will also produce a vast social benefit for the Spitalfields area. In accepting SDG’s offer, the Corporation is effectively making a massive contribution to inner city regeneration - more than £24 million as a planning gain to the borough of Tower Hamlets.\(^\text{85}\)

Redevelopment was represented within this discourse as being in the interests of all those affected. It attempted to deflect opposition through incorporating a key oppositional argument.

Because Spitalfields Market was established by Royal Charter 300 years previously, the relocation of the Market had to be legislated for by Act of Parliament. It is worth setting out the chronology of events, because the passage of the Bill and the delays in its passage are fundamental to the later redevelopment story. The City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill was lodged by the Corporation on 27th November 1987, to enable the necessary legislation to go before Parliament during the 1987/88 Session. The Bill stated that the market was to be relocated due to the fact that:

The age and condition of Spitalfields market is such that the market fails to meet modern needs and practices and the situation of the market is inconvenient for transport facilities and proper regulation.

The impracticability of providing satisfactory accommodation for the market in new premises on or near the site of the existing market makes it expedient that provision be made to move the market to a new site available at Temple Mills in the London Boroughs of Hackney and Waltham Forest.\(^\text{86}\)

The wording of the Bill was crucial and deliberate. Whilst the promotion of redevelopment as serving the interests of all affected parties had been a prominent feature of previous pronouncements, such ideas were silenced in the Bill. The Corporation, promoters of the Bill, included in this legislation only the idea that relocation was required for the good of the Market. The expansion of the City of London was not mentioned. As the Campaign found to its cost, the powerful were able to delimit the terms of the debate as it suited them. The Bill was debated in the House of Commons, sixteen Labour MPs having been prompted to sign a blocking motion by the Campaign. During its Second Reading on 12th May 1988, various points were raised criticising the plans to move the market by the two local

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\(^{85}\text{City Recorder, 3rd December 1987.}\)

\(^{86}\text{City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill 1987 p.1.}\)
MPs, who had been asked to object by the Campaign. These included the undesirability and lack of necessity for moving the market; the problems of Spitalfields itself in social, economic and housing terms; the pressing needs of the Spitalfields community in relation to the 'solutions' being offered through planning gain as part of the redevelopment scheme; the office boom and the unpredictability of future office requirements; and the gains being made by the City Corporation through this scheme.\(^{87}\) These comments were deemed to lie outside the scope of the Bill and it passed its Second Reading on 109 votes to 21.

The Bill then passed on to its Committee stage on 8th June 1988, where evidence presented by the City Corporation for the removal of the market was heard by four MPs, two Labour and two Conservative, over a ten day period. There had originally been six petitions against the Bill. Traders from the New Covent Garden Market had petitioned because of concern about the relationship of the new Temple Mills Market with their own sphere of influence, but later withdrew their petition after their concerns had been 'satisfactorily addressed' by the Corporation. The London Borough of Newham had petitioned because of their concern about the effects of the market removal on trade at Stratford Market, but again, their petition was withdrawn after suitable terms had been agreed between them and the City Corporation, namely the opportunity of joining the Spitalfields traders at the new Temple Mills site if they wished. Market traders from Stratford had petitioned in their own right but withdrew their petition on the 7th July 1988, just before the Committee session commenced, having been satisfied with the provisions that had been offered to them at Temple Mills, and with various other financial arrangements. The Transport and General Workers Union had petitioned because of concern over the effect of the move on employees in the market and possible redundancies, but after the negotiation of satisfactory undertakings and terms, and the offer of £300,000 for possible redundancies, their petition was also withdrawn.

Therefore, out of six petitions originally submitted, only two were finally presented at the Committee stage. Alan Thomerson, the director of four companies trading in the market, petitioned in an individual capacity on the grounds that in his view the proposed new site did not have the facilities required for his business, that the new market lacked suitable protection from the elements, and that the traffic problems at the new site would be just as bad, if not worse, at the new site. Secondly, the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers

\(^{87}\)Hansard Vol. 1449, Clm. 520 - 562.
petitioned as an umbrella group, presenting themselves as representative of a variety of local residents, retailers and community action and pressure groups in the area. Their petition concerned the implications of the market removal and the probable effects on the surrounding area of the redevelopment, including employment and housing issues, the implications of office development encroaching still further on the area, and the effects of redevelopment on the local community in general terms. They addressed in their petition exactly those points on which the Bill was silent. The Corporation, Alan Thomerson and Campaign all called witnesses.

After hearing evidence for a total of nine days, the committee announced on 30th June 1988 that it accepted the principle of the Bill, and did not wish to obstruct the removal of Spitalfields Market to Temple Mills. However, the

89 The City Corporation called a number of witnesses to support their case. Tom Simmons, Deputy Town Clerk of the City of London, was called to give evidence from his experiences in the officer team dealing with the question of the market removal since 1983, and explained City policy in relation to the market and the evolution of the market relocation proposals. Peter Studdert, Chief Planning Officer for Bethnal Green Neighbourhood was called to give evidence on the redevelopment scheme, the benefits, to give details of the council’s support for the scheme, and to answer questions arising from the Campaign’s petition. Edward Charman, The Clerk and Superintendent of the Market, was called to give evidence dealing with the problems of the existing market. Gordon Henderson, a Project Director with Ove Arup, engineering consultants, was involved in studying the traffic problems on the existing and new sites, and was therefore an important witness on current and potential traffic problems. Marius Reynolds, the Co-ordinating Architect with the City Corporation, was called to give evidence on the physical problems of the existing site and the evolution of the proposals for the new site. Arthur Hutchinson, Chair of the Spitalfields Market Tenants Association and Jim Hepple, SMTA Chief Executive, both gave evidence relating to the position of the market traders, their reasons for wanting to relocate, and the consultation process that the City Corporation carried out with the SMTA. Richard MacCormac, one of the architects for the redevelopment scheme at Spitalfields, was to have been called but this was later thought to have been inappropriate. With the exception of Studdert, all witnesses were people who could only speak on the question of Market relocation, thus supporting the Bill as being purely concerned with precisely that.

Alan Thomerson called a number of traders in support of his case. The CSSD called a number of diverse witnesses; Pam Mossman, a resident of the market; Kay Jordan, Co-ordinator of the Spitalfields Small Business Association (SSBA); Derek Taylor, a director of Market Garages; Robbie MacDuff to speak on education and the role of the former Spitalfields Local Committee in the consultation process; Councillor Phil Maxwell of Bethnal Green Neighbourhood to speak on the matter of the consultation and the workings of the decentralised Tower Hamlets planning departments; John Eversley, from the management committee of the Davenant Centre to talk on training needs in the area; Patience Butler to speak on behalf of Spitalfields Farm; Raphael Samuel to speak on the history of the area; Rosemary Sheldon to speak as a local owner occupier about her fears of the impact of the redevelopment scheme; Myra Garrett of the Spitalfields Health Campaign to talk in general terms about the needs of the area; Derek Cox from Avenues Unlimited to speak about youth needs; John Johnson of the Campaign for Homes in Central London to talk about the impact in more general terms of such redevelopments on local communities; and Councillor Abbas Uddin of Bethnal Green Neighbourhood to speak about the processes by which planning permission for the redevelopment scheme had been decided. In contrast to the Corporation, these people spoke on the effects of redevelopment on the area. This caused difficulties; the Campaign’s questions were cut short repeatedly because they did not speak to the Bill. The Corporation had the power as originator of the Bill, to determine the discussion of it.
Committee expressed the feeling that it shared the concern of the petitioners, and in response to that it recommended a number of points. It recommended alterations be made to the Section 52 Agreement providing planning gain in the area as part of the redevelopment. Certain arrangements were made for Market Garages, a garage company relying exclusively on the Market for trade. The Committee wanted to see the commitment regarding Elder Gardens and Homer Square strengthened (the two open spaces in the redevelopment scheme plans) in a convenant to maintain these sites as open spaces in perpetuity. The Committee did not believe £50,000 per year an adequate amount for training schemes and recommended the sum of £150,000 per year. Regarding the Community Trust, the Committee believed in the light of the evidence regarding the needs of Spitalfields, that the sum should be increased from £2.5 million to £5 million. Additionally, although outside the scope of the Section 52 Agreement, the Committee believed that the future of Allen Gardens should be made more secure, but was unsure as to how this could be effected. The Committee wanted investigations carried out as to whether or not some guarantee or equivalent covenant could be established by the local authority to ensure that Allen Gardens would be similarly protected for the future.90

A Revival Motion was put down for the Bill on the 1st December 1988, necessitated by the Bill not having passed through the Commons by the end of the 1987/88 session. Parliament, including (to the Campaign's dismay) the Labour front bench voted for the Bill to be revived.91 The Third Reading in the Commons was held on the 24th January 1989, and the Bill passed to the House of Lords. The Second Reading in the Lords was held on 3rd April 1989, previous to which petitions had been submitted against the Bill, including that of the CSSD, handed in on 3rd February 1989. Lord MacIntosh at the request of the Campaign, and agreed to object to the Bill and thus force a debate, where he spoke for the Campaign. The deadline for petitions had to be kept open beyond the closing date of 25th April 1989 after disclosures about a letter from the SMTA were revealed suggesting that any petitioners against the Bill would not be given suitable accommodation on the new premises. The final deadline for petitions was extended therefore to the 4th of June allowing further protests to be registered. A House of Lords Committee of five peers was appointed which began in session on 15th May 1989 and sat for a total of 12 days. A total of eight petitions were deposited. The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers had decided that after the gains they had made in the House of Commons that it would be

91Hansard, Vol.142, Clm.929. The vote was Ayes 107, Noes 23.
worth petitioning in the House of Lords in case similar improvements to the scheme could be enforced there. Alan Thomerson submitted two petitions, one in his own right and one representing the interests of other market traders. Again he argued that the new facilities at Waltham Forest were no improvement on conditions in Spitalfields. In addition he incorporated into his arguments the fact that the relocation was being undertaken for purely commercial reasons by the City of London:

> You've got to realize first of all that you're standing here in the middle of a 9-10 acre site which is probably the most valuable site in the world for redevelopment, right on the edge of the City of London which I understand is now the financial centre of the world, and obviously it's a very valuable site. But in spite of that and the Corporation will get something like £60 million for the development plus a percentage of the rents for 150 years, and then they get the site back, they haven't got any risk. The developers will make a lot of money out of this site and the tenants association have agreed for us to move for a few thousand pounds for each tenant to a market ill-designed for the purpose.92

Three petitions from Waltham Forest, representing the protests of nine residents about increased traffic caused by a relocated Market in their area, were deposited. The caterers in the market petitioned, as did Market Garages.93 The City Corporation gave similar evidence as it had in the Commons, calling exactly the same witnesses. The Campaign were obliged to call fewer witnesses following brusque treatment from the Chair: Peter Shore MP; Charlie Forman, former worker with SHAPRS; Phil Maxwell, Abbas Uddin and Kay Jordan. Again the Campaign were arguing precisely on the points about redevelopment upon which the Bill was silent.

The Committee announced on the 26th June 1989 that it had rejected all the petitions, and only required small changes in the wording of one clause of the Bill before it could be returned to the House of Commons for final consent. The Bill finally received its Third Reading on 19th February 1990, and passed. It then went on to receive Royal Assent. It took the SDG far longer than they had anticipated and this delay had consequences both for the planned redevelopment,

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92 Alan Thomerson, director of Jonathan Hurst Ltd. quoted from The Week in the Lords. BBC2 Television, 9th April 1989.
93 The caterers' is a generic term used in the Market to denote those firms which process produce for the catering trade on the site of the market. Thus they are not involved in the trade of produce, only the purchase and processing thereof.
and for the ways in which arguments for that redevelopment were drawn from the discourse of redevelopment.

In conclusion to this section, I have shown how the aims of the City of London to consolidate its position as an international finance centre appear as the real reason for the relocation of the Market. The discourse of the City concerning redevelopment constructed the central problematic of redevelopment as redevelopment combining the interests of all parties, including capital and local people. The discourse allowed no recognition of the problems and contradictions inherent within such a strategy. This discourse is not only present in the statements of the Corporation; in fact it appears with more force in the arguments of two powerful institutions, the Government and the SDG. The form of that discourse in justifying a particular type of redevelopment is the focus of the next two sections.

Redeveloping the Inner City

The redevelopment of Spitalfields Market must be seen in the context of Government policy towards inner urban areas and their redevelopment. The redevelopment of Spitalfields Market could not have proceeded without the existence of government policy towards the inner city which endorsed the involvement of the private sector and which encouraged the economic (and thus physical) expansion of the City of London. As Savitch notes, peculiar to the UK has been the salient role of political parties in providing cues for the response to post-industrialism and how to plan for it. The Conservative Government certainly set the ideological tone for the debate.94 As the SDG themselves said, 'we're not sure we'd be so confident of the scheme under a different government'.95

This is not the place to commence a comprehensive analysis of urban policy and the underpinning ideology used by the Conservative government or its predecessor with regard to urban redevelopment.96 It is however possible to draw

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95 Meeting between Brian Cheetham and Peter Bradley, representatives of SDG and members of the CSSD, 20th March 1990.
out some of its more pertinent features as they relate to the subject matter of this chapter by examining statements made in the Government's *Action for Cities* brochure.97

In it, the Government represented the inner city in a specific way and through this analysis pointed to private sector investment as the only means by which the problems of inner urban areas could be resolved.

The term 'inner cities' conjures up an image of a run-down urban environment. It covers towns as well as cities and areas ranging from those which have seen better days to acutely depressing examples of crime-ridden dereliction.98

The regeneration of inner cities is named as the responsibility of private enterprise:

Success cannot be imposed by central Government. ... There is no universal formula which can be dictated from Whitehall. The spark of regeneration must come from within the inner cities themselves. This does not mean leaving it all to the local authorities which for many years were allowed to decide the priorities and be the main channel for finance. It means firing the enthusiasm of local businesses, local leaders, local people: those who know the cities from the inside and have the will to change them.99

The City, as I illustrated above, represented the redevelopment of Spitalfields market as serving the interests of all parties in the area. The Government portrayed the redevelopment of inner city areas in a similar fashion:

The Government wants inner city residents to have more opportunities to share in the new prosperity. They - just like everyone else - should be able to enjoy greater freedom and choice. They, as much as anyone, want good homes for their families and good schools for their children. They want to live and work in a safe and decent environment. The inner cities must also be places where businessmen want to invest. They also want to be able to get on with their business; to press ahead with sensible development without unnecessary red tape; to keep their costs as low as possible, and not be punished by excessive rate demands; to be made welcome. For this to happen, the inner cities need to rediscover their sense of civic pride that once united residents and business.100

97 The Action for Cities venture, launched in March 1988 by the Prime Minister as a means by which existing resources could be 'reconcentrated'. The work of six Government departments (Environment, Health, Employment, Education, Trade and Industry, and Transport) was to be co-ordinated, a land register created and unused local authority land would be bought under compulsory purchase.


99 ibid. p. 5.

100 ibid. p. 3.
In this quotation we see the encouragement of urban regeneration through private
enterprise, and portrayed as a process that would benefit everybody living in inner
city areas. This policy of redevelopment led by the private sector has been
legislated for, for example in the establishment of Urban Development
Corporations, such as the London Docklands Development Corporation.

Encouragement of redevelopment in Spitalfields had come through the
general endorsement of private sector involvement in redevelopment schemes. In
Spitalfields the Government has also employed specific policies to encourage this
process. The Government Task Forces constituted part of the government's
programme for inner city aid. The Spitalfields Task Force was established in April
1987 to co-ordinate the resources of Government departments, local businesses,
local authorities, and other charitable, voluntary and non-profit making
organisations. The Spitalfields Task Force's advertised its specific remit as aiming
to create employment for local people, encouraging the growth and development of
small and new businesses in the area; improving the employability of local people
through skills training; and improving the local environment, including the
renovation of derelict buildings, measures for crime prevention and the
development of leisure facilities and other local amenities. Specifically, the
high levels of unemployment and skill mismatch in the area were to be tackled with
matching labour power available in the area with jobs in information technology in
the City. The Task Force had declared publicly that its role in the area was to
enable benefits in the forms of job opportunities to be obtained from such
developments as Spitalfields Market. The location of the Task Force in
Spitalfields thus indicates a government presence in the area, encouraging the type
of urban policy it endorsed.

Redeveloping Spitalfields

The SDG won the City Corporation's tender for redevelopment. In this
section I shall examine the SDG's representation of redevelopment, which in many
ways paralleled that of the City. We should locate the plans for the removal of
Spitalfields Market and the redevelopment of the site within the context of the
expansion of the City of London. This borne out if the plans for a redeveloped
market site, drawn up by the SDG, are considered. However, the plans were not

102 Meeting of the Community Development Group (CDG), 9th May 1989.
necessarily couched in those terms by the SDG. We should also examine the SDG's statements on redevelopment by looking at the claims made about their proposals, specifically with regard to the benefits that would accrue to the local population, because the SDG's portrayal of redevelopment constitutes the discourse against which the Campaign had to compete in order to argue against the redevelopment of the market. I shall emphasise here the ways in which the SDG emphasised the benefits of their scheme to the area.

This particular part of the story commences with the interest shown by two freelance surveyors in the market site during 1983.103 Noting the central location and its good public transport and road connections, they proposed on the site a shopping centre that could attract a large amount of custom from both Tower Hamlets residents, who were particularly ill-served in terms of large retail outlets, and from City office workers. At that time the plans for a shopping centre at an empty site in Whitechapel appeared to be coming into fruition.104 Because of these plans, the Borough indicated that any attempts to redevelop the Spitalfields Market site for retail would be met with opposition from the local authority, but that offices, restaurants and speciality shops would be deemed more appropriate. Approaches were made by this pair to the London and Edinburgh Trust, an expanding property company, who adopted the idea.105 Through a company known as London and Metropolitan, jointly owned by LET and Balfour Beatty, and in anticipation of plans as yet unformulated for the market site, London and Metropolitan started to purchase properties on the Bishopsgate frontage - a cafe on the corner of Bishopsgate and Spital Square, and 284 - 294 Bishopsgate. Important sites on the frontage were owned by County and District Properties, a subsidiary of Costains, so in order to expand the venture this company joined the LET and Balfour Beatty scheme, becoming the Spitalfields Development Group, and bringing with them the Central Foundation School site and St. Botolphs Hall. The 'Big Bang' and the success of Rosehaugh's Broadgate scheme over Broad Street and Liverpool Street Stations (across the road from Spitalfields Market) provided a crucial boost to the plans.

The first plans submitted to the Corporation for the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market had as their major component a large amount of office space - 1,320,320 ft. sq. - with 158,050 ft. sq. residential accommodation, 65,705 ft. sq.

103 Interview with Tim Budgen, Property Surveyor, LET/SDG, 24th July 1989.
104 These plans have a long and complex history. The latest plans were dropped in December 1988.
105 Interview with Tim Budgen, Property surveyor, LET/SDG, 24th July 1989.
retail space and 87,502 ft. sq. for small businesses. Peter Beckwith, Chair of SDG, speaking on the occasion of the unveiling of the plans clearly was quite keen to see the plans as acceptable to the local authority and local population. This image of the redevelopment was manufactured in the following way:

It clearly isn't just a commercial site - it is a community of people as much as it is bricks and mortar - there will be shops, houses and so on. There will be a tremendous boost for local jobs. The existing market employs 1,500 people whose jobs will be secured on a new site. The new development will generate 6,000 extra jobs not only in white collar banking work, but in clerical, maintenance and other service functions. The intention is to create a living environment, something that doesn't just end at 5 o'clock when office workers leave. Because this will be so much more than an office development it will be used by the whole community.\footnote{Peter Beckwith, speaking for LET/SDG, quoted in the City Recorder, 11th October 1986.}

This quotation stresses the importance to the local economy of the redevelopment. It does perhaps imply that low status, low skill jobs will be provided for the local population, but the SDG's Chairperson by-passes this problem by stressing the benefit to the area of the scheme. The possible incompatibility of large scale office development in the area is not considered.

The employment of Richard MacCormac, a self-styled 'community architect', was part of this process of image manufacture. The developers portrayed themselves as anxious that the redevelopment should not be seen purely as an office block, despite the overwhelming dominance of office uses in terms of floor space:

When one speaks of office blocks, one speaks of the most hated kind of architecture. Our idea is of a kind of 'chameleon' - it will be difficult to tell where existing buildings end and the new scheme begins. The office area will never engage the pavements except at the centre of the site, and it is possible to have the skirts of the office block inhabited by retailers.\footnote{Richard MacCormac, architect of part of the first SDG redevelopment scheme, quoted in the City Recorder, 11th October 1986.}

Redevelopment, according to my reading of this quotation, is promoted in naturalised imagery. The new structure would be organic, would blend into the existing urban fabric, would not constitute a large ugly piece of architecture. In the spirit of this idea, the developers set in motion a public relations machine geared towards the construction of a public image of 'community-aware' 'socially
responsible' redevelopment. This representation had as a major component a justification of redevelopment of the area for the good of the people who lived there.

In December 1986 the company acquired 274-280 Bishopsgate, consolidating their hold on the frontage of the site. In April 1987 they published revised plans for a scheme which 'would become an blueprint for other inner city developments in Britain and perhaps abroad'. In a series of exhibitions held in April 1987 the plans were displayed to the public as part of a public consultation exercise; the response was poor. In September 1987 the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee (BGNC), with the proviso that certain recommendations were to be met, granted planning permission to the SDG and to Rosehaugh Stanhope by a vote of 3 to 2, other committee members being absent. A crucial precondition for the City Corporation's plans to release the site for redevelopment had been decided on the casting vote of the Liberal chair of the Neighbourhood Committee. The Spitalfields Market Bill then went before Parliament; the SDG were not involved.


109 By 1988 it was not just the Market that was being planned for redevelopment. Spitalfields, the SDG declared, is an area:

...which for a century has been isolated by the market from the prosperity of other, more privileged neighbourhoods. The market's relocation to Temple Mills at last provides the opportunity to re-establish Spitalfields' relationship with the City to their mutual advantage. (SDG Spitalfields Market: A New Chapter, October 1989 Publicity Brochure.)

That relationship, if it is re-established, will be cemented by the fact that the redevelopment of Spitalfields, five years from the first interest of SDG in the Market site, now involves the wholesale reshaping of up to 20% of the ward area. Amongst some people watching as the Market redevelopment plans unfolded, an assumption had been made that although further redevelopment of the area was likely, it would not be immediate but would 'slip-stream' on the success of the market scheme. (Interviews with Kay Jordan and David Brown, SSBA workers, 21st July 1989). Although the historic buffer of the market would go, other developers would wait and watch the success of that scheme before tackling other derelict or 'developable' sites in the area, such as Trumans Brewery or Bishopsgate Goodsyard, the Nicholls and Clarke site or Great Eastern Buildings site.

The first indication that this would happen came with the announcement in the summer of 1988 by the British Rail Property Board, that they were inviting tenders for the redevelopment of the old derelict Bishopsgate Goodsyard, at that time used as a car park. In response to this, the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood and Hackney Council, as joint planning authorities for the site, produced Draft Development Guidelines that were then put out for public consultation in June 1988. Following suggestions elicited during the public consultation in September and October 1988, the two local authorities published their Development Brief in December 1988. The Brief stated that a mixture of local employment should be offered, with housing and shops around Brick Lane and offices at the western end. A substantial part of the plan hinged around new railway lines, the plans for which at the time of writing are unclear. The London and Edinburgh Trust submitted for the tender, and were shortlisted. It is through the development of the plans for the Bishopsgate Goodsyard site that changes in the discourse of redevelopment start to appear quite
The scheme as it stood included 885,000 sq. ft. of office space incorporating 80,000 sq. ft. for which planning permission had already been obtained on the Central Foundation School site on Bishopsgate, owned by Costains. 200,000 sq. ft. was to be devoted to housing, both for sale and for local needs under the Section 52 Agreement. 120,000 sq. ft. was to be set aside for retail, 70,000 sq. ft. reserved for public buildings of various kinds under the Section 52 Agreement and 65,000 sq. ft. for small business units. In November 1988 the SDG advertised for a Chief Executive to direct the Spitalfields Market scheme. The chosen candidate, earning £150,000 per year, would be 'a dynamo', and he (sic) would have to show ability in public relations and negotiations matters:

Obviously some political agility will be necessary because Tower Hamlets are notoriously difficult to deal with.

Rumours about substantial changes to the SDG's plans for the redeveloped site abounded, following an article in Estates Times on 28th October 1988 hinting at a reduction in office space and a substantial increase in retail facilities on a clearly. In the January of 1989, a 'community planning weekend' was convened by Hunt Thompson, the architects responsible for the design of the scheme. Public Relations tactics such as listing 'invited speakers' on the programme (whether they had accepted or not) and publishing details of all 'invited groups' (whether they appeared or not) were used in order to legitimize the exercise. Groups such as the CSSD boycotted the weekend due to their reservations about its validity in terms of public consultation. Yet their logo was used in a video promoting the scheme suggesting endorsement from the Campaign for the plans. Ultimately, it was the developers, LET, who were able to gain through this, by presenting their plans to British Rail and to the Neighbourhood planning officers as being apparently 'publically endorsed'.

In February 1989, Grand Metropolitan announced that Trumans Brewery on Brick Lane was to close, and that the 10 acre site would be redeveloped, excluding those parts which the company wished to keep for their Listed Buildings status and/or for their head offices. A Draft Development Brief was published by Bethnal Green Neighbourhood in June 1989, stating that a variety of uses would be acceptable - housing, open space, local shops, restaurants, showrooms, small warehouses, workshops, leisure facilities, training facilities, community facilities and small professional offices. Further details are not known as yet. On the Whitechapel site, uncertainty remains. A strong possibility is that a school will be built, the educational needs of Tower Hamlets over the next decade very great.

The future of the Great Eastern Buildings site, sandwiched between the Bishopsgate Goodsyard to the North and Trumans Brewery to the south, remains uncertain. A Development Brief had been prepared in October 1987, but no further information is available. Sites such as Selby St, designated for housing association homes, have uncertain futures whilst plans by bodies such as London Regional Transport and British Rail are prepared for possible extensions to London's rail network through the western part of Tower Hamlets. Speculation over the very future of council housing in the area continues. Although government plans for a Housing Action Trust have now been defeated, the possibility of the takeover of entire estates by private landlords remains. The environment and social structure of the area, whatever happens, is likely to change.

redeveloped site. The new plans would include a 'Galeria' modelled on a larger and more famous arcade in Milan. As would be expected, the changes over the previous two years in demand for office market, the development of Canary Wharf as a major office development in Docklands with an estimated 10 million sq. ft. of space, and the collapse of the Whitechapel shopping centre scheme, had all contributed to a decision to change the plans for Spitalfields market. The resignation of Richard MacCormac, 'community architect' in the scheme, was also associated with the changes in the plans. The SDG had employed a large American architectural practice, Swanke Haydn Connell, to oversee the new plans and the eventual construction of the scheme. As Forman noted with reference to earlier developments in Spitalfields, with the demand for office space being so closely related to the volatility of the stock market, development of office space for this market automatically becomes a gamble. Odds on the success of such schemes are improved by, for example, holding land with existing planning permission, or by utilising construction expertise that will facilitate the rapid construction of office buildings. This appears to be exactly what occurred for the SDG. Having been delayed, much to their chagrin, by the lengthy Parliamentary procedure of the Private Bill, time was, if not running out, running short:

...from our point of view we've got a lot of building to go up in a short space of time. Swanke Haydn are used to American methods and large buildings... We had to have somebody with experience...

The developers were eager, however, to appear grateful for the delays bought about by legislation, having been given a second bite at the cherry by a:

...lengthy Parliamentary process allowing SDG to review its earlier proposals measuring them against current demands both from the City and from Spitalfields and adapting them to meet those needs and expectations.

The redesigned scheme included a small reduction in the total amount of office space, but a greater variation in the size and type of units. The new plans had a massively increased retail component in the form of 'a major food store' and more speciality shops. The housing and open space components remained the

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114 There are several sites in the area which hold planning permission which will not be used, for example, the Nicholls and Clarke builders' merchants site, and Costain's holdings on Bishopsgate.
115 Interview with Tim Budgen, LET/SDG Surveyor, 24th July 1989.
same, as did arrangements for the fashion centre, creche and workshops. The Section 52 Agreement remained, but unsurprisingly, the commercial components of the scheme would provide the resources for social benefit.\textsuperscript{117} The SDG were keen to see this scheme as evidence of their commitment to the regeneration of the area, not only in terms of improved design, but also in terms of their continued plans for the site. The SDG emphasized in their publicity material and public statements their gratitude to groups such as the Campaign for holding up Parliamentary proceedings in order to give the SDG enough time to reformulate more 'suitable plans' and establish a greater degree of contact with various groups active in the area.\textsuperscript{118}

The representation of redevelopment constructed by the SDG clearly parallels that of the Government with regard to inner city redevelopment. The earliest SDG publicity brochures distributed to every household in Spitalfields in June 1986 portrayed the needs of the area and its residents in terms of a problem, the solution of which:

...means finding a scheme which will respect what already exists in Spitalfields - a community of people as much as its bricks and mortar - but at the same time generate enough money to help finance itself and cover the immense costs of providing the market traders with a new home.\textsuperscript{119}

The question of whether a commercial office development could be compatible with providing for the needs of the residents and the area was glossed over. Community is a word given particular positive values, and is linked to a particular economic argument on the best type of aid for the area. The necessity of commercial development is normalised, taken as given, assumed as shared knowledge and therefore unquestioned. The 'problem' is presented in terms of finding suitable solutions rather than questioning the source of the problem. A year later the emphasis is still on 'getting it right', on finding a 'solution' for the 'problem' of the area that is:

'Right for local people, architecturally sympathetic to the Spitalfields environment and at the same time economically realistic.'\textsuperscript{120} (ibid as in original)

\textsuperscript{117}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118}Interview with Brian Cheetham, SDG Chief Executive, 27th November 1989.
\textsuperscript{119}SDG A Solution for Spitalfields and what it means for you. Spitalfields Development Group, June 1986.
Conflicts of interests are however recognised; the type of scheme that Tower Hamlets council would have liked on the Spitalfields Market site (although exactly what this would have meant is unstated) would, according to the SDG, not finance the purchase price the Corporation would expect, let alone the cost of moving the Market. The problem is thus presented as one between the interests of two institutions, with the interests of the residents of the area sandwiched inbetween.

The only practical solution is to find a middle ground between what the Corporation wants and what Tower Hamlets wants; and to ensure that this middle ground offers the people who live and work in Spitalfields the best deal possible in all the circumstances.\textsuperscript{121}

Nothing is promised, no concrete assurance is given, only the SDG's word that it would attempt to do its best for the residents.

Over a period of two years, the SDG did however change the ways in which it portrays development. In later statements the best interests of the community were promoted, upfront, as being part and parcel of the regeneration of the area. There was no bashfulness in stating the need for commercial development, but the community's needs were pushed to the fore in order to represent the company as 'community conscious'. Private redevelopment was presented as the mechanism by which public gain could be ensured:

SDG's scheme is not only designed to meet the City's needs. It will also make a very significant contribution to both the economic and environmental regeneration of Spitalfields and its community; for the commercial components of SDG's plans will provide the resources for a wide range of social benefits.\textsuperscript{122}

I would attribute this subtle change in the discourse of the developers to the appearing of an opposition group - the Campaign - arguing against redevelopment on the grounds that it would disrupt the 'community' in Spitalfields, and that redevelopment was being carried out in the interests of the private sector. Over time the SDG's statements incorporated this criticism and by so doing tried to remove from the Campaign their main arguments.

This representation of redevelopment was not the sole preserve of the SDG. For example, a publicity brochure for the joint Grand Metropolitan/LET development of the Trumans Brewery opens with the following statement:

\textsuperscript{121}ibid.
\textsuperscript{122}SDG \textit{Spitalfields - A New Chapter}. 


By pooling resources and undertaking a continuing dialogue with the local community the companies believe they can regenerate the area both economically and socially in a way which will be of long term benefit to all those involved and especially those who live and work in the area.123

The emphasis is on continuous dialogue, giving a public appearance of community consultation - which in actual fact had occurred in a meagre and private way between the developers and selected groups in January 1989 and during the summer of the 1989. The legitimacy of the developer's plans is granted through their ability to include in their glossy brochures information on the involvement of the Community Development Group, established as a mechanism for involving local people in the redevelopment process and achieving what gains it could. The result is a brochure presenting the developers as working for the people of the area and as endorsed by all the existing residents to do so. At a meeting between the CSSD and the SDG in March 1990, we were told how the scheme would 'bring the wealth of the City into Spitalfields and the value of Spitalfields to the City'; how the developers 'see out there great needs and a great need to get out there and do something'; 'essentially we're developers, we're here to do something'.124

A further example of the development of 'community consciousness' comes from the London and Edinburgh Trust's joint initiative in establishing Avatar with Balfour Beatty. Avatar was a company formed specifically for inner urban redevelopment working mainly outside London. It styled itself as being 'formed as a response to the new opportunities and challenges presented by the call of both central and local government for public-private sector partnership in the regeneration of our inner cities and their communities'.125 It claimed partnership as the key to its success which ensured that 'development schemes are profitable for the private sector while being socially and economically desirable for the public sector.'126 Their 'community consciousness' was thrust to the fore, for example with their emphasis on public consultation at every stage of a project. Precisely what this public consultation implied, for example in the construction of their Arcadian Scheme in the centre of Birmingham, was of course never raised.

Finally, LET's 1988 Annual Report succinctly illustrated the ways in which lip-service to ideas of 'community' awareness could be used to give the

124Meeting between representatives of the SDG and CSSD, 20th March 1990.
126Ibid.
company some kind of philanthropic credibility. The 'corporate statement' listed 'social responsibility to the community' as a key point, after such concerns as creation of value for shareholders, quality of product and management, diversification into businesses compatible with property and global spread of interests. The Annual Report also had a section on 'LET in the community' giving details of money donated through its involvement with the Per Cent Club - (half of 1% of its UK profits before taxation are spent on charitable activities). Schemes supported include Save the Children, and grant assistance to what it terms 'local community projects'.

It would be more satisfactory for my arguments were I to have at my disposal more than anecdotal evidence for the SDG's private views of redevelopment in the area. Whilst the opposition to redevelopment is examined in detail below with reference to many interviews and conversations with Campaign members, I obviously was not privy to such detailed knowledge from the SDG. To paraphrase P.J. O'Rourke, these people do not get where they are today by being dumb enough to tell research students the truth. The Chair of the SDG is credited by two sources at being bemused by the 'problem' of a 'Bengali ghetto' on his doorstep, and puzzled as to 'why they could not all move to Bradford where they surely must have friends'. Bengali settlement in the area was understood as a great inconvenience for the development plans:

Part of the problem is the Bengalis all want to live in a little huddle together - I can understand why, for security, but I mean... we hope that they'll all thrive and do well out of it...

This surveyor in the SDG thought quite sincerely, he said, that redevelopment could only benefit members of the Bengali community in Spitalfields:

There's all this talk of "we've got to defend Commercial Street" and "we mustn't let all this increase the values", but as the area improves surely the people in the area are going to benefit. I appreciate that not everybody gains, but say a little chappie who owns a little property in one of these streets around here; he gets a very good price and he goes and buys a bigger patch.

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130 Interview with Tim Budgen, LET/SDG Surveryor, 24th July 1989.
131 Ibid.
Not everyone benefits from such redevelopment schemes. The SDG representative knew that. Redevelopment schemes that are financed by the private sector have to be profitable to that sector, and although trickle-down benefits may be available to a few, that is not their primary intention. Redevelopment of Spitalfields Market was therefore represented in such a way as to emphasise the possibility of 'community' benefit, and to silence the possibility of conflicts of interests between groups over the use of the Market site.

Conclusion

In this chapter, to summarize, I have introduced Spitalfields as an inner city area in central London. In this area a fruit and vegetable wholesale market was located on a site in buildings which were less than satisfactory for its function. Despite this, until the Market's owners were required to look for ways of enabling the expansion of the City as an international finance centre, the future of the market on that site seemed secure. When the SDG deposited relocation plans at the Corporation for their approval the Corporation was cautious, but made the decision to move the Market and open up a large area in central London for redevelopment. It justified relocation on the grounds that the requirements of the Market necessitated this step and was to a large extent silent on the expansion of the City, apart from within the close confines of the City's development industry. The relocation of the Market and development of the site occurred under a government whose policies towards the problems of inner city areas had been directed at the solution of such problems though private investment. A development company drawing on the same discourses of redevelopment as the City Corporation and Government, articulated its redevelopment plans in a language that emphasized the scheme as inner city redevelopment rather than as expansion of City office space.

I have now set the context for my examination of the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers as a group that argued against the redevelopment of Spitalfields and the relocation of the Market. In the next chapter, I shall introduce this group and their arguments. In Chapter Four I shall examine the origins of the Campaign. In Chapter Five, I shall discuss the ways in which Spitalfields was presented and the images the Campaign held about the area and used in support of their arguments against redevelopment. In Chapter Six I shall examine how the Campaign coped with the appearance of another group that drew upon the same constituency yet viewed redevelopment in a very different way.
Chapter Three

The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers

In this chapter I shall discuss the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, the group that formed to oppose the relocation of Spitalfields Market. I shall examine its origins and establishment and shall then look at its tactics of opposition. I go on to present the arguments it made against the relocation of the Market and the redevelopment of the site.

The Birth of the Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers.

On the 8th October 1987 at a meeting of Spitalfields Ward Labour Party, and a month before planning permission on the first Spitalfields Market scheme was to be finalised by the Liberal-controlled Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee, Councillor Phil Maxwell bought to his ward a report on the implications of the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market following a briefing by planners. After discussion of the matter, the meeting voted to organise a campaign around the issue, with one member to act as co-ordinator.1 A first public meeting was held on the 9th November 1987, following a mailing to tenants groups and local organisations in the ward from the Ward Labour Party:

We hope that out of that meeting will come a broad based campaign group, which would work closely together over the coming months and possible years, to try to stave off the worst effects of the City developers on Spitalfields.2

An initial logo declaring 'Homes not Offices' adorned the publicity handout.3

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1Spitalfields Labour Party, Minutes. 8th October 1987.
3CSSD notice of a public meeting on 'The Implications of Spitalfields Market Redevelopment', November 1987.
THE DEVELOPERS MOVE IN!

UP GO LAND PRICES
The current cost of land in the Bethnal Green area is -
Industrial land = £3-400,000 /acre
Residential land = £50 million /acre
Office land = £600,000+ /acre

In the Spitalfields Market area, the average price is £3 million/acre.
With the onset of the development of the Market, prices are likely to go through the roof. It is estimated that office space in the developed market area will have a starting rent of £30/sq.ft. Potential office space on the east side of Commercial Street will probably attract a starting rent of £25/sq.ft.

The value of land in the surrounding area to the market has soared spectacularly in the weeks following the Council's decision to grant planning permission. A house in Wilkes Street is currently on the market for £350,000.

UNEMPLOYMENT
It is the intentions of the Liberal Councillors in the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood area to change the bulk of West Spitalfields into a Business Improvement Area. This will further escalate the price of land. The Council has already earmarked the Great Eastern Buildings on Brick Lane for "small office business suites". A short time ago small traders were evicted from these premises. A number of businesses which employ local people have already indicated their intention to move out of Spitalfields. The majority of the six principal owners of the leather industry (not Bengali owned) will certainly sell their properties to developers. The main source of local employment (the rag trade) will all but disappear within the next 4 years. We face the almost certain future of unprecedented unemployment coupled with the selling off of council accommodation - Herbert and Jacobson blocks have been secretly earmarked for "development improvements".

THE FIGHTBACK
Unless the office development proposals collapse or the community in Spitalfields unites in opposition to the pressure from the developers, then our community and housing will be decimated within the next 7 or 8 years.

Come and join us to work out how we're going to CAMPAIGN against the threat to OUR community. The three Spitalfields Councillors (Phil Maxwell, Ghulam Mortuza and Abbas Uddin) and Mark Adams from SHAPRS will be there to answer YOUR questions and talk about what we can do TOGETHER to START THE FIGHTBACK.

at
The Montefiore Centre,
Deal Street/Hanbury Street, E1
Interviewed 18 months later, those responsible for the establishment of the Campaign, amongst them Jil Cove and Robbie MacDuff, said that they had no clear ideas as to what such a Campaign could achieve, the arguments they would make, or the fora available for their presentation. The founder members stated that they had taken the decision to organize a campaign against the relocation of the Market because they felt the issue of redevelopment to be an important one. This stated uncertainty about the Campaign is perhaps false modesty given the experience of many founder members of the Campaign in the Labour Party, and their knowledge of possible tactics of opposition. Either way, in October 1987 at a later Planning Group meeting of the Labour Party the decision was taken to press ahead with a campaign. Although informally very close connections between the Campaign and the Labour Party would exist throughout the course of the Campaign, it was taken out of the Labour Party with the aim of establishing the Campaign on as broad a base of support as possible.\footnote{Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.}

As the first circular letter pointed out:

Whilst Spitalfields Labour Party is starting this action, we want as many members of local community groups, tenants associations, trades unions and all those who live and work in the area and care about Spitalfields to join together in an attempt to preserve the very special character of the area.\footnote{Letter from Jil Cove, a founder member of the Campaign and subsequent co-ordinator, to community organisations, 4th November 1987.}

The founder members of the Campaign were ambivalent, on reflection, about its Labour Party roots. The choice to take the Campaign out of the Labour Party was made specifically because it was felt its link with the Party would have affected participation and people's views of the Campaign. For its credibility it needed to be seen as a 'community group'.\footnote{Various interviews and conversations with various Campaign members.} It was a conscious decision, as one member put it, 'so we couldn't be charged with being a politically motivated campaign'.\footnote{Interview with Robbie MacDuff, a founder member of the Campaign, 11th July 1989.} Another member considered the implications of market removal to be of concern to everyone in the area and not just the Labour Party; the Campaign should therefore be open to other groups and individuals.\footnote{Conversations with Campaign members, 1989, various.}

Another member was unconcerned about the Labour Party roots of the Campaign, and more interested upon joining to find that someone was actually starting a Campaign:

\[\text{I think the initiative might have come from there, but certainly the people that went to the meetings I don't think}\]
were Labour Party people. I'm not. It's my feeling that it was people that were interested and they just - perhaps it was just one or two people from the Labour Party who set the forum for it, so it was obviously a need. You know, like ourselves, we were desperate to get ourselves to get a group together to oppose the Bill. So it was really good that it was done.9

Reflecting on this decision 18 months later, some members of the Campaign were undecided as to whether this had been a useful strategy or not. Their prominence in local Labour Party politics had led to their being labelled as a Labour Party Campaign in any case.10 The Labour Party would not get any credit for the gains the Campaign had made - potentially a useful strategy against the Liberals in the May 1990 local authority elections. A Labour Party campaign could perhaps be more aggressive in its opposition than one based in the 'community'. Robbie MacDuff considered that they had done all they could to 'disassociate' themselves from the Labour Party. Nonetheless, a 'problem' had remained, in the view of Campaign members, due to the inability of the Liberal councillors to perceive them as anything other than their opposition:

I'm sufficiently involved in community organisations to know that there's a different tone that you take between a highly profiled campaign, that is a political party, and a community campaign, and I don't think we led the Campaign on political terms, I think we led it on community terms and unfortunately the Liberals on the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee could not see the difference between the two, and I think that's worrying for the way in which the committee is run.11

The view held by the Liberal members of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee about the CSSD was scathing. One member was quite adamant that the Campaign should be seen purely as a Labour Party front, who were viewed as hypocritical because they claimed the gains made to the Section 52 Agreement in the House of Commons, yet opposed the development outright.12 Another was positively abusive:

...the CSSD is an unrepresentative, narrowly based, undemocratic, secretive and doctrinaire clique of malcontents... When the market is relocated, thus ensuring its prosperity as well as the prosperity of the Spitalfields

9Interview with Pam Mossman, Campaign member, 4th July 1989.
10Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
11Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
12Interview with Liberal Councillor Jeremy Shaw, 13th December 1988.
area, people will look back at the antics of this coterie and liken you to the Flat Earth Society.13

As this quotation indicates, the Campaign were seen by the Liberal members of the BGNC as a threat, because of its political origins.

It is instructive to look at the opinion of others towards the Campaign. Just after the Campaign had made its first appearance in the House of Commons Committee, a worker for the Tower Hamlets Environment Trust denounced the Campaign's work as 'stable door stuff' - shutting it after the horse had bolted, an allusion to the late appearance of the Campaign during the unfolding of the redevelopment plans. He wondered aloud what the organisers had been involved with at that time with the Labour Party that had prevented the earlier establishment of a Campaign.14 He was later to change his view after the Campaign had managed to get additions to the Section 52 Agreement, and had proved their worth by continuing to involve themselves in the plans for the future of the Market and the area.15

The two representatives from the SDG that I spoke to gave different interpretations of the role of the Labour Party in the establishment and management of the Campaign. One was scathing and possibly slanderous:

...isn't Jil Cove - part of her ambition is to take over where Peter Shore retires - but isn't that part of her reasoning behind it all? At the early public meetings that we went to Jil Cove didn't appear for a year, until she formed the Save the Spitalfields Campaign. I went to public meetings, or council meetings at Bethnal Green, and the Labour Party didn't turn up at all. MacCormac showed his plans and there wasn't a single Labour there.16

Another was more sympathetic, probably because of his own affiliations with the Labour Party.17

The Chief Planner of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood whilst not prepared to dismiss the Campaign as just a Labour Party front, initially saw their critique of the redevelopment process as being representative of the views of only a small proportion of the local population. In his view they had entered to debate

13Letter to Campaign from Liberal Councillor Paddy Streeter, 10th January 1989.
14Interview with John Aldenton, worker with Tower Hamlets Environment Trust, 10th June 1988.
15John Aldenton, Tower Hamlets Environment Trust Worker, various Community Development Group meetings during 1989.
16Interview with Tim Budgen, LET/SDG, 24th July 1989.
17Interview with Brian Cheetham, SDG Chief Executive, 27th November 1989.
on the redevelopment of the Market far too late for their comments to be of any use. His view changed as he became aware of their tenacity. He initially mocked their view of Spitalfields as 'nice, messy, dirty and noisy', and understood their motivation to 'keep the area grotty' and to 'put something nasty there to stop the City spreading' as naive and ill-informed about what, for him, was the reality of City expansion and change in Spitalfields. His understanding of their 'bleeding heart' mentality changed as the Campaign demonstrated its willingness to maintain their opposition to the Bill and the relocation of the Market over the next two years. His perception of the Campaign's representation of Spitalfields was however quite pertinent, and I shall discuss this in more detail in Chapter Five.

The Campaign had their own reasons for their late arrival as an opposition group arguing against the redevelopment:

I don't think anyone fully understood the implications of the move of the market, and the issue of the market hadn't been something the community had taken on board anyway. It had been seen to be dirty, smelly, noisy and troublesome in the place that it was in between Spitalfields and the City of London. So people hadn't really appreciated the Market for its worth. It had just been seen as an eyesore and people weren't concerned about it because of that, and because they didn't have a look at the underlying reasons why the City wanted to move the Market.

As this quotation indicates, the Campaign was prepared to make that analysis, and act on it on the understanding that as a collection of individuals they had knowledge of the attitudes of the population of the area towards redevelopment.

The first meeting of the Campaign on the 9th November 1987 was attended by around 40 people, and was organised by Party activists such as Phil Maxwell and Robbie MacDuff. It was chaired by Jil Cove who subsequently became the Campaign's co-ordinator. At this meeting two important things happened. Firstly, the Campaign became formally detached from the Labour Party. Secondly, there was considerable debate as to whether the plans to relocate the market should be completely opposed, or whether attempts should be made to maximise planning gain. Ultimately, the decision to oppose the redevelopment outright was taken by a narrow majority although a secondary fall-back position of

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18 Interview with Peter Studdert, Chief Planner, Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, 1st September 1988.
19 Ibid.
20 Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
closer co-operation with the developers would remain. The reasons for this were quite specific:

We could recognise and understand the arguments for maximising planning gain, but at the end of the day our argument was that the community would not be there in the future to benefit from any planning gain that you're going to get.21

The Campaign from its earliest inception therefore took up a position of total opposition to the redevelopment. This is important and I shall discuss the origins and consequences of this in following chapters. Before doing so I shall discuss the Campaign's establishment of its aim's and objectives and examine the basic arguments of the Campaign.

3.2 The Campaign's logo.

21Ibid.
Defining objectives, establishing contacts.

The Campaign had been established from the Labour Party and then detached from it. It therefore had to build up support for itself both within and outside the local area. The choice of name for the Campaign was important, with debate going on 'for so long' that 'we settled on the issues of Campaign, Development, Spitalfields and Community'.

The idea was to keep it completely informal and try to encourage people to become part of it by using language that wouldn't isolate and intimidate. ... We felt 'The Campaign to Save' rather than prevent was more in tune with the community, and the Developers are a readily identifiable group of people, especially when you're sitting right next door to the City of London.

The ideas held within this quotation are important. This quotation expresses the idea of informality in the organisation of the group, and the wish for broadly-based grassroots mobilization. It also presents the idea that the Campaign were closely in touch with the wishes of those living in the area.

An initial strategy that reflects these ideas was to canvas support from as many quarters as possible. A letter from the Campaign to Richard McCormac, one of the architects at that time employed by the SDG, indicated the issues that were to be campaigned around but criticised the architect's involvement with the developers, appealing to his supposed sense of 'community':

We are surprised that someone who lives in the Spitalfields area, and purports to understand the pressures on the area, in terms of employment prospects, the condition of local housing, rising land and house prices and creeping gentrification, can endorse the type of development which is being suggested by the SDG.

Over the next few months, a whole range of local organisations were contacted by the campaign by letters which underlined the issues the Campaign felt to be important in the removal of the market. The arguments around which the Campaign were to focus in later public debates in the Houses of Parliament, had begun to be constructed and articulated:

Our position is that we cannot see that any re-development of the Spitalfields Market Site will be beneficial to the local

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22 ibid.

23 ibid.

community. The proposals before us will be catastrophic for the community, causing massive unemployment whilst contributing to ever increasing land and house prices.\(^{25}\)

As the two quotations indicate, the Campaign's arguments were based on an understanding of redevelopment as a set of economic processes. The language is strong and denies the possibility of benefit accruing to the area as a result of redevelopment. The Campaign set itself up as a group in total opposition to the redevelopment of the Market. In writing to the London Group of Labour MPs, a connection was made between the Government's policies on inner city regeneration and the plans of the SDG:

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\text{...we are very wary of the proposals outlined in the Housing Bill, for the establishment of Housing Action Trusts; and whilst we recognise that many communities fear they will be the testing ground for the Government's legislation, we feel that our fears are well grounded, especially as we are near to the LDDC developments, the Market Redevelopment plans are before us, and Prince Charles has spent so much time focussing in on the problems of Spitalfields.}\(^{26}\)
\]

The London Labour MPs were also urged to vote against the City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill which had just been deposited in the House of Commons, and were requested to advise the Campaign on ways in which the Private Bill could be opposed and delayed in the House of Commons. The letter also stated the Campaign's willingness to develop links with the Parliamentary Labour Party.\(^{27}\)

Further letters from the Campaign at that time to certain traders in the market and to a range of community and voluntary groups in the area, stated three objectives of the Campaign 'which can be moulded and developed as the Campaign grows'.\(^{28}\) These were: that the Campaign opposed the SDG's proposals to redevelop the Spitalfields Market site, and opposed the detail of agreements signed between Tower Hamlets Council, the developers and the City

\(^{25}\)Letter from Campaign to Tony Banks, Chair of the London Group of Labour MPs, 3rd December 1987.

\(^{26}\)ibid.

\(^{27}\)Throughout its campaign, the CSSD attempted to gain and maintain support from Labour representatives in the Houses of Lords and Commons. This was often undertaken through personal contacts, as the Parliamentary Labour Party did not adopt support for the Campaign as a matter of course. For example, Parliamentary SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Association) secretary, Joanne Whalley, MP signed a letter supporting the Campaign that was mailed to all Labour peers prior to the Campaign's appearance in the House of Lords. This was done purely through informal contact Robbie MacDuff.

\(^{28}\)Letters from Campaign to various organisations and businesses, December 1987.
of London; that the Campaign recognised that the development of a banking and finance centre on the site would be 'disastrous for the local people and for those who presently work in the area; it will lead to the break up of the community'; and that the Campaign recognised the need for homes, shops and workspaces for Spitalfields' existing and growing population above and beyond any other proposals.29

From the outset the Campaign attempted to publicize itself to other organizations and groups in the area. Market traders were contacted, but only those who were known or suspected of being against the removal of the market were approached:

We recognise that the Market traders may have different aspirations... but we hope that if we are able to unite in our opposition to those who would decimate this area, then both groups of people, residents and traders may benefit from that opposition.30

Contact between the traders and the Campaign was however limited because of the differing sets of interests between the two. The Campaign did however become known amongst the traders. This operated to the Campaign's advantage when it was able to reveal in the House of Lords via Lord MacIntosh that the SMTA had threatened to expell from the Association any trader found to be openly opposing the move to Temple Mills. This information had come to the Campaign from a trader who had contacted the Co-ordinator anonymously.31

Contact was also made with the Government's Task Force. Although the Campaign had declared their opposition to the redevelopment on the grounds that it symbolised the Government's approach to inner city problems, (ie. by the use of private sector money for the expansion of the City, against the best interests of the people who lived in the area), it contacted the Task Force with the intention of arranging a meeting in order to examine ways in which the Campaign and the Task Force could unite in an attempt 'to help provide more jobs and opportunities for the people of Spitalfields'.32 The implications of the market removal were articulated with regard to the potential increase in unemployment that such a development could cause. Parallels with the experience in the LDDC area were

29 Ibid.
31 CSSD meeting, 9th January 1989.
drawn, and the £50,000 offered by the developers under the Section 52 Agreement for training were compared with the £500 million cost of the development:

Set alongside the amount for the development, the training proposals are an insult to the community, and will do nothing to help alleviate the unemployment presently being suffered by the people of Spitalfields in particular, and Tower Hamlets in general.\(^{33}\)

Other organisations contacted by the Campaign included Newham Council, to urge them to petition against the Private Bill on behalf of the Stratford Market Traders, the Prince of Wales, local newspapers, and trade unions. The local heritage organisations, such as the Heritage Centre, Friends of Christchurch, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Georgian Society, and the Spitalfields Trust were all urged to support the Campaign. Wapping and Stepney Neighbourhood Committees and the two local MPs gave their support.

Responses to the Campaign's initial appeal for support varied greatly. Herbert and Jacobson House Tenant's Association, on the Holland Estate near the Market, were unequivocal in their support, linking the redevelopment of the market to the possible breakup of the residential structure of the area:

About the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market by money making financiers. We the Tenants of Herbert and Jacobson Houses are taking a serious view of this move as this move will provide Accommodation for the City Workers and at the same time affect Council Tenants. There is one way that the entire developed area be allocated to the uprooted families and families living in very bad conditions and this is not the case. It is therefore we the tenants association disapproves of the whole development plan. As this is one sided fraud for the benefit of a rich class of the society. Besides the whole object is for taking the flats from Council Tenants and Council Control.\(^{34}\)

As this quotation shows, a certain degree of agreement between the tenants association and the Campaign was apparent. Redevelopment was seen as an invasion of capital to the detriment of the people living in the area. Theories on redevelopment shared by the Campaign with other groups brought together certain groups under the umbrella of the Campaign, as I discuss below.

\(^{33}\)ibid.
\(^{34}\)Letter to the Campaign from the Herbert and Jacobson House Tenant's Association, 29th January 1988.
Others were less enthusiastic about the Campaign's strategy of total opposition, urging instead a strategy of obtaining the best deal possible from the development:

...it seemed to me a commonsense approach and that energy and time would best be spent in working on the things we regard as important, for example, ... the provision of low-rent housing.35

Arguments such as these were dismissed by the Campaign because they appeared to endorse the principle of redevelopment.36 In setting itself up with a strategy of outright opposition to the redevelopment it closed itself off from any prospect of negotiation with other groups in the area as to possible alternative responses to redevelopment. This was a Labour Party Campaign, comprised of political activists in the main, whose strategy reflected its origins. Opposition to redevelopment was a principle because of what redevelopment stood for, and I shall argue in following chapters, the meaning of redevelopment in the minds of the members of the Campaign was strongly rooted in particular ideas. The idea of negotiation over objectives was not entertained. I shall discuss that here.

In contacting the wide variety of local community groups and organisations, the Campaign was also attempting to gain a wide range of signatures for a petition that would eventually be presented to the House of Commons against the City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill. The decision to petition against the Bill was made after one of the Campaign's members, Robbie MacDuff, a researcher for a Labour MP, discovered through his knowledge of Parliamentary procedure that such an avenue was open to them. The Campaign in its petition was able to use as signatories an array of local organisations, a large proportion of which came from the voluntary sector and non-statutory welfare agencies. The Campaign at this point named itself as an umbrella organization. In addition to local residents signing the parliamentary petition in their own personal capacities, the Campaign held under its umbrella businesses such as Market Garages and Acre Produce, both associated with the market. Herbert and Jacobson House Tenants Association, Wheeler House Tenants Association, and the Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants signed. These were all groups who were known to the Campaign via personal contacts. The Inner Area Programme-funded Chicksand Community Action Group signed, as did Spitalfields Small Business Association, Spitalfields Community Farm, Avenues Unlimited (a youth

35 Letter from Rev. Eddy Stride, Rector of Christ Church, Spitalfields, to Campaign. 3rd February 1988

36 I take up this question again in Chapter Six.
and community project), Christchurch Gardens Adventure Playground, The Davenant and St. Mary's Centres, The Spitalfields Careworkers Service, the Campaign for Homes in Central London, Tower Hamlets Homeless Families Campaign and the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service. All these groups either had members who attended Campaign meetings, were involved in the local Labour Party, or were known personally to members of the Campaign. The 24 Labour Councillors of Tower Hamlets, the two Labour ILEA members and the two Labour Tower Hamlets MPs all signed. The Governing Bodies of local schools such as the Osmani, Thomas Buxton, and Canon Barnet schools signed, along with the Montefiore Community Education Centre and the East London Teacher's Association. Certain members of the Campaign were on the governing bodies of the schools and were thus able to persuade them to sign. Individuals cited as 'owner occupiers' and 'tenants of rented accommodation' signed.

It is important to note that all these groups were part of the voluntary or non-statutory welfare sector in the area. Many had links with each other via their work, and individuals formed networks based on shared interests and friendship. For example, Pam Mossman and Patience Butler who were associated with Spitalfields Farm later became active with the Campaign, and both were known personally by the founder members of the Campaign. The Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service worker Mark Adams was a member of the local Labour Party. Many of the groups named above, had been members of Spitalfields Local Committee, which I discuss in Chapter Four, in which both Abbas Uddin and Robbie MacDuff had been active. Similarly, Avenues Unlimited had been involved in the Local Committee and a worker, Claire Murphy, later active in the Campaign, had had close links with other members during her time working in the area. The Campaign styled itself an umbrella organisation on the basis of the support it had from the above groups.

What is also important to note at this stage, however, is the existence of many other groups in the area concerned with what might broadly be termed 'youth' and 'community' and 'welfare' work, who were not included in the Campaign's petition. The reasons for this are unclear to me. I would suggest that political differences lie at the root of it. From interviews and conversation with Campaign members it appears that it was mostly groups known and 'approved' by the Campaign that were contacted, that is, those in the voluntary sector seen to be organizing grass roots mobilization in a number of areas, which the Campaign or the Labour Party supported because of their aims and objectives. Many of the organisations that did not sign the Campaign's petition were predominantly
Bengali groups, such as the Bangladeshi Welfare Organisation. These are important organizations amongst the Bengali population, who constitute the majority population in the area, and who themselves had argued in the local authority's 1986 consultation that they would be the group most adversely affected by the 'wrong' type of redevelopment.\(^{37}\) The fact that many Bengali organizations did not sign undermines the Campaign's rhetoric about its claims to be a 'community group' with a broad base of support. It had to present itself as representative of the population of Spitalfields because of the logic of its own arguments in establishing itself. It was founded by Labour Party activists but taken out of the Party in order to give it more credibility and so that it could argue that it represented 'the community', something a party political grouping could not do. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Six, the political consequences of this argument for representativeness were enormous. Yet in terms of personnel and supporting bodies, the Campaign was selective and not representative of the entire population of the area, as it claimed to be. It was representative, but only of those living and working in the area who shared similar identities through their allegiances with the left and the Labour Party, and those who shared similar ideas on the consequences of redevelopment for Spitalfields.

Given that the claims made by the Campaign for the grouping as an umbrella organization are undermined by evidence of the limits for the Campaign's support, it is crucial to look more closely at the Campaign's composition in terms of active membership. The Campaign met every 2 - 3 weeks as a core group of around 12 - 15 regular attenders. It was co-ordinated by Jil Cove, who also acted as the main contact point of the Campaign and its spokesperson in the Parliamentary Committees. Robbie MacDuff and two of the three Spitalfields Councillors Phil Maxwell and Abbas Uddin all attended when their own work commitments permitted. Pam Mossman, a member of the Spitalfields Farm management committee and a resident of one of the flats above the Market attended regularly.\(^{38}\) Ian Worland, the only lifelong resident of the area in the Campaign and the only member to style himself working class attended very regularly, sometimes with his partner Paula Worland, who worked in the Market. Claire Murphy, in whose offices at Avenues Unlimited we met, attended every meeting. With the exceptions of myself, my fellow researcher and a member who had


\(^{38}\)Pam's membership of the Spitalfields Market Residents Group meant that an important link was established between those fighting to prevent the relocation of the Market and those most immediately affected by redevelopment work.
worked in the area for many years but didn't live there, the Campaign's membership all lived locally. There were of course other members who attended sporadically, some of which have asked not to be named. In terms of its class and race composition, the Campaign was unusual within the wider context of the social structure of Spitalfields. With one exception, a Bengali, all were white. With one exception the members defined themselves as middle class. The Campaign was therefore not representative in its core make-up of the wider population, and members were highly aware of this. As a consequence it legitimized itself as a representative group by highlighting the range of groups and individuals which supported it and by defining itself as essentially locally based.

Its internal organization reflects a basic adherence to discourse of the left and community activism in that it attempted to gain a high degree of participation amongst its membership, even if it could not achieve this amongst its constituency. It functioned without formally organised positions, most of the administrative work falling on the shoulders of Jil Cove. All the other members contributed their skills and time as other commitments permitted. Meetings were loosely structured around an agenda and were co-ordinated by encouraging as much participation from each individual as possible.39

The Campaign used certain tactics to advertise itself in the area and to attempt to gain an appearance of broader support. Door-to-door petitioning was one strategy. A questionnaire was produced in the winter of 1987/88 but few responded, possibly because the schedule asks more about the respondents knowledge of local politics and local political representation, appears more as a Labour Party research exercise and includes only minimal details on the Market. It is also possible that few people from the Campaign were actually prepared to undertake the groundwork of finding respondents to this questionnaire. A petition obtained many more signatures and this was produced in the House of Commons Committee as proof of the level of support that the Campaign had in the area. Another door-to-door petition was undertaken in the Spring of 1989 prior to the Campaign's appearance in the House of Lords. The aim of this exercise was to

39As Susan Smith argues, the way the research shapes the researcher is crucial and should be noted. (Smith, S. (1988) Constructing Local Knowledge: The Analysis of Self in Everyday Life. in Eyles, J. and Smith, D.M. (1988) Qualitative Methods in Human Geography. Polity Press, Cambridge. pp. 17-38. This research changed me in many ways, most of which I don't want to discuss here. Being forced to speak in meetings in order to report back information is one example of an experience gained during this research which changed me as a person. This is not an experience exclusive to me I don't think - other women members have commented that they have gained in confidence through having to do things in the Campaign. See also Bronwill, S. (1987) The Politics of Change: A Case Study of the People's Plan for Newham's Docklands. Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham.
obtain the maximum possible number of signatures as 'proof of local support for a Campaign that resented the appellation 'unrepresentative' pinned to it in the previous Committee. The strategy in order to do this was to leaflet as much of Spitalfields as possible and then go out two or three weeks later to the same areas and collect signatures for the petition. Together with another member I went around Hughes, Treeves and Lister houses along Vallance pad on two occasions. The response to our petition was generally favourable. No-one refused to sign. Going around the Conservation Area around Elder St. and Fournier St with another member, responses were not so sympathetic - on two occasions we had refusals to sign, and on five people signed more to send us on our way or shut us up, than out of any sympathy for the Campaign's arguments. We were seen by these as wasting our time in the face of inevitable processes (or progresses?). Very few people had heard of the Campaign, however, despite having been leafleted. One household was unsure where they'd seen the name before, another person was uncertain as to the origins of the Campaign and therefore uncertain as to how to 'categorise' us. Although not at all hostile about the Campaign's objectives, he appeared to want some kind of indication of who we were above the information given in the leaflets and petition.

The Campaign was acutely aware of the disparity between their own composition and that of the population of Spitalfields. Their strategy to overcome criticism for this was to get over 700 signatures in support of the cause to present to the House of Lords. This of course gave them much greater public credibility. Their response to their own self-identified conception of themselves as unrepresentative did not however lead them to adopt different languages or rhetorics or strategies in order to get support.

40 See comments from Campaign members in Chapter Four on how leaflets from developers tended to be ignored.
41 I often felt during the fieldwork for this thesis, and whilst still unsure about some of my objectives in analysis, that an interesting exercise might be to undertake a survey of perceptions of local people in Spitalfields to both the redevelopments mooted at that time, and to bodies such as the Save Spitalfields Campaign in order to find out the level of awareness of the changes planned for the area, and conceptions of opposition to such things from people who by their absence from active campaigning groups were obviously not given to vocal protest either through disinterest, language difficulties or lack of time and energy for such things after long days of work. Such a piece of research would of course have been very difficult to undertake, in terms of time, resources for interpretation and translation of interviews, as research carried out at QMW by Alison Kaye on Bengali Women Homeworkers indicates. Furthermore, I was disinclined to undertake such research given my belief in the case study of the Campaign of active participation and understanding, and empathy, which would not have been matched. Further, and most importantly, as an adopted member of the Campaign, my own position would have been suspect and I would not have felt uncomfortable in that situation. I therefore left my investigations of local peoples' views to those conversations I had on door steps with people whilst petitioning.
Flyposting was another strategy used by the Campaign to advertise themselves in the area. The intention in this case was two-fold. Firstly to advertise themselves to local people with a logo that they hoped people had seen before. Secondly, to 'get up the noses of the Corporation and the SDG', which they did quite satisfactorily. Flyposting is a lot more fun than petitioning. When going door-to-door the possibility of abuse and the hurling in one's direction of vile opinions is an ever present worry (not to mention dogs and individuals who want to let you stand in the cold and talk incessantly about their life histories in the area for over half an hour). In contrast, flyposting involves physical activity, the vague thrill in the knowledge that you are committing an offence reportable to the police, and a chance to be slightly irresponsible with the hoardings so carefully erected, painted and maintained by the development companies. Accordingly, on the night of the 5th December 1988, clad in woolly jumpers and armed with buckets of paste and a supply of posters, we decorated Spitalfields thus:

3.3 Decorating SDG hoardings
As a mobilizing strategy very little came of it. As an 'advertising gimmick' for the few days before the posters disappeared beneath those for car sales magazines and prior to their removal by the SDG and the City Corporation, Spitalfields cried out to be saved from any spare space of wall or corrugated iron. People noticed that. By petitioning and flyposting, then, a conscious attempt was made to attract attention amongst the populace to the Campaign's presence in the area, and even if it did not draw active support, it publicised the Campaign.

The summarise this section, I want to emphasise firstly that the Campaign was established by Labour Party activists. This is important because of the ideas that people like Jil Cove, Phil Maxwell, Robbie MacDuff and Abbas Uddin brought to the construction of arguments against the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market. It was taken out of the Labour Party and established as a community-based campaign in an attempt to grant itself more legitimacy and claim support for its arguments from the people of the area. I shall now examine those arguments that the Campaign produced against redevelopment.

The Arguments.

The Campaign argued against the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market in many different ways, and separating out the strands of argument for discussion and comment here is not straightforward. Arguments against redevelopment ranged from those that refuted the idea that the market was redundant on its site and no longer economically viable, to statements on the likely future of the area should redevelopment be allowed to happen, incorporating very strong images of Spitalfields as perceived by members of the Campaign. The arguments against redevelopment were made in a variety of places, ranging from Campaign meetings to parliamentary committees, council meetings to interviews with me. In this chapter I shall examine these arguments by looking at two main themes that I have identified in the Campaign's discourse. Firstly I examine the idea that the increase in land values as a result of redevelopment would harm the economic base of the area, and the idea that this land values increase, coupled with existing structural problems in the housing market, would result in some sort of housing crisis. Secondly, I shall look at the arguments the Campaign made against the public consultation. I have picked these themes out because they stand out to me as the basis of the Campaign's case against redevelopment, upon which other arguments were built. I have left discussion of the images and representations of Spitalfields
that were used in arguments against redevelopment to Chapter Five, separating the two with a consideration of the Campaign's origins, as I wish to demonstrate the point that the arguments discussed did not fall from the sky into the laps of the Campaign to be used as appropriate, but have their roots in groups and discourses to which the Campaign owed its origins.

Land Values, the Economic Base and Employment.

The Campaign took as its starting point the idea that the redevelopment plans promoted by the City Corporation and the SDG were misleading on the real impacts of the Market redevelopment. It argued that the redevelopment proposals were couched in languages that were silent on the 'real' reasons for relocating the Market, namely the provision of space for the expansion of the City of London, rather than relocation for the good of the Market.43

It seemed to us obviously the question of moving the Market was nothing to do with either providing the Market with a better trading base or providing the local community with a better environment, it was entirely to do with the market value of that particular site, what that particular site was worth with a different use on it.44

The thrust of the Campaign's arguments therefore came via consideration of land values and the relationship between rising land values and the socio-economic structure of the area. Put simply, the Campaign's argument was that with the development of the Market land values would rise, leading to the displacement of the mainly Bengali population.

The Campaign argued that the Market, being an unpleasant and negative feature of Spitalfields, had held down land values. The establishment historically of sweated labour and a migrant haven had, as noted in Chapter Two, been contingent on the existence of low land values in Spitalfields. The Market was seen as performing a function that maintained low land values in the area. The

43I am, of course, aware that the arguments the Campaign used against redevelopment, which I discuss here, in places echo the analysis given of the redevelopment of the Market in Chapter Two. This is no coincidence. My own analysis of the redevelopment was made on the basis of my understanding of this event as caused by the expansion of the City of London, a view I share with the Campaign, and which developed through conversation with members of the Campaign. My ideas and the Campaign as a group were born at the same time (October 1987) and grew up together. I don't know how much the Campaign's arguments owe to my input, if at all, but mine certainly owe plenty to those of the Campaign.
44Kay Jordan, SSBA Co-ordinator, House of Commons Committee, 23rd June 1988, ME 7 p.27.
Campaign argued that the removal of the Market would do two things. Firstly it would open up an 11 acre site for office development. Offices were understood to be detrimental to Spitalfields, preventing the use of sites for local needs such as housing and workshop space. Office developments, as the Spitalfields Local Committee had argued:

...pose a serious threat to the area in that it neutralises and often blights available sites that could be used for low rented local authority or housing association housing or local industry; it artificially drives up site values; it makes no contribution to the need for public open space; it does not create new local jobs matched to the skills of local people or contributes to the local industrial base.45

Secondly, the Campaign argued that once Spitalfields Market was redeveloped other sites would follow. This prediction was realized with the development of Bishopsgate Goodsyard and Trumans Brewery. The removal of the Market was presented as having a detrimental effect on the local economic base - the clothing industry:

...the vegetable market and the clothing trade have mutually suppressed land values. A particular relationship, and whilst the two of them have existed round here it's an unattractive proposition for development. Having cleared one the rag trade will be forced out through rising land values making the rest of the area much more attractive to developers.46

Spitalfields is a major centre of the clothing industry, and whilst a registered 22.6% of the Tower Hamlets workforce are employed as clothing workers,47 over 50% of the working population of the ward are employed in that industry.48 The clothing industry relies on intensive production techniques, located in small workshops in the area. The industry caters for the lower end of the market and exists by keeping overheads such as wages and rental costs to a minimum. The availability of low-cost rented workshop space in the area was understood by the Campaign to be integral to its survival. Were land values to rise, rents on workshops would increase and the industry would be driven out of the area. Whilst rental costs for the manufacturing industry could range in this area from between £3 - £6 per square foot, office rentals would range from

48Spitalfields Small Business Association estimate.
between £10 to £40 per square foot. Owners of buildings in which workshops were located had already started to cash in on the rise in land values, that started with confirmation of redevelopment plans for the market and the area, by increasing rents or selling properties at increased profits. The clothing industry was seen as being under siege. This was understood to threaten the Bengali population in particular - the SSBA estimated that around 80% of the Bengali population of Spitalfields have recourse to the clothing industry for employment at some time during the year.

...with the kind of development that is now happening in Spitalfields the Bengali community is not going to be given the space and time to develop in the same way that the Jewish community did. It is actually being blown apart.

The Campaign argued that the knock-on effects of the redevelopment of the market would lead to a rise in unemployment, despite the opportunities for clerical work in the new development.

Unemployment in Spitalfields is 24.4%. Tower Hamlets has the second highest unemployment rate of Greater London. According to the Home Affairs Select Committee Report, "Bangladeshis in Britain", these figures are likely to conceal considerable hidden unemployment. The employment that does exist centres around the clothing and leather industries, and those seeking employment are predominantly either semi-skilled or unskilled. With this skill base local employment is unlikely to be created in the proposed development. Existing local employment will be threatened and undermined by rapidly rising land values created as a consequence of the development proposals. The effect of this will be to curtail the expansion of the existing manufacturing base and loss of premises.

The lack of retraining opportunities on a sufficient scale would do nothing to ameliorate these conditions. The SDG had stated in their initial publicity brochures that 6,000 jobs would be created by the redevelopment scheme. It was unclear to the Campaign whether these would be in the construction, white collar

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50 SSBA estimate. An exact statistic is difficult to quantify because of the the seasonality of employment, unofficial employment, and the the concealed employment of a large number of women homeworkers rendering enumeration impossible.
52 Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, House of Commons Petition Against the Spitalfields Market Bill October 1987.
53 John Eversley, Member of Management Committee, Davenant Centre, House of Commons Committee 28th June 1988. ME 8 p.32.
or clerical service sectors. The Campaign argued that job opportunities in the construction industry would not be of benefit to local people because of the levels of skill demanded by contractors and sub-contractors that the unemployed in the area did not possess. The experience of construction in Broadgate was cited as an example of this. John Eversley, from the Management Committee of the Davenant Centre, a consortium of eight local groups concerned with employment and training, used anecdotal examples to the parliamentary committees of previous experience in and around Docklands to underline the Campaign's doubts about increased employment opportunities in the new development. Local people were not, he said, taken on for work experience by City employers, and further, even when such employers moved into the area, they still did not employ a locally based workforce. Such companies were known to bring their own workforce with them. Other writers have also commented on this phenomenon of the structural disqualification of inner city residents from city centre jobs, which tend to be filled by commuters - people with experience, education and training. Any new local employees would require training, for which insufficient funds were available. Furthermore, such companies were understood to be unwilling to provide language support for what would be a trainee and Bengali workforce, and would not recognise any obligations they might have to the local population, to do so. The evidence given was not backed up with any concrete examples in the way of reports or surveys independently commissioned to assess employment opportunities. The witness spoke from experience and knowledge gained through work in attempting to co-ordinate training and employment schemes for predominantly Bengali unemployed. This argument was underpinned by a belief that redevelopment initiatives that would occur in the area had to be directed, as a priority, to the development of the local economy and maximising gains that could be made by local people, obviously not a primary motive of the developers.

The £50,000 for five years originally proposed for training was, the Campaign argued, insufficient - a mere drop in the ocean in relation to training needs for the local population. A witness in the House of Commons argued that

55House of Commons Committee, Minutes of Evidence, 28th June 1988, ME 8 p.32.
56Management Committee Member, Davenant Centre, in evidence to House of Commons Committee, 28th June 1988, ME 8 p.30.
58John Eversley, Management Committee Member, Davenant Centre, in evidence to the House of Commons Committee, 28th June 1988. ME 8 p.29.
59Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989.
training in the clothing industry was essential. The survival of the rag trade in the area (leaving aside the issue of its decimation in the wake of redevelopment) was contingent on it going up market and producing garments with higher quality added value in order to survive competition at the cheaper end of the market from overseas. Training was therefore required. Additionally, retraining was seen as important - the skill base of the local population had to be diversified away from clothing if unemployment rates were to come down. Further, a recognised need was to get more women into waged labour in order to start combating poverty. The training proposals of the SDG did not mention this need.60

Interestingly, the SDG were forced to be more realistic in their claims about the redevelopment schemes when these arguments were made in the first parliamentary committee. The House of Commons Committee had already enforced an increase in money from £50,000 to £150,000 per year for five years as a pre-condition for returning the Bill to the House. The SDG lessened its claims, stating in October 1989 that 2,000 jobs would be created.61 The Campaign continued to argue against the validity of the SDG's claims.

Finally, with regard to service employment that might be on offer to local residents, these, the Campaign thought, would be low status, low paid clerical and data entry jobs; surely 'the people of Spitalfields deserve better than service jobs'.62 The Campaign saw the possibility that the development would contribute towards the creation of an underclass in the area around the development, offering people little hope of employment and increasing dependence on benefits. This was seen as detrimental to the young people of Spitalfields 'who have equally valid aspirations of decent jobs and homes as others from other traditionally well off areas'.63 And anyway, as one member noted with reference to the possible availability of computing and data entry jobs in the redeveloped scheme, "The people of Spitalfields deserve more than that sort of work".64

The relationship between the arguments of the Campaign and those of the developers and Government with regard to inner city redevelopment must be pointed out. Both argued that redevelopment would increase land values; they differed on whether this would have a positive or negative impact on the area and

60 John Eversley, Management Committee Member, Davenant Centre, in evidence to the House of Commons Committee, 28th June 1988, ME 8 p.28.
62 Jill Cove, House of Commons Committee, 29th June 1988, ME 9, p.46.
63 Ibid. p.45.
its population. The developers argued that the construction of an office complex in Spitalfields would reduce unemployment by creating jobs; the Campaign denied this by arguing for the threat to an existing economic base by the insertion of a new one. They argued against jobs in services and new technology and advocated the clothing trade as the sole economic base of Spitalfields, possibly reflecting traditional socialist discourses emphasising manual work and the protection thereof in the face of the growth of new technology. Both groups argued that the residents of this inner city area deserved better prospects than those deemed to be currently available to them; the two differed however in their views on the ways in which an alternative solution could be found. Both insisted that they had the solution. There was a tension between the two arguments arising as a consequence of their proximity.

**Housing**

The Campaign argued that the rise in land values would also have an impact on housing in the area.

If [the scheme] goes ahead the effect of the re-development on the housing situation in Spitalfields and Tower Hamlets will be disastrous. The local community is facing some of the worst conditions in Britain and new homes, not offices, are needed. The proportion of the borough's households with more than one person per room (10 per cent) is the highest in London and rises to over 28 per cent in Spitalfields. At the moment there are 1,300 homeless Tower Hamlets families living in bed and breakfast hostels across London, over 12,000 households on the Council's waiting list, with over 10,000 of its tenants needing a transfer. The worst of these conditions are concentrated in the Wards in the west of the Borough, next to the City. The 118 homes being promised by the developers to meet this local housing need is totally inadequate. There is no guarantee that even these homes will be built. And the redevelopment will push up land and property values in Spitalfields. Housing for sale will be much too expensive for local people.65

This process had just begun to be observed:

It really hit home when a little local house which was sold for £4000 derelict five years ago went for £200,000. Average earnings around here are £7000 and people can't

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65Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, *House of Commons Petition Against the Spitalfields Market Bill* October 1987.
afford those prices. The area is already becoming gentrified and prices will go up and up.66

This was not denied by the developers or the local authority. For example, in a letter to Councillor Phil Maxwell, dated September 1987, the Chief Executive of the Neighbourhood Committee confirmed that increases in the value for both private and public housing would occur as the 'desirability of the area increases'.67 This increase in land values and housing costs had, for the Campaign, to be set in the context of the housing crisis in Tower Hamlets and Spitalfields. Housing conditions are the worst in the Borough over all indicators for overcrowding, homelessness and levels of disrepair. Precise figures for Spitalfields on the extent of housing problems are unavailable, the 1980 Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service (SHAPRS) survey now being considerably out of date.68 Figures for 1987 for Bethnal Green Neighbourhood showed that 15% of all households were statutorily overcrowded, and 28.3% of all households had more than one person per room. (The figures for Greater London were 1.3% and 5.3% respectively, for Inner London 2.1% and 7% respectively). 35% of all households in the Neighbourhood did not have exclusive use of a bath and 11% had no exclusive use of both bath and WC. There was a pronounced mismatch between household size and size of dwellings available in the Neighbourhood. Only one household in nine needing more than seven rooms could satisfactorily be accommodated.69 Homelessness, and the accommodation of homeless families in bed and breakfast hotels in other parts of London was a particular problem. The redevelopment of the market site would do nothing, according to the Campaign, to solve this housing crisis or 'alleviate the plight of local residents who live in squalid conditions'.70

Over 85% of households in Spitalfields were estimated to live in rented accommodation, with around 15% still in the private sector wherein the worst housing conditions in the ward were found. Were land values to increase, those renting from private landlords, the Campaign argued, would face large rental

67 Letter from the Chief Executive of Bethnal Green Neighbourhood to Phil Maxwell, leader of the Labour Party, 10th September 1987.
69 Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee Public Consultation on Report on Housing in Spitalfields. 8th April 1987. All these figures are based on information from the 1981 Census and were assessed as being an underestimate of current conditions.
70 Letter from Campaign Co-ordinator to the Chief Executive of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee, January 1988.
increases and would be gradually squeezed out the area. This process had already started to happen. Tenements in Hanbury Street, sold by a private landlord to Gand Metropolitan in 1988, had doubled their value in six months. Rents for workshops there had increased by 500%, and some tenants were faced with the prospect of eviction because they did not carry rent books which otherwise would afford protection through evidence of their status as tenants.71

Those in council accommodation, the Campaign argued, faced rental increases due to the effects of recent housing legislation, particularly the 1988 Housing Act. In addition, the proximity of certain estates to the City and the proposed developments raised fears of bids for the takeover of the estates by private landlords, targeting the area and the huge amount of public housing for takeover under the provisions of the 1988 Housing Act. This would result in the constant harassment by private landlords of tenants, with continual ballots over the transfer of estates to the private sector, 'sapping people's strength, time and ability to deal with those pressures on them'.72 The Campaign insisted, as other voluntary sector groups had in the past, that takeovers under such 'Pick-a-Landlord' schemes would entail much-needed refurbishment of homes at the expense of vastly increased rents, which tenants would not be able to afford. Tenants would be gradually squeezed out.

The proposed establishment of a Housing Action Trust in the area brought these arguments into the debate on the removal of the Market.73 During the first Committee stage in the House of Commons in June 1988, the first rumours were heard concerning the establishment of a Housing Action Trust (HAT) in Tower Hamlets. This was confirmed, and tenants in six estates in the borough were faced with the prospect of the takeover of their estates by private trusts for their refurbishment and later sale to private landlords. This was to happen without the tenants' right to a ballot. One of the targeted estates - the Holland Estate - was in Spitalfields and another, the Boundary Estates, lies just over the northern border.74

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71 Kay Jordan, SSBA Co-ordinator, House of Lords Committee, 25th May 1989. ME 9, p.34.
72 Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
73 The plans for a Housing Action Trust in Tower Hamlets were subsequently dropped by the Department of the Environment on the grounds that there was insufficient land available for purchase at a suitable price to accommodate all those who would be required to leave their homes during refurbishment, and to rehouse those families currently sharing flats and experiencing high levels of overcrowding.
These arguments, stressing the impact of redevelopment on land values, the economic base of the area and on the housing problems of the area, underpinned the Campaign's opposition to the redevelopment of the area. Other arguments were constructed from this understanding. The Campaign argued that the redevelopment would adversely affect the Bengali population of Spitalfields:

The Home Affairs Select Committee Report "Bangladeshis in Britain" stated that 'Bad housing is not just a severe disadvantage in itself, but contributes to a range of other difficulties ... and a high incidence of physical and mental illness'. Already bad health is a major issue for the local community and this problem will worsen as their local environment, employment conditions and overcrowding worsens.75

The redevelopment would not provide open spaces that were needed by the residents of the area for recreational use:

Spitalfields is in need of more open space for community use. The proposals outlined by the Developers will adversely affect existing open spaces, where land - because of its rising value - will be highly sought. This threatens the continued existence of the Spitalfields Community Farm and open space which is presently under-developed for community use. There is a need to protect, improve and create strategic open space to meet the needs of local people. The Developer's proposals outline open space provision which will be passive and inaccessible to the community at particular times. An expanding, and an increasingly younger, population needs more open and green spaces. This also ensures a contrasting variety of landscape to minimise the visual impact of development on the area.76

Public Consultation

A second theme which I have identified as important in the Campaign's arguments concerns the Campaign's objections to the public consultations that were carried out by the developers and the local authority. The Campaign claimed that redevelopment had been planned for people without their consent and was therefore anti-democratic. In this final section I shall examine this claim.

75Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, House of Commons Petition Against the Spitalfields Market Bill October 1987.
76Ibid.
In the summer of 1986 a public consultation exercise was carried out by the Planning Department of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood. In June and July 1986 4,000 copies of a newspaper printed in English and Bengali, entitled "Spitalfields Market to Go?" were distributed to homes in the area of Spitalfields bordered by Brick Lane to the east, the Holland Estate in the south and to the railway lines in the north. Copies were also distributed to libraries, community centres and the health centre. Details were advertised in the local and national press, professional journals, and local television and radio were informed. Between 18th and 24th June 1986 an exhibition was mounted at the London Fruit Exchange in Brushfield Street, highlighting the issues surrounding the future of the market and the possibilities for redevelopment. Three hundred and ninety eight people attended. The exhibition was then moved to the Montefiore Centre on Hanbury Street for the period 25th June - 21st July 1986, although no precise record was kept of attendance, as it was staffed only during lunchtimes and evenings. Comments sheets and questionnaires were made available, of which 63 were returned by the 22nd July deadline. On the 21st July 1986, at the request of the then still functioning Spitalfields Local Committee (SLC) an open meeting was held with the local authority on the Flower and Dean estate, attended by roughly 50 people, to discuss the issues involved. Throughout the consultation period, around 60 meetings were held with a number of national and local groups and representatives of the Council. Considerable effort was made, according to the local authority and the planning department, to hear a variety of views during the consultation period. Retrospectively, in September 1988 the Chief Planner of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood saw the exercise as one of the best they had undertaken. But as an ex-worker for the Spitalfields Project tartly replied, wasn't this because it was the only consultation exercise they had ever been allowed to undertake?

The SDG had also undertaken a public consultation exercise as part of the 'competition' for the development, and later over the redesigned plans. Their publicity brochures emphasised the lengths to which they had gone in order to obtain as many ideas as possible, as did representatives from the company during

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77 Peter Studdert, Chief Planner, Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, House of Commons Committee, 9th June 1988. ME 2, p.29.
78 Interview with Peter Studdert, Chief Planner, Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, 1st September 1988.
79 Interview with ex - Spitalfields Project worker, 15th June 1989.
"We went to see a lot of groups", one interviewee from LET kept pointing out:

I think everybody had plenty of opportunity to come along. I must admit that a lot of the public meetings were not terribly well attended. But isn't that what happens generally? It's not unique to us I don't think. And particularly you have the Bangladeshis - all our leaflets were in two languages. Then we had a full public relations team on our side. We felt were were doing all that we could.  

The Campaign was highly critical of the consultation process, both of the exercise in the summer of 1986 undertaken by the developers at the time when both Rosehaugh Stanhope and the SDG were competing for the City of London's tender for the redevelopment of the market, and of that undertaken by the local authority. The criticisms of the consultation emphasised the narrowness and selectivity of the exercise.

The council's consultation included a questionnaire that visitors to the exhibitions were invited to fill out and return. The council received 63 replies. This was seen as ridiculous. What was needed, in the Campaign's view, were large numbers of both public meetings, and private discussions with targeted groups from all sections of the population living and working in the area. At the meetings organised both by the Neighbourhood and the developers, Campaign members remembered seeing 'the same people', 'people from the conservation areas', 'mostly white people', 'market residents', and 'not many Bengalis'. The consultation process was seen as being appealing to only a small section of the population.

Abbas Uddin, a Spitalfields Councillor with many years of experience of voluntary and political work in the area, was particularly scathing about the apparent lack of inclusion of a broad cross-section of the local population in the consultation process:

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80 As indicated in Chapter One, my close involvement with the Campaign led to my being identified in the eyes of the property surveyor for LET as one of the Campaign. This obviously shaped his reaction to me and my questions during the interview, in which he was very defensive about his company's activities during the consultation process, mindful of the criticisms that the Campaign had made.

81 Interview with Tim Budgen, consultant surveyor, LET/SDG, 24th July 1989. See also Spitalfields News, July 1987, for a fervent denial from Peter Beckwith, Chair of SDG, to accusations from the Spitalfields Project that the SDG had planned schemes 'without consideration of the wider community'. Beckwith reiterates the claim to depth and thoroughness in the consultation process.

82 Various interviews and conversations with Campaign members, 1988 - 1990.
What was the response rate, why was the response rate so poor for certain sections of the community? If you missed participation - why were some women's organisations not mentioned in the consultation? Why were Spitalfields organisations not encouraged to hold public meetings and hold general meetings amongst their members and their clients? And why did [they] not turn up at those meetings to explain to those individuals, those small groups of people, the proposed schemes, your objections, the impact it's going to have - the changes it's going to bring about in this area? And they said "No-one has asked" - people don't ask for public consultations.83

The idea that the consultation process had in fact been a purely cosmetic exercise was made consistently. The public consultation literature was understood to have presented the question of redevelopment of the market site as a fait accompli and to have endorsed from the beginning the principle of the relocation of Spitalfields Market. Accordingly, it was argued that discussion about various possibilities concerning the future of the market had never been initiated:

We were actually presented with "You can have A or B. You can have a hedge or a fence." When actually what we wanted was a dustbin. If you do not ask the right questions you can finish up with completely different answers and that is what has happened.84

Quotations such as the two above indicate a great deal of anger directed by the Campaign at the consultation process. It is quite possible that members were angry with the consultation process in part because they were angry with themselves at having missed full participation in it. It had been undertaken a full year before the Campaign was formed. Yet some of the people who are quoted here were involved in the consultation process, as representatives from groups such as SHAPRS, the SLC, and the Spitalfields Small Business Association. I would argue that rather than being angry because the consultation process came up with the 'wrong' result as far as they were concerned, that there is possibly some substance in the complaints of the Campaign. The consultation process was derided because it failed to take into account the specificity of local needs with regard to opening up a public debate about the redevelopment scheme. If we examine the grounds on which the public consultation was damned, it is possible to understand how the representation constructed by the Campaign of Spitalfields was used in its arguments against the redevelopment.

83 Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989.
The Campaign used in their arguments against redevelopment the idea that it should not be allowed because it had been planned without people's consent. For example, they argued that people had not been given a chance to respond to the plans and consultation because of the format in which it was conducted. The Campaign members understood the lack of response to the efforts of the local authority's consultation, as a difficulty shared by a lot of people, Bengali and white, with the language and with literacy. Although all the SDG and council publicity literature for the scheme and the consultation was done in two languages - English and Bengali - there was still the problem of whether people would actually read this information.

You can write out a wonderful philosophical leaflet and hand it over to someone waiting on a bus stop - someone local who's working class, unemployed, or who's never had their proper secondary education, and you don't expect them to give a response but you've done your duty.85

This understanding was used in the construction of arguments against the public consultation exercise, emphasising the point that the developers should have taken into account the ways in which people received and understood information. Abbas Uddin was highly dubious as to whether anyone ever looked at the glossy brochures that dropped through people's letter boxes:

...I think there are a lot of white working class people who can't read basic English and the same thing applies to a lot of illiterate Bangladeshis who cannot read any language, and therefore putting it in 8 - 12 syllable words in Bengali doesn't mean you're actually communicating to those people.86

Furthermore, people were thought to have had difficulties in understanding the planning process and procedure. This was a problem for both the white and Bengali communities:

...the Bengali community - we're talking about alien issues here - I mean, when you're talking to the Bengali community, their understanding of planning doesn't - I mean, when you're talking to the white community it doesn't get through that much, but to try to get across to something that has no tradition in Bangladesh is nil.87

But an understanding of the planning process was not understood to be any easier for more educated and articulate people. Campaign members themselves saw their

85 Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989.
86 Ibid.
87 Interview with ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.
lack of understanding of planning issues as detrimental to their understanding of 
the whole process, and thus of their ability to respond effectively:

I wouldn't say that any voluntary organizations that were 
actually listed in the consultation had the necessary 
resources and skill and knowledge to analyse the schemes 
that were put in front of them and be critical of it or give a 
fair assessment of the impact. You're talking about 
community workers, you're talking about health visitors - 
how on earth can they legitimately comment on a million 
pounds' architectural scheme? I certainly couldn't do 
that.88

The Campaign was also painfully aware that as individuals, back in 1985 and 
1986 they had to an extent ignored the consultation process. As one member 
pointed out:

I do remember the consultation documents coming round 
from the council about what we thought about whether the 
market ought to go or not, and I do remember them 
announcing that the decision of the traders was to go. I 
still thought it wasn't anything to get too excited about. So 
I didn't take much notice.89

The developer's approach to the consultation process was heavily 
criticised. It was understood and promoted as 'crass' and 'patronising', a pure 
public relations exercise that perhaps indicated a lack of concern on the part of the 
developers to actually take note of anything that was said to them:

It's appalling - they pour thousands and thousands of 
pounds into supposedly consulting the community, but the 
net effect of it is to in no way really find out what people 
think and what people's aspirations are in the area, and it's 
a gloss to justify an attack on the community really.90

The public relations exercise was however a very skillful one:

...what was really interesting is that I think the Spitalfields 
Development Group did a brilliant public relations exercise. 
Because good public relations means you assimilate the 
protest and the dissent, and they did that.91

The listing by the SDG of all the people and groups to whom they had publicised 
their scheme was seen as a particularly dubious consultation strategy:

88 Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989. 
89 Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989. 
90 Interview with Phil Maxwell, 6th September 1989. 
91 Ibid.
I was always amused that in that big brochure that they produced my name appears as someone who was consulted etc. Getting a letter in the post saying "Come along to an exhibition" isn't my idea of consultation. And by including local councillors names, it gives a little more credibility to the mock consultation that occurs.92

The criticisms the Campaign made of the consultation procedures of the local authority and the developers did not fall on deaf ears. Perhaps because it was the first public consultation the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Planning Department had carried out, they appeared to be receptive to feedback and constructive criticisms. As a consequence, perhaps, of the Campaign's criticisms, during March and April 1990, as part of a consultation process on the Bishopsgate Goodsyard and Trumans Brewery sites, the old police station on Brick Lane was opened to the public, staffed in the afternoon by members of the planning department. The notion was that people could make their comments known in a more accessible way. This of course still does not solve the problem of consultation for people who cannot leave their work during the day, or for people who do not understand either English or the language of the planners. Although in interview, a representative of the planning department was quite defensive about the consultation process,93 the planning department later started to approach the Campaign for informal discussions about both the Spitalfields Market scheme and the other developments that had subsequently come on line, particularly after a very disappointing response to consultation on the Bishopsgate Goodsyard site.94

I think with the planning department, because of their lack of response, if you think when they did their consultation they got 63 or 64 responses, are actually quite pleased that people are beginning to take action and interest in the planning.95

The Campaign were appreciative of these moves by the local authority.

The arguments made by the Campaign about consultation ultimately had a use in that they were picked up and acted upon by the local authority. However, they also had another use. They acted as a mobilising strategy by providing a common complaint with which their constituency could identify. Although as a Campaign we never sat down and decided that this line of argument would prove

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92 Ibid.
93 Interview with Peter Studdert, Chief Planner of Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, 1st September 1988.
94 CSSD meeting, 20th February 1989, at which the planners had an open and frank discussion with the Campaign about the proposed redevelopments.
95 Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
effective in mobilisation and constructing an opposition, we knew implicitly that the complaints were well grounded and that many people in the area appreciated that consultation had been lacking, judging by the complaints about the consultation process made to us when we went petitioning door to door. The public consultation was criticised because its organisers had ignored the specificity of local needs with regard to opening up a public debate about the redevelopment scheme. Redevelopment was therefore to be opposed because this failure had allowed plans for the area to be made without the consent of the people who lived there. The Campaign had an image of a local population who were unable to respond to the consultation process and this prompted oppositional action.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the establishment of the Campaign and its arguments. The Campaign argued against redevelopment on the grounds that an increase in land values as a consequence would destroy the local economic base and have an adverse impact on the local housing situation. It argued that redevelopment would affect health, recreation and leisure in the area. It argued that the population of the area had not been properly consulted about the redevelopment. Importantly, it presented itself as representing these views on behalf of the population of the area, claiming knowledge of that population and asserting that it could speak on its behalf:

Spitalfields is a unique and historic area. The area has a high degree of social and communal cohesion; of racial tolerance, industry and enterprise. This uniqueness is characterised by a high concentration of local residents who live and work in the area, the majority of residents living within ten minutes of their place of employment. The area houses a community for whom living, working, schooling, shopping, cultural and religious needs are contained and sustained within the locality. All these features will be threatened by the proposed relocation of the Market and redevelopment of the site; it would pose the most serious threat to the continued existence of the multi-cultural community that makes up the local residents who live and work in Spitalfields.96

Yet the arguments that the Campaign made against the redevelopment were never negotiated with these local residents. Although the Campaign had a large base of

96Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers, House of Commons Petition Against the Spitalfields Market Bill October 1987.
support within the local population, as evidenced by the numbers of people prepared to sign their petition against the removal of the Market, it did not formulate these arguments through intensive consultation within the area. The Campaign's mobilization strategies may be contrasted with those of the tenant's anti-HAT campaign in Tower Hamlets in 1988-1989. This campaign, organized by tenants associations in the area, aimed at persuading the Government not to establish a Housing Action Trust in the area. As a mobilization strategy, the anti-HAT campaign used posters and petitions combined with languages that were specifically constructed in order to bring as diverse a number of people together as possible. Certain discourses, for example of racial equality, were used, but subsumed under others such as 'housing rights' because the former did not appeal to certain white tenants. However distasteful the co-ordinators found this they were prepared to silence such discourses. This was not a strategy followed through by the Campaign. Although attempting to gain broad support they did so on terms of their own choosing, laid down by the core of the Campaign and not negotiated amongst a wider constituency. This is because the origins of the Campaign's arguments lay with the origins of the Campaign itself, the discourses from which it grew and the images and representations held by the Campaign about Spitalfields. I shall deal with these two themes in the next two chapters.

3.4 The threat hanging over Spitalfields.
3.5 Man and Child - a photograph taken by Phil Maxwell and printed onto postcards for the Campaign.
3.6 Impressions of Spitalfields
3.7 Impressions of Spitalfields
3.8 Impressions of Spitalfields
3.9 Impressions of Spitalfields
3.11 Impressions of Spitalfields
3.12 Impressions of Spitalfields
Chapter Four

The Origins of the Campaign

In the previous chapter I discussed the establishment of the CSSD and examined its arguments against the redevelopment of Spitalfields and the Market. I indicated that the arguments the Campaign made and their mode of construction lay with the Campaign's origins. In this Chapter I shall examine the origins of the Campaign in order to illustrate where those roots lay. The Campaign's critique of redevelopment had been constructed over time and the Campaign was able to draw on already established and well rehearsed arguments about the implications of redevelopment in terms of land values, employment and housing disbenefits for the local area, and the need for wide consultation on planning and redevelopment matters, from the voluntary sector and various community groups. Three groups within the voluntary sector may be identified as vital to the origins of this discourse of opposition. They are the Spitalfields Project, the Spitalfields Local Committee (SLC), and the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service (SHAPRS). Other groups had been involved in the same movement and had contributed towards the arguments, such as Avenues Unlimited, a youth and community project, and the Spitalfields Housing Co-operative. The three mentioned here were in the course of their work explicitly concerned with housing and redevelopment issues, and I shall confine my examination to them. The questions I am asking in this Chapter concern the nature of these groups and the contribution they made to the Campaign. I shall then develop this part of the narrative by examining the nature of the local Labour Party. The Campaign was established by the Labour Party with the encouragement of the SLC and SHAPRS, and would not have existed without it. It was to the Labour Party that the co-ordinator of the Spitalfields Project turned, just before its closure, in the hope that some sort of opposition would still be raised against redevelopment despite the absence of the SLC and SHAPRS.1 Charlie Forman, a SHAPRS worker, notes the significance of the Labour party in filling one of the big gaps left by the demise of the SLC in terms of opposing the redevelopment scheme.2 So what sort of Labour Party existed in Spitalfields that cared enough about the future of the area to want to enter into the debate on redevelopment?

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1Interview with ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.
The Spitalfields Project

The Spitalfields Project was established in 1975 as a programme aiming to undertake a variety of new local area initiatives that would be derived through the voluntary sector and be geared and targetted towards the relief of deprivation. Its parentage was a mixture of ideas and aims, including the Home Office Community Development Project experience which had, according to Spitalfields Project Workers, provided 'a great burst of ideas (and ideology!) about community and local development - and power'. The CDP projects had been stopped, the reason being their radical analysis; they saw the 'social pathology model as inadequate and inept and substituted a more rigorous Marxist model of analysis'. The GLC who had started the Project was, according to one interpretation, concerned for the inner cities, viewing the growing alienation of its residents with dismay. This was particularly frightening for a Labour administration 'losing votes in rundown inner city wards in what was a working class heartland'. Tower Hamlets had been reluctant to become involved in the Project:

Labourist parochialism was rife, to define an area such as Spitalfields as 'deprived' - which it was on every count, was very much a case of the truth that should not be told!

The GLC was seen with suspicion, as Big Brother figure:

...everyone outside the narrow coterie of Tower Hamlets' white rightwing Labourite politics was an alien intruder and to be treated with suspicion.

Eventually however they took on the idea, seeing the Project as a way of providing money for Spitalfields and releasing funds for elsewhere in the Borough - although Project money was intended as supplementary. It was funded by the Home Office (75%) and the GLC (25%) with additional contributions from Tower Hamlets. The Home Office and GLC at that time worked, if not in harmony, then quite closely over the funding of the Project:

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3The Records of the Spitalfields Project are kept in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library. I have not referenced any particular items because the information given to me about the Project by an ex-worker proved to be a far better source. The Essay given to me in this way will be deposited, with the permission of its author, with the Campaign's archive.
4Essay following interview with Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.
5ibid.
6ibid.
7ibid.
8ibid.
Can you imagine that happening today with the hostility and complete mistrust of local authorities by central government?\textsuperscript{9}

The aim of the Project was to:

...undertake a variety of new local area initiatives, that would be derived through the voluntary sector, and be geared and targetted to relieve deprivation.\textsuperscript{10}

They would have to be subject to public involvement, and were intended to be derived from grass roots initiatives etc.\textsuperscript{11} A secondary aim was to co-ordinate local and statutory authority programmes so as to focus additional resources on the area.

Public involvement not only enabled local people and community groups to have contact with councillors and officers but also, through the decisions to spend Project funds, enabled them to set up efficient local schemes. It raised the social and local political consciousness that is still apparent today. Local people do want to participate in local democracy and care about the future of their area.\textsuperscript{12}

For one ex-Project worker with whom I spoke, there was still a lot of doubt in his mind as to the ultimate effectiveness of the Project in terms of its aims. Departmentalism and lack of local authority support effectively reduced the ability of the Project to carry out its work successfully to a minimum. However:

...at a local level, it produced an explosion of involvement, organization, participation etc, among local people and some voluntary agencies. From an area that had been apathetic and powerless due to blight (planning and economic) and neglect by local authorities etc. It suddenly became a mass of meetings, demands for better services, recriminations against neglect, calls for more local power and say over local issues. People really began to identify themselves with the area and began proposing all sorts of schemes to enhance the area - community development.\textsuperscript{13}

Release of local energy and involvement was seen as phenomenal, and the Project was seen retrospectively as vital therefore in bringing about 'community' feeling, defined as a degree of political cohesion and consensus. Crucially, it was an organisation that encouraged the involvement of the expanding Bengali population.

\textsuperscript{9}ibid.
\textsuperscript{10}ibid.
\textsuperscript{11}ibid.
\textsuperscript{13}Essay following interview with Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.
in the area. It developed public involvement, generated a framework and support system enabling and encouraging local people to be involved in developing their own schemes, and provided money for voluntary agencies to develop work with the community. The rightwing Labour administration at the LBTH was cautious of the project:

Needless to say, we were not allowed to call ourselves community workers officially - LBTH interpreted community workers as communist workers.14

The Spitalfields Project is important in understanding the Campaign. People who had been involved in the Project later became involved with the Campaign bringing with them ideas on organization and languages of empowerment and community action. Some Campaign members who had not been involved in the Campaign nevertheless knew about it, its aims and its 'philosophy'. Brought from the experiences of the Spitalfields Project were two things very important for the Campaign's arguments. Firstly there was the idea of a policy specifically targeted towards establishing a framework for the development of diverse projects (everything from youth to health via housing) with local input. The ideas of local action established by the Project surface again in the arguments of the Campaign. Secondly the Spitalfields Project drew upon discourses highlighting the importance of grassroots action as a means of achieving change in deprived areas. The encouragement of grassroots activity was understood to politicize a population resulting in demands for self-determination, which the Project was keen to encourage.

There's no doubt about it that the great success of the Project was in terms of developing public involvement, and generating a framework and support system which enable and encouraged local people to be involved in developing their own schemes.15

This idea of self-determination was fully endorsed by the Campaign. Tensions between this idea and the reality of later political organisation in Spitalfields later surfaced, and I indicate where the consequences of this lie in Chapter Six where I discuss the conflicts that emerged between groups of individuals who had been politicized via the Spitalfields Project and involved in its work. Not all the ideas inherited from the SLC were unproblematic in their later form.

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14 ibid.
15 ibid.
The Spitalfields Local Committee

The Spitalfields Project ended its first phase in 1980. The Spitalfields Project during its second phase (1980 - 1986) worked very closely with the newly established Spitalfields Local Committee (SLC) which had grown up out of the rump of the Project's Consultative Committee and Steering Group. It aimed to 'improve the environment and other conditions affecting the quality of life of the residents of the West of Spitalfields' and to 'promote co-operation and mutual understanding among local residents and members and officers of the authorities in tackling problems, issues and proposals for action'.\textsuperscript{16} As an 'un-official sub-committee of the council' it had its own budget and remit for environmental improvement works, social activities and educational issues, with a full-time council officer and a clerk servicing the committee.\textsuperscript{17} It had representation from over forty local groups (see Appendix 2) as well as councillors, and was open for attendance to all members of the local population. It encouraged the involvement of workers from various voluntary organisations on the grounds that:

...people whose work is with residents are often those that represent the interests of the less vocal.\textsuperscript{18}

It involves people working together to benefit their area and enabling local organizations, through their delegates, to have a voice in many of the local issues that affect their lives.\textsuperscript{19}

An ex-worker with the Project summarised the work of the SLC thus:

I am not sure that the SLC had a "philosophy" as such - it did have aims and these were (very generally) to ensure that local people had a say in the decisions that affected them/their lives; to develop the area in a way that provided homes, jobs, amenities including environmental quality (open space) for local people. An underlying assumption was the need for the "community" to retain a stake in the area.\textsuperscript{20}

As with the Spitalfields Project, former SLC representatives joined the Campaign and were highly influential in determining its arguments. Part of the remit of the SLC was to submit views to the central council planning committee on planning applications. The experiences of former SLC members in doing this was

\textsuperscript{16}Proposed Constitution. Spitalfields Local Committee December 1979.
\textsuperscript{17}Interview with ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.
\textsuperscript{18}SLC Formation Meeting. Notes. 20th August 1980.
\textsuperscript{19}General Letter from Project Co-ordinator to member groups, 16th September 1983.
\textsuperscript{20}Essay following interview with Spitalfields Project Workers, 15th June 1989.
essential to the Campaign later, as was the position taken on the question of redevelopment by the SLC. As the following will indicate, the Campaign drew extensively for its own arguments on a critique developed by the SLC. On its establishment, the Local Committee drew up a list of guidelines indicating the policy stance to be taken on planning and redevelopment. The list indicates the SLC position which it took when considering planning proposals such as the Spitalfields Market schemes submitted by the SDG and Rosehaugh Stanhope. The guidelines for planning applications are as follows:

1. There should be no further office development in Spitalfields.

2. Where, in spite of local committee opposition, office planning permission is granted, the developers should provide a housing gain for Spitalfields the size of which should be equal to or greater than the square footage of the office development.

3. No consent should be granted for the demolition of listed buildings unless agreed plans already exist for their replacement and these plans are certain to be carried out. In general the listed buildings of the area should be conserved wherever possible.

4. Buildings inside and on the periphery of the conservation areas should all be preserved and rehabilitated.

5. There should be no loss of residential usage whatever.

6. New industrial schemes should be judged bearing in mind the following points: number of local jobs created; degree of visual, chemical and noise pollution; degree of traffic generated; whether or not the development is in an existing industrial development zone.

7. Change of use of small business premises and shops should be judged bearing in mind the following points; local jobs created/lost; local need for the new shop/service being proposed; degree of pollution as above.

8. There should be support of local housing schemes which are designed to local housing needs.21

In their submission on the Borough Plan in February 1983, the SLC firmly rejected the view that office development could be seen as beneficial to the area:

Office development is contrary to the needs of Spitalfields and West Stepney. There are already vast amounts of

21 Spitalfields Local Committee *SLC Planning Criteria for the Consideration of Planning Applications*. 18th November 1981.
unused office space vacant in the locality and immediate areas. The nature of the development is such that it destroys the opportunities for much needed alternative uses ie. housing and local industry, because it forces up the surrounding land values. It does not contribute to local employment in any way. It blights whole areas, causing a loss of both residential and the local working populations through the takeover of privately rented sites and buildings. Any additional income gained through increased rates is penalized by Central Government policies. The concept of planning gain has not produced benefits or facilities that are needed by the community.22

In 1984, a realisation of its lack of policy for considering planning gains as part of its criticisms of planning permission applications, prompted the local committee to draw up a list of three main areas where 'acceptable planning gains' could be considered. I would argue that this policy initiative came with a growing realisation at that time of likely future pressures for redevelopment in Spitalfields:

Hitherto, any planning gains which may have been made in relation to planning permission sought and/or granted in the Spitalfields area, have never been considered in the context of meaningful consultation with the local community or the SLC about possible priorities or needs. Moreover, the SLC has long recognized the fact that office developments (for which planning gain is usually offered), poses a serious threat to the area in that it neutralises and often blights available sites that could be used for low rented local authority or housing association housing or local industry; it artificially drives up site values; it makes no contribution to the need for public open space; it does not create new local jobs matched to the skills of local people or contributes to the local industrial base.23

The areas in which planning gain were acceptable were housing, industrial workspace and open space. In the case of housing, money should be made available to finance either local authority, housing association or co-operative purchase of a local site or properties and cover the cost of construction, rehabilitation or conversion. The SLC would expect a larger floor space devoted to housing than to be granted for office space, and would never expect to see less than equal space being provided. In the case of industrial workspace, any replacement workspace should be within 10 minutes walking distance from the point of displacement of the firm in question and should be specific to the needs of the firm displaced. The construction of provided workspace should be completed before displacement occurred. Again, more industrial workspace should be created.

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22Spitalfields Local Committee Minutes 23rd February 1983. Comments on the Borough Plan.
than office space. Open space should be provided by developers at twice the permitted plot ratios for office development. These criteria were adopted. I would argue that these criteria were underpinned by a belief that the existing economic base and social life of the existing population should be maintained in order to strengthen its position in the face of redevelopment.

This critique of redevelopment, constructed by the SLC, was drawn upon by the Campaign. The above list was never formally adopted or discussed by the Campaign, but the ideas contained therein, concerning the problems associated with redevelopment and the conditions that should be imposed on any development, are echoed time and again in the Campaign's statements. For example, as I showed in Chapter Three, a main concern of the Campaign was the impact of office development on the rag trade. The SLC's criteria for assessing planning applications detail the steps that could be taken to lessen the impact on the rag trade of office development. The SLC had developed ideas on how planning gain should be dealt with and arguments as to why office development should be opposed. As the quotations in Chapter Three illustrate, the SLC had its own critique of public consultation exercises. Crucially, certain individuals active in the SLC, such as Abbas Uddin, Robbie MacDuff and Phil Maxwell, brought these ideas with them to the Campaign.

It is important to emphasize the consequences of such wide representation on the Local Committee. A great variety of people were given the chance to voice their opinions on matters concerning their lives in the area. It also provided a model for the future ideas of the Campaign and other groups as to how groups could best work together within a co-ordinated and democratic structure, serviced by professionals, directed by a steering committee and formed as a group by representatives from the local area. I may be wrong on this point, but I would suggest that some Campaign members previously active in the SLC saw the umbrella function of the SLC as something that could and should be replicated by a campaign such as the CSSD was to become. Importantly, the SLC claimed to represent the views of the people of Spitalfields, as this quotation illustrates:

People feel that the area was "under attack" from city developers who care nothing for the real needs of the area.

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24 Ibid.
People thought resources should be put into improving existing workshops and houses in the area.26

This confidence in the support of their constituency lies with the membership of the SLC.

The ... make up of the SLC also enabled the Bengali groups to become more involved, not only in seeking grants but also in the discussion of issues and debates. Gradually over a short space of time, they gained equal weight in the Committee and towards the end preponderated, thus the SLC mirrored the local demographic mix much more closely than did the Council itself.27

I have pointed out already that the Campaign represented itself in public as representative of the views of the people of the area. I would suggest that this idea has its roots in the experiences of certain members of the Campaign within the SLC. The quotation above suggests where problems with that self-understanding of the Campaign lie.

In accordance with its belief in public debate and involvement in the planning process, a public meeting was called by the SLC on 21st July 1986 in order to discuss the Market plans with which the Committee had finally been presented by the council. It was billed as 'THE LAST CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN PUBLICLY'.28 The local needs that the meeting was to address included protection for existing residents; fair rent housing for local people; community gardens and children's playspace; shops to meet local needs and small workshops offering employment opportunities for local people. Again, the Local Committee's stance was aimed at maintaining what it understood to be the economic base and conditions of the existing social organisation of the local population. Again, this position was to be taken up by the Campaign two years later.

In response to this meeting, the SLC submitted its reaction to the public consultation carried out by the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood planning department on the future of the market. Around 50 members of the public had attended the meeting. The views of the meeting appear in the Spitalfields Market Report on Consultation compiled by officers of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood planning

28Spitalfields Local Committee, poster advertising meeting on 21st July 1986 to discuss the future of Spitalfields market.
department. The meeting concluded that relocation of the market traders was acceptable provided the traders were happy with conditions on the new site. However, although the market was smelly, dirty and thought to be dangerous to residents, it was valuable as it allowed the community to survive. There was concern that market residents should be allowed to stay in their homes. The site should be redeveloped so as to address the needs of local people, although the meeting apparently accepted the need for the development to be self-financing. There was a 'primary demand' for one bedroom and large family unit housing for fair rent by housing associations. Shopping facilities to meet local needs were wanted, open space was required, particularly for young children, and workshops for local businesses at affordable rents were needed on site, bearing in mind the employment needs of the area and the lack of attention to employment over housing issues. Further:

Offices were not bringing jobs to local people. Although workshops were needed to provide local businesses and therefore jobs for local people, training was also needed to help local people get office jobs.29

The needs of the area were presented as mechanisms by which the vibrancy of the area could be maintained, even if the redevelopment were to proceed. An alternative to this would be an incorporation of Spitalfields into the City of London.

Office dominated areas were dead and lifeless in the evening/weekend - like Aldgate. Spitalfields should be like Continental Cities where people lived in the City.30

A clear theory of precisely why office developments could work to the detriment of an area such as Spitalfields can be seen to be emerging from these early discussions:

Office development could destroy the area by pushing up land values, rents and pushing residents and workshops out. This was well researched and described by the GLC's Community Area Policy. However, offices could create jobs. Offices weren’t bad per se, but their effects should be carefully controlled and the amount of offices kept to the minimum needed.31

30 ibid.
31 ibid.
The summary included in the Report noted that the scale, size and type of development proposed would be likely to have an enormous and detrimental impact on the character and local economy of the area. The SLC noted that the massive increase in land values that would follow a purely commercial development would put pressure on the surrounding area, seriously threatening residents and the local employment base. It was felt that the first principles of the development should be local needs and views which would underpin the community and not undermine the community by appearing as useful additions or benefits. Planning benefit, if sought, should be on site and should be of maximum benefit to local people. Fair rent housing, shopping facilities, open space and workshop premises were all needed as part of the development. The report from the consultation meeting held by the SLC does not condemn the scheme outright, although it is extremely critical of it.

The SLC itself, a year later, adopted a strongly worded resolution:

The SLC rejects both schemes for the development because they represent a further incursion of the City into Tower Hamlets which in no way benefits Spitalfields or the Borough in terms of housing, jobs or services. We believe the proposals threaten the local community and businesses through the inevitable rise in land values. Support for the development will ultimately mean that local people and businesses are driven out from the surrounding area. We finally resolve to defend our community from the further incursion of the City developers.\(^\text{32}\)

It is possible that more radical individuals had become members of the SLC by this time, people who were later to become members of the Campaign. The similarities of idea and language between this quotation and others from the Campaign are striking.

Shortly after the submission of these comments, the SLC was cut by the BGNC. Certain members of the Campaign were retrospectively swift in hinting at an element of causality between the former event and the latter.\(^\text{33}\) The disbanding of the SLC was justified as a rationalisation exercise given the establishment of the new decentralized Neighbourhoods. The council proposed that the Local Committee function could be brought into the newly created Bethnal Green Neighbourhood. This was also, according to some commentators within the

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\(^{32}\text{Resolution agreed at an Extra Ordinary meeting of the Spitalfields Local Committee, 8th May 1987.}\)

\(^{33}\text{See comments of the Robbie MacDuff, Ex- Vice Chair of the SLC, to the House of Commons Committee, 28th June 1988. ME 8 p.9.}\)
Campaign, a mechanism by which the new Liberal administration could get rid of an opposition that had consistently confronted the Borough's planning policies, both as a Labour and as a Liberal administration. The SLC was viewed by certain members of the planning department as being 'very left wing and partial' and had ultimately 'fallen apart under its own steam'. The new Neighbourhood structure, former SLC members argued, did not replicate in any way the democratic aims of the Local Committee, with its remit of accountability, and empowerment through the establishment of a very wide constituency in the area. The SLC was thought to offer a consistent forum for discussion of redevelopment plans, and ultimately the seedbed from which ideas about opposition to redevelopment grew. As a former delegate commented:

> Some of the measure of the Project's worth is in its loss too - for example, no locally accepted body to co-ordinate and agree future structures, for example with BIC and the CDG.

The lack of the Project and Committee during the time that the redevelopment plans started to materialise was understood to hamper effective opposition, and the 'burn-out' of workers with these two groups after years of consultations that had come to nothing were understood to have affected the way these two groups felt they could fight the redevelopments in their last year. But just before it was disbanded, at a meeting on 8th May 1987 the committee resolved to oppose the redevelopment of the Market, and recognised the need for:

> a Campaign to get the development altered to recognize local needs of housing, employment, amenities and the support of the local economy and the community.

People supporting that resolution were later involved, via the Labour Party, in the establishment of the Campaign.

What did the SLC bring to the Campaign and why is a discussion of it important for an understanding of the Campaign's arguments? I would argue that the contribution was similar to that of the Spitalfields Project in terms of the idea of

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34 Interview with Peter Studdert, Chief Planner, Bethnal Green Neighbourhood, 1st September 1988.
35 The question of the limits or extents of community empowerment as aided by local state structures and the voluntary sector is of great relevance here, although I shall not cover this through lack of space. This needs a separate research project.
36 Interview with Claire Murphy, 6th July 1989. Both Business in the Community (BIC) and the Community Development Group (CDG) are discussed in Chapter Six.
37 Ibid.
38 SLC letter to all members, 12th May 1987.
an umbrella organization expressing the 'local will' although the SLC had a far wider range of groups and individuals supporting it. I would suggest that this idea was very appealing to the people who later founded the Campaign. I am not suggesting that they tried to emulate the SLC. I do think, however, that the model it provided of a locally-based and democratically organised grouping was important as an example of a possible style of community-based politics. I think that this influenced the way in which the Campaign went about organising opposition. The SLC also brought in, crucially, a principled stance of opposition to redevelopment and a range of arguments to support this assertion.

Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service

The third group which I would identify as being instrumental in the development of this oppositional movement against redevelopment in Spitalfields was the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service (SHAPRS). The Service was established through the work of a few individuals who had been involved in the voluntary sector and community organisations in Spitalfields in the late 1970s. At that time, the Spitalfields Law Centre was still reasonably active but in the minds of some of these workers, was not fulfilling its remit. Accordingly, after rewriting the job specifications of the Law Centre workers, the Service was established in 1979, with funding from the GLC and Tower Hamlets Council. Its remit included firstly fighting for tenants rights and dealing with case work for individual cases over housing issues, and secondly, monitoring and criticising where required the council’s planning policies in the area, mainly with relation to housing and office developments.

The policies that the Service followed in relation to its work on housing and development in the area were publicised as a manifesto that the Service was mandated to pursue. The intentions behind the manifesto may be seen as an indication of the policy of the Service towards the establishment of SHAPRS as a democratic, accountable and locally-required organisation, committed to maintaining what were perceived as the bases upon which economic life and social organisation were founded.

MANIFESTO

1. All housing development should be pushed forward as soon as possible.
2. Plans should be drawn up and carried out as soon as possible for every area of the ward where there are none. Preferably this should be part of an overall scheme for the ward drawn up either by the people living within it or at least with their full consent.

3. No council or housing association homes to be sold.

4. In the allocation of all modernised and newly built council and housing association homes priority should be given to local Spitalfields people in most housing need.

5. All people forced to move out of the area because of clearance schemes or modernisation programmes, in the past, now or in the future, should have the right to return when new housing becomes available.39

The parallels between this and statements of the SLC are apparent. Again the Campaign reflected these arguments but did not necessarily reproduce them in full.

SHAPRS has been seen by those working in and associated with it, as a radical organisation, commendable for its principled opposition to office development and advocacy of local housing needs as a priority.40 Two of its initial activities indicate this. Firstly, the undertaking and publication of The Spitalfields Survey was an attempt to analyse the precise nature of the housing problems in the area in 1980 in order to establish a base point from which their arguments could be launched.41 It aimed to compensate for the lack of adequate recent statistics on the demography of the local population, its employment base, its aspirations and the conditions of the housing stock in the area. Secondly, a SHAPRS report, What's Happening to West Spitalfields?, published in 1980, documented the threats posed to the local population by encroaching office development, and noted the Labour Council's and GLC's involvement in this process.42 Both these reports were unequivocal on the nature of the problems faced by people in the area - terrible housing conditions - and the source of these problems - developers encouraged by a local authority whose primary motive was the conversion of Spitalfields from a residential and light industrial area to an extension of the City of London.

Both the tone and content of these two reports were inflammatory to the local council and the GLC. In particular, What's Happening to West Spitalfields?

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40Interviews with ex-SLC workers and ex-members of SHAPRS Management Committee, Summer 1989.
was understood to be the prime motive for the cutting in October 1980, at three
weeks notice, of SHAPRS's funding.\textsuperscript{43} The council did not initially give the
Service the reason for their decision, but later announced that the authorities were
going to establish a new housing advisory service for Spitalfields, rendering the
work of SHAPRS redundant.\textsuperscript{44} The newly established Spitalfields Local
Committee voted, at one of its first meetings, to give its entire £15,000 budget to
maintaining the Service,\textsuperscript{45} and SHAPRS was able to continue until the 1981 local
government elections when the new Labour GLC administration restored funding
to organizations such as SHAPRS. The Service was then able to continue until
1986 when its funding was cut by the new Liberal administration in Tower Hamlets, having made specific allegations about the political involvement of
SHAPRS.\textsuperscript{46}

Due to constraints of space and time here, SHAPRS' work with regard to
case work for individual tenants, and general campaigns with and on behalf of
local residents around housing issues, will not be discussed.\textsuperscript{47} Rather, it is their
activities and campaigning with regard to office development that is important
because the Service developed a critique that was later adopted by the Campaign.
The Service had a policy of systematically lodging their objections to planning
applications that had been put before the council for office developments in the
area. These would have been either new-build offices, or conversions of
buildings from light industrial, retail or residential to office usage, which until the
changes in the use classes orders in 1987, entailed an application for planning
permission to do so. Retrospectively, Forman concluded that ultimately, if the
council supported a planning application, it went through. The objections of
community organisations such as SHAPRS were only taken into account if the

also attributes the borough council and GLC's withdrawal of funding to the publication of a third
report, \textit{New Houses in Spitalfields: The Big Sleep?}, written and published by SHAPRS in
East London}. Avebury, Aldershot. p.32.


\textsuperscript{45}This Local Committee... considers the closure of SHAPRS to be a CUT IN SERVICES TO
THE PEOPLE OF SPITALFIELDS. This is unacceptable at a time of massive Government

\textsuperscript{46}Forman, C. (1989) \textit{Spitalfields}. p.66. At an interview with a former worker for SHAPRS, I
was told that certain Liberal councillors had confirmed that the withdrawal of funding from
SHAPRS was indeed political: "Why should we finance our opposition?" they were reported to
have said. Interview with Mark Adams, St.Mary's centre worker, 14th October 1988.

\textsuperscript{47}For a clear idea of SHAPRS activities with regard to housing issues, see SHAPRS \textit{Annual
A Different View of the GLC} (Summer 1986); \textit{Selby Street: Make it 200 Council Homes}
(September 1984); \textit{Bengalis and GLC Housing Allocation in E1} (March 1982 and March 1984);
and various proofs of evidence to the Public Inquiry on the Borough Plan, May 1984. See also
council was unhappy with the details of the scheme and used such objections as a justification for refusal.48

Forman, a former worker with SHAPRS, has himself critiqued this aspect of their work. He assesses local loyalty to SHAPRS as being based more on its housing work than on its confrontations with the council over their office policy. Much of the SHAPRS documentation indicates a powerful self-belief that the organisation acted on behalf of a supportive local population, and in the best interests of that constituency. Forman notes however that whilst arguments against office development were readily accepted by community activists, there were always more immediate and easier issues to organise around.49 The efficacy of SHAPRS with regard to its opposition to office development was perhaps doubted, and recognised as a consequence of the difficulties of conceptualising and dealing with such large schemes. This I think indicates a source for the Campaign's arguments against public consultation. Despite his reservations about the efficacy of SHAPRS' activities against office development, the arguments proposed require examination here, not least because of their contribution to the discourses of the opposition.

SHAPRS had from its establishment argued that the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market constituted 'the biggest question mark hanging over the future of West Spitalfields'.50 The Service claimed that the development of the market site would result:

in the irreversible destruction of West Spitalfields as a viable residential community, placing as it would a wall of offices between the north and south of the area. ... such a development would see the destruction of the homes of another 93 of West Spitalfields residents.51

The report went on to document the rumours that Greycoats were considering the redevelopment, encouraged by the local authority. In 1982, SHAPRS accused the Council of actively encouraging the relocation, holding discussions with the LDDC and drawing up a planning brief for the market. This brief did however contradict the Borough Plan, as SHAPRS pointed out. SHAPRS were particularly displeased by the GLC's support for the relocation of the market at that time, as the Service had been counting on the support of the GLC to oppose the

49ibid.
51ibid.
idea, bearing in mind the GLC's own Community Areas Policy 'under which they are committed to preventing any further damage to communities in Central London such as Spitalfields'.

In 1986, when the discussions over relocation were underway, SHAPRS had by then been involved in advice work and organising and resourcing meetings for locally based groups and residents associations to ensure some discussion of the matter, and had submitted their views in full to the local authority's and developer's consultations. SHAPRS response to the Neighbourhood's request for comments on the redevelopment of the market arrived in great detail, to then be cut and summarised by the planning department. SHAPRS pointed to the desperate need for housing and land to meet that need, noting that:

...the Spitalfields Market site is an opportunity to provide many more new homes. If the site is used for other uses where is the Council planning to build the homes to meet these needs? The Council should refuse any scheme which does not provide for housing on the vast majority of the site. The Council should join with the local community organisations in putting the housing needs of Spitalfields and the Borough to the City.

The Service was adamant on the lack of benefits that offices and associated planning gains would provide to Spitalfields:

Offices do not raise extra income for the Council or jobs for local people. Offices have sometimes provided useful planning gains but this is no substitute for proper planning to meet the needs of the area. ... If the Council does not stop further office development, speculators will continue to expect office permissions putting pressure on existing uses, forcing up land values. Has the Council carried out any research on the effect of office development especially on local clothing firms and residential premises?

George Nicholson, an architect of the GLC's Community Areas Policy and worker with the Campaign for Homes in Central London (CHICL), a group of which SHAPRS was a member, presented a view allied with that of SHAPRS:

It cannot be argued that the development is proposed through concern for the market's operation. It is, as with

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55ibid.
many other proposals in the community areas ring, just a property transaction designed to cash in on the location.56

These ideas, as shown in Chapter Three, are also evident in the arguments made by the Campaign against redevelopment in the area.

Whether SHAPRS would have had any ultimate success in opposing 'unsuitable' redevelopment on the market site is an interesting question; it was cut by the BGNC just after the initial consultations about the market redevelopment had begun in 1986. Retrospectively, both ex-workers for the Service, people associated with other groups in the area, and Campaign and Labour Party activists have noted the importance of the Service in developing a coherent critique of local authority planning policies in the area and in formulating answers to the assertions made by the Government, developers and Corporation about the redevelopment made in their discourses. Whilst the CSSD had, in Forman's words, 'its work cut out to cover the ground' lost by the closing of SHAPRS and the Local Committee, the CSSD could not have begun the fight against the relocation of the market without the prior work of SHAPRS in the area.57

As with the SLC the contributions of SHAPRS to the Campaign were various. SHAPRS personnel later became involved with the Campaign, not as active participants but as witnesses in the House of Commons and House of Lords committees. The idea of opposition to redevelopment on principle, which later directed the Campaign's activities in opposition, may be linked back to the position taken by SHAPRS whereby unless redevelopment was directed specifically towards the needs of the people living in the area and suffering the most from deprivation, it was to be opposed.58 From SHAPRS workers, amongst others, came ideas on the way that public consultation could be made more effective through their own experiences with consultation exercises amongst its constituency. SHAPRS also argued very strongly against blithe acceptance of planning gains as a result of redevelopment.

The Labour Party

58These ideas in turn may be traced back to the Community Development Projects of the GLC in the 1970s. Further research into the establishment of SHAPRS and its connections with such ideas would be interesting, but it unfortunately outside the remit of this project. This would complement Forman's work on the activities of the Service, detailed in Spitalfields.
In the introduction to this Chapter I noted that the local Labour Party had been encouraged to take up the arguments put forward by the SLC on the demise of the latter. Because the Campaign would not have existed without the initiative of members of the local Labour Party, it is necessary to examine that organisation and to ask two questions of it. Firstly, which elements of the Campaign's organisational style and argument can be traced back to the local Labour Party? Secondly, what sort of Labour Party existed in Spitalfields that cared sufficiently about the redevelopment of the area to organise a campaign and enter the redevelopment debate? It is to these questions that I shall now turn.

The establishment of the Campaign was contingent upon the Labour Party being prompted into action - by themselves and by some individuals who had formerly worked in the area (with the Spitalfields Project, the SLC and SHAPRS) and perceived the redevelopment as (at that time) the major threat to Spitalfields. The Spitalfields Ward Labour Party had in fact been considering the issue at its meetings and had responded to the 1986 public consultation. Councillor Phil Maxwell, writing on behalf of the group, raised the issue of 'public consultation' which had previously not been questioned:

...we note with alarm the fact that most groups in the Spitalfields area who have been consulted are under the impression that the market is inevitably going to go and that they are powerless to do anything about it. People in Spitalfields feel that the consultation is just a public relations exercise designed to pave the way for large scale office redevelopment.59

This concern over public consultation later became a feature of the arguments of the Campaign against redevelopment, as I illustrated in Chapter Three, with the Campaign using a particular representation of Spitalfields to argue against the public consultation carried out by the local authority. Here, then, we see the origins of that argument. The Labour Party statement claims knowledge of the feelings of the people of Spitalfields towards redevelopment. This implies an understanding of its position in the area as mouthpiece for the people, with a mandate to speak on issues such as redevelopment. This style of self-presentation was later used by the Campaign, as the evidence in Chapter Three indicates. The ward Labour Party response to the consultation noted that there was still the same level of demand for the market and that it still employed the same number of people as it had ten years ago, attempting to refute council and City declarations.

that the market was uneconomic on its present site. As I showed in Chapter
Three, this argument reappears in the Campaign's objections to the redevelopment
raised in the Parliamentary committees. Low cost housing, workshop space,
leisure and community facilities should be prioritised for the site, the Labour Party
stated. In view of the housing shortage in the Borough, it was felt that office
development would be a disgraceful waste of the land involved. The ward Labour
Party thus urged the Council to take out a Compulsory Purchase Order on the
market so as to ensure that if the market moved the developments recommended
would be implemented.\textsuperscript{60} The Labour Party therefore offered an assertive and
principled opinion on the future of the Market site, totally at variance with the
plans that had been given planning permission by the local authority. The
Campaign's arguments continued in this vein.

The Labour Party opposed the idea of redevelopment. Their opposition
does not, however, explain the establishment of a campaign. The Labour Party in
the ward had a record of consistent comment on a wide variety of issues to a
variety of bodies including the local authority. None of these issues ever produced
a campaign such as the CSSD. I would interpret the establishment of the
Campaign by the Labour Party as contributable to the threat posed to the Labour
Party by the redevelopment (and a redeveloped) Spitalfields. I would argue that
the redevelopment of Spitalfields posed a threat to the constituency of the Labour
Party because of the social and demographic changes that would occur.

Tower Hamlets council, from 1919 to 1986 was controlled politically by
the Labour Party, both as the modern borough, and before 1964, as the boroughs
of Bethnal Green, Stepney and Poplar. Commentators have noted the dominance,
until the early 1980s, of a Labour party run by elderly white men with a
background in organised labour.\textsuperscript{61} The Party was seen by Forman,
retrospectively, as 'complacent' and 'ossified', due to a virtual lack of opposition
on the council and within the Party.\textsuperscript{62} Prior to the 1982 council elections 29 of the
43 Labour councillors had held office for over 20 years, with one member
representing his ward since 1928.\textsuperscript{63} In 1980 and 1981 the dominance of this 'old
guard' of right-wing Labour started to be challenged from within. These
challenges constituted the beginning of a major change in Labour Party politics in
the area.

\textsuperscript{60}ibid.
\textsuperscript{63}ibid.
In Spitalfields what has been described as a clique of white elderly Jewish councillors dominating the Party were challenged in 1982-3 through the attempts to gain entry into the party of a group of younger left-wingers. This had taken some time:

...and we did spend about a year trying to find out where the meetings happened and trying to get an application form and eventually we found out, I can't remember how we found out, but we marched in one night, put our application forms down and said "We're here" and totally gob-smacked them. And Mark Adams was the only other person under about 90 that was there.

Their take-over of the party marked a decisive change in the Labour politics of the ward. It had shifted left-wards in its policies, it had become more democratic in its practices, and its membership numbers had greatly increased. Robbie Macduff interpreted the change as being attributable to the rise of a politically motivated Bengali population in the area, which made the experience of the left and the Labour Party in Spitalfields very specific:

65Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989. For full details, see Eade, ibid.
66I would argue that links may be made between the left-wards shift of the Spitalfields Labour party and the emergence of the new urban left in local politics around the country at that time. This situation was not peculiar to the ward, as Wainwright's examination of changes in Labour Party politics in Newham indicates (Wainwright, H. (1987) Labour: A Tale of Two Parties. Hogarth Press, London. pp. 17-23.) The new urban left is a term used by Gyford to denote a stream of thought in British politics concerned mainly with arguing for and demonstrating the socialist potential of local government arising from a belief in the inadequacy of traditional models of socialist politics (Gyford, J. (1985) The Politics of Local Socialism. Allen and Unwin, London.). Gyford points to it being not a formally organized grouping, but rather a syndrome or set of associated practice, the characteristics of which include:

a concern for issues hitherto absent from or marginal to conventional local government, such as local economic planning, monitoring the police, women's rights and racial equality; a disdain for many of the traditional ways of conducting local authority business; a view of local government as an arena both for combating the policies of a Conservative Government and for displaying by example the potential of a grass-roots socialism; and perhaps most fundamentally, a commitment to notions of mass politics based upon strategies of decentralization and/or political mobilization at the local level. (ibid. p.18)

I would argue that the Labour Party in Spitalfields may be identified as sharing the discourses associated with the new urban left. It was concerned precisely with those issues and exhibits those characteristics that Gyford identifies as characterizing the new urban left. Unfortunately, this is not the place to go questions concerning the relevance of theories of the new urban left to the Labour Party in Spitalfields, although I believe this to be a very important topic in its own right and worthy of consideration.

145
No I don't think its the rise of the urban left at all, I think it was a combination of events, only one would be similar to the other London boroughs where the left saw rise, and that was other people moving into the area like Jil Cove and George Roberts, who had a different perception to the people who had run and controlled the party for numerous years in an unchallenged way and in a very cliqueish way. They came in as articulate white people and they were horrified and angered by the misuse of the system, the way in which the Party was run in a totally unaccountable and undemocratic way, which of course was out of sync with the Party's commitment to the way in which organisations should be run. But what happened in Spitalfields was different, was there was an activated, politically activated Bengali community and they were being denied access to the Labour party by being told that the Labour Party was full, that there was no longer any places. Now for people who had never been involved in the labour Party - you could believe it - it's only people who know what the Labour Party is like, how its run, what its rules are, that would be able to say "This is outrageous, how dare you". So there was a combination of those events. The riots down Brick Lane against the fascists in '78 which politicised clearly the community also, and so there was a right-wing Labour controlled council, there was this National Front activity, and there was a Bengali community that was fed up with its lot. And it saw the Labour Party was in control, and it knew for it to have some influence it had to be involved in that organisation and involved in that structure.

The changes in the Labour Party meant that it had become multi-racial and was politically active. As Jil Cove explained it:

I suppose it's all part of the community suddenly finding that they've got something to say, and looking for ways to say it. And it may have been that people were very aware that we suddenly got a Tory government that was going to hammer areas like this, and was looking for forums to make their voice known. That may sound a bit sophisticated, I don't know! But it may also be that suddenly people in this area - are natural allies of the Labour Party but never got any ability to take part in the Labour Party.

Crucially, the Bengali population became involved in the Labour Party. The results of a ward by-election in 1985 seemed to symbolise this change in the nature and support for the Labour party locally. A 24 year old Bengali man - Abbas Uddin - was elected to a seat on the council following the death of an 80 year old Jewish woman. In addition, and crucial to my argument, the Labour Party's idea

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67 Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
68 Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
of itself as the 'natural' party to represent the area was reinforced. The Party had held the ward since 1919 and had traditionally seen itself as the Party of the area. In addition, because of the increase in support the rejuvenated party was getting, this idea did, I think, become reinforced in the minds of certain Labour Party members.

...its a working class area, and working class equals Labour, doesn't it, under usual circumstances. And certainly the Bengali people would be natural Labour Party supporters purely because they are working people, poor people... and would see that would be the only party that represents them. Obviously people change their politics as they prosper and move on, but I think that certainly people in this area are natural allies of the Labour Party, in this immediate area.69

As I explained in Chapter Three, the Campaign thought that if the redevelopment went ahead as planned, the area would change. The social composition would alter radically, it was thought, and the Bengali population would be forced to leave the area. I would suggest that the Labour Party had in fact imagined that scenario for themselves. Support for the Labour Party, by their own analysis, came from those most affected by redevelopment. Redevelopment of Spitalfields could seriously threaten support for the Labour Party. This was frightening for the Party. The tone of two quotations taken from local newspapers illustrates this:

The last thing Spitalfields needs is wine bars and galloping gentrification from the City. The Alliance had decided to let big money flood in from the City in order to provide a playground for City gents and office space for new computer technology... The site should be developed for the benefit of the local community, not the City.70

It now appears that the Alliance is extending its interest to the wine market and designer clothes industry, reducing development in the area to nothing more than a high society soap opera. The Labour Party will stick with East Enders.71

Redevelopment of Spitalfields would threaten the power base of the Labour Party in the area, and I would argue that this was highly significant in prompting the Party into action and establishing the Campaign. A gentrified Spitalfields would not, according to the understanding of the Party, vote Labour. I am not saying

69 Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
71 Phil Maxwell, quoted in East London Advertiser, 8th August 1986.
that this was the only reason for the establishment of the CSSD. Concern about the future of the population of the area and the pressures on them were spurs to action too. But I would argue that the threat to the Party was extremely significant in prompting members into action.

Conclusion

In Chapter Three I introduced the Campaign, looking at its membership and organisation, and introducing the basic arguments against redevelopment of the market that appeared in its public discourse. I argued that the Campaign understood the redevelopment of Spitalfields to constitute a threat to the area and its population because of its impact on land values, the local economic base and housing. In this chapter I have examined the origins of the Campaign and these arguments. I have argued that the basic arguments articulated by the Campaign against redevelopment were adopted from certain groups such as the Spitalfields Project, the Spitalfields Local Committee and the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service, brought to the Campaign by personnel involved in such groups. I have also discussed the motives of the Spitalfields Labour Party in establishing the Campaign, attributing them to the threat posed by redevelopment to the constituency of the Party. Whilst the explanation so far given of the Campaign would suffice as correct and accurate as far as it goes, it is not the full story. Redevelopment, as I shall argue in the next chapter, was also opposed because of the threat it posed to a particular set of ideas, images and representations the Campaign held about Spitalfields. On what terms was Spitalfields defended? How was Spitalfields represented in their arguments? Why did the Campaign argue what they did, in the ways that they did?
4.1 Spitalfields
4.2 Spitalfields
4.3 Spitalfields
4.4 Spitalfields
Chapter Five

Representations and Redevelopment

In this chapter I want to examine the ways in which the Campaign represented Spitalfields. The CSSD was formed because its members thought that the redevelopment planned for the Market would set in motion a set of processes that combined would fundamentally alter the area, changing its function and driving its population away. Furthermore, and as I shall argue in this chapter, the CSSD was formed to fight the redevelopment because it constituted a threat to the sets of images, ideas and representations the Campaign members held about the area. These images would be totally undermined if redevelopment went ahead - redevelopment threatened ideas held dear in people's hearts about the place that they lived in. Opposition to redevelopment was about attempting to assert a specific understanding of Spitalfields. In this chapter I shall examine that image of Spitalfields through the discourse of the Campaign, and investigate how it was used to argue against the redevelopment of the Market. In doing so I hope to emphasise the importance of a consideration of the power of meaning and imagery in understanding political action.

Spitalfields in pictures

I shall start this discussion by examining a collection of photographs exhibited in October 1989 by Phil Maxwell, a Labour Councillor, photographer and Campaign member, in the Montefiore Centre in Spitalfields. Photographs, as Sontag notes, are images - created structures of meaning. They are an interpretation of reality and not an irrefutable image of it. Photographs therefore do not represent an unbiased reality because of their power of inclusion and
exclusion. These photographs, then, are extremely useful in examining the Campaign's representation of Spitalfields.

The commentary on the photographs, written by Robbie MacDuff, linked Maxwell's portrayal of Spitalfields directly to the question of redevelopment:

The new look for Spitalfields can be either the dry, drab, grey face of the City or the image of a vibrant community enhanced by the injection of much needed, community directed cash.

My own comments on them will assess them from that perspective also.

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2I am of course aware that the photographs that appear elsewhere in this thesis have been chosen by me, and that a similar analysis of my photographs might be undertaken.


4I am grateful to Katharine Hurd and Mary Baker of S.D.U.C., Lampeter, for their helpful comments on the photographs.
5.1 Introduction to Maxwell's exhibition, taken from catalogue.

SAVE SPITALFIELDS

A Photographic Exhibition by PHIL MAXWELL

SAVE SPITALFIELDS is Phil Maxwell's 4th exhibition. As a freelance photographer who has lived in Spitalfields for seven years, Maxwell has sought to portray the life and times of the area he knows intimately. The photographs seek to capture the very essence of life in Spitalfields: its humanity, heritage, multiculturalism; its poverty and homelessness: namely, its great diversity.

Of Spitalfield, Maxwell says: "deprivation certainly permeates the place but people have a fighting spirit and they form a vibrant community. The strengths of our community are too often overlooked by misguided, well-intentioned outsiders, as well as those who are ill-intentioned, and sensationalist journalism".

Maxwell has chosen to link his exhibition to the work undertaken by the Campaign To Save Spitalfields From the Developers: a local community organisation which has been fighting to halt major redevelopment in Spitalfields; redevelopments which put at risk the continued existence of the very community the photographs portray.

With 20% of the area up for redevelopment, and the hungry-eyed City of London looking for land for expansion, Spitalfields is threatened with a face lift. The new look for Spitalfields can be either the dry, drab, grey face of the City or the image of a vibrant community enhanced by the injection of much needed, community directed cash.

In this exhibition Maxwell chooses to contrast the Spitalfields photos with images of the newly established privileged few who live on the borders of our community; a timely reminder of what could happen to Spitalfields unless the community as a whole is diligent in working together to agree a community perspective on new developments.

Maxwell states: "we know our weaknesses; to overturn these we need to build on our strengths".

Market life, street life, home life: the photographs are all about a living and dynamic environment: one we should all do our best to preserve.

Phil Maxwell has dedicated SAVE SPITALFIELDS to the memory of George Roberts, a close friend and comrade who worked for many years for an end to discrimination and the threat of a nuclear holocaust. He is greatly missed by those who knew him.
5.2 Their beautiful launderette

'Their beautiful launderette'

- Brick Lane Launderette was closed down and no other facility has replaced it.
5.3 Looking hopeful

'Looking hopeful' - Cheshire Street
5.4 Chicksand Estate - Hanbury Street
Resistance

On July 15th locals demonstrated against the policing tactics in the area. Over thirty demonstrators were arrested and face serious charges in the Courts.
5.6 The Whitechapel Open

'The Whitechapel Open'
5.7 Warning - Developers

'Warning - Developers: Children at risk'
5.8 Street Life

'Street Life' - Swanfield Street
5.9 Playing in Hanbury Street
5.10 Allen Gardens

'Allen Gardens viewed from Spitalfields Farm'
This area will be blighted for up to nine years if the British Rail "Cross Rail" proposals go ahead.
'Overcrowding in Spitalfields' -

"My name is Mustaque Ahmed and I live with my two sisters and four brothers in a two bedroom flat on the twelfth floor of a tower block..."
5.12 Various

Spanning the years’ - Sunday Market

‘Sunday Market’ - Sclater Street

The Ullah family’ - Brune House, West Spitalfields

‘Alone together’ - Cheshire Street
Their Beautiful Launderette

This is a picture of a launderette with a couple in it. We assume they are washing their clothes, but we're not sure because they are kissing. I think the point that Maxwell is making is that lauderettes are communal places, meeting places. They are used for many functions other than washing clothes. Brick Lane Launderette closed down, but no other facility replaced it. A meeting place, a communal space, was lost. To my mind this image is making a point about the appropriation of space and the availability of communal space for appropriation, and it is also making a statement about the loss of that space.

Looking Hopeful

This photograph of Spitalfields shows bad housing conditions, decaying building fabric, and rubbish. These features provide the background for this picture of a small child. The photograph highlights environmental conditions in the area and points to the fact of people's residency with them.

Chicksand Estate

A group of boys, posing together for a photograph. A happy, hopeful, friendly image, lively and energetic. It is also an image of solidarity and cohesion. These are Bengali boys who are portrayed as being protective of each other because they have their arms round each other. They are asserting their mutual support for one another. They are portrayed as asserting ownership of their space, having appropriating that space for themselves. The boys in the photograph are Bengali. I would suggest that an assumption is being made, concerning the background to this image, to the effect that elsewhere in London they are rendered either unwelcome or invisible by a racist society. The photograph, I think, is making a statement highlighting and celebrating their assertion of their right to use this space, and their own feelings of exclusivity. Phil Maxwell refered to this in interview with me, (although not in the context of refering to this photograph). We were discussing the future of the people in the area after redevelopment:

If you just look at the way, say, young people dress, they're asserting themselves as "we're here to stay" -
they've got that confidence. I think that is the key to the future in terms of the community asserting itself.5

**Resistance**

This is a picture of anger, and it also has a lot of energy in it. It is an image of a group protesting against racist policing tactics in the area. I think that this image is making a point about the activism of the Bengali youth in Spitalfields. It is an image of a group who will not acquiesce, in the way that a previous generation did, to the conditions in which they are forced to live, and the configurations of power they are forced to live under. I think that in using this image in his exhibition, Maxwell is underscoring a point with regard to the political activism of the young Bengali population of the area. They were portrayed not as passive resisters but as active protesters against injustices they perceive. Maxwell spoke about this too in interview with me, against in the context of the future of the population of the area.

...if you ask me to speculate and go ahead 15 years, I think that the Bangladeshi community is going to be far more organised in a political way, and that will have a tremendous impact on the decision makers and what will happen. I also think that there's a strong possibility, unless things change, it's almost inevitable, there will be civil disturbances in the area and that will have an effect on prices and investment and will force government to do something.6

I would suggest that this idea of active protest is being celebrated by Maxwell both through his capture of it and through its presentation.

**The Whitechapel Open**

This is a photograph of contrasts. The solid, institutional facade of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, with its doors closed, a symbol of western culture, is contrasted with a Bengali man, occupied with an everyday activity - wheeling his shopping home in a trolley. Spitalfields is portrayed as an area of contrasts. This idea appears within other areas of the Campaign's discourse, and I discuss this below.

5Interview with Phil Maxwell, 6th September 1989.
Warning - Developers: Children at Risk

I think that in using this image of a man wheeling a pram in front of an unfinished housing development, Maxwell is making a point about the gradual appropriation of public space, the takeover of streets for development, and the creation of no-go areas in cities by developers. This new housing development, closed off from the area by corrugated iron, is presented as housing for outsiders, not for local people such as the man pushing the pram.

Street Life

This is another image of urban decay, showing corrugated iron and boarded up shop fronts, possibly alluding to the processes by which Spitalfields has become run down in the way that it has. Again, this is an image of people appropriating their space.

Playing in Hanbury Street/ Allen Gardens/ Overcrowding in Spitalfields

These three photographs show a normal activity on an average backstreet of Spitalfields, and playing field that is overlooked by a railway line and a disused signal box. The prospect of removal of this facility if redevelopment occurs is raised as an issue, and thus the need for facilities such as these in an area where overcrowding is rife and children require somewhere to play.

These photographs as a collection of images are realistic, that is, their style encourages the viewer to believe that these are pictures of Spitalfields as it really is. That reality is one of decaying buildings, rubbish and in parts a derelict environment. There is a risk in portraying this area in this way, because it opens up questions surrounding the need for some sort of redevelopment in order to clean up this environment. But I think the idea that these photographs represent is that this rather derelict area is home to a group of people who have adopted it as their own. They have their own space in which communal life is acted out, and are defiant about their right to assert themselves in the area, and thus their will on

6 ibid.
any plans for the area. I will now explore some of these ideas in more detail, looking at how they were used in the discourse of the Campaign in the arguments against redevelopment.

Community

The photographs seek to capture the very essence of life in Spitalfields: its humanity, heritage, multiculturalism; its poverty and homelessness: namely, its great diversity. ...deprivation certainly permeates the place but people have a fighting spirit and they form a vibrant community.7

The above quotation may perhaps be read as a celebration of poverty. Maxwell's view, as I interpret it, shared and promoted by the Campaign was that deprivation constituted a life style shared by the people of the area, giving them their community. The Campaign understood there to be a community of struggle in the area, and this shared political experience had formed the community into the entity they perceived. Buttimer has noted that a celebration of 'community' can be tantamount to condoning the conditions of poverty, exploitation, injustice and alienation in which this 'community' is commonly understood to live.8 In this instance however, and indeed as Rose has argued, the celebration of community was to be part of a more radical political project.9

The idea of community was fundamental to the Campaign's image of Spitalfields.

Spitalfields is a unique and historic area forming a buffer between the City and East London. It is an organic community of working class and industrious people; a multi-ethnic community where the Bengali community is now the largest group of local residents.10

The quotation complements Maxwell's photographs. The pictures are images of a lively and vibrant area, and emphasise the fact that this is both a young and Bengali area. The quotation above was written to emphasise the fact that

10Campaign Co-ordinator, House of Commons Committee, 29th June 1988. ME 9 p.44.
Spitalfields has a specific identity. The image of Spitalfields held by the Campaign was of a stable area, an area sure of its past and what this represented. It is portrayed as unique - like nowhere else - and historic - it has an identifiable past. It has a distinct community, and this community is solid and working class. And it is the home of Britain's Bengali population, whose residence in Spitalfields, as I shall explain below, was a point of celebration for the Campaign.

The foundations of the Campaign's understanding of Spitalfields as home to a distinct community lay in experiences of political activism in the area during the preceding twenty years, during which time organisations such as the Spitalfields Project, the SLC and SHAPRS had been active, the Labour Party had been revitalised, and the Bengali population had established themselves as the numerically dominant group in the area. In addition, there was seen to be a tradition of organising over housing conditions because historically they had always been so bad. For example, there was a mythology surrounding a rent strike held in the late 1960s by tenants and organised by the Chicksand Estate Tenants Association.

There were loads of slum blocks still around. Spitalfields, because it had escaped a lot of bombing, it had been the last to be redeveloped. There was all this potential. There was a bit of a history - like Great Eastern Buildings in particular - there was this Bill who had 'died fighting' - there were all these legendary characters who had probably been quite charismatic in their leadership.

However, Spitalfields was understood to be unlike other areas in terms of its local culture. Although there had been some tradition of organisation, experience of Spitalfields was unlike that of areas in, for example, the dockland areas of East London which had an established tradition of organisation through the trade unions, resulting in a more politically confident local population. The fragmentation produced as a result of employment in the rag trade, according to the analysis of certain members of the Campaign had meant little or no work-place organisation in Spitalfields, and thus a history fragmented political activism.

So according to the analysis of some members of the Campaign, despite a history of some local political organisation and activism, it was only with the establishment of so-called community based organisations, such as the Spitalfields

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11 Interview with Ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989; Interview with Claire Murphy, 6th July 1989.
12 Interview with Claire Murphy, 6th July 1989.
13 ibid.
Project, and later of other groups such as the Labour Party, that a substantial
growth in political activism was enabled. With the establishment of the
Spitalfields Project, according to an ex-worker there, people (and especially
Bengali people) were enabled to get grants and funding for projects which they
could organise themselves, and were able to build their confidence as political
activists. This created a sense of 'community confidence'.  

Seeing this happen had resulted in a belief, for people who were later to found and join the Campaign, in the establishment in Spitalfields of a community as an organised, unified, political entity.

...seeing those people come together, and sort of organise and grow in front of your very eyes was absolutely extraordinary and terrific, and of course there were other things which helped that. I mean, the growth of the Bangladeshi community which did organise in part with help, in part with being able to find a place within the sort of structures of what was going on in terms of local government and the community development bit in relationship to it. But also in terms of their identity as a nation vis-a-vis the War of Independence, the growth of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign state, and that whole thing there - it was amazing, I mean that was the most energising experience I think I've ever had in terms of my rather crummy life! To literally see a community grow before your eyes and see people come out and sort of greet you in the street - people you don't know, sort of 'Joy Bangla!' and - great - oh its amazing - very heady stuff.  

The representation of Spitalfields as a community area was constructed precisely because of this recent history of politicisation. It gave Campaign members an understanding of their area as an area of collective activism. In short, it gave them their community. This representation of community was important because it enabled the Campaign to account for political difference within their community. Defining community in terms of political activism allowed the Campaign to define it in terms which included space for argument and dissent in that community. As Robbie MacDuff put it: 'I don't think any community is homogenous'. This definition of community thus allowed the Campaign to account for its own differences of opinion with other groups, for example, with the exclusion from under its umbrella of certain groups active in the area, whilst still allowing itself to present the views of the 'whole community'. There were problems associated with this strategy, and I raise these questions in Chapter Six.

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14 Interview with Ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989
15 ibid.
16 Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
The Campaign's construction of the idea of a community in Spitalfields is also important to this critique for a second reason. The representation of Spitalfields as a community area was deliberate. The portrayal of the area in this way was known to be appealing and attractive, and known to have currency. As Williams notes:

Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships.\(^{17}\)

Either way, the term is never used negatively. The word has an enormous variety of definitions, and as Brownill's review of the term illustrates, the use of the concept appears endless.\(^{18}\) I shall not attempt to discover why the term has had such positive connotations. Rather, I shall discuss here why that positive connotation was used, and the means by which this was undertaken. The Campaign emphasised community because they understood the term to be a universally appealing one. As one commentator succinctly put it:

You can over-romanticise it - I do at times, OK for political reasons as much as anything else and you can get carried away.\(^{19}\)

I would suggest that the Campaign recognised the power of the idea of community, and used it to effect. If community is anything, notes Cuff, it is a convenient fiction for what may in fact be dynamic, multi-faceted and full of factions and changing actors.\(^{20}\) The idea of community was realised by many campaign members to be fictitious. As an ex-SHAPRS worker put it, the area had to be seen or understood as being without unity as a necessary precondition to the construction of any sort of mass action in the area.\(^{21}\) Only once this was realised could efforts be made to find ways of bringing people together and constructing unified action, such as that against the Housing Action Trusts or the redevelopment of Spitalfields Market. Yet that fiction was recognised as convenient. The idea of community was thought to be useful because of the general endorsement of community as a good thing - its appeal - and also because


\(^{19}\)Interview with Ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.


\(^{21}\)Interview with Mark Adams, 14th October 1988.
of myths and assumptions about life in London's East End that tend to emphasise cohesion and solidarity as pervasive in the area.

The Campaign, then, held and promoted a very strong image of Spitalfields as an area that was home to a community. The redevelopment plans were a threat because according to the Campaign's analysis of the processes of urban development, the community that existed in Spitalfields would be destroyed. Large sections of the population would be forced to move away from the area. Redevelopment would destroy the social structure of the area. They argued against the redevelopment by using ideas of community in order to emphasise a positivity that would be destroyed.

A History of Migration

The Campaign had an image of Spitalfields as home to a distinct community. Its image of Spitalfields, and its representation of the place linked this idea of community with the idea of Spitalfields as a traditional haven for immigrant groups, including the Irish in the nineteenth century, Jewish settlers in the decades preceding the First World War, and Bengali, Pakistani and Somalian migrants after the Second World War. Members of the Campaign, in discussing this phenomenon, seemed extremely proud of this history of their area, a feeling not specific just to them. As Glassberg notes:

Interestingly, local political leaders in Tower Hamlets trace migration considerably further back in time and, with some pride, describe the area's receptivity to Huguenot refugees from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.22

Historically Spitalfields had had a Jewish community which, in the minds of certain Campaign members, had given to the area a particular culture and a particular sense of place.

Spitalfields was in Stepney, Stepney was always seen very much in terms of the Jewish population and Jewish settlement, it was always seen as a sweated area, sweated workshops and labour, it was always seen as a non-conforming place etc.etc. ... in terms of Labour history and Labour mythology, the old Docklands area and the East was very much the settled pattern of working class, very much based on Irish immigration, and it was very much traditional manual, it was trade union organised, it was solidly Labour, it didn't have a huge or high sort of

intelligent content to it, it was a solid ground in a
traditional Labour neighbourhood or area, where Stepney
was an absolute riot! It was Jewish, it was volatile, we
had a lot of people who had an awful lot of nowse... a
whole series of people, a whole range in professions of
one sort or another, it was a place where the community
was getting ahead, where every mother wanted their son to
be a doctor or a lawyer! 23

The establishment of the Bengali population in the area was celebrated as a
continuation of this function. They formed a distinct group that required space in
order to establish themselves in Britain and Spitalfields served that function.

For 300 years people have come to Spitalfields. Some
stayed, some passed through. ... It's an extraordinary
paradox - an area in constant change and yet unchanging.
Spitalfields has been the haven for each new migration. It
has been a place to settle, a place to rebuild broken lives.
But is has also been a place of poverty. Migrants haven't
chosen Spitalfields, but were forced into its bad housing
and its sweated labour in the clothing trade. There was
nowhere else to go. 24

There is plenty of space and plenty of public money to
move people into the East End. So long as they are the
right people. But the Bangladeshis weren't the right
people. Poor and unskilled, they came from a rural
economy that Britain had asset-stripped for 200 years.
They were given neither space nor money to help them
settle. The rich of Wapping would still be making money
no matter where their home was. They don't depend on
the East End for their living. They can afford to live
elsewhere. The Bengalis of the catering and clothing trades
can't. They don't have a choice. They must live in the
area to survive. 25

The function of Spitalfields as home to successive migrant groups was constructed
by the Campaign in an extremely positive fashion and produced an image of an
exciting, exotic area that benefitted from this influx of new blood.

...the revival of Spitalfields has taken place not through the
[Spitalfields] Trust but spontaneously and irrevocably
through settlement of the Bengalis who have transformed
what was a derelict street - Brick Lane - into a commercial
and cultural centre. 26

23 Interview with ex-Spitalfields Project Worker, 15th June 1989.
26 Raphael Samuels, House of Commons Committee, 28th June 1988, ME 8, p.41. The
Spitalfields Trust is a group formed and consisting of architects and architectural historians who
have campaigned for the preservation of the Georgian fabric of Spitalfields. The construction of
the heritage of Spitalfields, both by the Campaign (including Samuels) and by the conservation
The redevelopment of Spitalfields threatened this function:

Spitalfields has always been an area where you've got a new ethnic minority coming in. It's just that one day there won't be any ethnic minorities - just office blocks instead and yuppies. They're the ones who can afford it.27

...the area won't be the slightly run-down derelict sort of area that would welcome the input of people with energy and enthusiasm and there won't be the accommodation for people to come and squat or whatever.28

The redevelopment process would remove from Spitalfields its function as a haven for migrant groups, through the increase in land values and processes outlined in Chapter Three. Redevelopment thus threatened the image of Spitalfields constructed by the Campaign as an immigrant area, an image held very dear by some members.

I think that the Bengali community... is probably the last wave of immigrants that will come into Tower Hamlets, and I think that's really sad. I think one of the things about Tower Hamlets is it's been able to welcome all those different cultures - there's a stong Irish community, a strong Jewish community, a strong Somali community, Bengali, Chinese, the whole thing, and that's part of the attraction of the East End, I think.29

Multicultural Spitalfields

Spitalfields, then, was imagined and represented as a migrant area, and this aspect of the area's history celebrated. I have already touched upon the celebration of migrant culture, and indicated through the quotations above that the area was portrayed as multicultural, and this image used in the arguments against redevelopment. I want to expand on this idea in this section. Here, I want to discuss how this idea is portrayed and shown to work or operate. I shall do so by quoting at length from Forman. Spitalfields; a Battle for Land opens with a long description of a street scene in Brick Lane, which illustrates perfectly for Forman the nature of the area and perfectly for me the nature of Forman's (and the Campaign's) ideas on the nature of the area.

27Interview with Ian Worland, 18th July 1989.
28Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
29Ibid.
Take a walk down Brick Lane in London's East End. It is like nowhere else. It's a narrow street, crowded with shops opening straight onto the pavement. It's blocked with traffic. Somewhere a wide van is parked, half-keeled over, two wheels on the pavement, two on the road. A man, almost submerged under a pile of thick women's coats, is loading it from the back. He pops in and out of an open doorway, up the steep stairs to the workshop above. A car could get by. But a lorry is stuck - piled high with empty beer kegs going back to Truman's brewery just beyond.

It's Friday. There's a queue in the take-away cafes for the meat pancake kelama, cooked only once a week. Someone pushes his way out with an armful of polystyrene cups of steaming tea and vegetable samosas, carried in a cut-down cardboard box, which he uses as a tray. He heads back to the other machinists in his workshop. They're on piece rates, there's no time for anyone else to stop and have a break.

The doors of the mosque fly open. Men burst out into the frosty street and the flow of those leaving prayer is traced in the crowds by the bobbing of their white skull caps, called tokis. Some of the men filter past the wicker baskets of vegetables into the New Taj Stores for the weekend shopping. As ever, the shop is packed. Someone is explaining with intricate gestures how he wants his fish cut up. Others from the mosque pass the shops by and gather round the knots of people at the talking corners of Princelet Street and Hanbury Street. As conversations build, the traffic jam of the street is repeated on the pavement.

A woman wearing a cardigan over her sari reaches the bottom of her tenement staircase and turns out from Hanbury Street against the flow from the mosque. She's heading for her doctor's appointment. Her daughter holds her hand, walking slowly, wearing her knee-length skirt over long trousers. They cross the road, past old Weinberg the printers, where until recently metal letters were still laid out waiting for a compositor. Next door, the black-hatted orthodox Jews sort their bales of cloth.

The mosque has emptied as they cross Fournier Street with its town houses, gleaming shutters, polished knockers and locked front doors. The girl is embarrassed. As they reach the Church of England school, her mates are coming out in a long ragged crocodile. "Why aren't you in school?" they shout. But they push on past the Seven Stars, its topless dancers advertised, as the traffic jams up again. Someone hoots half-heartedly. Through the round porthole windows of the new health centre other women can be seen, children beside them - some silent and still, others squirming with impatience. The girls holds the door for a pensioner who shuffles out unsteadily. Into the warm they go.30

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There are many, many things that I could say about this passage. I shall confine myself to here to a discussion of the image of Spitalfields as a multicultural area. I should hope that the reader will pause and consider some of the other ideas contained in this quotation, such as the notion of Spitalfields as a place of industry and economic activity, that link back to many of the Campaign's concerns expressed in this and previous chapters.

An image of Spitalfields is constructed that tries to underline the mix of cultures resident and evident in the area. The first thing Forman does is tell us that this is unique. It is found nowhere else. Spitalfields is singular and individual because of this. It is special and different because of the mix of people it contains. In this passage, Forman is telling us that there live, cheek by jowl in Spitalfields, a range of cultures - Bengali, Jewish and English. Each of these groups is divisible too. The Bengali population are not all clothing workers - some are traders, manufactueres, entrepreneurs. The whites are working class and gentrifiers. The Jewish traders still work here.

Spitalfields is portrayed as a place of contrasts. The Bengali woman and her family live in a tenement block, presumably in flats reached by communal staircases. Contrast this with the gentrified town houses of Fournier Street, their inhabitants closing themselves away from the world behind locked doors and closed shutters. In one culture the women are strippers, in another women are mothers. Men do the shopping. A woman wears both a sari and a cardigan.

Spitalfields is represented as a place with a lively street culture. It is a crowded place; Brick Lane is a street seething with humanity. It is special because of this, as Raphael Samuel emphasised in his presentation to the House of Commons Committee, talking of the singling out of Brick Lane by architectural critics as a 'city street which works'.31 People meet on corners to talk. The place has public life.

Spitalfields is also given an exotic image. The clothes people wear are different. Orthodox Jews appear in black hats, women wear saris, girls wear suits men wear their prayer hats. The foods are different - samosas and ketlama. By implication the smells will be different. This difference is constructed as exotic, but it is also presented as 'normal'. There is no questioning as to whether there is anything abnormal in this street scene. It is just presented as different.

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31 Raphael Samuels, quoted in the House of Commons Committee, 28th June 1988. ME 8 p.41.
We have, then, a particular construction of Spitalfields. It is portrayed as lively, exotic, different and exciting.\(^{32}\) It is portrayed as a Bengali place above all, as Maxwell does in his photographs. This fact is given as positive and as a cause for celebration. This construction of Spitalfields in a particular way is undertaken with a purpose. It is produced in order to underscore what would be lost if redevelopment would proceed and evict the population (and crucially the Bengali population) from the area. (Forman's book goes on to argue precisely these points).

In constructing the representations of Spitalfields outlined so far in this chapter, the Campaign could claim knowledge of the area. This was undertaken for a political purpose, and this caused problems for the Campaign, as I have noted with the questions raised concerning the political function of the Campaign's construction of community. Because I deal with this point in Chapter Six I shall not elaborate on it here. In the last section of this chapter I shall conclude by examination of representations and redevelopment by discussing the images of Spitalfields that are constructed and contrasted with images of the City of London by the Campaign.

Images of the City

I now want to continue this examination of the images and representations of Spitalfield by looking at the images the Campaign produced of the City of London. The Campaign portrayed the City in a specific way so as to illustrate its arguments about the redevelopment of Spitalfields. Interestingly, I think, an image of the City was constructed by contrasting it with Spitalfields, and conversely, Spitalfields was constructed to be what the City was not.

\(^{32}\)Forman's construction of Spitalfields is in fact similar in many ways to those produced in the media. See for example, John Brennan's article on house prices in Spitalfields, 'Cultural Contrasts, Financial Times' 22/23 December 1990; Steve Platt 'The Ghetto Rippers' New Society 16th October 1987; 'East End Promise: The New East Enders', Seven Days/Sunday Telegraph 9th April 1989; 'City and Bounty' Guardian 12th April 1989. Connections may be made here between these representations and some of the ideas and explanations for this discussed by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, which examines in detail the history of the fascination of the west with the Orient. This is not something I have developed here because I have wanted to draw out a different point about the political purposes of this representation in relation to the Campaign's right to prevent the relocation of the Market. I do however consider it important and worthy of further consideration.
The City of London was represented as planning for Spitalfields in its own image. The appearance of the City was taken as an indication of the changed appearance of Spitalfields after redevelopment.

If the developers get their way Spitalfields Market will disappear into a hole in the ground. In its place will rise the monster office blocks of the international banking centre planned by the SDG.33

The City was represented as an alien place, remote from people's lives as lived in Spitalfields, although the City's towers could be seen over the road from Spitalfields Market. Comparisons were drawn from even far afield to indicate the future face of Spitalfields. The future cityscape was represented as foreign and alien. The City was compared and equated with New York and Tokyo, as alien places and symbols of unbridled capitalism. The broadsheet produced by the Campaign, the Spitalfields Defender, is titled 'Hello Wall Street, Goodbye Spitalfields'.

For Spitalfields as a living and working community would be wiped out by an international banking centre. It would become just one more line on the computer screens linking Wall St and Tokyo.34

Other portrayals of a redeveloped Spitalfields included an image of an area behind a 'Berlin Wall of offices' and:

...another Manhattan where no trees or grass can be seen except in Central Park which for much of the time appears to be unsafe for use by residents.35

The representation of redevelopment and its consequences as constructed by the Campaign was built up by using issues that the Campaign understood to be relevant to people in the area. The City was represented as a workplace, in contrast to the working and residential functions of Spitalfields which the Campaign consistently promoted. '[Spitalfields'] uniqueness is characterised by a high concentration of local residents living within ten minutes of their place of employment.', the Campaign told the House of Commons Committee.36 This representation of Spitalfields was promoted as an appeal to sensibilities of the benefits of permanence in a transient world and was drawn from an understanding

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33Spitalfields Defender, February 1988. This was a broadsheet produced and distributed by the Campaign during December 1987.
34ibid.
35Jil Cove, House of Lords Committee 24th May 1989, ME 8 p.16.
36Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers Petition to the House of Lords. Clause 5, March 1989.
of social cohesion in the area as a product of Spitalfields' function as a combined working and residential area:

The population had traditionally lived and worked in the area to a degree that was totally atypical of most inner city areas - yet this had given and continued to give the locality its life, its identity, its community - its protection. Although in fact a transitional area, it wasn't a transient area with no roots.37

This view is not unique to Spitalfields. Brownill notes the concern of local socialism and the left with the destruction by economic decline and redevelopment of occupational communities where workers lived and worked in close proximity, and which epitomised the traditional culture of Labour.38 The City, by contrast, was portrayed as a place of change and rootlessness, and as an area devoted solely to the financial services, in contrast to Spitalfields, which 'houses a community for whom living and working, schooling, shopping, cultural and religious needs are contained and sustained within the locality'.39 The very existence of the City was presented as being inextricably bound up with the functions and requirements of the financial sector. Life in the City was portrayed as reflecting this:

If you go through the City at night, you see very few people walking around - it's not because it's unsafe, it's because there is nothing there - no shops, no cafes, pubs are closed in the evenings... You occasionally see a light on at the top of a building or something like that.40

Spitalfields, in contrast, was presented as an area which belonged to people, because they lived and worked there.

Spitalfields was portrayed by the Campaign as a community area. This was contrasted with images of the City, full of people who would leave after a day's work, contributing little more than their sandwich wrappers to the area:

How are we going to be cohesive with the office people who are coming in? You just have to walk five minutes if less down the road to Bishopsgate and you feel totally alien to people who are walking around down there who are just commuters who go in every day and that's what it will be

39Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers *Petition to the House of Lords*. Clause 5, March 1989.
40Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
like when the market's going, it'll just be commuterland even further in.\textsuperscript{41}

The point to make here is not such much one of querying the veracity of the Campaign's claim of Spitalfields as a unified and cohesive area, for indeed the Campaign members lived political and social lives that testified to the diversity and at times disunity of the population of the area. The point I am making is that in constructing an image of what Spitalfields could be imagined to be, they could then use this representation to appeal against the destruction of cohesion through the encroachment of the City.

This representation of the City was created out of experiences of Campaign members, and used in publicity material to indicate a likely future for Spitalfields after redevelopment:

Residents fear that the new business people will show little loyalty. They will leave at the end of the day, turning the area into a ghost town at night.\textsuperscript{42}

The term 'ghost town' appears repeatedly in the language of Campaign members:

...having seen what's happened with Broadgate, and round the Shoreditch area, it'll happen round Spitalfields, so I've moved from one place where its happened to one place where its going to happen. Around Shoreditch it's like a ghost town at night time; where there used to be people walking along the streets, there used to be kids playing in the streets, now it's just firms and it's dead.\textsuperscript{43}

The ghost town representing the City is compared with the vibrant streets of Spitalfields with its air of activity both day and night:

...you do walk around this area, and there are people around. There are lorries going through, there are the women working on the streets, there are cafes open at night, there are the pubs open at night, there are people around. And that won't happen. The street lighting is bloody awful, the pavements are bad, but nonetheless they are out and about. And that will disappear. And it will just be an extension of the City.\textsuperscript{44}

Spitalfields is presented as being threatened by the deadness of the City, its former vibrancy removed. This aspect of the representation of redevelopment shows clearly how representations of Spitalfields were used in the construction of

\textsuperscript{41}Interview with Pam Mossman, 4th July 1989.
\textsuperscript{42}Jil Cove, quoted in the \textit{City Recorder}, 14th January 1988.
\textsuperscript{43}Interview with Ian Worland, 18th July 1989.
\textsuperscript{44}Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
arguments against redevelopment. Spitalfields was represented and understood to be a lively place. One Campaign member, talking with reference to Broadgate, highlighted this point as a major reason for her objecting to the relocation of the Market.

Well when I saw that I thought 'That's going to be at the back of where I live', and at the moment its so full of vitality and life and colour and its so vibrant... I can see it being just a ghost town at weekends and in the evenings possibly or there being an overspill from people in the City staying late to use the winebars and pubs and things.45

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the Campaign's representations of Spitalfields. The Campaign was formed on the understanding that redevelopment would change the area. I would argue that redevelopment threatened to undermine the images and ideas the Campaign held about Spitalfields, and this threat provided the impetus to the establishment and trajectory of the Campaign. Their activities in opposition involved constructing and presenting arguments against redevelopment, which I outlined in Chapter Three. But these were fleshed out by assertions of their own understandings of Spitalfields. I have discussed these understandings and images of Spitalfields by examining their appearance in visual imagery (Phil Maxwell's photgraphs), and in text through the ways in which images of Spitalfields were presented, as a community, as a place of migration, as a multicultural place, and as a place fundamentally different from the City of London. Throughout this chapter I have demonstrated the importance of a consideration of the power of meaning in helping to understand political action.

In this and preceding chapters I have emphasised how this construction of Spitalfields, used in the arguments against redevelopment, had a constituency claimed for it by the Campaign. A particular representation of the people of Spitalfields was constructed by the Campaign, and simultaneously this representation was asserted as one held by the people of Spitalfields. This raises important questions about the political function and consequences of these images which extend beyond their use in debates about redevelopment. It is to these questions that I shall turn in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Speaking for Spitalfields

In the previous chapter I discussed how images and representations of Spitalfields were held, constructed, and used in the arguments against redevelopment. In this chapter I shall discuss the political function and consequences of this representation. As the reader will have noted, the Campaign represented Spitalfields as a lively, vibrant, multicultural place and home to the Bengali community. The Campaign argued that this entity would be destroyed if redevelopment was allowed to take place. The Campaign also claimed support for this image from the people it purported to represent. There were however unintended consequences of this representation, and I shall discuss these by exploring the relations between the Campaign and another group that became active in the debate over redevelopment in the area in early 1989, who held different ideas about Spitalfields and the area.1

Representations and Support

The Campaign constructed a representation of Spitalfields and its population, conveying the image that both were different; exotic, vibrant, lively, colourful and 'other'. As Said notes, ideas cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force - their configurations of power - being studied also.2 This is exactly what I intend to consider here - the political function of this representation. Why did the Campaign construct the image of Spitalfields that they did? What were the consequences of this?

I would interpret this representation as a product of the Campaign's claims to be representative of the population of Spitalfields and to be based within a specific community. The Campaign had appointed itself as a group representative of the people of Spitalfields and had entered the debate on the redevelopment

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1Although I discuss the CDG and examine the Campaign's reactions to this group in some detail in this chapter, I would like to point out that I never interviewed anybody from the CDG, and this therefore affected my analysis of the situation. The information about the CDG used here, apart from that discussed as provided by the Campaign, is taken from the CDG's own publicity material and from my attendance at some formation meetings of the CDG during 1989.
project on those terms. It had claimed a constituency in order to lend weight to its arguments, because all its arguments centred around the consequences of redevelopment for the whole population of the area.

In arguing against the redevelopment of Spitalfields, the Campaign was frequently challenged as to its legitimacy as a group claiming a supportive constituency in the area. As I illustrated in Chapter Three, it was concerned about this. Its door-to-door petitioning and leafletting were undertaken in order to get proof that it had support outside its very immediate constituency of white, Labour-supporting, middle class political activists. It succeeded in doing this by producing 700 signatures on a petition that was presented to the House of Lords Committee. The Campaign frequently discussed this issue and worried the issues of representativeness that I have discussed in this thesis. The following quotation, whilst referring to the public inquiry at which the Campaign planned to appear in 1991, echoes earlier discussions held during Campaign meetings at which the Campaign worried about its ability to represent the constituency it had defined for itself.

We had a discussion about the future of the Campaign bearing in mind the very few people who regularly attend and the subsequent apparent level of interest. How well could we claim to represent the community views and should we continue or consider the possibility of going to the Enquiry as individuals. At the end we agreed that for many reasons this Campaign should continue and that we needed to re-activate interest at an appropriate time. It was felt that unless we did continue, the Public Enquiry would only hear the views of the conservationists and not those of local people.3

Despite these doubts, the Campaign continued to claim that it represented the population of the local area.

Crucially, in order to lend credibility to its claim to know the wishes of the population, represent it, and speak out against redevelopment on its behalf, it had to claim knowledge of that population. It had to be seen to be knowledgable of the desires and best interests of the people of the area. But the Campaign were, in effect, claiming knowledge about people very different to themselves, people with cultures, background and attitudes which may and may not have been very different to their own. Consequently the image - the knowledge - that the Campaign constructed about Spitalfields and its population - and especially the Bengali population - was precisely that. It was an image, a picture, a stereotype,

3CSSD Notes of meeting on 18th March 1991. (Mailing letter)
an ideal type of the people of the area, simplified because its reality could not be known in its entirety and complexity to the Campaign. This is not to suggest that the members of the Campaign had no idea of the diversity of their fellow residents. Rather, I am suggesting that in order for the Campaign to claim a constituency amongst this diverse population, they had to construct an image of this population which was both a simplification (because they needed it to be) and a simplification because they could not, as a predominantly white and middle class group, have full knowledge of because much of the detail would be obscured to them due to their own difference.

This construction of an image of the population and their wishes as regards redevelopment reflects the Campaign's own politics and priorities, as I have illustrated in previous chapters. They, for example, presented the population of the area as a positive asset to the area, as revitalising the area, which reflected the Campaign's own wishes to see such a population in the area. And crucially in claiming knowledge of this population they could claim to represent it. The representation that the Campaign constructed of Spitalfields had a political function.

**Competing Claims**

The representation that the Campaign constructed of Spitalfields was however challenged, and this caused immense problems for the Campaign. Claims that the population of Spitalfields might benefit from redevelopment came from an unexpected source - from within that 'community' itself.4 The Community Development Group (CDG) was established in May 1989 as an 'umbrella organisation with a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations from Spitalfields, Weavers and St. Mary's' (wards to the north and south of Spitalfields respectively).5 Its aims and objectives were:

...to identify appropriate means for achieving the maximum degree of community influence and involvement in the redevelopment process; to promote housing, training, workspace, educational and leisure opportunities for local people; to seek to identify areas of agreement or substantial agreement and options for choice; to provide information to people resident or working in the area on proposed major

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4Please note that because of the contemporaneity of this thesis, the part of the story to which this chapter refers is not yet complete. This chapter deals only with the situation up to the middle of 1990.

redevelopments and on proposals for changes in land use and their impact on living and working conditions for people in the area, and to raise public awareness of these issues.6

It publicised itself as the principal forum working towards the establishment of a Community Plan for the area and a Community Development Trust, utilising planning gains given to the area by two developers, Rosehaugh and Grand Metropolitan. The Plan and the Trust were developed in response to the redevelopment of Bishopsgate Goodsyard and Trumans Brewery in the first instance. The developers of these two sites were understood to be:

...committed to working in partnership with the local community and transferring control of land to a Community Development Trust.7

This strategy of co-operation with the developers was embarked upon on the grounds that:

...ensuring development of all the land rather than just the major office element, for uses meeting local needs, combined with a community-led charitable trust having control of all or substantial parts of that land, should ensure that much of the new development serves local needs and is accessible and affordable to people working, living and trading in the area.8

The CDG was endorsed wholeheartedly by development companies such as the SDG:

They're going to produce their own sort of plan and then we're going to see if the two can mesh together. They know roughly what we think and we know roughly what they think, so the thing is going on together.9

The CDG presented itself, as had the Campaign, as representative of the wishes and aspirations of the local population in respect of the planned redevelopments:

The Community Plan represents a starting point and gives a community perspective on the nature, desirability and extent of development on the two sites.10

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6ibid. 
7ibid. 
8ibid. 
9Interview with Tim Budgen, Consultant Surveyor, LET/SDG, 24th July 1989. 
Funding was required for the drawing-up of the Community Plan. The Spitalfields Task Force and Business in the Community (BIC) obliged by agreeing to fund a team for the Community Plan and for a CDG working party in June 1989 to carry out public consultation on the Community Plan. The CDG, then, had come to a different conclusion to the Campaign as to the best means of dealing with redevelopment in the area.

The Campaign were extremely hostile to the CDG. They found the existence and arguments of the CDG extremely difficult to deal with, because both undermined the Campaign's position as a group claiming to represent the 'community' and arguing against the redevelopment. The CDG was seen by the Campaign as facilitating the developers, allowing them to gain a foothold in the area. For example, the involvement of the Task Force and BIC was seen as an indication of that, establishing community trusts,

...and basically control this community for the developers.
The Task Force, at that semi-public meeting [the Task Force Co-ordinator] said, "we are here to facilitate the developers." First time she publicly said that.\textsuperscript{11}

One member of the Campaign, a worker with the SSBA presented the CDG as being 'led astray' by the developers:

They're being totally manipulated by BIC and the Task Force. The whole agenda is being set by the developer. [The CDG are saying] "We have to get our public consultation done by September." Well why is this? "Because the planning application is going in in September." Well why the hell are they setting the agenda? And they're just being used and I don't know whether they're blind, ignorant or stupid.\textsuperscript{12}

Community Trusts were presented by the developers and by the CDG as a mechanism by which money received through planning gain could be held in trust by the 'community'. BIC's remit was to enable this to happen and this was felt by the Campaign to be unacceptable:

\textsuperscript{11}Interview with Kay Jordan, SSBA Co-ordinator, 21st July 1989.
\textsuperscript{12}ibid.
there to see which groups they can and can't be working with and everything else. It's total social engineering that they're doing.\textsuperscript{13}

In claiming to represent the area, the Campaign was asserting that it had a very good understanding of the requirements of the area. The Co-ordinator of the SSBA, related how she had in fact raised this point with the director of BIC:

When he trotted out his grand plan, I said "Look - that is a totally inappropriate mechanism - it presupposes there's nothing going on on the ground - we have more community groups per square foot than architects in Camden - the last thing you need is to come and re-invent the wheel."\textsuperscript{14}

The emergence of the CDG and involvement of groups such as BIC and the Task Force totally undermined this claim to knowledge concerning the needs of the area. The CDG presented a different strategy towards private sector-funded redevelopment, and this argument came from within the community that the Campaign claimed to represent. Although the Campaign had defined community as politically constituted, and could therefore account for difference therein, the limits of this definition were tested and broken through by the CDG.

An indication of the hostility of the Campaign towards the CDG may be obtained by examining the quotations below. Phil Maxwell was cautious in his criticism, but saw the CDG as quite possibly undermining the efforts of the Campaign who had tried to argue against the redevelopment on the grounds of its impact on the local population.

...there will be some people who may try to use it for themselves, rather than have an overview of a strategy for the community. There's a possibility that people, because of those people in it, the developers will try to assimilate the group and use it to justify what they're doing etc.\textsuperscript{15}

The CDG was portrayed as being undemocratic, unrepresentative, and comprised of individuals who were attempting to make personal gain out of the developments.

...they're not interested in doing [consultation]. They're interested in accessing what they see to be fifty... I don't know how much money they think they're in for, but they have no perception of the physical forms, they're not interested - in letting the broader public know what's going

\textsuperscript{13}ibid.
\textsuperscript{14}ibid.
\textsuperscript{15}Interview with Phil Maxwell, 6th September 1989.
Something the Campaign had always reminded itself of was the fact that in terms of material gain, Campaign members themselves had nothing to gain or lose because of the redevelopment. This claim had bolstered, for them, their claims as an opposition group. They presented themselves as protesting for the benefit of the whole community. They had entered into the debate on redevelopment on these grounds and not because they personally stood to benefit from redevelopment. They extended this argument too - they argued that nobody in the area stood to benefit from the redevelopments and they constructed an elaborate set of representations about the area in order to do so. Yet this claim was being completely undermined by that of the CDG, who had argued, as I illustrated above, that redevelopment could bring substantial benefits to the area. The representativeness of the Campaign was undermined by this emergence of an alternative, their power of argument removed, and they were reduced to having to make personal jibes against the CDG:

...we had this stupid thing at that meeting the other day - I haven't got the patience for it any more - but we sat and went through what they were and were not doing and who would be on the committees and who wouldn't be on them - all the usual clap trap about structures instead of getting their heads around anything tangible that puts something or someone on the ground that benefits people. That gets into the whole notion of committees and who's who and what's what.17

The Campaign's claims to know the wishes of the population of Spitalfields with regard to redevelopment was central to its raison d'etre. This was totally undermined by the appearance of the CDG claiming the same thing, and relying (perhaps) for the veracity of that claim on its existence as a predominantly Bengali group. The Campaign also understood the CDG's claims to representativeness as being based on the latter's consultation within the area. This consultation exercise was however derided as being minimal.

If they were serious when SHAPRS shut down, why didn't they step in? Going round knocking door-to-door - that was public consultation and community involvement. They didn't have the confidence to go door-to-door - you get spat at but you have to have the commitment to keep on with it.18

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17 Ibid.
18 Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989.
Yet the CDG’s claims at representativeness, the Campaign felt, carried far greater weight in public than those of the Campaign. The Campaign had never carried out a large public consultation exercise. It had felt that it didn’t need to - it was not in the business of undertaking market research, but knew *instinctively* what the people of the area wanted. This claim was totally undermined by that of the CDG claiming representation implicitly (I would guess although I have little more than anecdotal evidence for this) because it was a Bengali group and explicitly because it had undertaken consultation with groups in the area. The CDG were felt to be unrepresentative:

...they don't have the same perspective - I wouldn't say they don't understand. Partly because they're middle class social workers, they are not from Sylhet, they are not the working class of Spitalfields. They are being their leaders saying things, taking positions just like white middle class social workers do.\(^{19}\)

Why have the local business community, training organisations, youth organisations not become involved? Other organisations I may not agree with, but they do good work. This lot are a bunch of crooks - creating jobs for the boys and not working for the community, accessing funding for their petty organisations.\(^{20}\)

The Campaign was, however, unable to make these claims in public. I shall indicate below where I think the reasons for that lie. Before doing so I shall discuss some more specific arenas in which the Campaign and the CDG came into conflict.

A specific criticism that the Campaign made of the CDG concerned its role in distributing the money that the area would receive as planning gain for the redevelopment, and which had been given as a Community Trust for the funding of local groups. These criticisms were drawn from experience within the voluntary sector and from the Campaign’s own critique of the role of funding for that sector. In a nutshell, the Campaign was concerned that money in the Community Development Trust would be accessed by a small number of organisations for their own purposes, and that the wider 'community', and indeed the Campaign itself, would have no say in the ways in which that money was distributed. This would occur because of the rules governing the operation of such trusts, and because of the Campaign’s assessments of the individuals likely to be in charge of the distribution of money amongst groups in the area.

\(^{19}\)ibid.

\(^{20}\)ibid.
The Campaign perceived there to be fundamental (but not insurmountable) difficulties associated with the receipt of funds from any institution. Forman, with reference to local government funding for community groups, portrayed this as a complex dynamic. Funding may be drawn from the state and on the one hand groups might be dependent on that institution for their finance and thus for their existence. On the other hand, however that funding and thus the existence of such groups might lead to political demands being made for changes inside the political administrations that funded them.\textsuperscript{21} Or Robbie MacDuff put it:

\begin{quote}
...at the end of the day the person who holds the purse strings is the person who’s got or is the organisation that’s got control over you in some way, and I’m very concerned about grant-related cultures and community and voluntary organisations that are too dependent on their funding organisation when they have a clear responsibility very often to be very vocal in their criticism of those organisations.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

This was in no way an argument against funding for voluntary groups; for example, the GLC had done:

\begin{quote}
...pioneering work in funding organisations which represented groups in society that were unheard, that didn’t have a voice because there was no forum in which they were allowed to be heard. The mechanisms didn’t exist for them to be allowed to participate, contribute, determine, effect.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

However:

\begin{quote}
...I think what happened was somewhere down the line the issue of grants became more important than the issue of work and the issue of output. Complacency set in between / amongst organisations that felt they had a natural right to be grant maintained, to use that term, without actually showing anything, or showing very little as a result. Now that doesn’t benefit anybody.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

Charlie Forman had predicted the divisions that could be caused in the area over the question of planning gain in conversation with me in October 1988. Sure enough, the following year when the CDG had become established and had raised the issue of accepting planning gain as a trade off for redevelopment, the Campaign started to voice its concerns as to the financing of local groups and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{22}Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.  \\
\textsuperscript{23}ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{24}ibid.
\end{flushright}
projects by the private sector. Kay Jordan thought this quite acceptable in principle:

What you need to do is do what BIC says it's supposed to do which is access the private sector for that community and make sure the bloody private sector coughs up something.25

Others were less happy with the private provision of public welfare needs:

you've got another group like the developers almost, going around and offering money to do this, that and the other, which may from their point of view make sense, but I would challenge whether or not they have a coherent and cohesive view of what is needed vis-a-vis actual local needs of that neighbourhood.26

The encroachment of the private sector into the funding of local groups was seen as a harbinger of greater erosion of local democracy:

...basically the premise was that there's no hope, there's no future in local government, it's all going to be done on a voluntary basis and in terms of trusts, it's all going to be done through the business ends and all done through privately contracted work. ... But it seems to me its totally undemocratic, there's no way local people can have a say in what's going on, have a view, have a place in their own community - which is frightening.27

At issue was also the question of accountability.

If I were a Labour councillor in a new in-coming administration I'd have a ruthless regime on the issue of monitoring community group funding. ...there has to be a new criteria outlined, there has to be a set of rules to ensure that a community is getting value for money. I know that sounds like a bit of Thatcherism, but if you can't do your day-to-day maintenance of your housing stock through mismanagement, and if you're mismanaging your grant-related sector, you're mis-managing your social services, and you're spending a lot of money out, at the end of the day people are saying "all this money is going into this, that and the other and they're never getting anything for it". And if you're a council you have a responsibility to provide decent services.28

The Campaign were worried about the ways in which the community trust money would be used by the CDG. It was also concerned about the CDG's very

26Interview with ex-Spitalfields Project worker, 15th July 1989.
27Ibid.
28Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
acceptance of the trade-off of planning gain in return for redevelopment, with no recognition, according to the Campaign, of the dangers of this.

Discussions on planning gain crystallized the arguments used by the Campaign on the problems of redevelopment lead by the 'carrot' of 'community benefits', and an examination of the way in which planning gain was represented yields further insights into the politics behind the opposition of the Campaign to the redevelopment of Spitalfields. It was constructed as wrong, was presented as a means by which people were deprived of a choice regarding the principle of whether or not to allow redevelopment into an area at all, and it was understood as a means by which redevelopment was legitimized as a benefit for all, concealing the 'true' motives of developers for profit. 

None of the "gains" match the needs of the people of Spitalfields and adjoining area. What is needed is a strategy that begins to address the problems of inner city deprivation and regeneration with social and economic responsibility.

The Campaign viewed the planning gains to be given under the Section 52 Agreement as a mere drop in the ocean in comparison with the needs of the area.

The provision of 118 residential units for Housing Association fair rent is derisory in terms of the local housing need. The remainder of the private sector housing will in no way be "affordable" to local people who earn on average £100 a week or less.

How many people - local business people - would be able to take advantage of the offer of new retail units, given the high rents likely? Additionally:

The reservation of shop units in the scheme is already being diminished by the redesignation of "use class" to enable banks, building societies, travel agents and estate agents to be included.

The Section 52 Agreement incorporated space for a Fashion Centre for the local garment industry. Yet, the Campaign argued:

The provision of a Fashion Centre is a cynical gesture when the development through its massive rise in land

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29 Please refer back to Chapter Two for details of the planning gains made to Spitalfields under the Section 52 Agreement.
30 Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers Proposed Development of Spitalfields Market: Brief in Relation to the City of London Spitalfields Market Bill. October 1987.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
values will wipe out the base of the local garment and clothing industry.33

The gains as a whole were seen as 'tokenistic, misplaced, and they don't have a real impact'.34 According to Abbas Uddin, his experience with groups such as the Spitalfields Local Committee and SHAPRS had shown to him how promises on planning gains were often never enforced, or when they materialized, they were not ultimately beneficial to the local community.35 The example of the planning benefits obtained through the Sedgewicks development at Gardiners Corner in Aldgate were often cited as an example of planning gains that did nothing for the area - a Sports Centre costing over £100 per year to join and an underground 'shopping precinct' full of sandwich bars and perfume shops were not catering for the needs of the people of Spitalfields. They benefitted only the City workers.36 As SHAPRS and the SLC had said, back in 1984, offers of planning gain should not obscure a more fundamental issue of why planning benefit was available in the first place.37

Given this attitude, based for some members of the Campaign on over 10 years' experience in dealing with the issues of planning gain both practically and conceptually, it is unsurprising that the attitude of members of the Campaign was to view planning gains as basically unacceptable:

...we could recognise and understand the arguments for maximising planning gain, but at the end of the day our argument was that the community would not be there in the future to benefit from any planning gain that you're going to get.38

The Campaign argued against the provision of planning gain, and by implication, because of its self-portrayal as representative of the needs and wishes of the people of the area, argued that the people it represented shared this view. This representation was totally undermined by the appearance of the CDG and its arguments. The Campaign had debated the issues surrounding the provision of planning gain at some of its first meetings. The most vocal advocates of this opposition strategy came from those members of the Campaign most closely

33ibid.
34Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989.
35ibid.
36Pers. Comm, various. Photographic evidence handed to the House of Lords Committee by the Campaign, in May 1989 was used to emphasise this point.
38Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.

195
associated with the Labour Party. As Phil Maxwell understood it, the broader issue of redevelopment and planning gain was understood to be both intellectually problematic as well as difficult to deal with in practical terms:

...the planning regulations that exist mean that if you object to a development and you refuse it to go ahead, you go to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State gives authority and you get nothing out of it. However, if you object and negotiate, and try to set out some guidelines and get planning gain, then you have an office development, but also you’re getting some benefit for the community. So it’s a really difficult area to deal with.\(^{39}\)

Given expertise in planning matters a case could be made for attempting to get the best possible deal in negotiations, but on the other hand there was a very strong argument for refusing planning gain and planning permission because of the perceived or presumed consequences of such schemes on the local area. The issue was understood to encapsulate the dilemma that socialists have with regard to their involvement with the electoral system and a even broader establishment.\(^ {40}\) The Campaign was aware of these contradictions. Whilst the planning benefits on offer were perceived to be a mere drop in the ocean in relation to local needs, the 118 homes would go towards accommodating some of the 1,000 families currently living in squalid bed and breakfast lodgings because of the housing shortage. There were further dilemmas and contradictions recognised too by the Campaign. Spitalfields Housing Co-operative was to be one of the beneficiaries of the Section 52 Agreement, managing some of the social housing units.\(^ {41}\) It was unable to join the Campaign or sign the parliamentary petitions, yet certain members had sympathy with the Campaign’s arguments, an ex-Chair of the Co-op gave evidence for the Campaign in both Parliamentary Committees and its sister organisation, the Spitalfields Small Business Association, was an active participant in the Campaign’s activities. But when all was said and done, the Campaign disliked the idea of planning gain because it was thought to represent a pay-off by developers to the people of the area. This argument was made by the Campaign, in the name of the community, and was undermined when the CDG appeared and proposed a different strategy for dealing with redevelopment.

\(^{39}\)Interview with Phil Maxwell, 6th September 1989.
\(^{40}\)ibid.
\(^{41}\)Spitalfields Housing Co-operative was formed in 1980 by a group of people living in derelict tenements in the area who decided that due to mismanagement of properties and racism in allocations to Bengali families, they would take control of their housing situation themselves by establishing a Co-operative. It is still functioning, managing over 50 properties, and has recently provided accommodation for over 20 families on the Fakahruddin estate, Peace Street, which it built on derelict land. For further information, see Forman, C. (1989) *Spitalfields: A Battle for Land.*
The Campaign constructed a highly critical representation of planning gain by pointing to the use of planning gains by the local authority. The system of 'planning gain for planning permission' was seen as indefensible:

...if you pursue this programme of planning gain for planning permission the whole system of planning legislation is coming up to the highest bidder - the best barterer - and basically, that's corrupt.42

The local council was implicated in this, and seen as giving planning permission merely on the assumption that good planning gain was on offer. This view is in fact borneout by the statements from the Liberal Chair of the Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee.43 Another Campaign member commented that the council had so much planning gain they didn't know what to do with it. This was interpreted as a dangerous situation because of the lack of difference between decisions made for the good of the area on the sort of development required, and decisions made for the most money that could be obtained. This implied, according to the Campaign, that ultimately the council was not unduly bothered as to the impact of the development, so long as planning gain was available as a sweetener.

In practice there was little the Campaign could do beyond voice its objections at the paucity of the planning gains on offer according to their perceptions. Ultimately this strategy produced gains in the form of a House of Commons Committee receptive to these arguments who decided to pass the Spitalfields Market Bill on the condition that the Section 52 planning gains were improved in certain respects. The House of Lords was not so receptive to their arguments. The Campaign, prior to their appearance, drawn up a shopping list of demands on the Section 52 Agreement, but came out of that Committee with nothing additional. In the spring of 1988, before the first Committee stage in the House of Commons, the Campaign had considered questioning the legality of the Section 52 Agreement on the grounds that the Council was directly acquiring some of the benefits on the grounds of having granted planning permission in contravention of the 1971 Act and circulars issued by the Department of the Environment on this matter. This information was provided free through a contact of one of the Campaign members.44 The Campaign were unable to go further and

42 Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
43 Interview with Jeremy Shaw, Liberal Councillor and Chairperson of Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee, 13th December 1988.
44 Note on Spitalfields Market Planning Agreement. Michael Dempsey, 29th February 1988. (Amongst collection of Campaign papers)
seek Counsel's Opinion on the matter because of their lack of funds. The SLC had previous questioned the legality of the Agreement, but apart from noting this, there is no record of any further action being taken on this issue.

Discussions of planning gain were not a recent concept for the Campaign. The SLC had noted in 1984 that there were difficulties inherent with accepting planning gains and had argued that they had never been considered within the context of meaningful consultation with the local community or the SLC about possible priorities or needs. People were not used to the concept. There was a perception amongst those discussing these issues that, in the case of Spitalfields Market, the provision of planning gain had caused unprecedented divisions between groups in the area, which was held to be simultaneously interesting, new and slightly worrying by workers who had experience with SHAPRS. This had to be due to a lack of experience in how to handle and deal with these 'carrots' that appeared on sticks before a community that felt itself under siege anyway. The Campaign for Homes in Central London (CHICL), who had contacts with the GLC, the Local Committee, SHAPRS and latterly the Campaign had argued back in 1984 that:

Developments are allowed because of the gains to the community; this would seem to be a highly dubious method of permitting development. The gains are often what the developer would have done in any case as a service to an office block. Often the gain is paid for by the council; all the developer does is leave space..., the gains are often profitable and not open to the general public, or they may be something that the planners want but the community is opposed to. ... There is extensive history of planners being persuaded by 'gains' to permit development of a kind and scale which they would otherwise have found unacceptable.

The Campaign never argued against the provision of money for the area. Never did they reject that idea that some sort of physical redevelopment and economic regeneration was needed in the area. Their point was that aid was

45Ironically, the barrister recommended to the Campaign for further consultation on this matter by Dempsey, one Robert Carnwath QC, turned out be the Counsel acting for the City of London a few months later in the House of Commons Committee.
46SLC / Planning Action Group Meeting Minutes 10th December 1987. Note: by this time the SLC had ceased to exist and this group met at the St. Mary's Centre, a community resources and advice service.
50Letter from CHICL to Spitalfields Project Co-ordinator, undated (Archives indicate 1984)
needed, but that the money should be available 'without strings, without commitments, without attachments to development'. This in their minds contrasted completely with the CDG's view of the use of planning gains, courtesy of private sector redevelopment schemes, as a means of bringing money into the area. The Campaign's representation was undermined by the CDG in this fashion and because the CDG were arguing for redevelopment as a source of finance for the area.

The Campaign's attitude of dislike for the CDG was based on the fact that the CDG had completely undermined the Campaign's arguments. The representations and images that were constructed by the Campaign about Spitalfields and its population had a political function. In presenting the population, and specifically the Bengali population in a particular way (and in the only way knowable to them) the Campaign were claiming knowledge of the views of this population, thus claiming a right to speak on their behalf and attribute to them their own views on the consequences of redevelopment. This image of a unified population in a poor inner city area standing behind and supportive of a small group of people was totally undermined when a group also claiming the same constituency as the Campaign appeared, offering a different analysis of the benefits and disbenefits tied to redevelopment, advocating co-operation with the developers, and doing so on the grounds that as a Bengali group it was perhaps more representative of the wishes of the people who lived in the area.

I can go no further in my analysis of the Campaign's reactions to the CDG than this. This story is still unfolding as I write. Additionally, I suspect that a fuller explanation and conceptualisation of the Campaign's attitude towards the CDG lies with information in a form more complete than I have at the present time. I cannot discuss this here because I do not have that information in enough detail to draw the conclusions that I think could be drawn from this situation. I can however indicate where I suspect the roots of the Campaign's dislike of the CDG lie, and why the Campaign was unable to voice these concerns in public.

The Campaign had its own credibility undermined by the CDG. In turn the Campaign had its own doubts about the credibility of the CDG, and these concerns were based on relations at a personal and a political level between the members of the two groups. Through documentary and anecdotal evidence I happen to know that certain members of the CDG and groups that came under its umbrella had previously, and like the Campaign been political active and perhaps politicized by

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51 Interview with Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989.
organisations that had existed in Spitalfields in the 1970s and 1980s - the Spitalfields Project, the Spitalfields Local Committee, SHAPRS and the Labour Party. There had in the past been friction between people who were subsequently to form the Campaign and those who went on to found the CDG, occurring over issues such as the granting of funding to certain institutions and the activities of certain people within the Labour Party. Members of the Campaign had severe misgivings about the credibility being granted to certain people who became active within the CDG. Because I do not have a perfectly clear idea myself about the causes and consequences of these frictions, I am not prepared to go into them here. I suspect that a lot of harm could be done were I to make an interpretation based on incorrect facts. Whilst I am able to examine in detail the political views of the Campaign itself, it is not my place to start a detailed examination of the political differences between Campaign and CDG members because I do not have what I consider to be a complete enough picture of these political differences to make a fair and reasoned interpretation of them. An full examination of the roots of the conflict between the Campaign and the CDG would be a very interesting research project to undertake, but unfortunately can form no part of this thesis.

In addition to this, the Campaign were unable to make public their fears and doubts about the CDG. They found this incredibly frustrating. I would suspect that the reasons for this lie with the Campaign's own inability at the time to deal with the racial politics of the situation. This was raised by the former's Co-ordinator, Jil Cove, who herself expressed worry and frustration over the basis of their attack on that group, and whether it was in fact caused by a communication breakdown or, much more problematically, by racism:

"...I don't know whether it is inherent racism - it may well be that whole sort of thing about us not understanding the culture and the way community politics and politics in general work in Bangladesh. Which do, from my understanding of it, work very much on the power brokerage thing, and people push their way through the community and become community leaders. And I don't know what that means, actually."

A misunderstanding of the cultural bases of politics in Bangladesh perhaps lay at the heart of the matter. Other members understood these to have resulted in a

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52 Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
53 Sources for this include Eade, J. (1988) *The Politics of Community*. Gower, Aldershot; all 86 boxes of SLC records currently housed in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library; interviews with Jil Cove, Claire Murphy, Phil Maxwell, Abbas Uddin, and Robbie MacDuff; and my participation and observation at Campaign and formative CDG meetings.
54 Interview with Jil Cove, 12th July 1989.
political system which stressed co-operation and communication with powerful institutions as a means of achieving trickle-down benefits for a less powerful group. The CDG were operating in this fashion by aligning themselves with the developers, and Campaign interpreted this as a reflection of a political culture in which alliances such as this were the norm. One interviewee (not explicitly a member of the Campaign) understood that Bangladesh had no political tradition of democracy. The Zamindary system had operated, a zamindar being a land tax collector and thus a powerful figure in rural communities. In order to gain power, people allied themselves to this figure. British Imperial rule had encouraged this system, and it had persisted, leaving its mark in the form of style of political activity that stressed co-operation and alliances, rather in the same way that the Campaign's political style bore the imprint of the heritage of Labour and socialist politics in Britain. In order to influence development, the CDG had seen the developers as the group with which they should attempt to gain influence. This was discounted as naive and 'blind' and 'stupid' by the Campaign, yet certain members were discomforted by their own criticisms. For this reason, I would argue, the Campaign were never able to voice their concerns about the CDG outright and in public. They were uncomfortable about doing so because they felt themselves to hold an incomplete understanding of the cultural background to Bengali politics, which perhaps lay at the heart of the matter, and thus did not feel able to criticise the CDG on grounds that could easily be labelled racist.

...certainly I find it quite uncomfortable, because I say I'm not sure and I don't understand when they say to me they're a 'community worker'; I know what I think a community worker is, but I'm not sure I understand what they think a community worker is... And it's quite difficult, that, and it is a lack of culture, lack of understanding I think. I think it probably cuts both ways. One is that they're reluctant to perhaps provide us with that information on their own assessment of what it's all about and what they mean by it, and our reluctance to go and ask them. ...perhaps now is not the opportune time because it would be looked on as an attack.55

55ibid.
Chapter Seven
Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to present an account and critique of opposition to redevelopment in East London. This has been undertaken through an examination of the activities, anatomy and genealogy of one group, The Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers. I wish at this point to make some concluding comments drawing together some of the empirical, conceptual, methodological and theoretical insights and implications of this study.

An advocacy of the study of opposition to redevelopment.

At the outset I provided a context for this thesis by highlighting the lack of attention that has been granted within the political economy tradition in urban studies literatures to a discussion and conceptualisation of opposition to urban change. This absence, I would tentatively suggest, might be attributable to the underlying theoretical paradigm within which many of these writers have worked, namely within a Marxist tradition. Whilst I have no fundamental criticisms of work which examines urban change as a consequence of changes in relations of production and consumption, I would argue that the absence of a consideration of the ways in which people make place and society shapes space may be due to preoccupations elsewhere. I wished to examine the process by which place is contested, and wished to undertake an empirically-driven study, as a balance to a body of literature on the structural mechanisms by which this occurs. However, no suitable models existed for the conduct for such research. Descriptive accounts of opposition struggles exist, and these have an importance because they document struggles over space and tell stories that deserve relating. However these have been largely atheoretical writings on specific cases of redevelopment, lacking an inclusion of ideas on urban change and the role of groups and individuals in that process. The literature in urban social movements, whilst providing a theory of urban change through social
process, was felt to be inapplicable to this study because of the emphasis given by writers such as Castells and others on the broad, non-party political nature of such movements.\(^1\) The Campaign could not by any stretch of the imagination be termed an urban social movement.

Because of a lack of helpful guides within the literature as to how this study of opposition to redevelopment might be approached, I chose to tell a story about this opposition with the aim of providing myself with a framework with which to not only discuss and describe, but also to critique and conceptualise such opposition. Essential to the telling of this story seemed to be an approach which would not present the Campaign and its activities within Spitalfields as free-floating and purely of the present, but rather as rooted within highly specific political traditions. A first major conclusion I can draw therefore concerns not only the advocacy of the study of opposition to redevelopment, but concerns also the advocacy of an approach guided by the empirical material which, given sufficient attention to context and detail, should in itself suggest a way of presenting such a critique.

In this thesis, I undertook this as follows. In Chapter Two I presented the context which formed the background or backdrop for the Campaign. I presented a brief outline of the Spitalfields area and the history of the Market. I then discussed the redevelopment plans, firstly by looking at the history of discussions to relocate the Market and redevelop the site. I then looked at the plans for redevelopment that were first proposed in 1985, arguing that their appearance at that time could be explained by the expansion of the City of London and its need for physical space. I noted that the policy of the Conservative Government in the 1980s had encouraged the redevelopment of inner urban areas through the use of private sector finance. I then examined in more detail the steps by which the redevelopment plans took their form.

Having set this up as the context for the Campaign, I then in Chapter Three went on to examine the Campaign in more detail. I looked at its establishment and its member's reflections on their aims on forming the Campaign. I examined how they presented themselves and tried to mobilise support for their cause amongst groups and individuals in Spitalfields. I examined the Campaign's claims for itself as an umbrella group representative.

of a wide constituency in the area. I then presented the arguments on which the Campaign based its opposition to the redevelopment of the Market.

In Chapter Four I then set out to examine the roots of these arguments and the genealogy of the Campaign. I located both in Spitalfields. I looked at the work of the Spitalfields Project, the Spitalfields Local Committee and the Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service, arguing that the arguments presented by the Campaign could be traced back to arguments put forward by these groups against a particular type of redevelopment in Spitalfields. I then looked at the Labour Party in the area over the preceding ten years, in order to try and assess what sort of Labour Party existed that cared enough about the future of the area to organise a campaign against redevelopment.

This thesis was written as a story in which a great deal of attention was paid to the context in which that story took place. I would not be so rash as to suggest that this stands as the only way in which such a study might be researched and written. What I am suggesting is that this thesis demonstrates one particular way in which that may take place. It stands therefore as a contribution to what I hope shall be a developing concern within literatures on urban redevelopment; in due course I hope further work on this topic would take on board the suggestions made here and in turn offer further approaches based on that undertaken here.

The role of place.

In the final two chapters of this thesis I focussed in on the the role of place in the arguments against redevelopment. I chose to be directed in my consideration of place not by literatures on senses of place, but rather by the detailed empirical material I had at my disposal. This material pointed to the necessity for a specific approach to the notion of place. In accordance with suggestions made by my material, I argued that place was a dynamic entity, fluid and open to construction, rather than fixed, given and merely the locus for action. In Chapter Two I showed how the developers constructed a view of Spitalfields to suit their ends, focussing particularly on the ways in which the Spitalfields Development Group represented the redevelopment plans for Spitalfields. In Chapter Five I explored the ways in which Spitalfields and redevelopment were represented by the Campaign, in order to demonstrate how the Campaign understood and thus portrayed the area and its future after...
redevelopment. I examined these representations of Spitalfields in many different ways. I took an exhibition of photographs by a Campaign member and tried to assess what was being said about the area and redevelopment through them. I examined the ways in which the Campaign portrayed Spitalfields as a community area and as a migrant area, showing how these ideas were important to the Campaign's ideas of what constituted Spitalfields as a place and using a variety of data sources in this process. I looked at the Campaign's representation of Spitalfields as a multicultural area, and examined their celebration of this. I concluded this chapter by showing how these representations of Spitalfields were used in conjunction with images and ideas about the City of London in order to bolster their arguments against the redevelopment of the area. The contests that occurred over the meaning of Spitalfields were examined in order to illustrate this point.

Additionally, the use of specific constructions of place in battles for political control of an area was examined. I concluded Chapter Five by asserting that the threats posed to the Labour Party by redevelopment were sufficient to prompt that group into action. In Chapter Six I picked up the theme of the Campaign's representations of Spitalfields and looked at the political function and consequences of this. I re-introduced the question of the Campaign's representativeness, first raised in Chapter Three, and questioned this and their representations by examining the Campaign's reactions to the appearance of another group in the area, claiming the same constituency, and arguing for a different strategy with regard to the redevelopment planned for Spitalfields. I focussed on the arguments over the use of planning gain that had been raised briefly in Chapters Two and Three. I left the conclusion to this open-ended, by stating that I personally could go no further in my analysis, by noting that this particular part of the story was still unfolding at time of writing, but by presenting as a conclusion the Campaign's own ideas on their discomfort with the CDG.

On methodology

A third major conclusion I have reached in this thesis concerns the use of my methodology. In Chapter One I detailed my experiences of ethnographic practice and illustrated its use throughout the thesis with the utilisation of a specific textual strategy which involved the incorporation of the self within the text. I did this because, as I stated at the outside, I believe the
validity of ethnographic inscription to rest upon the exposure of the self in the research process in the construction of the data, and in the construction of interpretations of that data. Accordingly, my explanation of my research strategy included an account of the methods of participant observation and semi-structured interview techniques which were used in the research. The methodology chosen involved a deep level of commitment on my part to one group of people in order to obtain and deal with material suitable for a detailed critique of that group. I have no regrets about following this strategy. However, there were two implications of this strategy that were not accounted for during that strategy's formulation.

The first of these relates to my inability to include in this thesis a consideration of other points of view held by other groups and actors involved in the story of the redevelopment. My closeness to the Campaign precluded my closeness to, for example, the SDG or the CDG. This is not to say that, given a distance from the Campaign, that I would have been able to achieve the same level of insight into the workings of these two groups as I did of the Campaign. This would have been impossible given my personal characteristics and circumstances. The developers would not have allowed a young research student access to information concerning their decision-making process. The CDG would not have allowed an outsider - a white middle class non-Bengali non-Sylheti-speaking woman - access to information concerning the development of their case and arguments for redevelopment in the area. However, a certain amount of access to these two groups, I am now convinced, might have been facilitated had I not been so closely identified with the Campaign. For example, interviews with executives from the SDG would have been conducted at a different (and on their part) more professional level were my face unknown. Interviews with founder members of the CDG would have been undertaken had I not known that my face was clearly identified with a group who consistently denounced the CDG's views and their very existence. The conclusion I draw from this experience is that a 'qualitative' research methodology can raise research difficulties that may only appear during the course of such research. They cannot be planned for, and they may have ramifications stretching through the collection and construction of data to its interpretation.

A second ramification of my involved research strategy concerns my own construction of Spitalfields, and its shaping through my identification with the Campaign. A tension existed between my own set of images and
representations of Spitalfields and those of the Campaign. I shall discuss this point in relation to the photographs included in the text which help to illustrate for the reader my position in relation to the Campaign and my feelings about the area. In Chapter Five, in order to build up my own portrayal of the Campaign's representation of Spitalfields, I examined a collection of photographs taken by Phil Maxwell and used in an exhibition dedicated to the saving of Spitalfields. As I noted in a footnote there, my own photographs of Spitalfields dispersed throughout the text could similarly be examined and conclusions drawn concerning my own interpretations of the area and the image that I wish to portray of it. This conclusion is in part a reflection of my feelings on completion of the research and the thesis, and it therefore seems doubly appropriate to mention my own reflections about that construction here in the conclusion. The reader is, of course, encouraged to develop her own ideas on this matter.

In order to deconstruct my own photographs, I must firstly describe how and why these particular images were picked out for inclusion in the text. I shall not discuss the photographs and maps that were drawn directly from already published sources; these images are provided in order to give the reader a set of reference points about the area. Their form could be discussed but that would entail a level of knowledge about the production of the original documents that I do not possess. In addition, there are fourteen photographs that were either taken by myself in the early spring of 1988, or by Dan Cohen, a friend of a QMW colleague in the summer of 1989. The differences between the two are not apparent here. Due to an unforeseen technical hitch, although I had anticipated the inclusion into the finished text of glossy colour photographs reproduced from negatives or transparencies, I was left with black and white photos, reproduced I don't know how. They have what seems to me to be a vaguely ghostly quality and also seem to refer back to an older sepia-toned style of photography. They look rather strange to my eyes because of this, and their production in this style was not intentional. I could have asked for the photographs to be reproduced again, to my original specifications. I did not, because although initially disappointed with the reproductions, I grew to like them. They also offered me the opportunity to view familiar images from a new and different angle. For example, Photograph 2.3 shows a view from Bishopsgate of the market and the church. The sky is very dark, the Christchurch steeple appears as distorted and the market looks extremely clean. This is a very uncommon representation of this particular view.

207
The images in the photographs were chosen deliberately. Their use as image was also premeditated, to the extent of precluding the use of detailed captions indicating the precise location of the photographs. At the time of their inclusion in the text I felt inclined to give the reader a set of images of Spitalfields that were as imprecise (or as confused?) as my own images of the place. This stands in direct contrast to Maxwell's photographs with their clarity of image and caption. He is a resident and knows his home turf. I was and am an outsider and do not. This difference is reflected in the photographs.

My choice of photographs reflects my views, feelings and impressions of Spitalfields. A detailed introspective examination of a set of personal representations is difficult, but certain aspects of these images stand out to me and can be shared. (The reader is of course at liberty to make up her own mind). For example, figures 2.5 and 2.10 give two views of the market, one of it rubbish-strewn and used by people, the other of it deserted in the afternoon, with only market vans and large expensive cars using the site. It is the latter image that I hold in my mind. As a non-resident of the area my frequent visits to Spitalfields were conducted in the main between noon and midnight. The image I hold in my head of the market is that of it as a deserted carpark. Spitalfields market as a working market I saw only occasionally.

Some of the photographs portray Spitalfields as rather run-down and derelict - which it is to my eyes. For example figure 3.6 looks into Wentworth Street from the back of a disused tenament block. I wanted to show that there were still these tenament blocks here, and that they had not been renovated, unlike others elsewhere in Tower Hamlets which have been fully refurbished and many subsequently sold. This picture is therefore, for me, a statement about the implications of the lack of investment in the area. Photograph 3.7 is for me a similar statement, showing a derelict site used as a car park, where for many years plans for the Whitechapel shopping centre have failed to come into fruition.

It has been pointed out to me that none of the photographs chosen here show people as their main subject. This is most apparent with photograph 3.8, which shows types of housing in Hanbury Street. This could be contrasted with Phil Maxwell's photograph of the same street with children playing. Perhaps I am making a statement here about my ambivalence
towards people in the area. Because I do not feel myself to be one of them, as Phil does, I remove them from my images. Many of my photographs were taken early in the morning because I knew that I would not find many people on the streets (apart from around the market) - perhaps subconsciously I wished to avoid them.

Some of the photographs were taken in order to show the contrasts evident to my eyes in Spitalfields. For example, we have the image of successive uses in the area and their imprint on the area's fabric, as shown in photograph 3.9 of the Brick Lane/Hanbury Street corner showing the Brewery arch across the street in the distance and men unloading halal meat in the foreground, in front of an old material and haberdashery wholesalers and the row of curry houses and restaurants stretching down Brick Lane.

Others were taken because of my interest in housing. Photograph 3.10 was taken for another project on Housing Action Trusts and reproduced here because it showed yet another back street, the end of Wentworth Street market, and a banner saying 'No to a Housing Action Trust' - a statement about housing set amongst some of the worst housing conditions in the UK. Photograph 3.11 of the Herbert and Jacobson estate with Denning Point, the last of the GLC's tower blocks, in the distance shows the contrasts in types of housing provision in the area, and there is litter in the foreground. This is one of the images I hold of Spitalfields, namely as a place of sub-standard housing, litter and dirt.

Photograph 3.12 is something of an enigma to me. Taken in Spitalfields on an extremely hot day by Dan Cohen, the colour original shows how derelict parts of the area can look and perversely, how attractive in a mysterious way, something not entirely captured in this poor reproduction. On reflection I would conclude that my choice of this photograph was directed by the image it gave of Spitalifelds as attractive and mysterious despite its problems, a feeling heightened for me because I have no idea where this photograph was taken. As I have pointed out elsewhere, one of the attractions of Spitalfields is the ease with which we (the educated white urban middle classes) can construct the area as exotic - perhaps this is my contribution to the exoticisation of Spitalfields.

Finally, there are four photographs (4.1 - 4.4) showing the Brick Lane area of Spitalfields, full of images that I associate with the area - for sale signs, a mixture of architectural styles, expensive and old cars, the old
Brewery facade reflected in the new Brewery facade and so forth. Again, these photographs are devoid of people, and again these are images I hold in my head when I think about the area and which I wished to reveal and perhaps share with the reader.

These photographs seem to me to sum up clearly a major point concerning my close level of involvement with the Campaign and my adherence to a participatory methodology. My relationship with the Campaign was close, but not that close. I could identify with many of the arguments of the Campaign, but not all. I could contribute towards the Campaign's arguments but ultimately to a limited extent. I could aid the construction of a set of specific representations about Spitalfields, but only up to a point. Ultimately, my views of Spitalfields were different, my relationship with the area was one of outsider. Although I held a position within the Campaign, it was one of difference. Although I claim insight to the Campaign in this thesis, that insight is tempered by that difference.

On the use of discourse analysis.

The final conclusion I wish to point out concerning this thesis relates to the question of discourse analysis. In Chapter One my advocacy of discourse analysis of the type undertaken by writers such as Said was supported by the contention that such an investigative strategy could be useful in revealing both the power relations that work within a social setting and the representations that are constructed within social life. I undertake this by discussing the positioning of the Campaign within a web of social relations in Spitalfields, pointing to the positions of its members as constituents of a specific social group. I point to the relationship between the Campaign and the local Labour Party, noting the importance of the identification of the roots of the Campaign for an understanding of its later trajectory, and show how a discourse of opposition to redevelopment was constructed by both the Campaign and previously existing groups which established a specific set of arguments of the dangers of a particular type of redevelopment. I point to the conflicts that ensued because of this positioning when I discuss the conflicts between the Campaign and the Community Development Group. This is undertaken by an examination of the discursive strategies by which both the Campaign and the CDG constructed themselves as representative of the 'community' and the points of tension that arose through tensions between
these two discourses. I hope to have shown that the examination of discourses can provide a useful conceptual tool for the investigation of social life and the power relations held within that social life. Moreover, I have illustrated how these discourses are used in the production and control of space, be it by the Campaign, the developers or the CDG.

As I noted briefly in Chapter One, a similar exercise involving the study of conflicts between specific discursive constructions might have been undertaken by examining the discourses of redevelopment and opposition held by the developers and the Campaign respectively. It is to my regret that I did not undertake such an exercise, the reasons for this lying both with the time available for such a study and my own position within the Campaign. I would argue that any further work on this case study should as a priority include such an exercise. Similarly, an examination of the discursive construction of Spitalfields as undertaken by the CDG was not undertaken in this thesis. Again, my own position in relation to the Campaign and the lack of time available for such an exercise precluded this. Therefore I conclude that a research strategy based on the analysis of the discursive construction of social life is only as good as the material from which such an analysis draws. In order to investigate power relations to the fullest extent one has to investigate the intersection between discourses, and this of course relies on the availability of comparable material. An investigation of representations and their construction, again, will only make complete sense if that which a representation refutes, its 'other', is considered as a component of that representation.

Therefore, whilst this thesis might stand as a text advocating the use of discourse analysis and an interpretative research methodology based on proximity to the material, it should be borne in mind that it also stands as a warnings to the limits of such a strategy. This is not to say that I consider this thesis invalid because of this; far from it, and given the time again I would happily repeat this strategy if only for what it gave to me personally. But this thesis is partial. The research strategy ultimately conflicted with the conceptual strategy with the result that an incomplete analysis has been undertaken.
And finally...

As a final statement, I wish to make two final points concerning the partiality of this thesis. Firstly, this is very much a current thesis. As I write, in May 1991, the Market is moving to its new home in Temple Mills, leaving the old Market deserted. Plans for the redevelopment scheme are being drawn up again, older plans have been called in to a public inquiry that will sit in about six month's time, and the developers are stating that still older plans might still be used on the grounds that they have planning permission. The Campaign is still operating, still arguing against the redevelopment, but now on the form of redevelopment rather than the fact given the imminent removal of the market. It is still questioning itself and its role in the area, wondering whether it is representative of its constituency and devising new strategies of opposition. It is still co-existing uneasily with the CGD. My thesis deals with the redevelopment of the Market from the genesis of the plans through to the passing of the City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill in the summer of 1989. A lot has happened since. I hope subsequent redevelopments will be recorded somewhere else - this story is interesting and deserves retelling.

A second reason for its partiality lies with its purpose as a piece of academic writing. You have just read a Ph.D thesis. Its function has been to get me an academic qualification. It has been written as a critique of the Campaign for that purpose. I have therefore had the power of the author to emphasise that which I consider important in the story and play down things (ideas and happenings) that I have not considered important to my argument. This thesis may constitute a record of the Campaign's activities as fully and accurately as I can make it, but it remains a partial record. There are omissions in this thesis. I do not, for example, examine some of the blind alleys and red herrings that we as a Campaign followed and dropped over the past three years as part of the campaigning strategy. I do not go into the background of the differences between the Campaign and the CDG in any detail because I did not obtain enough information on that to write about it to my satisfaction. This thesis is my interpretation of the activities of the Campaign; it should not therefore be read as the definitive statement on the Campaign. It is, as far as I know, factually accurate (although I am sure there are inaccuracies) and it has been written by someone involved very closely in the Campaign. But it is not a definitive statement.
For this reason I hope that the Campaign will read this thesis, comment on it, and produce their own critique of my work. I cannot determine how or whether this will happen, but I hope it does, and I hope that anyone who had read this will remember that. I have been critical of the Campaign, and it is only right that those criticisms are answered. Ideally they will be, and will be written up and placed with this thesis for public access.

As I stated in Chapter One, I wanted to write a critique of the Campaign. I have been critical of the Campaign, but I hope that this critique is of some use to them in thinking through what they/we have achieved and finding new strategies and arguments to use in the debate over the form that a redeveloped Spitalfields would take. I hope this thesis is of some use. As Abbas Uddin put it:

I think if you write anything like that it needs to be slightly provocative, it needs to be controversial to a degree, as long as you don't personalise or offend people, otherwise it can be like a novel because it's nice and peaceful.2

2Interview with Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989.
7.1 The day I finished writing this thesis, the Market moved.

THE GUARDIAN
Monday May 13 1991

Spitalfields traders finally call it quits

Michael Walsh called in as usual on his way home from a night's work in the sewers under the London Hospital, to find it was all over. Instead of a week's vegetablesged and leggers along with the cabbage stalks and rotten oranges.

The site now becomes a wholesale planning row. The original scheme, flattening 'the listed market buildings, has been called in for public inquiry.

Save Britain's Heritage has just commissioned and published its own scheme from Terry Farrell, which would keep the market building and develop piecemeal. And the developers, Spitalfields Development Group has come back with a new scheme by the American architect, Ben Thompson, keeping some of the building.

Brian and Richard started as porters, and eventually bought out their employer, the 146-year-old Ridgewell firm.

June Moore stayed at her desk until the day's work was over at 2.30 pm on Friday, then started to dismantle and pack it.

'If I miss the characters, but not the hassle of trying to get to work in the morning.'
Appendix 1
List of Interviews

*The Campaign*
Jil Cove, 12th July 1989
Robbie MacDuff, 11th July 1989
Phil Maxwell, 6th September 1989
Claire Murphy, 6th July 1989
Pam Mossman, 4th July 1989
Ian Worland, 18th July 1989
Paula Worland, 18th July 1989
Abbas Uddin, 19th July 1989
Kay Jordan, 21st July 1989

*Bethnal Green Neighbourhood*
Jeremy Shaw, 13th December 1988
Peter Studdert, 1st September 1988

*SDG*
Tim Budgen, 24th July 1989
Brian Cheetham, 27th November 1989

Peter Shore, MP for Bethnal Green and Stepney, 1st August 1989

Ann Santry, Newlon Housing Trust, 8th November 1988
David Luxton, Toynbee Housing Association, 1st November 1988
Rees Johnson, Tower Hamlets Homeless Families Campaign, 3rd November 1988
Mark Adams, St. Mary's Centre, 14th October 1988
Jon Aldenton, Tower Hamlets Environment Trust, 10th June 1988
Douglas Knight, Shadwell Gardens Tenants Association, 25th July 1988
Graham Magnusson, Holland Estate Tenants Association, 24th October 1988
Charlie Forman, ex-SHAPRS, various telephone conversations.
The interviewees are listed for ease of reference and are divided according to groups. An alternative division of interviewees would be to separate interviewees according to purpose of interview. This strategy is outlined below to separate for brief discussion interviews that were selected for factual information, and those selected for more in-depth discussion of particular aspects of the story.

The first type includes interviews with Jeremy Shaw, Peter Studdert, Ann Santry, David Luxton, Rees Johnson, Mark Adams, Jon Aldenton, Douglas Knight, and Graham Magnusson. These people were selected for interview in order to provide primarily factual information, background details, context and chronology to the information that I was at that time handling, during the first eighteen months of the research. For example, Ann Santry and David Luxton were both involved with the schemes for housing provision in the new market development. Interviews conducted with these people were essential in order to clarify facts and to get some idea of the chronology of events to this aspect of the story, even though much of the material obtained in these interviews is not covered in detail or used within the text.

These interviews were not tape-recorded. Notes were taken during interview, subsequently written up in full to incorporate both the information obtained and my constructions and interpretations of the information given. These notes were kept for reference but not for direct quotation. These interviews were conducted and later used for the purpose of aiding factual reference and inference, rather than for the direct construction of an argument and a text.

A second type of interview was conducted with people from the Campaign (listed above). After the House of Lords Committee had made its decision in the summer of 1989, it seemed appropriate that I should interview as many members of the Campaign as possible, in order to take the opportunity to sit down with them and both ask direct questions about the Campaign for the record, and to discuss aspects of the Campaign’s and individual’s stories that seemed important to me at that time, particularly those questions relating to its foundation, its success or otherwise, and its future as a group constructing itself as representative of the people of Spitalfields in the face of the development of the Community Development Group. These interviews were all loosely structured around a key set of questions, with additional discussion arising either out of their answers or from further questions from me specific to themselves and their histories. Often during these interviews I would ask questions to which I already knew the answer, but to which I required a direct statement for the text and for my reconstruction of the story.
These interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. They were then examined quite carefully as a collection of texts. Three things seem important on reflection, although these were not necessarily fully conscious strategies for interview analysis at that time. Firstly, a certain amount of intuition plus personal knowledge and friendship with interviewees was useful in directing attention to various ideas that appeared in these interviews, concerning for example, why some people preferred to talk about particular aspects of the redevelopment story at the expense of others, or why particular languages and turns of phrase were used (although no speech analysis was used). Secondly, the Campaign's story as told by themselves could be (re)constucted through these interviews. This, obviously played a central role in the construction of the written text and the (re)telling of the opposition's story draws heavily from these interview transcripts. Thirdly, many shades of attitude and feeling were detectable in the interview transcripts. Although these were not used explicitly in the text, my awareness of emotion and attitude, confirmed in the interview transcripts, were important in my critique and text.

In addition, interviews were conducted with others who played an important role in the redevelopment story; Tim Budgen, Brian Cheetham, and Peter Shore. Both factual information, used in the construction of the text, and impressions of the role of these people in the story were gained through these interviews. All three were conducted around a specific set of questions tailored to the individual. From Tim Budgen and Brian Cheetham I gained an insight into the history of the redevelopment as told by the developers (a story which I could not tell in great detail due to my association with the Campaign and the conditions this imposed upon my research strategy as I point out in Chapters One and Seven). From Peter Shore, the Labour MP for Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency in which Spitalfields lies, I obtained his overview of the redevelopment story, useful as an addition to my construction of the context in which the redevelopment plans were formulated. This interview was also helpful in aiding my interpretations of the Campaign, because there had been a certain amount of difference in opinion between certain members of the Campaign and their MP arising from experiences within the local Labour Party. These interviews were all tape recorded and transcribed. Their analysis was less intuitive than that granted to the transcripts of the interviews conducted with Campaign members. My lack of familiarity with these three interviewees meant that I could not read their comments and statements with the same level of insight accorded to my readings of the transcripts of the Campaign members.
In addition, information was obtained from other people not listed above, for example, representatives from tenants associations in Tower Hamlets, and individuals involved with community development in Spitalfields to whom I was introduced by other interviewees. These were not strictly interviews, but rather brief encounters with people contacted briefly and informally. Much of the material obtained was unattributable, is not used explicitly in the text, and these people are therefore not directly cited as interviewees. Much of that information was extremely useful in aiding my interpretations of the material by providing hints of other people’s local knowledges, glimpses of their interpretative frameworks and clues as to processes of image construction and representation with reference to redevelopment in general in the area.
Appendix 2
List of SLC Member Groups.

Bengali Youth Movement
Bengali Youth Organisation
Chicksand Community Action Group
Chicksand Friendly Club
Christchurch Adventure Playground
Christchurch Parish
Cottages Tenants Association
East End Community School
East End Mission
Frendz And Neighbours of Spitalfields
Federation of Synagogues
Montefiore Youth Club
Monterfiore Co-operative
Multiracial Bengalee Association
Nari Samity
Pakistan Youth Organisation
Spitalfields Housing And Planning Rights Service
Spitalfields Housing Co-operative
St. Ann’s church
Tower Hamlets Commission for Racial Equality
Toynbee Hall
West Spitalfields Market Residents Association
West Spitalfields Residents Association
Whitechapel Art Gallery
Bibliography and Sources

Published Works


*What is the Spitalfields Task Force?* Action for Cities publicity brochure, undated.


Other Sources

Campaign to Save Spitalfields from the Developers


CSSD *Petition to the House of Commons*. October 1987.


See also the Campaign's archive of material dating back to its establishment, from which letters and documents quoted here are taken. The intention at time of writing is to house this in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library.

Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service


SHAPRS *Too Little, Too Late: A Different View of the GLC*. Summer 1986.

See also SHAPRS’ proofs of evidence to the public inquiry on the Borough Plan, 1984.

All the above documents are held at the Tower Hamlets Local History Library.

Spitalfields Local Committee


SLC Extraordinary Meeting of the SLC. 8th May 1987. Notes on meeting.


See also Tower Hamlets Inner Area Programme (THIAP) Consulting the Community: A Report of the 1985/6 Consultation Programme. This is held amongst the SLC's files.

Refer also to the files of the SLC and the Project which are kept in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

LBTH Development Committee Report on Spitalfields Market. 9th April 1986.


Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee

Bethnal Green Neighbourhood Committee Spitalfields Market Report on Consultation, 30th July 1986


BGNC Minutes 20th July 1986. All other minutes for the relevant period were consulted. All are housed in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library.

Community Development Group


City of London Corporation


See also the evidence presented to the House of Commons and House of Lords Committees by the Corporation.

**Spitalfields Development Group**


SDG *A Solution to Spitalfields and What it means to You.* July 1986.

SDG *Update.* April 1987


**Spitalfields Market**


**Additional Sources not included elsewhere:**

All material presented to the House of Commons and House of Lords Committees on the City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill 1987.


Finally... this cartoon has little relevance to this thesis but a lot of relevance to the new redevelopment plans.