

Visioning Retrofit Futures for Cities

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EPSRC

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Pressures on Cities



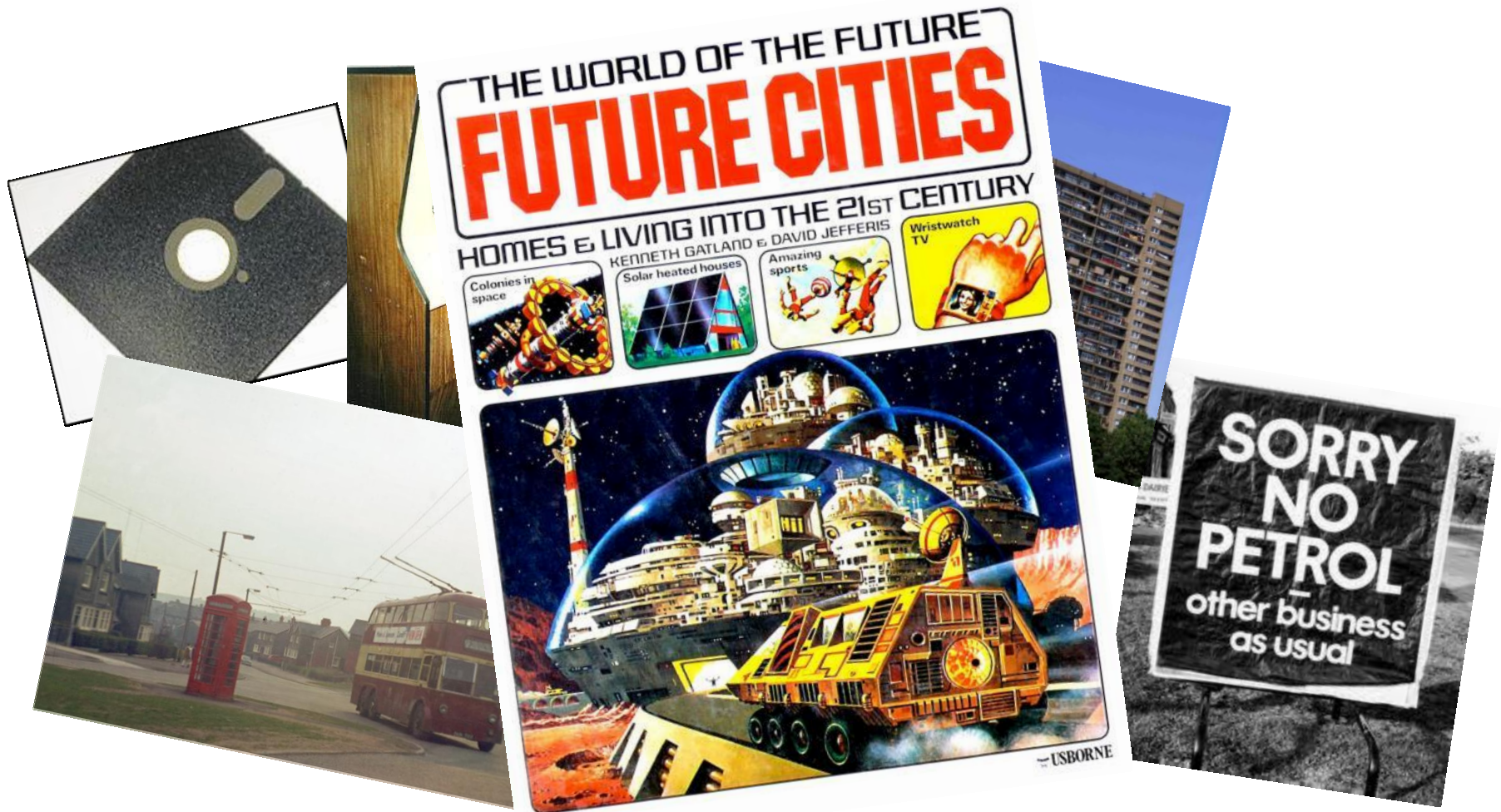
Looking backwards - Learning from the 1970s?

“David Cameron, the new Edward Heath?
The coalition prime minister's austerity programme is taking us back to 1970s Britain, a time of slow growth, rising unemployment and soaring bankruptcies, writes **Larry Elliott**”



The government is thinking about putting an airport in the Thames estuary. It is ramming through a revamp of the National Health Service. Oil prices are high and there is trouble in the Middle East. The prime minister inveighs against the "unacceptable face of capitalism".

Technological change: looking back 40 years...



(Adapted : Eames, 2012)

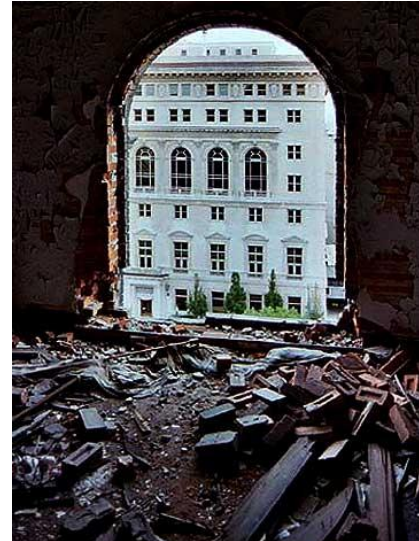
'Then and Now' – Detroit

“This continent has not seen a transformation like Detroit’s since the last days of the Maya. The city, once the fourth largest in the country, is now so depopulated that some stretches resemble the outlying farmland and others are altogether wild.”

– From “[Detroit Arcadia](#)”, Harper’s Magazine, 2007



Source: lhoon (flickr)



Source: Forgotten Detroit



Seoul, South Korea (2005 and today)



Cardiff (1950s and today)

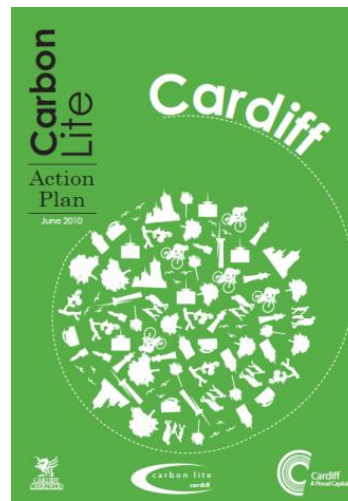


Looking ahead 40 years.....



Emergence of sustainable city visions

- 'Ecological crisis' and 'Economic crisis'
- Responses:
- New visions and expectations
- Reconfiguring infrastructures
- Capacity and consequences



Why do we need visions for cities?

- Sense of purpose and orientation
- What sort of future do we want?
- Promote discussion and debate
- Mobilise resources around desired futures



Utopian Visions

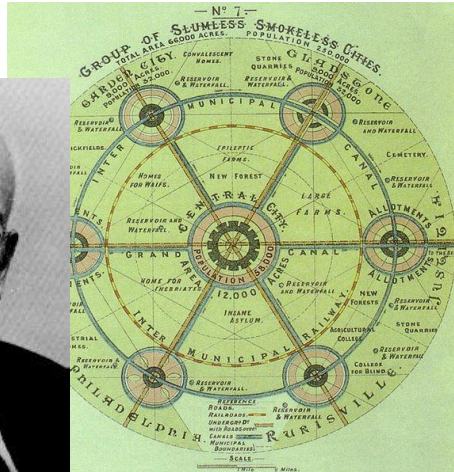
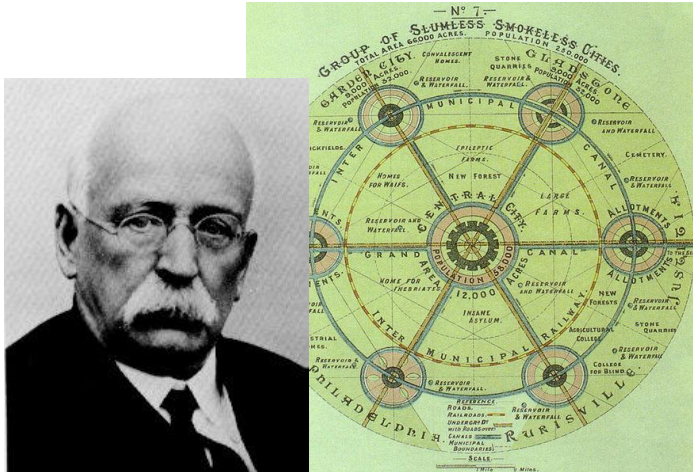
Plato's 'Republic' (380BC)



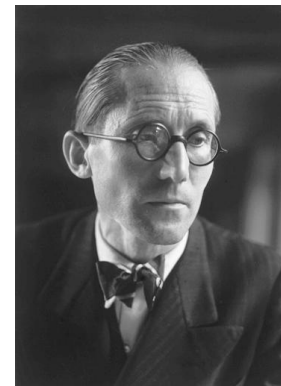
Thomas More's 'Utopia' (1516)



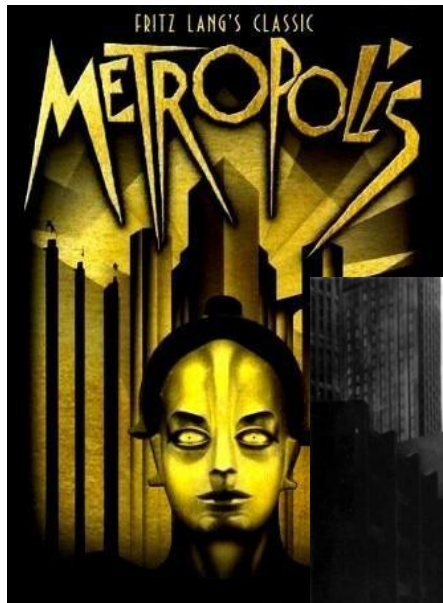
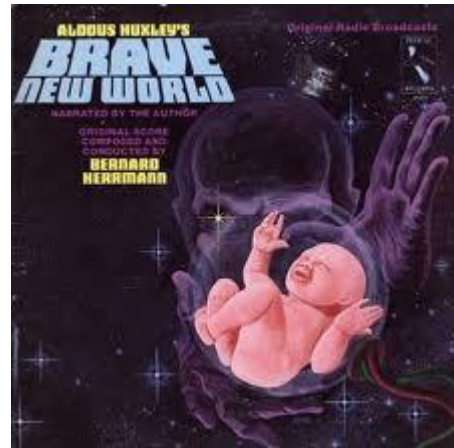
Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City' (1902)







Le Corbusier's 'Contemporary City', (1922)



Urban Dystopias



'Competing' city futures

Technocity	Smart City	Eco City	Gaian City
			
<i>A place where all urban contradictions remain unresolved. An antecedent to ecological and cultural collapse.</i>	<i>A place where people are trying to resolve the contradictions of sprawl, its systemic impacts through growth management. But it creates a blinkered view of ethnocentricity.</i>	<i>A place where inhabitants are reconstructing their ways of life to resolve contradictions through systems-based policy of sustainable development. Social justice is pursued through a world-centric view of reality</i>	<i>A place of dreams where all urban contradictions are resolved within a sustainable and holistic culture.</i>

Degree of diffusion of sustainability and sustainable technologies within city region

	Up to 25% (Cultural creatives and early adopters)	Up to 50% (mainstreamers start adopting)	75% adoption (laggards and reactionaries persist)	Saturation (sustainability is the way of life)
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Retrofitting Cities – Key Themes

- Flexibility – ‘people or technology’?
- Obduracy – ‘materials or social priorities’?
- Malleability – ‘system change or making do’?
- Whose futures – ‘elite or shared visions’?
- Managing purposive change what what capacity?

