

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University		
Unit of Assessment: D32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Heritage Action: Discovering, preserving and celebrating post-war modern architecture		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007–2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Richard Brook	Reader	2007–present
Laura Coucill	Senior Lecturer	2014–2020
Luca Csepely-Knorr	Reader	2011–present
Ben Edwards	Reader	2011–present
Kevin Tan	Senior Lecturer	2011–2019
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–2019		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p><u>Brook</u>'s funded research has impacted on the heritage sector through the statutory listing of post-war buildings, the protection of assets by lodging them safely in archive collections, the innovative digital preservation of Manchester Reform Synagogue, and by more broadly recalibrating popular views and preconceptions of mainstream modern post-war architecture. Public talks, walking tours and exhibitions have enabled citizens to re-appraise apparently mundane, non-descript sites as 'special places of interest', thereby increasing appreciation of mainstream architecture by embedding it within new socio-cultural contexts and providing alternative perspectives. His work is characterised by engagement with the region, the city, a wide variety of cultural stakeholders, policy makers and the general public.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p><u>Brook</u>'s research on 'mainstream modernism' architecture in the post-war period (1945-80) encompasses all the constituents of the built environment that, at the time, provided the material background to most people's experience of daily life but were not regarded as of the avant-garde. Informed by his expertise as a practising architect, <u>his</u> unique 'holistic approach, embracing architecture, planning, landscape and social history, places [him] ahead of most scholars of the period' (Senior Architectural Investigator, Historic England [A]).</p> <p>The first milestone in <u>Brook</u>'s long-standing investigation was <i>Manchester Modern</i>, a wide-ranging architectural survey of the region including archival study, interviews, fieldwork and photography. Funded by the Royal Institute of British Architects' Research Trust, this project was initially published as a report that was lodged with several libraries (2010). <u>Brook</u> subsequently produced a website (with Fablr, 2014), and the project was eventually realised as a book (2017), with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund [1]. He then embarked on research into the architecture of Lancashire County Architect's Department. This work developed, in part, in response to a thematic focus by the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (SAHGB) and The Twentieth Century Society (C20) on 'Official Architecture' (architecture associated with the state). Subsequent archival research and interviews led to a presentation at the SAHGB annual symposium (2016) and drew attention to the hitherto unknown plastic classroom at a school in Fulwood – <u>Brook</u> submitted the building for listing in 2016, it was successfully approved the following year. Published as a journal article, this research established the significance of regional architectural cultures in the post-war period while also introducing a new set of buildings to architectural historians [2]. Extracts were included on <u>Brook</u>'s website, which is cited in both the C20 Society's letter of support and the listing entry itself (2017).</p>		

Infra_MANC (with Martin Dodge, University of Manchester) [3] was another important milestone that consolidated Brook's expertise in the novel subject area of post-war infrastructure. The exhibition and accompanying illustrated catalogue drew on primary archival research, fieldwork, photography and interviews, drawing attention to artefacts from the collections of the County Record Office, the Museum of Transport, John Rylands Library in Manchester and private individuals. Many of these items were on public display for the first time and had previously remained uncatalogued within the collections from which they were retrieved. New ideas were introduced regarding the conceptual space of unbuilt projects, and the political and spatial traces left by infrastructural schemes. The exhibition attracted over 2,000 visitors, formed a major component of the Manchester Histories Festival (2012), and became one of the foundations for further funded research [6]. It also enduringly influenced the practice of Manchester-based heritage professionals: 'The *Infra_MANC* exhibition helped us to shape our thinking about exhibition, access and audience development. This work allowed us to move away from seeing Manchester in a vacuum of Victorian industrialisation, and to reflect on developments and innovations in the recent past and its impact on the city we know today' (Heritage Collections Officer, Manchester City Council [C]).

Making Post-War Manchester (2016) was an exhibition and catalogue [4] that built on several years' archival and interview-based research into post-war planning by Brook and Dodge, including the hosting of a multi-disciplinary one-day symposium about the reconstitution of the city and society after 1945. Brook and Dodge collected significant amounts of unpublished as well as rich visual archival material. Asking 'how can the public encounter the unbuilt visions of 1960s planners using new technology?', *Making Post-War Manchester* enabled close collaboration with Kevin Tan to explore the interface between archival drawings and reports, 3D design software and games engines.

Involving Brook, Tan and Edwards and supported by funding from the joint Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Immersive Experiences programme, *The Life of Buildings* [5] was a multi-disciplinary pilot project designed to pioneer new methods for digital preservation of buildings of historical importance. Implementing archaeological and architectural survey techniques, the team integrated documentary material from social history in the form of film, photography, digitised drawings and sound recordings into navigable 3D virtual-reality environments. The case study building was the Manchester Reform Synagogue, which had been earmarked for demolition. As Principal Investigator, Brook collected historical archive data, interviewed members of the synagogue community, wrote the history of the building, and worked alongside Tan to collect digital data on the building. Tan developed the VR headset interface while Edwards commissioned the 3D scanning to support the virtual presentation of the building. Together they explored how the latest digital media could help to establish new relationships with and between archive collections and the public by creating sophisticated 3D environments that were not only openly accessible but moreover fully navigable in the first person. The open-access project website, designed with Fablr, captured the collaborative assembly of new and historic data while introducing the virtual-reality model for all to engage with.

The Landscape and Architecture of Post-War Infrastructure was a public-facing conference that 'broke new ground while engaging a broad audience' (Senior Architectural Investigator, Historic England [A]). Co-convened by Brook, Coucill and Csepely-Knorr, it was the first to examine the nexus of landscape, engineering and architecture in the post-war modernisation of Britain. As well as scholars, the conference was attended by more than 200 practitioners, artists and aficionados. The research opened up new cross-disciplinary debates and was accompanied by the publication of *The Modernist, No. 30, Infrastructure* [6], reaching a wide international audience. The conference and publication subsequently led to two new AHRC awards under the *Landscape Decision Making* call (2019-20), enabling Brook and Csepely-Knorr to engage a wide range of stakeholders in developing new modes of assessment for infrastructural landscapes, which will feed into future policy advice.

3. References to the research

1. **Brook, R.** (2017) *Manchester Modern* (Manchester: The Modernist Society) ISBN/ISSN: 978-0-9955481-2-1
2. **Brook, R.** (2018) 'Roger Booth, Lancashire County Architect, 1962-83.', *The Journal of the Twentieth Century Society* (C20), 13, pp. 130-145. ISBN: 978-0-9556687-5-3
3. **Brook, R. & Dodge, M.** (2012) *Infra_MANC Post-war Infrastructure of Manchester* (Manchester: bauprint) Catalogue of exhibition RIBA Hub/CUBE Gallery, Portland Street Manchester. <https://www.the-modernist.org/shop/inframanc>
4. **Brook, R., Dodge, M. & Tan, K.** (2016) *Making Post-War Manchester: Visions of an Unmade City* [Exhibition] Manchester Technology Centre, 3/6/2016 - 24/6/2016. <https://www.the-modernist.org/shop/mpwm>
5. www.thelifeofbuildings.org
6. **Brook, R.** [ed.] (2019) *The Modernist, No. 30, Infrastructure*; **Csepely-Knorr, L.**, 2019. 'Wild Landscape', *The Modernist, No. 30, Infrastructure*, pp. 62-68.; **Coucell, L.**, 2019. 'Industrial Identity and Legacy in the case of the CEGB', *The Modernist, No. 30, Infrastructure*, pp. 56-61. <https://www.the-modernist.org/news/2019/7/16/issue-30-infrastructure-spring-2019>

Funding:

- G1.** 2020. AHRC: Landscape Decision Making GBP100,000
Principal Investigator. *The Landscapes of Post-War Infrastructure: Cooling Down*
- G2.** 2019. AHRC: Landscape Decision Making GBP45,000
Principal Investigator. *The Landscapes of Post-War Infrastructure: Culture, Amenity, Heritage and Industry*
- G3.** 2019. Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art GBP10,000
Post-doctoral Fellowship. *The Renewal of Post-War Manchester: Architecture, Planning and the State*
- G4.** 2018. Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art GBP3,000
Co-Investigator. *The Landscape and Architecture of Post War British Infrastructure*. Conference. Feb. 2019.
- G5.** 2017. AHRC/EPSRC: Immersive Experiences GBP52,000
Principal Investigator. *The Life of Buildings*. www.thelifeofbuildings.org.uk

4. Details of the impact

Building upon this significant body of collaborative research, **Brook** has generated demonstrable impact primarily in the following ways:

Statutory listing of buildings

Brook's research has led him to make several successful applications for buildings and artworks to be listed. This represents a major achievement since statutory protection of post-war structures is notoriously difficult to achieve because the evidential threshold for their value tends to be set very high. For example, as part of the *Manchester Modern* project, **Brook** located and conducted primary research on a concrete sculptural wall in central Manchester and a private home in south Manchester. Historic England testify that 'without Brook's work these two previously unknown structures would have remained outside the strategic planning system and unprotected. The wall in particular has attracted considerable interest locally and online, a good example of the dissemination of his work into popular culture' **[A]**. Founded on these successes and following his research into the work of Lancashire County Architect's Department and Roger Booth, **Brook** made an application for the listing of a plastic classroom at Kennington School in Fulwood. The case study of the classroom, published on his website, is cited in both the C20 Society's letter of support and the listing entry itself (2017) **[B]**. Historic England state 'The work informed the listing of a school at Fulwood, Preston, and has provided the basis for future decisions on listing, which will be of great public benefit' **[A]**.

Protection of assets

As well as finding and protecting historic material by ensuring it is deposited in recognised archives, Brook has helped to open museum and archive collections to the public. The Greater Manchester County Record Office (now Archives+) were obliged to consider new access and cataloguing measures as part of their 2014 move to the newly refurbished Central Reference Library in Manchester. Brook worked with the Chief Archivist to advise on classification and access systems for records moved from the Town Hall into the archives, most notably the Building Control archives and the City Engineer's micro-card collections. These extensive resources were live records that became historic collections by virtue of their survival, and the technical nature of the material required an expert adviser with industry experience. Larysa Bolton (Archives+) maintains that the digitisation of these materials has garnered thousands of online views, which would not have been possible without Brook's leadership and expertise. Brook's role as an expert adviser on access and dissemination with Archives+ continues [C]. Similarly, working closely with the Greater Manchester Museum of Transport, Brook displayed significant documents in exhibitions and opened up the institution's rather hidden, but immensely rich, archival holdings to the wider public. Several architectural archive collections (including those of Cruickshank & Seward, Gordon Hodgkinson, and Joe Blackburn) have also been preserved as a result of the *Mainstream Modern* project, as they were recovered by Brook and lodged with Manchester Metropolitan's Special Collections. The families of Hodgkinson and Blackburn are especially grateful for Brook's intervention [D]. Hodgkinson's work was exhibited in Special Collections in 2019 and received 1,678 visitors, with comments including 'As usual, beautifully displayed and easy to learn from and enjoy. Curator Richard Brook's address was so full of enthusiasm and his manner could be said to be refreshing and beguiling!! Super exhibition' [E]. The archives have already been used by artists (Sarah Hardacre) and others (Drawing Matter) to develop new work and to cross-reference with other holdings respectively [E,F]. One of the Special Collections curators has noted that 'Richard's work on the company archive and his relationships with the current owners of the archive resulted in our acquisition of a significant collection of photographs recording Cruickshank and Seward's most important buildings. This archive has and will continue to be an important research resource within our collections' [E].

Innovative digital outreach, recording and publishing

Brook has developed new digital modes of publication and dissemination, celebrated hitherto unknown buildings, realised unbuilt urban plans in virtual domains and reconstructed augmented-reality versions of buildings under threat. He developed the website www.mainstreammodern.co.uk (2014) with partner Geoff Bretherick of web developer Fablr. The website is a live and continuing project that enables Brook to share his primary fieldwork and visually rich secondary research material with the public. The case study buildings presented on the website reflect the expanding geography of Brook's research, including examples from across the UK. To date, the site has had 33,000 unique visitors, over 100,000 hits with 25% of the traffic from outside the UK. It is regularly used as a reference resource by other scholars and aficionados. In *Making Post-War Manchester*, Brook and Tan made virtual environments built from unrealised masterplans from the 1960s and exhibited them publicly for two weeks in June 2016 – over 700 visitors roamed around 3D models of unbuilt 1960s mega-structures, using game controllers. The interdisciplinary project, involving architectural history, historical geography and computer science, resulted in an enduring legacy in the form of the website www.mpwm.msa.ac.uk. Visitors stated that 'it brought back many happy memories', that the 'walk throughs [were] a great way to engage people', and that the exhibition 'should cause us to reflect – how will our current architectural developments be viewed in 50 years?' [G]. The project's success was one of the foundations for the 2017 AHRC/EPSRC award from the Immersive Experiences programme, which funded *The Life of Buildings* project and involved Archives+ as a key partner [C]. Working with other established partners (Fablr and The Modernist Society) and new collaborators (Oxford Archaeology North), Brook led a pioneering digital preservation project that engaged the community of Manchester Reform Synagogue in dialogue about their past, present and future. Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen said that the research 'reminded us of the history of our community', 'allowed older members of the

community to commit to record their reflections of our past and our future', 'put to use histories we had collected ourselves', and that she was 'able to take the website with me on pastoral visits and shared the software with members who are housebound which provided a great deal of comfort'. The project allowed 'building and sustaining our community' in a time of transition, and the website record is a 'resource that we cherish and will be available to our community for a time to come. Working with the research team headed by Richard [Brook] really energised us' [H]. More than 100 people attended the launch of the project website and it has been accessed over 1800 times.

Recalibrating public perceptions of post-war building through the Modernist Society

Brook's expertise was recognised by the fledgling Modernist Society at their constitution in 2009, which resulted in his appointment as formal advisor. He assists the Society with funding advice, project development and makes a regular contribution to their publishing and events programme. In this role he has collaborated in the delivery of books, articles, walking tours, presentations and exhibitions based on his research. The reach of the Modernist Society is significant and extends beyond the Chapter centres of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds and Croydon, with the largest congregations in the North West and in London. The Society has very healthy online audience figures (42,000 across networks, of which approximately 20% are from outside the UK) compared to similar heritage organisations. The Modernist Society have attested that 'through partnership on a number of exhibitions, projects and publications, Richard's academic research and rigour has been integral to our own priorities of delivering projects to the public in an informal, engaging and entertaining way' [I]. In total, these activities have directly engaged 1,237 people and reached international audiences of more than 5,000. Working with the Modernist Society, the collaborative project and exhibition *Making Post-War Manchester* was a core component of the Manchester Histories Festival 2016, attracting over 700 visitors. A 60-page printed catalogue with written commentary, accompanying architectural images and historical plans was published with the show and sold more than 300 copies [G]. The Modernist Society were also partners in the *Landscape and Architecture of Post-War Infrastructure* project where more than 200 members of the public learned about the innovative design thinking in this little understood historical field.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Testimonial from Dr Elain Harwood, Senior Architectural Investigator, Historic England. Corroborating impact of new building listings and Brook's contribution to heritage preservation and appreciation.
- B. Kennington School Listing Advice Report. Corroborating listing of Kennington School.
- C. Larysa Bolton (Archives+) testimonial. Corroborating impact of *Infra_MANC* exhibition and archival research to archives practice and audience development.
- D. Testimonial from Hodkinson Family. Corroborating impact of Special Collection exhibition on friends and family.
- E. MMU Special Collections testimonial / evaluation material. Corroborating reach and significance of Special Collections exhibition.
- F. Testimonial from artist Sarah Hardacre. Corroborating impact on artistic practice and new cultural production.
- G. *Making Post-War Manchester* data and evaluation. Corroborating impact on exhibition attendees.
- H. Manchester Reform Synagogue testimonial. Corroborating impact on community.
- I. Testimonial from the Modernist Society / evaluation data. Corroborating impact on development and resilience of Manchester Modernist Society.