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Colin Buchanan's American Journey

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Introduction

In Autumn 1962, the British planner, Colin Buchanan, made an extensive eight-week tour of the United States. His purpose was professional and official, part of a major British government study to find appropriate planning responses to the long term problems of urban motor traffic. Buchanan's intention was to learn and draw lessons from American experiences that could be applied to Britain, then becoming a mass motorised society. He also made other shorter visits to several European cities, mainly in West Germany but also Stockholm and Venice. The resulting exotic knowledge was then integrated with a larger volume of British-based contextual, conceptual and practical studies that Buchanan and his working group had been preparing since spring 1961. The results appeared in late 1963 in what became the most important government planning document of 1960s Britain, *Traffic in Towns*. This report's analyses and conclusions have exerted a huge influence on British urban planning and have had a major international impact.

Yet, although Buchanan's work stimulated much contemporary comment and has regularly been re-examined since 1963, relatively little attention has been given to the role that foreign examples played in shaping his thinking. Partial exceptions are Ward (2007) and Clapson (2013) who have given some consideration to this aspect within wider studies. This paper is, however, a detailed investigation of Buchanan's American visit and the part it played in formulating this seminal report. His other, briefer European visits are also considered but, because no original evidence has survived, the depth of possible examination is limited. By contrast, the available contemporary detail on the American visit opens a window on Buchanan's personal views and contemporary British attitudes to the United States. In a wider sense, this investigation also becomes a case study of how urban policy knowledge circulates internationally and exogenous experiences can inform and to some extent shape city and national policy formulation. This connects it to a growing body of work within political science, urban geography and planning theory, as well as the more empirical studies undertaken by other planning historians.

This paper is based primarily within the latter disciplinary tradition and the documentary research on which it is based draws extensively on published and unpublished sources. The latter include Buchanan's own account of his American journey, other files from the UK National Archives and Buchanan's own papers recently deposited at Imperial College, London. This article also makes use of contemporary and subsequent comment and draws on recent historical work about *Traffic in Towns*. Particularly important amongst the latter is Gunn's work (2011; 2013; 2015), setting Buchanan into the wider context of British social, urban and political history, while Bianconi and Tewdwr-Jones (2013) are the only previous authors to draw on Buchanan's own archives.

Researching foreign visits to gain urban planning knowledge

Buchanan's American journey was part of a well-established practice in all countries of using foreign knowledge and experience to inform the development of new policy ideas in the urban planning field. Sutcliffe (1981) first highlighted how learning from other countries played a key part in forming the modern international urban planning movement during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Visits were a central part of this learning, the earliest often incidental to other purposes such as business or attending international conferences or exhibitions. Increasingly, however, more focused investigative and official visits were being used, sometimes in conjunction with more specialist conferences, exhibitions or other events concerned with urban problems and policies (eg Saunier, 1999).

In recent years, such visits have become ubiquitous, attracting the rather derogatory label 'policy tourism', especially so in relation to much-visited cities with some iconic 'celebrity' status such as Barcelona or Bilbao (eg González, 2011). Other researchers have preferred the altogether more purposeful terms 'cross-national learning' and 'lesson-drawing' (eg Rose, 2005). This contrast in terminology indicates two distinct though not mutually exclusive approaches to the circulation of policy knowledge, both of which give valuable insights and prompts for this particular empirical study.

Thus 'cross-national learning and lesson-drawing' stem from what has been labelled the 'policy transfer' school, largely developed by political scientists. 'Policy transfer' is a misnomer and does not imply that policy is simply transferred in its entirety between different countries. Rather, the intention is to develop a robust methodology for identifying, sifting and then using selectively in a new setting foreign policy experiences that are seen as useful. An essentially rational, positivist approach, it uses externally derived evidence and subsequent evidence-based reasoning to produce appropriate 'good practice' for policy-makers. It is doubly valuable for the present study. Thus it models how Buchanan intended to collect and use foreign planning knowledge. For the *post hoc* researcher, the approach also emphasises the need to scrutinise the empirical and reasoning processes involved in evidence collection, sifting and distillation into the final policy advice and action.

Although originating as an informal description, 'policy tourism' has recently attracted closer attention. This reflects a growing interest by urban geographers and others in 'policy mobilities' whereby knowledge and practice about planning and other urban policies move between cities and countries (eg González, 2011; Cook, Ward and Ward, 2015). Although these researchers have drawn on 'policy transfer' approaches, they have adopted more critical, political economy perspectives that are less geared to producing usable policy guidance. Such 'mobilities' are conceptualised as forming part of a wider 'assemblage' that makes up urban policies (McCann, 2011). This sees policies (and indeed cities themselves) as being 'assembled' from a melange of different, often contradictory, ideas and practices drawn and adapted from diverse places.

Yet the exogenous ideas and practices which contribute to this assemblage do not come simply from rational, evidence-based investigation and reasoned consideration. They can be seen as part of an 'imaginative geography' whereby admired places from elsewhere become images (or even myths) constructed in the minds of admirers. Some of this imagery derives

from prevailing cultural impressions of the place in question but this is more powerfully charged by the specific experiences of policy tourism. As Urry and Larsen have observed, in the context of 'normal' tourism, people view different places 'through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations' (Urry and Larsen, 2011, 2). Similarly, policy tourism echoes many features of conventional tourism with some sites cumulatively gaining iconic and exotic status partly because other tourists have also visited and gazed upon them. In such circumstances anticipation plays a key role, creating a (possibly unconscious) desire for confirmation of expectation in the actual visit. In turn, these experiences 'in the field' then usually reinforce (but may modify) a previously-held image.

These two perspectives point to the dual nature of the foreign policy knowledge uncovered on such visits and subsequently applied in the received setting by others. On the one hand is knowledge rationally discovered from evidence and reasoning and, on the other, knowledge significantly filtered through the culturally constructed expectations and perceptions of the visited places by both visitors and those using the visitors' reported knowledge. The present example will show that significant differences can occur between the 'raw' perceptions of visitors and what is subsequently 'digested' into actual policy and action.

British planning's American connection

Despite many business connections and obvious affinities of language and culture, sheer distance for many years limited the possibilities for British planning-related visits to the United States. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British reformers and practitioners seeking relevant foreign knowledge in urban planning initially tended to visit European countries. By the early twentieth century, Germany was the most favoured destination for the emergent British town planning movement, reflecting and informing the then prevailing admiration for its efforts in this field (Ward, 2010).

Yet there were some important American links. As a young man, Ebenezer Howard, had between 1871 and 1876 lived in the United States, awareness of which certainly contributed to his seminal formulation of the garden city during the 1890s (Beevers, 1988, 5-8). Most early Anglo-American contacts in this general field went the other way, however, with many American social progressives visiting Britain and Europe (Rodgers, 1998). Such contacts helped build networks of interest and a few early leaders of the British planning movement, notably Thomas Adams and Raymond Unwin, became important pre-1914 Atlantic-crossers (Simpson, 1985, 119-28; Miller, 1992, 99). Such contacts raised British awareness of American planning achievements even before 1914.

It was not until the interwar years that British planning interest in the United States began to rival that in European countries. By the 1920s prominent British planning visitors to the United States became more numerous and a few actually worked there. Thus Adams, after several years working in Canada, became director of the mammoth New York Regional Plan during 1923-9 and remained as a consultant until 1938 (Simpson, 1985, 128-67). This role made him an important transatlantic conduit, regularly bringing American planning knowledge back to Britain (and vice-versa). The 1925 New York Conference of the

International Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation also attracted several notable British visitors (Allan, 2013, 81).

By the 1930s, British planning interest in the United States began to outweigh that in Germany or other European countries (Ward, 2007). There remained substantial interest in the planning achievements of Nazi Germany after 1933 (also Mussolini's Italy and Stalin's Soviet Union). In 1937, for example, over 200 British highway engineers, representatives of motoring organisations and others made an extensive and admiring tour of Germany's national *autobahn* system (Clements, 1937). A few weeks earlier, the young Colin Buchanan had made his own private tour and returned similarly impressed (Buchanan, 2001, 9). Yet such planning achievements of Germany and other totalitarian states carried serious ideological baggage. The links between German planners and a British planning movement that remained predominantly progressive in its political outlook were losing their former personal and relaxed familiarity.

In contrast, the ambitious democratic planning of 'New Deal' America attracted growing interest in Britain. By the later 1930s, many American planning initiatives and specific documents were being reported in the British professional planning press. The 1938 Mexico City Conference of the International Federation of Housing and Town Planning (as it had become) was followed by another detailed United States study tour of planning achievements of the New Deal. Prominent amongst the delegates was the then President of the Federation, George Pepler, Chief Town Planner of the Ministry of Health. In this last capacity in 1939 he prepared a report on planning in other countries for the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population (RCDIP, 1940, 288-316; Ward, 2007, 372-8). With positive memories of the United States still fresh, he focused on that country more than any other.

The links intensified during the war with Anglo-American initiatives in 1941-6 concerning urban social research and post-war reconstruction in the housing field. Funded respectively by the Rockefeller Foundation and American government, these involved social science researchers, national and city government agencies and the British government (Clapson, 2013, 11-28).¹ As well as enhancing the Anglo-American circulation of planning knowledge, these links further enriched the personal dimensions of contact (eg Stephenson with DeMarco, 1992, 63). More tangible connections came with the British emergency housing programme which drew heavily on American know-how and imports of pre-fabricated housing.

These deepening links set the trend for the years that followed, though the liberation of Western Europe widened American links with many more countries. Common European problems of physical reconstruction planning also re-energised Britain's intra-continental connections after 1945. In addition, there was growing interest in planning in the British Commonwealth where opportunities for British planners to work grew from the late 1940s

¹ The National Archives (hereafter TNA) HLG 71/795.

(eg TPI, 1956). By the later 1950s, however, another marked upturn of British interest in the United States was underway.

Better communications were facilitated by the first transatlantic telephone links in 1956 and the first jet airline flights to North America in 1958. The coming to office in 1961 of a young and charismatic President John Kennedy with radical visions of a 'New Frontier' also signified a nation that was itself changing (Bernstein, 1991). External perceptions of the United States were as yet untainted by the urban race riots, political assassinations or the Vietnam War which occurred later in the 1960s. In the decade's first years, however, it seemed that old wrongs would be righted and a new, more interventionist kind of urban policy and city planning would emerge (Scott, 1969, 554-601).

The impact on British planning activity was palpable. A small but growing number of American consultants began to give planning advice, largely roads and traffic-related, in Britain and key American experts came to speak at British planning conferences. By the 1960s the British Roads Research Board routinely received and evaluated all American highways and transportation-related research.² More articles on American experiences also appeared in British planning journals (eg Doubleday, 1960; Lichfield, 1961; Hilton, 1961; Childs, 1963). Many addressed the same issues that were to preoccupy the *Traffic in Towns* team – expressways, urban renewal, urban sprawl and suburban shopping malls. More British planners also began to visit the United States, individually and in groups such as the tour organised by the Town and Country Planning Association in April-May 1961 (T&CP, 1961; Burns, Lane and Thomas, 1962). In 1964, after *Traffic in Towns* appeared, Buchanan himself headed a 130-strong Town Planning Institute study tour by British planners (with partners) to the USA and Canada (Rathbone, 1964).

The key figures involved in *Traffic in Towns*

By then, Buchanan had become the leading British planner of his generation (Bruton, 1981; Buchanan, 1993, 1-18; Hall, 2006). In large measure this reflected his central role in the *Traffic in Towns* study. Born in 1907 in India into a family of Scottish engineers who had made their careers in the British Empire, he too entered imperial service as a road engineer in Sudan before joining the British Ministry of Transport (MT) in 1935. After war service with the Royal Engineers in Africa, he returned to civilian life. He was by then professionally qualified, unusually, as an engineer, architect and planner. It was in the last field that he exclusively practised after 1945 and he quickly transferred to the new Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Eventually he became the senior planning inspector of its successor, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG), responsible for conducting major public inquiries and making recommendations to the Minister. These covered many topics but throughout his main personal interest remained the relationship between planning and transport, especially road transport. In 1958 he published *Mixed Blessing*, a notable book about the impact of the motor car. It contained some brief international references, to American and, to a lesser extent, German experiences (Buchanan, 1958).

² TNA DSIR 12/110.

Not without some misgivings, Buchanan was recommended to the flamboyant and energetic Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples, by his Permanent Secretary, Sir James Dunnett (Gunn, 2015, viii). On hearing that an inquiry into the long term problems of urban traffic was contemplated, Buchanan had approached Dame Evelyn Sharp, the formidable Permanent Secretary of his own MHLG, to put his name forward. In February 1960 she wrote very positively to Dunnett, 'We think him very able...he has ideas. Your Engineers may not always agree with his ideas but I think they are worth bringing into the pool'.³ After reading (while flying to New York) *Mixed Blessing* and Buchanan's report of a key planning inquiry over which he had recently presided, then interviewing him personally, Marples agreed. (FIGURE 1)

At that time Marples was unusual as a Conservative politician who won cabinet office despite working class origins (Dutton, 2004). Between the wars he had established himself in the construction business and after war service he moved into politics. He played a key part in the remarkable success of the Conservative government in the early 1950s, helping to accelerate housing production. When Macmillan (his former boss as Housing minister) became Prime Minister, Marples gained ministerial office. From 1959 to 1964 he joined the cabinet as Minister of Transport, clearly seeing new road construction as a key part of that role and oversaw the implementation of the first stage of the motorway system (Drake, Yeadon and Evans, 1970, 42-9). Potential conflict of interest necessitated selling his controlling interest in Marples Ridgeway, a road construction company, of which he had been Managing Director.⁴ (However the conditions of sale bound him to repurchase the shares on leaving office so that the severance was not total.) Yet, uneven though his transport interests clearly were, his tremendous flair for publicity certainly raised the political profile of transport.

Marples had also initiated other lower profile studies (notably into freight transport and road construction plant) which involved examining American experiences (MTPIT, 1964).⁵ Better known, however, were the important studies he instigated into strategic transport policy. The most notable, apart from *Traffic in Towns*, was *The Reshaping of Britain's Railways*, a devastating 1963 report by Richard Beeching, the new head of the British Railways Board, which proposed extensive retrenchment of the network (BRB, 1963). Also significant (though rejected) was the study led by Reuben Smeed of the Road Research Laboratory, *Road Pricing: The Economic and Technical Possibilities*, issued in 1964 (MT, 1964a). Buchanan's own rejection of road pricing chimed with Marples's and the popular mood at the time. The Smeed Report was actually submitted before *Traffic in Towns* but Marples appears deliberately to have delayed publication to avoid any distraction from Buchanan's efforts.

The third figure who shaped the *Traffic in Towns* report led the Steering Group which oversaw Buchanan's Working Group. Marples and Buchanan wanted the work put completely beyond possible interference by MT officials and road engineers. Therefore some other way of relating technical and policy dimensions was necessary, allowing the work of

³ TNA MT 45/559, Letter E. Sharp–L. Dunnett, 16.2.1960.

⁴ *Hansard, HC Deb* 28 January 1960, vol 616 cc380-1.

⁵ TNA MT 97/598.

Buchanan's team to be cleared and then sent directly to the Minister. With Buchanan's agreement, Marples in March 1961 appointed his fellow Conservative, Geoffrey Crowther, a distinguished economist and journalist, to head this Group, the remainder comprising prominent figures with relevant professional and local government experience.

Crowther was a man of great intelligence, influence and persuasive qualities (Bird, 2004). His American connections were palpable. Partly educated in the United States (at Yale and Columbia Universities), Crowther was married to an American, spent part of every year there and had extensive American business interests. As a wartime civil servant he had worked with the Rockefeller initiative to promote common transatlantic approaches to social and economic research (Clapson, 2013, 15). During his celebrated tenure of the editorial chair of the *Economist* magazine from 1938 to 1956, he had hugely increased its circulation and influence, giving it a strong American perspective and presence. Although Buchanan had never before encountered him, he found Crowther, easily the most powerful person on the Steering Group, an ideal overseer for his team's work.

The roots of Buchanan's American journey

Yet, well before Crowther and the Steering Group were even appointed, Buchanan had wanted foreign visits as part of the study. When Buchanan first met with Marples in early August 1960, he referred to the need to visit significant places in Britain 'and abroad'.⁶ Yet he clearly anticipated a querying of any foreign travel requests. Writing in February 1961 to fellow town planner Sir William ('Bill') Holford, then President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (and soon-to-be member of the Crowther Steering Group), Buchanan hoped that the Steering Group would '...back me if I got into difficulties, say, on doing a foreign trip'.⁷ The singular reference to *a* trip may also be significant as Buchanan also used his European continental holidays as a way to gather information (at, it seems, no public expense). Thus in August 1960 he reported that he would be spending part of his leave studying German and Italian experiences.⁸ He also repeated the experience for Germany in 1962.⁹

Buchanan's son subsequently confirmed that his father's professional information gathering was a normal feature of family holiday-making (Buchanan, 2001, 131). (Although quite how the Stockholm visit occurred is unknown.) The long American trip was however approved as an official visit, perhaps because it was generally seen (not least by Crowther and Marples) as particularly relevant. Buchanan originally wanted his foreign trips earlier in the life of the Working Group but the Steering Group wanted British conditions to be studied first.¹⁰ In

⁶ Buchanan Papers, Archives Imperial College, London, (hereafter BP) Ministry of Transport file 1960-65, J. Garlick, Note of Minister's meeting with the Secretary and Mr Buchanan, 5.8.1960.

⁷ BP, *Ibid*, Letter, C. Buchanan-W. Holford, 26.2.1961.

⁸ BP, *Ibid*, Memo, C. Buchanan-J. Garlick, undated but about 9.8.1960.

⁹ BP, *Ibid*, Memo, R. Heaton-Secretary [L.J. Dunnett], 5.6.1962.

¹⁰ TNA MT 128/99, Minutes of 2nd meeting of Steering Group, 30.10.1961, 5.

March 1962, the American trip was further postponed because these ongoing British studies were at a critical stage which required Buchanan's presence.¹¹

Eventually in late September, Buchanan, travelling alone, arrived in New York and began his American visit. This is the only one of his overseas trips for which an unpublished detailed record survives. (Its official, funded status may mean that it was the only one produced, given the apparently informal status of the European trips.) The report of his American journey was essentially a diary and an overall report, together running to 25 unpaginated foolscap pages of single space typing.¹² It was reproduced for limited circulation within the Steering and Working Groups and was the basis for Buchanan's illustrated presentation to the Steering Group and officials from the MT and MHLG.

Table 1 summarises his American itinerary and records who he met. As can be seen, Buchanan spent some time in major cities including Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles, along with Louisville and Rochester and several smaller towns. While driving, he also passed through Baltimore, Buffalo and Niagara. His engagement with the places he visited was generally detailed, involving much walking, car driving and (in New York) a helicopter flight courtesy of the Port Authority. He also travelled by bus and used metro systems. He sought (but failed to locate) the original example of the eponymous residential layout which entirely separated motor and pedestrian movements, at Radburn in New Jersey.

In face-to-face meetings, he encountered many people with significant official or academic posts in city planning, highways planning and engineering, mass transit and related fields. Some meetings were arranged before he went to the United States, though others were set up more opportunistically during his visit. For example, his return visit to see Edmund Bacon in Philadelphia appears to have been arranged at short notice. He also met people socially, often in their own homes, and in some cases stayed with them, or on some occasions with friends. During the trip, he attended and participated actively in three conferences or symposia where he encountered other important figures. Generally he seems to have made important contacts while at these events and, here or elsewhere, excited wider American interest in his study. Thus Darwin Stolzenbach of the National Capital Transportation Agency, then preparing an official report for President Kennedy, asked to see Buchanan while he was in Washington.

Buchanan's unpublished impressions of the United States

*'I went to the U.S.A. with something of an inferiority complex, thinking I should have little to do but gaze in astonishment at what had been achieved and to ask humbly the principles on which it had been done. I came back with considerable respect for our own methods and institutions, and with the feeling that, under the disciplines of land shortage and financial stringency, the urban development being done in Europe, and not the least in this country [ie the United Kingdom] is probably of more significance than anything in the U.S.A.'*¹³

¹¹ BP, *Ibid*, Memo, C. D. Buchanan–Minister, 23.3.1962.

¹² TNA HLG 136/49, Visit to America, 1962 – Report by C. D. Buchanan.

¹³ *Ibid*, §82

With these words, Buchanan began summing up his impressions (which extended beyond the *Traffic in Towns* brief), adding that, ‘I cannot pretend that my overall reaction was other than one of shock at what I saw, and I was confirmed in this by the openly expressed pessimism of so many people I spoke to.’ (FIGURE 2) He then added in the next paragraph:

*‘Everything I saw in America convinced me that the motor vehicle is an insidious destroyer of most of the things we have previously valued in towns. That would not matter perhaps if there was a prospect of something new coming in their place, but of this I saw no sign. There was nothing I could even begin to feel was a new kind of brilliantly successful motorised environment’.*¹⁴

In writing these words, Buchanan was being sceptical about the views of Californian urban theorist, Melvin Webber, that looser forms of urban community and city form were emerging (notably in Los Angeles), held together less by spatial propinquity than by automobility, the telephone and other modern communications media (Webber, 1963). More generally, Buchanan’s conclusions were also entirely reflective of his predominantly negative opinions of the United States. Tables 2 and 3 show the main features of the American scene that attracted his attention and from which he drew negative or positive lessons for his British work. The quoted extracts convey his personal and sometimes visceral reactions to what he saw. It will be immediately clear that the overall balance of his reactions was negative while closer examination further shows that much of his praise was decidedly faint. If he noted good aspects of some things, this was often set against his predominantly negative view of them.

Thus the planning system might have been almost wholly inadequate, but there was intense public interest in metropolitan planning issues. Suburban shopping malls were inward looking and set within vast car parks but they offered an attractive pedestrian shopping environment. (FIGURE 3) The new downtown multi-use centers were turned inward from the rest of the central city, but similarly provided congenial shopping environments, showed the value of multi-level circulation and of designing for vehicle and other movements in an integrated way (FIGURE 4). American cars were tinny and garish but also silent because of their powerful engines. And, after many criticisms of urban expressways, Buchanan admitted that they did ease traffic movement in cities.

Some of his opinions (or silences) can appear rather extreme, even shocking. Thus, amidst so much other criticism of American cities, their blatant racial inequalities are noted almost casually and apparently with some acceptance. Although the environmental damage of urban expressways on housing areas was ‘terrible’, it was lessened by his parenthetical afterthought, ‘(albeit older houses now mainly in negro occupation)’.¹⁵ Yet none who read his report saw fit to comment on this. Stronger feelings were, however, prompted by his very low opinion of the American rural scene, especially on the urbanised eastern seaboard and inland to Buffalo:

¹⁴ *Ibid*, §83.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, §50.

*‘Never once did I see a place where I really wanted to stop the car and get out and walk. Indeed, I found it generally a very depressing scene of rural de-population, rotting farmsteads, fields all overgrown with scrub, and decaying woodlands, and all this on a very large scale.’*¹⁶

Here, an unknown person, possibly a MHLG official who attended Buchanan’s presentation to the Steering Group has annotated the retained National Archives copy with the words ‘absolute nonsense’. Nevertheless his own view led Buchanan to conclude that the lack of intrinsic appeal of the American countryside, especially around large urban areas, meant that there was far less political pressure compared to Britain to protect it from land-hungry expressway builders.¹⁷

Traffic in Towns: the final reports

The American report was written quickly on his return to London. Buchanan acknowledged that he had perhaps not yet fully sorted out his impressions and that he might subsequently modify his views. Although many actual words from the unpublished report appear in *Traffic in Towns*, he certainly softened his negative comments in the published version while the positive aspects came through more prominently. He still could not bring himself to describe downtown Los Angeles as anything other than ‘depressingly ugly’ (MT, 1963, 188). But the expressways were reported with a little more emphasis on their positive features than in his unpublished report, indicating that they might have a role in the biggest British cities, especially London (MT, 1963, 190).

He also wrote more about the good practice that he saw in downtown revitalisation, in Rochester and Philadelphia than about the bad practice he identified in Los Angeles (eg. MT, 1963: 46, 184-5, 188-9). Even more strikingly he put more emphasis on the moves for stronger metropolitan planning evident in the 1961 planning report for the Washington Region, *The Nation’s Capital* than he had in his unpublished impressions (MT, 1963, 186-8). Similarly the technically impressive metropolitan transportation studies, far in advance of anything found in the United Kingdom, were reported with greater approval than in his unpublished report. Likewise big American cars were powerful and silent, but no longer tinny and garish. He was also noticeably more positive about suburban shopping malls which he saw as ‘...more efficient and pleasanter than anything in many capital cities, with all the advantages of a car to hand.’ (MT, 1963, 190).

Overall the published Working Group report (ie the Buchanan Report proper) showed the United States in a mixed light. The negative features that had dominated his initial impressions were now less prominent, with more acknowledgements of positive lessons. There was more of a sense that the United States was starting to generate some transferable answers to its obvious problems. Meanwhile, although they were given less space, the other foreign examples – West Germany, Stockholm and Venice – were described with almost unqualified praise. This was especially so in the German case, where he drew examples from

¹⁶ *Ibid*, §64.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, §63-4.

Cologne, Düsseldorf, Essen and Bremen (MT, 1963, 174-6). He admired especially the pedestrianisation of the existing 'historic' (albeit usually rebuilt after wartime bombing) streets in central areas and the superb landscaping associated with urban road schemes. The high commitment to public transport was also praised, especially the tramway systems enhanced and extended since 1945, in sharp contrast to the British policy of progressive abandonment. This same point underpinned his admiration of Stockholm, where metropolitan expansion was consciously based on the new underground rail system, despite Sweden having the highest car ownership rate in Europe. Venice attracted his interest because there were no road motor vehicles on the island city proper, except on the causeway linking it to the mainland. Much movement of people and goods was handled by motor boats or by walking, with completely separate circulation systems at different levels.

This exotic evidence and the greater body of work drawn from British experience and conceptual studies led Buchanan's Working Group to its main conclusion that

'...there are absolute limits to the amount of traffic that can be accepted in towns, depending upon their size and density, but up to those limits, provided a civilised environment is to be retained or created, the level of vehicular accessibility a town can have depends on its readiness to accept and pay for the physical changes required. The choice is society's.' (MT, 1963, 191)

Beyond that Buchanan did not advance firm proposals but offered a series of options, dependent on what society chose. There was a recognition that it was probably going to be necessary to invest in major new primary road systems in cities, effectively an 'American' solution. On the other, however, this should be combined with what can be seen as a 'European' solution: the creation of 'environmental areas' within cities where the use of the motor vehicle would be made less easy (in some cases to the point of exclusion) to improve the quality of urban life for those who lived, worked in or used these areas. The Working Group recognised that the relative balance of these options was a matter of political choice and might vary from city to city, according to their historic and other qualities.

More detailed measures were also suggested about how the options could be put into practice. For example, where high capacity roads had to be put into areas with many other activities, comprehensive redevelopment creating raised building decks and multi-level design would minimise visual and environmental impacts of traffic. Buchanan also advocated extensive use of traffic architecture to facilitate close integration of movement and activity patterns. He also stressed the need for close integration of public and private interests in securing truly comprehensive renewal of large areas. In these, Buchanan clearly had in mind the best American examples of downtown revitalisation, especially the Penn Center. (Although, rather surprisingly, he referred to his team's proposed pedestrian building deck above a much enlarged Tottenham Court Road as being 'a Venetian arrangement') (MT, 1963, 180).

Meanwhile, existing streets might be retained and pedestrianised, German-style, in more historic cities where a lower level of motor access was desirable. Specific types of residential layouts offering high pedestrian/traffic separation and greater limits on traffic and parking

might be used within environmental areas, whether newly created or retrofitted into existing areas. There was, in addition, a general recommendation that public transport be strengthened as an alternative to at least some of the motor cars (MT, 1963, 195). However this had not been a major theme of the Working Group's remit and research and, as such, was not a central aspect of the general conclusions.

While most attention focused on the Buchanan Report proper, it is important to recognise that *Traffic in Towns* actually comprised two reports. The report of the Buchanan Working Group was preceded by the shorter, unpaginated report of the Steering Group, prepared by Crowther. This was more than being simply a foreword or an executive summary but played a part in guiding how the report ought to be read in government circles and by other opinion-formers. Although some of Buchanan's words appear in this report, its text suggests that American experience carried more weight with Crowther, who drafted his report while he was actually in the United States. Just two days before the report was completed, the Steering Group Secretary also expressed worries that the Chairman was ignoring other interests and '...drafting the text from his experience in London, New York City and the West Coast of America...',¹⁸

Significantly, Crowther's foreign references, apart from a passing mention of the Soviet Union (to underline the unthinkability of restricting car ownership), were exclusively to the United States and Canada (the last unmentioned in the main report). No other European examples were mentioned. Yet Crowther's own conclusions were certainly not blindly pro-car or pro-American. He was, certainly, more direct than Buchanan in stating that there would have to be 'a great deal of urban road-building' (MT, 1963: §19) and associated reconstruction of British cities, though acknowledged that, alone, this would not go very far towards solving the problem. There was some recognition of the problems of the major road construction in urban areas, but less prominently than in the Working Group report. But he also noted the potential role of public transport (again citing US precedents) and some limitations on motor car use. It seems then that Crowther may have influenced Buchanan to soften his criticisms as between his unpublished and the final report.

Buchanan as a cross-national policy learner and policy tourist

Rose has pointed out that 'in order to win endorsement, a lesson's values ought to be congenial, or at least not opposed to those of the governors of the day.' (Rose, 2005, 90). It may be therefore that Buchanan simply recognised that it would be easier to gain wider acceptance for American thinking and practice than that from the other countries. American motorisation had gone much further than in any other country. As shown, Britain and the United States also had obvious and long-standing affinities of language, culture and outlook. America's high moral standing as leader of the 'free world', now given new vision and hope by its charismatic President, John Kennedy, reinforced those affinities. Conversely, less than twenty years after a war which had touched the lives of virtually all adult British people, there was no automatic readiness to learn from the major alternative, West Germany. Not

¹⁸ TNA MT 128/114, Memo J. A. L. Gunn to D. C. Haselgrove, 28.06.63.

least Marples, his immediate ‘governor’, was someone who certainly looked to the United States. It made sense therefore not to be too critical.

In other respects, too, Buchanan epitomised the textbook cross-national learner. At one level he was forming raw judgements about the United States (and other countries) based on objective, professional investigation and the deployment of factual evidence and rationality. Table 1 shows his sheer diligence in this respect. In length alone, his American visit far exceeded all comparable visits of recent years. He spoke to numerous experts in the field, combining extensive field observations with direct experience of all transport modes in metropolitan, small town and rural conditions. As well as roads of all kinds, he experienced all the automobile’s ancillary apparatus of signage, gas stations, on-street and multi-storey garage parking, drive-in eateries and motels.

He did not allow himself to be deflected into some greater understanding by any wider sympathy for the United States as leader of the democratic world, defending it from Soviet domination. Thus he gave no overt indication that the Cuban missile crisis occurred during his visit. The world may, famously, have been holding its breath but Buchanan remained relentless in his quest. The only hint of the global strategic role of the United States was his note that the generally low highway bridge clearance heights were higher than usual on some interstate highways to facilitate the road movement of the latest rockets.¹⁹

Yet how far then might Buchanan’s journey be considered as policy tourism? Certainly his was no simple packaged policy tourist experience of the kind described by González (2011). Any touristic analogy would have to be an older one, of a lone and rather ascetic pilgrimage of discovery pursued with great personal discipline. It was all the more impressive because it proved to be, not a quest for truth, but an anti-pilgrimage, finding a ‘god’ that he soon saw to be false. To adapt Cohen’s term (Cohen, 1995, 15), after Said, he had gone as a potential ‘Americanist’, prepared to see the United States in a positive light as a beacon of dynamism, progress and advanced thinking. But, far from confirming his anticipated view, perhaps the usual condition of the tourist (and many policy tourists), he largely rejected it.

In understanding this disavowal, we need to consider how he imagined the United States. It should be remembered that he was a child of the British Empire. He clearly saw one of his main roles as a town planner as protecting the heritage that lay at the heart of that Empire and, in doing that, also the heritage of the wider English-speaking world that it had spawned. This was the standard against which he judged other countries, not least the United States. He was, as shown, almost arrogantly dismissive of the heritage of the United States – towns and cities with ‘very little that is worth conserving’²⁰ and with ‘nothing remotely resembling the English countryside’.²¹ In the published report he set out how much was at stake in protecting British historic towns: ‘...it is not a question of retaining a few old buildings, but of conserving, in the face of the onslaught of motor traffic, a major part of the heritage of the English-speaking world, of which this country is the guardian’ (MT, 1963, 197).

¹⁹ TNA HLG 136/49, Visit to America, 1962 – Report by C. D. Buchanan, §61.

²⁰ *Ibid*, §47.

²¹ *Ibid*, §64.

In 1969, delivering the Churchill lecture in Paris, Buchanan confessed to a larger insecurity behind these attitudes, namely his anxieties about the Americanisation of Britain and Europe.²² Crossing the English Channel to France (and despite his Scottish roots) he admitted ‘I cannot but feel myself an Englishman’ from ‘the offshore island’, not wholly belonging to Europe. Yet when he went to ‘that extraordinary laboratory across the Atlantic’, he became:

‘...a European intensely aware of the whole European cultural legacy of which I am a privileged inheritor...I am frightened of forces that make for uniformity, and...there are aspects of American culture that possibly constitute the most powerful force for uniformity that has ever existed. Perhaps...we are being driven to uniformity by forces we do not understand...it might solve many problems. But the case is not proven...so I would be reluctant to see Europe “go American”’.²³

For all that he softened his final published views a little in 1963, Buchanan did not in the long term greatly vary from his initial negative reactions to what he saw in the United States. Much later, in 1993, Buchanan reflected on his foreign visits for *Traffic in Towns*: ‘I myself went to the USA to see what was going on there – on the whole not a very profitable visit. Much more useful was my visit to West Germany where I was greatly impressed by the moves towards large scale pedestrianisation in city centres’ (Buchanan, 2001, 65). Of course, this was said with the benefit of hindsight and seeing German ideas latterly taken up on a large scale in British cities. But there is clear continuity with the raw impressions that he recorded in the unpublished report of his long 1962 American journey.

How *Traffic in Towns* was received

This article does not detail what happened to the possibilities laid out by Buchanan in *Traffic in Towns*, which many others have already done. Yet it is important to note the huge interest which the report quickly engendered (Gunn, 2011, 531-42).²⁴ A film was made to promote it and an abridged version published as a Penguin Special paperback soon became a bestseller (MT, 1964b). There was very wide media coverage at home and abroad. The report was very soon translated into German, Japanese²⁵ and large sections into French (Hass-Klau, 1992, 194; MT, 1965; *Urbanisme*, 1999, 85). In Britain at least, the most radical of Buchanan’s options initially caught the popular imagination, so much so that many persuaded themselves that this was what Buchanan had specifically recommended. For a while, at least, it seemed that British cities were to be changed in the most dramatic way to accommodate heavy motor traffic. There would be big new roads, with, in the busiest districts, traffic moving beneath futuristic building decks on which were apartments, shopping centres, office buildings, entertainment etc.

Facing the 1964 election, both the Douglas-Home Conservative Government and the succeeding Wilson Labour Government soon balked at the costs of implementing anything like this vision on a large scale (Gunn, 2015, xii-iii). Yet, although spending was frustrated,

²² BP, Churchill Memorial Lecture, May 1969, 24.

²³ *Ibid*, 24-5.

²⁴ Eg also TNA BD 4/206; BP, *Traffic in Towns*, Press Cuttings, Folders 7 and 8.

²⁵ BP, MT, *Traffic in Towns* [Japanese edition], Tokyo, Kajima Institute, 1965.

this most radical Buchanan vision continued to shape many hopes about the planning of cities for about ten years after the report was published. The London sections of the M4 motorway and its approach route), especially the major flyovers at Chiswick and Hammersmith (already built, the latter by Marples Ridgeway, when Buchanan reported) had given a foretaste of urban motorways. Now city highways engineers and the ‘roads lobby’ generally (BRF, 1964, 27-9) saw Buchanan as legitimating new urban motorways and pressed this interpretation on the MT. In practice, these ‘new’ road plans were often simply scaled up versions of older ones.²⁶ Already sections of these limited access and grade-separated ‘urban motorways’²⁷ were beginning to appear in major cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds and continued to do so over the following years.

The new techniques of American transportation planning which Buchanan had endorsed were also enthusiastically imported, producing notable British examples of land use and transportation modelling (Boyce and Williams, 2015, 71-127). However, the MHLG flatly rejected the large suburban shopping malls that Buchanan appeared to favour in the published report.²⁸ It was not until 1976 that the first one appeared, at Brent Cross in London, and only a further ten years later that others followed.

The other side of what Buchanan proposed, stressing the concept of environmental areas, pedestrianisation of existing streets and conservation took rather longer to be generally adopted. A few cities, notably Norwich and, to a lesser extent, Leeds, both case studies in *Traffic in Towns*, took early steps towards pedestrianising existing streets from 1967. But few others immediately followed them. From about 1970, an anti-roads lobby emerged, emulating earlier campaigns in American cities (Goodman, 1972; Tyme, 1978). During the 1970s there began to be significant new investment into public transport, though not until the 1990s was this on a big enough scale to have much impact on most British cities.

Conclusions

There are several dimensions to the story of this journey. At the simplest level, it is a tale of disappointment, a failed quest for answers to the most pressing problem then facing British cities. Viewed as an example of policy tourism, it is striking how personal, how disciplined and how prolonged the touristic experience was – and how unrewarding. There was little or no confirmation of expectation. The image of the American urban scene that Buchanan had anticipated quickly and shockingly faded away. Although he later reflected that something of use as policy guidance might pragmatically be salvaged from the experience of his journey, this was making the best of a bad job.

At another level, it is a picture of urban America in the Kennedy years seen by a very experienced but also very *British* town planner. It was not, of course, the first time a British planner had observed American cities and planning efforts at first hand. Yet Buchanan saw something radically different to earlier visitors who had seen places closer to contemporary

²⁶ eg TNA HLG 136/196, I. V. Pugh, Memo 3.2.1964.

²⁷ Few of these were full motorways in the legal sense but had motorway-type features.

²⁸ TNA HLG 136/196, Background Note re. Relocation of Land Uses and Out-of-Town Centres.

British and European ideals of the city and planning. Thanks to the motor car, the American city was becoming a different morphological entity with functional relationships that almost entirely contradicted Buchanan's notions of urban order and beauty. Yet he saw no signs of any early realisation of Webber's new vision of urban form. While he realised that the motor car was already becoming an essential feature of the British urban scene, he was also horrified to think its cities might go the same way as most American cities, especially Los Angeles. Later British travellers more familiar with American popular culture have perhaps been more at ease with the brash and exuberant commercialism of American auto-culture that Buchanan saw, but was quite unable to understand.

In another sense, though, this is also a story of the complexity of how experts and policy makers learn and draw lessons from other countries. Buchanan came from a country that, on the whole, thought more positively about the United States than he did. Its opinion-formers also thought less positively about the foreign examples which really impressed him. In order to fashion a message that had any hope of being listened to, he was obliged to soften his message about the United States into something more mixed, with less emphasis on the negative aspects, in order to engage with those who formed opinion and took policy decisions. As such he ended up endorsing major urban road construction and urban redevelopment – but in more qualified terms. Yet, despite all his caveats, many initially took the report simply as an encouragement to just these things. Only gradually has there been significant learning from the other, 'European' side of what was in *Traffic in Towns*.

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Figure 1 *Traffic in Towns* Working Group. Colin Buchanan is fourth from the right.

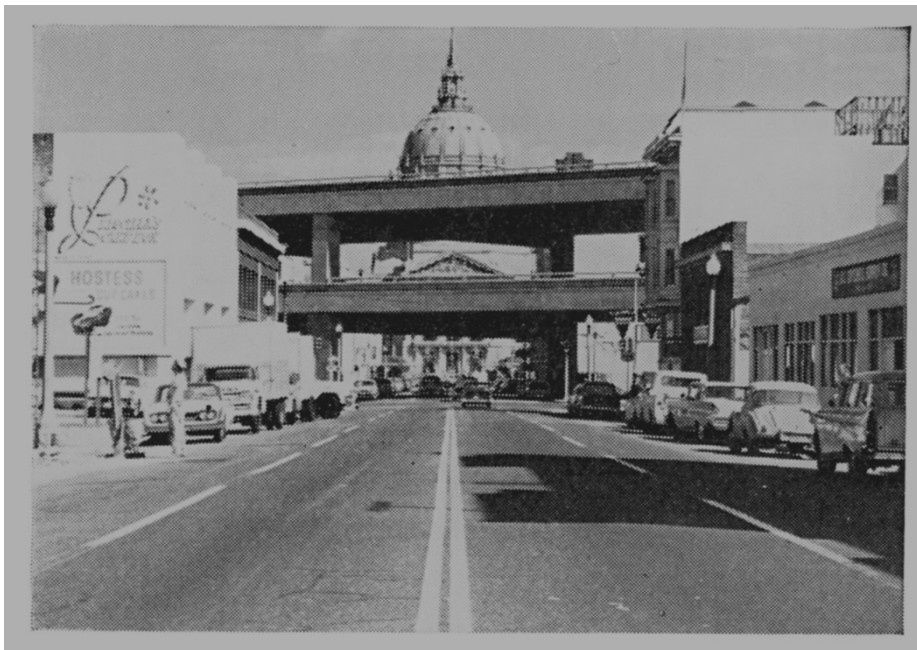


Figure 2 Double-deck elevated expressway in San Francisco, blocking view of City Hall, an example of the 'disastrous' environmental effects of expressways on cities



Figure 3 Californian suburban sprawl along expressway which Buchanan disliked although saw some merits in the convenience of car-based suburban shopping malls.

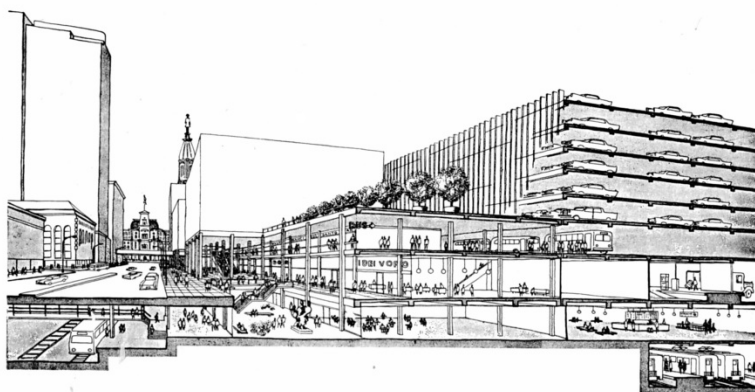


Figure 4 Penn Center in Philadelphia. Planned in the early 1950s, Buchanan admired this as a pioneer of integrated planning of buildings and transport modes, 'traffic architecture' and multi-level circulation. However, he saw many such redevelopments as too inward-looking, turning their backs on the rest of the central areas.

Table 1: Itinerary of Colin Buchanan's American Journey

Dates (all 1962)	Final destination /Travel mode	Specific sites mentioned	Persons met	Post of persons met
27-29 Sept	New York/Air	Manhattan (walked length of Island, visited Pan Am & UN buildings)		
30 Sept-3 Oct	Detroit/Air	Freeways, intersections etc Northlands shopping mall	Charles Blessing Professor Albert J. Mayer	City Planning Director, Detroit Institute of Urban Studies, Wayne University (also Director, Detroit Area Traffic Study)
4 -5 Oct	Chicago/Air	Transportation Authority Expressways Lake Shore Drive Urban renewal area	Dennis O'Harrow ? (unnamed) Douglas Carroll	Director, American Society of Planning Officials Commissioner of Capital Improvements Programme Director Chicago Area Transportation Study
6 -7 Oct	Louisville/Air	Suburban shopping mall Residential area Central expressway	Grady Clay	Commentator on urban affairs
8-12 Oct	San Francisco/Air	Central area (visits curtailed because of extremely wet weather)	Henry Rolph Kenneth Hoover James McCarthy Donald Reay Mr Sinclair Professor Norman Kennedy Professor Donald Foley	Former member of Board of Supervisors and activist in expressway versus rapid transit controversy Technical Director Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission City Planning Director Private consultant (formerly of UK Ministry of T & C Planning) Chief Engineer, State Highways Department, SF area Institute of Transportation & Traffic Engineering, Berkeley City Planning Department, Berkeley
13-18 Oct	Los Angeles/Air	Central area Conference of American Institute of Planners on 'Balanced Urban Transportation' All day auto tour of LA district	Unspecified persons Mr Telford Unspecified persons Unnamed planners	Los Angeles Rapid Transit Study State Highways Department in charge of LA area Los Angeles Mass Transport Authority Los Angeles Planning Commission
19 Oct	New Orleans/Air	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
20-21 Oct	New York/Air	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
22 -24 Oct	Philadelphia/Auto	George Washington Bridge New Jersey Turnpike Philadelphia & Redevelopment Area	Robert Mitchell Ed Bacon David Longmaid	Professor, City and Regional Planning, University of Pennsylvania City Planning Director, Philadelphia Director, Penn-Jersey Transportation Study
25-Oct-2 Nov	Washington (via Baltimore)/Auto	Washington - 'explored city' South West Urban Renewal Ares Symposium (29 Oct-2 Nov) on 'The Impact of Design – Transportation and the Metropolis' at Washington Centre [sic] for Metropolitan Studies Shirley Highway Outer Beltway (completed portions) Shopping malls at Arlington & Parkington	E. H. Holmes W. Slayton Darwin Stolzenbach (at his request)	Assistant Director of Research, Federal Bureau of Public Roads Commissioner for Urban Renewal, Washington DC Administrator of the National Capital Transportation Agency
3 Nov	No entry	No entry	No entry	No entry

4 Nov	Redbank/Auto	Greenbelt Baltimore Harbour [sic] Tunnel	Unspecified person gave tour	
5-8 Nov	New York/Auto	Garden State Parkway Lincoln Tunnel Manhattan (Port Authority helicopter tour) Guggenheim Museum (leisure)	Unspecified persons Unspecified persons Unspecified persons Professor Harry Anthony	New York Regional Plan Association Victor Gruen & Associates Port of New York Authority City & Regional Planning Department, Columbia University; private consultant.
9 Nov	Rochester/Auto	Radburn (but not found) Ithaca	Professor Burnham Kelly Professor Barclay Jones	Dean, College of Architecture, Cornell University Department of Architecture, Cornell University
10-11 Nov	Schenectady (via Buffalo and Niagara) /Auto	Rochester Mid-Town Plaza New York State Thruway		
12-16 Nov	Boston/Auto	Schenectady Massachusetts Turnpike Cambridge housing areas Harvard and MIT campuses	Unspecified person(s) Unspecified person(s) Unspecified person(s) Professor John T. Howard Professor Reginald R. Isaacs Professor Lloyd Rodwin	Joint Centre for Metropolitan [sic] Studies, Harvard/MIT Boston Mass Transportation Commission Boston Redevelopment Authority City Planning Department, MIT City Planning Department, Harvard City Planning Department, MIT
16 Nov	New London/Auto			
17-21 Nov	Philadelphia/Auto	Merritt Parkway George Washington Bridge Outer Areas Philadelphia (Penjerdel) Conference on Transportation Central Area Proposals Depressed expressway	John Bodine Ed Bacon	Director, Penn-Jersey-Delaware Project (Penjerdel) City Planning Director, Philadelphia
22 Nov	New York/Auto	In transit		
22-23 Nov	London (UK)/Air			

Source: TNA HLG 136/49, Visit to America, 1962 – Report by C. D. Buchanan.

Table 2 American features negatively reported by Colin Buchanan

Topic	§ Nos.	CB's observations	Representative Quotations
Planning system	23-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary nature • Fragmentation of local township zoning authorities • Inadequacy of higher-level county & state planning commissions • Development patterns reflect profit-seeking actions of sub-dividers 	‘...it was extremely difficult ...to discuss more practical questions of designing for vehicles in cities. They shied away from anything savouring of an architectural image as though it were something immoral. In general I got nowhere with my ideas about environment’ (§25)
Urban sprawl	26-7; 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge scale of sprawl • All kinds of development, not just housing • No effective planning policies to promote other forms • Result of natural increase & some migration + federal mortgage policies + car ownership • ‘The negro problem’ - black moves to suburbs trigger a white flight further out • Expressways not cause but outcome of sprawl though then fuelled further expansion 	<p>‘I gained the strong impression...of a restless population always ready to up sticks. The result of all these pressures is this huge sprawl...of all kinds of development, not merely houses, and so all manner of cross-currents of movement are generated of an extremely complex kind.’ (§27)</p> <p>‘...the motor vehicle unquestionably encouraged and enabled a great loosening of residential areas...Expressways appear to have been the perfectly logical outcome of sprawl, their function to lace the whole spread of development together...There does not seem to be any end to the process in sight’ (§31)</p>
Difficulties of peripheral expansion	29-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instability of land uses • Congestion on original expressways • Vast expense & disruption of road widening or double-decking required by continued peripheral growth 	<p>‘the expressways never have a chance of solving the problem because loads are increasing all the time’ (§29)</p> <p>Long Island Expressway: ‘the longest parking lot in the world’ (§30)</p>
Central business district	32-36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift of retailing into suburbs, following population • Removal of unprofitable buildings in CBD to create parking lots • Extent and sordidness of parking in CBD • Uneven central skyline • Inward looking, concentrated nature of attempts at CBD revitalisation • Further CBD office development (eg in Manhattan) intensifies travel demand 	<p>‘...sometimes the new suburban branch [of a department store] has become the headquarters and the old central headquarters has become a branch’ (§32)</p> <p>‘The extent of such [open-lot] parking, and the sordidness of much of it, coupled with jagged buildings, some very high and some very low, make the centre of Los Angeles the ugliest place I have ever seen.’ (§32)</p> <p>‘[Rochester Mid-Town Plaza] struck me very much as a single, concentrated high density project which might, by its very concentration, make the comprehensive redevelopment of the central area more difficult.’ (§33)</p>
Suburbia	37-42; 58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little walking in low density residential suburbs • Inward-looking character of pedestrianised suburban shopping malls, surrounded by huge parking areas • Visual disarray and ugliness of ‘gasolene [sic] gullies’ – shopping & service corridors along non-expressway roads to & within suburban areas 	<p>‘Pedestrian/vehicle separation has been achieved because there are no pedestrians (§37)</p> <p>‘...nothing urban about... [shopping malls] in the traditional sense, they are just isolated buildings stuck down in a sea of cars. I could not get used to this myself...’ (§38)</p> <p>‘In Los Angeles the grid pattern of these roads extends over an enormous area, making a criss-cross pattern of ugliness that must be hard to beat anywhere in the world...’ (§39)</p>

(continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Splitting of communities when such routes are divided highways Suburbs lack any real identity 	<p>‘...a really dreadful thing...almost complete severance’ (§41)</p> <p>‘I got completely lost in the anonymity of the suburbs (there is never anyone walking about whom one can ask)...’ (§58)</p>
Environmental impacts	47-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apparent unconcern of Americans for visual impacts of motor traffic Serious impacts of vehicle fumes in CBDs and on expressways in heavy traffic 	<p>‘...on the visual side they don’t seem to care very much anyhow and have very little that is worth conserving.’ (§47)</p> <p>‘In the important matter of vehicle fumes I could see no signs of an advance in American practice...exceedingly unpleasant...’ (§48)</p>
Expressways (mainly in cities)	49-64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaction against expressways though virtually everyone saw them as essential, but could have been better done. Crude designs and disastrous in environmental effect Require wide tracts of land and extensive destruction of property Frequent on/off ramps add to this land requirement Sever areas and generate great noise Intersections require huge amounts of land and are very ungainly Elevated expressways are especially intrusive Infrastructure difficulties when forming (less intrusive) sunken expressways Limited entry/exit points give fewer route options than street grid during congestion Stress of driving at high speeds on crowded expressways Difficulties of expressway navigation and poor signage (on all roads) Huge expense of expressways and associated engineering structures Unattractiveness of rural areas encourages urban sprawl 	<p>‘...double-decked structures of the crudest design...the environmental effect is disastrous.’</p> <p>‘...a wonderful redevelopment site has been effectively ruined.’</p> <p>‘...the effects of this clumsy structure slewing through housing areas (albeit older houses now mainly in negro occupation) are terrible.’ (all §50)</p> <p>‘...for us to attempt to put down... [expressway intersections]...in the tight conditions of our cities would present difficulties of a most formidable nature.’ (§53)</p> <p>‘... [elevated expressways] seem to have...the same kind of blighting influence that railway viaducts have had...’ (§54)</p> <p>‘...a big pack of vehicles travelling three or four abreast in rank after rank after rank. I must confess I found this unnerving...’ (§56)</p> <p>‘A sense of direction doesn’t help, because you may have to peel off to the right, say, in order to reach a destination to your left, and when you have perhaps traversed a completely circular ramp feel you are completely lost.’ (§57)</p> <p>‘...there is nothing remotely resembling the English countryside. Never once did I see any place where I really wanted to stop the car and get out and walk. Indeed, I found it generally a very depressing scene...’ (§64)</p>
Small towns	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little of interest regarding motor traffic 	<p>‘... the same story of pleasant residential areas contrasting with hideous entry roads, and somewhat ragged centres packed with cars.’ (§66)</p>
Parking	67-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large amount of space devoted to parking Cheap & crude design of multi-storey parking 	<p>‘I saw very little in the way of parking provision that interested me, except where the cars were put right out of sight...nearly all the multi-storey garages that I saw were cheap and crude in design and destructive of the urban scene such as it was.’ (§67)</p>

(continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of control of commercial parking Mess and sordidness associated with parked cars 	<p>‘...nothing to prevent anyone from using land for commercial parking until some more profitable use declares itself.’ (§68)</p> <p>‘...the parked car prevents proper street cleansing. The condition of some of the New York streets at weekends, when the cars have been removed is quite disgusting.’ (§69)</p>
Urban renewal, public housing & schools	70-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban renewal was building- rather than people-oriented Depressing appearance of public housing Income thresholds meant always occupied by poorest people Large car parks at schools and universities 	<p>‘....more for the sake of renewing <u>buildings</u> than helping the <u>people</u> who live in the houses’ (§70)</p> <p>‘...a stigma attached to people who live in such [public] housing – they haven’t made the grade...’ (§72)</p> <p>‘... [UCLA] resembled a gigantic car park more than anything else.’ (§73)</p>
Public transport	76-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncomfortable, very noisy and old-fashioned subways Poor quality of city buses (especially New York) Absence of new technologies or effective forward thinking in public transport/traffic control 	<p>‘...much of the equipment including the stations seem old-fashioned or even ropery...Many of the New York buses looked very dirty and battered, and made a fiendish noise from their rear engines’ (§76)</p> <p>‘I heard a good deal of serious talk about the possibilities of greatly increasing the capacities of expressways by the electronic control and guidance of vehicles, but no one seemed anxious to consider where this would lead.’ (§77)</p>
Los Angeles	80-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impossibility of applying very low density auto-sprawl model to the UK Extreme ugliness of motor vehicle-related environment 	<p>‘...I think there is an important negative lesson in the unbridled ugliness that a great deal of Los Angeles has taken on under the influence one way or another of the motor vehicle. I do not think any reasonable person, viewing the place dispassionately, could deny that it is, in many ways, an awful example of what happens when the motor vehicle is given its head.’ (§81)</p>

Source: TNA HLG 136/49, Visit to America, 1962 – Report by C. D. Buchanan.

Table 3 American features positively reported by Colin Buchanan

Topic	§ Nos.	CB's observations	Representative quotations
Wide range of public and official interest in planning	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite 'political ineptness' (§23) of planning system in USA, there is high public and special group interest 	'I was impressed by the wide variety of people who attended [a 5 day symposium of design for transportation & the metropolis], and the seriousness with which matters were discussed, and the way young people in public offices had been drawn in.' (§25)
Transportation studies	28 & 85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technically sophisticated and elaborate means of predicting future patterns of land use and movement from existing trends and possible alternatives 	'...we [ie the UK] would require more advanced techniques than we have so far developed. It is in this sphere that the work being done in the American transportation studies is of such great interest.' (§85)
Commitment to maintaining viability of central areas	33 & 86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite obvious signs of decay, there is strong commitment to retaining an adapted form of central area 	<p>'In some cities strong efforts are being made to revitalise the down-town areas, the initiative coming from traders and business firms' (§33)</p> <p>'I was impressed by the way most people supported the concept of central business districts, even if discharging somewhat different functions in the future. I had thought they might have abandoned the idea by now...' (§86)</p>
Some major central area renewal projects	33-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex multi-level developments (eg Mid-Town Plaza, Rochester & Penn Center, Philadelphia) Mixed-use combining shopping centres, offices, hotels etc Convenient integral car parking & (in Penn Center) public transportation facilities Whole single or double city block development (eg Lever Building or Rockefeller Center, New York) allows pleasant traffic-free area between buildings. 	<p>[Mid-Town Plaza] 'is a remarkable example of the advantages that can accrue from several levels of circulation' (§33)</p> <p>[The Penn Center] '...bears out our notion of "traffic architecture" which is a term we have coined to express our belief that buildings, spaces and access-ways for vehicles require designing together as part of a comprehensive process...' (§34)</p> <p>'...a good deal of the site is being opened out for public access. Where this has happened it is possible to get away from the traffic.' (§36)</p>
High quality suburban housing environments	37 & 39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractive with high housing standards even for modest income householders Quietness of these areas, not menaced by traffic 	<p>'I was very impressed with the general quietude that seems to reign.' (§37)</p> <p>'...suave, smooth low density housing areas...' (§39)</p>
Suburban shopping centres [sic]	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised shopping facilities in pleasant pedestrianised surroundings Abundant very convenient car parking Efficient delivery arrangements for shops 	'These are extraordinary places, and once again the size and number of them has to be experienced to be believed.' (§38)
Occasional high quality of some strip development	42 & 81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 	'...a kind of splendid anarchic ribbon development of substantial well-designed buildings strung out along a wide access road. Just how we could utilise the idea is another matter.' (§81)

Lesser impact of motor traffic in urban areas cf UK	43-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standard of driving – slower, more disciplined • Silent cars because higher powered; few motor-cycles • Wider urban streets • Grid-iron layout allows traffic dispersal • Adoption of designated trucking routes to reduce impact • Expressways help take traffic off many urban streets 	<p>‘I was most impressed by the fact that drivers seldom seem in a desperate hurry...they are content to glide along in an orderly way. There is an advantage, too, in their big, powerful, even if otherwise garish and tinny cars, that they are very silent’ (§44)</p> <p>[The grid-iron layout] ...encourages a very even spread of traffic all over the grid...it makes it very easy for special truck routes to be devised. The grid-iron thus seems a much easier system to deal with than the typical European spider’s web plan...’ (§45)</p>
Landscaping of rural expressways	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little litter (severe penalties) • Spacious service areas with effective separation of cars & trucks • Comfortable and clean restaurants 	‘Many lengths of <u>rural</u> expressways...struck me as superb...The service areas were spacious and well laid out...’ (§65)
School buses	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well organised system • Great attention to safety of school children 	‘I was impressed by the school bus arrangements, with the rigid requirement that the buses are not to be overtaken when they are stationary for picking up and setting down children, and with the slow speed limits flashed up by special signs when schools are discharging.’ (§72)
Airport terminal design for passengers & motor traffic	74-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of two levels for arrivals/departures vehicle access • Spacious planning of circulation and aircraft access for passengers 	‘...there is a spacious pedestrian environment with all kinds of facilities raised clear above all the coming and going of vehicles. It is so simple and natural...that it is difficult to understand why it should be so hard to make people see the opportunities for doing the same kind of thing in urban areas’ (§74)
Long distance bus terminals	78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractively provided with shops, caf��s, multi-level car parking in some cases • Good links to major highways 	‘...well-appointed...The Port Authority’s West Side bus terminal in Manhattan is an enormous place containing a sizeable shopping centre, with several floors of parking above. It connects directly to the Lincoln Tunnel and the West Side expressway.’ (§78)
Growing US perception of need for co-ordinated urban transportation	84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that continually increasing motor traffic cannot be handled in cities • Some willingness to subsidise mass-transportation 	[The Americans] ‘...seem to be rapidly advancing to the conclusion that such freedom [in choice of transport method] cannot really exist in metropolitan areas and that...all methods...must be harnessed in a co-ordinated way’ (§84)
Urban expressways	87	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite all their negative features, they ease urban travel 	‘Disturbing as I found the urban expressways in many of their aspects, I could not deny their value in facilitating urban travel...But...there are limits to the amount of such construction that an urban area can stand if it is to remain liveable in the broadest sense. Where to draw the line is a matter of great difficulty.’ (§87)

Source: TNA HLG 136/49, Visit to America, 1962 – Report by C. D. Buchanan.