When the Festival of Britain has run its course the South Bank site of 27 acres will become what might be described as a planner's vacuum. But not entirely, since the Royal Festival Hall has already been built, the National Theatre is to go alongside it and Government accommodation will straddle the upstream section. But these are zoning proposals and cannot tell us about the nature of the development. In the 'thirties new building became a battleground on which the modern style of architecture struggled to establish itself. The Government-sponsored South Bank exhibition shows how well this battle is now going. Today's new building projects must become a battleground for modern planning. The first salvo in this new battle has been fired in this same South Bank site, and the preceding pages of this issue will have demonstrated how effectively some of the best principles of modern planning, or Townscape as its visual aspect is called, are employed there: how buildings and the space and floor which they enclose or bound are regarded together to produce scenes and progressions of emotional value. This article attempts, very simply, to translate this planning conception from exhibition into a permanent part of everyday London.

The plan alongside show:

1930 The river bank is industrial, based on river transport. The Surrey Leads Works is marked by its chimney. Behind this zone lies a maze of small streets of two and three storey houses.

1951 The County of London Plan reserves the area as a cultural and office zone. The war has helped to clear the site and the exhibition eliminates the erection of the Royal Festival Hall and embankment. Some of the roads, the bridges and the jetty (and of course the river) are all that remain of the old pattern. The new pattern is one of monkeying quadrangles.

The Future

Government offices, conference rooms and hotels; a large hotel and the National Theatre are the main buildings envisaged to replace the exhibition. Although the exhibition pattern, or grid, the density of building is greatly increased in the scheme put forward hereafter.