

from the school collaborate on the splendid interiors of the Philharmonic Hotel, as forerunner to the integral ideal of the 'Basic Course' at the Bauhaus.¹⁹ The 1902 Education Act, however, surrendered the universities from local funding. The art school went off to a new building where later the Beatles fermented,²⁰ and in 1904 the university appointed as Professor of Architecture Charles Reilly, who took the school in a new direction, and through personality and publicity over the following decades made it known across the world.²¹

That direction was westwards. Reilly was a typical Edwardian in that, while he was in reaction against the Gothic Revival and Victorian structure (Lytton Strachey was living nearby in Rodney Street), he evinced little interest in advanced European developments. Aware, nevertheless, of the untenable tide of big business, and funded by William Lever (Lord Leverhulme), who also endowed the university school of civic design, while building by his Wirral soapworks the garden suburb of Port Sunlight,²² he sailed in 1909 to America, in search of a model to adapt to the new city, to teach, to promote, and thereby to promote the Liverpool school. Chris Church has shown how Liverpool was already long open to US models and contexts,²³ but on Reilly the American way of amplifying Beau-Arts composition to steel construction and huge commercial projects now exercised an overwhelming persuasion. As Colin Rowe put it, Reilly 'believed that the message had been delivered by McKim, Mead, & White'.²⁴ Thus, US trips and internships became a feature of the Liverpool curriculum, which then began to bear influence on the city itself. In consequence, Liverpool and Glasgow (with Burnet's work) were the only British cities to retain to 1939, some architectural independence of the kind that had flourished in provincial centres in the nineteenth century.

There is not most conspicuous example of 'Liverpool neo-grec' was Willink & Trenchard's Cunard Building. Completed in 1918, it was the third of the Pier Head trio, and quite the most refined – a very grand palazzo which housed not only Cunard's headquarters building but a lounge and restaurant for first class passengers awaiting embarkation at the landing-stage, its site matching Cunard's New York office on Battery Park, No 1 Broadway. While Willink went on, with Harold Dod, to design the new Athenaeum club, the most successful architect of the Liverpool school, with the greatest impact on the city between the wars, was Herbert Rowse. For his Blue Funnel Line he built India Buildings and for Martin's Bank headquarters two of the huge blocks which ringed the endow Water Street with its epic New York 'canyon' prospect down to the Mersey. Not least New York about Water Street was that architects put their offices on the top floors of their own buildings – Rowse over Martin's Bank, Willink abode the Canard, and Aubrey Thomas atop the Liver Building.

Rowse displayed an evolution from Beau-Arts, through Art Deco, to the brink of Modernism in his last big job, the Dudok-influenced new Philharmonic Hall, which opened in 1939. His most haunting endowment to the city, however, are not in Liverpool but in Birkbeckland. They are the enigmatic towers which, from the far embankment, echo those on the Pier Head and kindle, by their spectral correspondence, an idea of the city's transmarine extension to its metro-colony on the Wirral (or New Jersey). Abstract and pharaonic, with sleek Art-Deco detail, they are in fact bures of the Mersey Tunnel, engineered by Mott & Brodie, and opened in 1934. Rowse also designed the tunnel's hieratic portals, but streamlined in three-mile carriage-way so rationally that when Maxwell Fry brought Walter Gropius to lecture at the university, he took Gropius through the tunnel.

Doubtless, Fry (a 1924 Liverpool graduate) also showed to Gropius Frederick Eschell's recent translation of Corbusier's *Vin L'Architecture*, which was illustrated with Liverpool works – notably Cunard's Aquitania and a striking whole-page photo of a Gladstone Dock loading, anticipating the skyscraper profile of Milan's Pirelli tower, entitled simply 'Liverpool'.

By Reilly's retirement in 1933, Modernism was reaching Liverpool. Indeed, Reilly brokered the Modernist design of his recent graduate

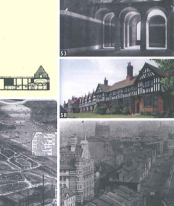
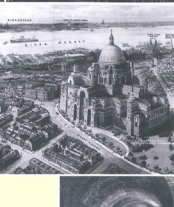
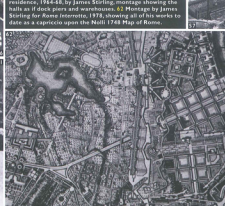
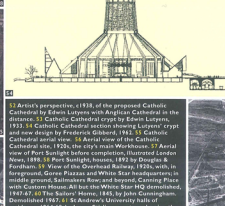
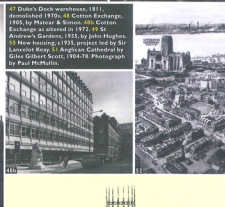
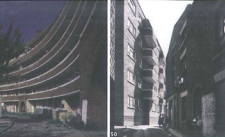
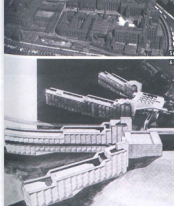
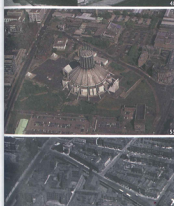
William Crabtree for the Peter Jones store on London's Smeane Square, modelled on works of Erich Mendelsohn who, while in Britain, lectured twice at Liverpool. Meanwhile, Fry, a partner with Gropius, tried to get him a post at the university. But would Gropius have fitted at Liverpool? The expressionistically supercharged Arts and Crafts ideal that launched the Bauhaus had turned to industrial design, but Gropius still spoke for a social functionalism likely to be misunderstood in a liberal academy which, in Rowe's account, was disposed by degrees towards Modernism, but, as in the America of 'The International Style', in essentially formalist terms.²⁵ Yet Liverpool's largest Modernist initiative was one of Britain's most extensive programmes of social housing, under the city architect Lancelot Keyes. Characteristic was the deck-accessed inner-city *Siedlung* of St Andrews Gardens, designed by local graduate John Hughes after a trip to Germany. Characteristically 'contrary', too, for this housing was, as George Orwell noted, commissioned by Liverpool's Tory council: 'Here therefore you have what is in effect Socialist legislation ... done by a local authority. But the Corporation of Liverpool is almost entirely Conservative ... On the other side ... you have Port Sunlight, a city within a city, all built and owned by the Leverhulme soapworks ... Looking at the Corporation buildings – and the Leverhulme houses ... you would find it hard to say which was which'.²⁶

Liverpool interrupted

By the time of Orwell's *Diary*, Leverhulme was dead, and his company Unilever had built a big headquarters building at Blackfriars in London. Up the Thames at Millbank, the ICI, another huge combine of northern chemical companies, had built a still bigger headquarters. The deal that created ICI was conceived in 1926 aboard Corbusier's favourite, Aquitania, and its largest element was the United Alkali Company which was based in the Cunard Building.²⁷ Neither ICI nor Unilever had history or interests in London; but its monopoly of national government led both to erect massive Beau-Arts headquarters there that would have been better designed in Liverpool, had they remained in the city where they had grown, and which now needed their new dynamism. For within a few years of their move, Liverpool was suffering the aftermath of the Wall Street crash.

Where did decline really begin? 'The onset of the end is always discrete' wrote Hans Magdalen Eitzenburger in *The Struggle of The Titanic*. Was it that moment in 1876 when, overeating his snobish lights against her husband, Mrs Frederick Leyland confronted James McNeill Whistler amid the gilt and turquoise panels of the Peacock Room? A Liverpool shipowner of some cultivation, Leyland invited the American artistically to his home at sixteenth-century Speke Hall, which Whistler drew. Leyland also acquired a rich art collection, yet kept it not in Liverpool, but in Kensington's Princes Gate, where, as signal to high society, he commissioned Whistler to decorate a salon. Had Princes Gate been in Liverpool, this keyword of the Aesthetic Movement, characteristic of Liverpool's role in Henry James' 'Gilded Age', might have one of local Jugendstil like those of Glasgow and Vienna. Moreover, Leyland could have kept an eye on Whistler. For, left unsupervised at Princes Gate, Whistler was profligate not only with his talent, but with Leyland's money, painting over antique Spanish leathers and then, as much a parvenu as his patrons, demanding 2000 guineas for unspecified work.²⁸

The Peacock episode was a significant straw in the wind; for it indicated the weakness of new provincial cities in relation to the old money, advantage and privilege of London. Initially *pluie à deux*, then main houses, their entire corporate headquarters, shifted in the early twentieth century from the North to London. When Sir Henry Tate, Liverpool sugar magnate, opened a national gallery of modern art, he did so in London. When Dr Ludwig Mond made the greatest-ever bequest of old masters, acquired from wealth in the Merseyside chemical industry, it was not to Liverpool or Manchester, but to the National Gallery in London. When Sir Thomas Beecham founded an orchestra with money from his family's drug company in St Helens, he did so in London. Against this trend, some Liverpool firms held out. As late as 1970, the only clearing



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47 Dike's Dock warehouse, 1811, demolished 1910; 48 Cotton Exchange, 1865, by Messrs R & Sons; 49 Cotton Exchange as shared in 1972; 50 St Andrew's Gardens, 1935, by John Hughes; 51 New housing, 1935, project led by Sir Lancelot Keyes; 52 Anglican Cathedral by Giles Gilbert Scott, 1904-78. Photograph by Paul Holliman.

53 Artist's perspective (1938) of the proposed Catholic Cathedral by Edwin Lutyens with Anglican Cathedral in the distance; 54 Catholic Cathedral crypt by Edwin Lutyens, 1933; 55 Catholic Cathedral section showing Lutyens' crypt and new design by Frederick Gibberd, 1962; 56 Catholic Cathedral aerial view; 57 Aerial view of the Catholic Cathedral site, 1929; the city's main Workhouses; 58 Aerial view of Port Sunlight before completion, illustrated London News, 1896; 59 Port Sunlight, houses, 1892 by Douglas & Ferriss; 60 View of the Overhead Railway, 1928, with its foreground, Gares Piazas and White Star headquarters; in middle ground, Sailmakers Row and beyond, Cannoning Place with Custom House. All but the White Star HQ demolished, 1947-52; 61 The Sailors' Home, 1848, by John Cunningham. Demolished 1967; 62 St Andrew's University halls of residence, 194-48; by James Stirling; montage showing the halls as if floor pans and workspaces; 63 Montage by James Stirling for Rome Interiors, 1978, showing all of his works to date as a graphic upon the Mall, 1748 Plan of Rome.

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