



University Library, Special Collections & Archives: Highlight for September 2011

Papers of Baron Holford, Architect

The papers of William Graham Holford (1907-1975), Architect and Town Planner have been supplemented by previously uncatalogued material, now fully listed online. The personal and professional papers relate to architecture and town planning, both in Britain and abroad, and illustrate in detail Holford's career and the work of his company, William Holford & Partners.

Holford was born in Johannesburg South Africa in 1907. In 1925 he left South Africa to enrol at the University of Liverpool's School of Architecture, headed at the time by Professor C.H. Reilly. After successfully graduating with a 1st class honours he embarked on a one year scholarship in Architecture with the British School of Rome, where he was to meet his wife Marjorie Brooks (1904-1980). He became Senior Lecturer and Demonstrator in the School of Architecture in 1933 and held the Lever Chair of Civic design until 1947.



D147/8/1/4 Photograph of Holford

Although he remained Planning Consultant for Liverpool until 1955, by 1948 he had moved to University College London as Professor of Town Planning. He was granted a knighthood in 1953 and by 1965 had been made a life peer as Baron

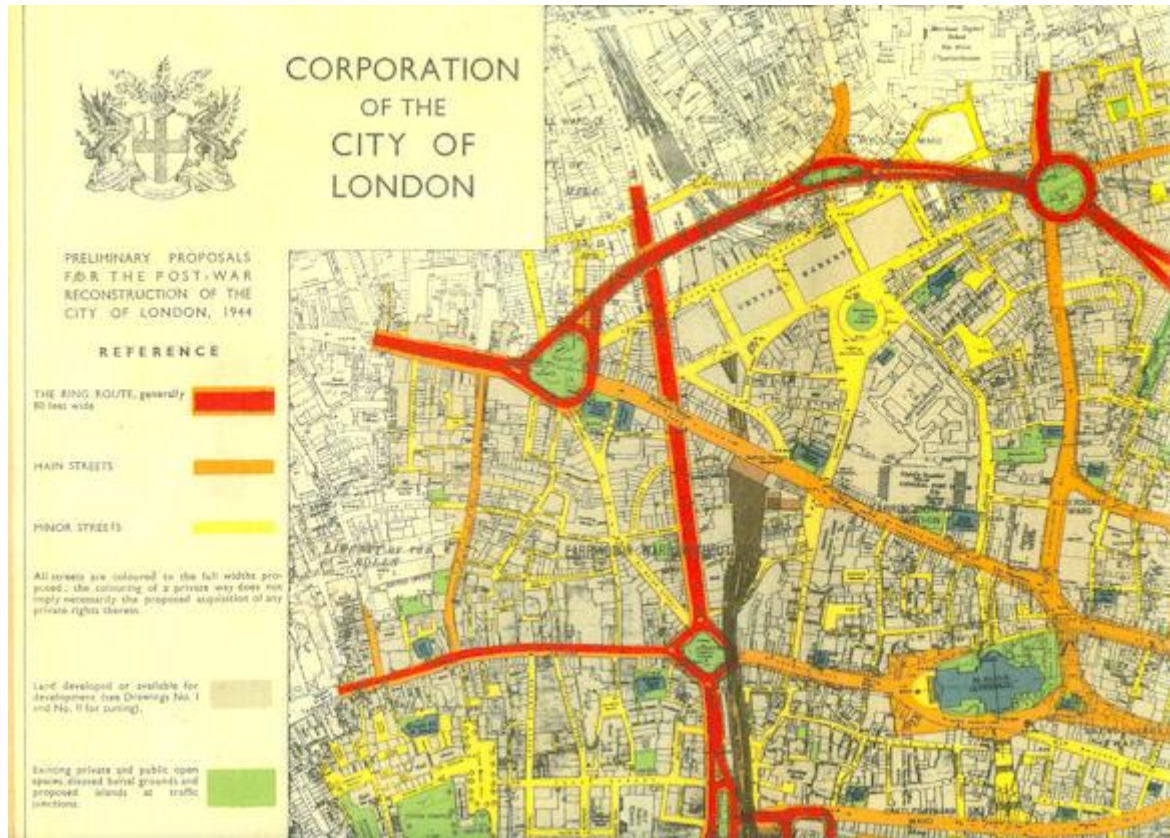
Holford of Kemp Town, making him the first town planner to have been made a Lord.



D147.7.1.1.26.6 View of Parliamentary Triangle, Canberra

The collection illustrates the public image of Holford through his membership of many professional committees and councils, including the Royal Institute of British Architects of which Holford was president. He was also a trustee of the British Museum and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; on a more local level he was president of the Bluecoat Society of Arts, Liverpool.

The majority of the material focuses on his career during the post-war period when he was connected with the University College London. In particular it represents his impact on projects such as the reconstruction of post-war London (including Piccadilly Circus and the Precincts of St Pauls), Cambridge, and Corby where he was architect for the New Town Development Corporation.



D147.7.5.5.6 1944 Report on the reconstruction of London

Researchers are also able to access papers that reflect his role in international projects such as his position as consultant to the National Development Commission of Canberra (1958-1970), his involvement with South Africa as planning consultant for the City of Pretoria and with his development plan for the City of Durban. The collection also highlights Holford's role internationally as an assessor in competitions (Brazil/Canada) and in an academic capacity (America/Greece).

Newly catalogued items also include papers from Richard Gray who was a partner of Holford's and who worked on his biography, comprising a variety of personal photographs and slides along with correspondence and material relating to his wife Marjorie Brooks who was a Rome Scholar in Mural Painting.

Text by Si n Wilks.

References:

University of Liverpool, Special Collections & Archives website: <http://sca.lib.liv.ac.uk/collections/index.html>

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, article on Holford: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31245>