

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is nearly ten years since this report on land-use controls in the United States was first written. When I was asked by the M.I.T. Press to prepare it for a second edition, I was faced with a problem: whether to attempt to bring the whole report up to date in technical terms, or whether to leave it substantially unaltered as an account of the American system of land-use controls as seen by a British observer in 1960.

Three factors led me to adopt the second alternative. First (though this did not prove so compelling a reason as it might have been) was the fact that, although I have kept in touch with American planning and planners over the years, I could not claim to have a detailed knowledge of recent technical developments in American land-use controls. Second, however, I was assured by some of my American friends that there had been no spectacular advances in those techniques since 1960, and that my account of what then appeared to be the more significant innovations remained broadly correct. It seems that developments over the past ten years have been more in the direction of wider adoption of the more modern forms of control that I had identified than toward any major change in the scope or methods of control. Third, I felt that such value as the report might have lay in its general assessments rather than in its more technical details. Its account of the historical development of American methods of land-use control—their origin and rapid growth in the 1920's and 30's, followed by a long period of stagnation and litigation, and then by a determined effort on the part of a few practicing city planners to revise and render those controls more effective—all this remained valid. The report, therefore, had a certain historical or documentary interest in itself as reflecting the state of play in American land-use controls at the end of the 1950's and the start of the 1960's, an interest which it would lose if I attempted to bring it up to date. It would also have meant attempting to do so at secondhand, rather

than with that element of reportage which the original version gathered as I wrote it over the twelve months of discussion, study, and 20,000 miles travel throughout the United States in 1959/60.

But as I reread the report, ten years after it was written, I began to question how far American *attitudes* to land-use planning, as distinct from the techniques, might have changed over that decade. In 1960 there was little sign of urgent public concern with the problems of land use. Those planners who were endeavoring to alert public opinion to the dangers of unplanned and rapidly accelerating urban growth faced a largely indifferent audience. Those few planners who were convinced that, if these problems were to be dealt with at all, then the only hope was to revise, systematize, and enforce the methods of control that already existed encountered not only public indifference but also a very widespread skepticism among professional planners and academics as to the efficacy or relevance of such an approach to the problem. Transportation planning and the early bulldozer methods of urban renewal attracted far more interest than conventional land-use controls. Even those who were actively engaged in the emergent problems of urban America were more concerned—and rightly so in the wider context—with the problems of racial conflict, crime, poverty, and social deprivation rather than with the mundane, but in some ways related, questions of land-use control.

I concluded that the best course would be to leave the original report substantially unchanged and to consider, in a new chapter, how far and to what effect American attitudes to land-use planning have changed over the past decade and the extent to which these changes are reflected in the planning system. This now forms Part VII of the present edition: "Retrospect and Prospect—1969." I have also drawn attention by footnotes to some points in the original text which require modification or amplification in the light of more recent developments.

In attempting this revision without returning to the United States I have necessarily been heavily dependent on

the advice of my American friends. Among these I would like to express my special thanks to Richard F. Babcock of Chicago, who is not only actively engaged in the day-to-day knockabout of zoning litigation, and one of the most entertaining writers on the subject,¹ but is also Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the American Law Institute study for a Model Land Development Code, which is engaged in a comprehensive review of the law relating to land-use controls. I discuss this review in Part VII.

Those readers who require a more detailed account of recent developments in American land-use controls may be referred to the well-organized account of the system given by Norman Williams, Jr., in *The Structure of Urban Zoning*.² If this book had existed when I began my study of the subject, I would have been spared a lot of arduous research. Developments in the general legislative context can be followed in the periodical legislative reviews published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*.³ The International City Managers' Association published in 1968 a new edition of their all-purpose handbook on American planning, *Principles and Practice of Urban Planning*.⁴ F. Stuart Chapin produced in 1965 a new edition of his standard textbook, *Urban Land Use Planning*.⁵ The political context of planning in American cities, which is critical to an understanding of how planning decisions are actually taken, is described by Alan A. Althuser in *The City Planning Process*⁶ and, as part of the wider background, by Edward

1. See Richard R. Babcock, *The Zoning Game—Municipal Practices and Policies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

2. Bottenheim Publishing Corporation (New York: 1966).

3. See *Journal of The American Institute of Planners*, Vol. XXX, No. 3 (August 1964); Vol. XXXII, No. 5 (September 1966); and Vol. XXXIV, No. 5, (September 1968).

4. Edited by William I. Goodman and Eric C. Freund (Washington, D. C.: International City Managers' Association, 1968).

5. University of Illinois Press (Urbana: 1965).

6. Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1965).

C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson in *City Politics*.⁷ I would also recommend Christopher Tunnard's *The Modern American City*,⁸ which includes a fascinating selection of readings on the subject from a wide variety of sources.

In conclusion I must emphasize that this report has a limited perspective. It is concerned primarily with land-use controls or, in the terms of my original project, the public control of private development. It does not attempt to deal in any detail with transportation planning, metropolitan planning, urban renewal, or wider aspects of urban and rural planning except insofar as they are expressed in terms of land-use control, that is, by the traditional methods of zoning and subdivision regulation. It is therefore short on the theoretical aspects of planning and on those forms of master planning or "paper planning" which are not closely related to the practical and available powers of implementation through the control of land use. I make no pretense, therefore, to appraise the real advances made in the techniques of planning—particularly notable in the application of mathematical concepts to planning problems and the development of theoretical models—or in the understanding of the social factors that contribute to the problems with which the planner attempts to deal. Those problems extend far beyond the limited range of the technical and administrative methods of control that are the subject of this report. But, and this is the theme to which I constantly recur, these methods have a contribution to make toward the solution of those problems; and there is still a danger, as there was ten years ago, that they will be neglected or dismissed as irrelevant. That is the justification for a second edition of this report.

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7. Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass.: 1963).

8. D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc. (Princeton, N.J.: 1968).