

## 9.4 CLOSING STATEMENTS

This research started with the implicit charge that Alsop's work was all image and no substance and used this to posit a dialectical position of image versus substance, the synthesis of which might lead to a better understanding of the art and science of making masterplans using *Remaking Barnsley* as the case study.

In so doing it has shown categorically that, contrary to the view of many in the professional and property worlds and the world of journalism, his work is both image and substance. However they are probably right to exercise a degree of caution because, although five years on, much has been achieved, the regeneration is still in the subsidy phase, which may be masking an economically unsustainable position.

It has highlighted the deep irony that powerful images can interfere with the reading the propositions that lie beneath them, but this is only to be consistent with the paradoxical Condition of Postmodernity that Harvey so presciently describes (1989).

The research seems to have produced the makings of a tool, which with a little more work, could prove to be useful in assessing masterplans before, or as, they are being implemented, and thereby reduce the numbers of ineffectual masterplans. It has tried to grapple with the real tangible effects of the informational age suggesting more the need to think creatively about answers than being able to prescribe any.

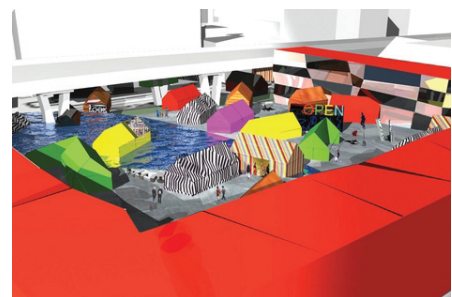
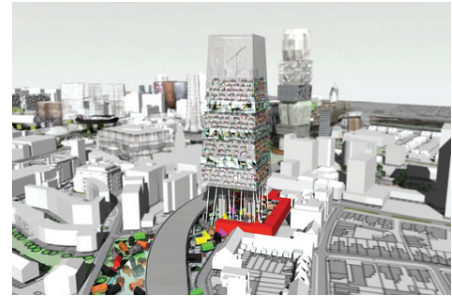
In tracing the trajectory of *Remaking Barnsley* it has been a privilege to have observed, albeit from afar, the creativity and drive of three dynamic and positive organisations: Yorkshire Forward, Barnsley Council and Alsop Architects epitomised by Alan Simpson, Steve Houghton and Will Alsop respectively, and how these blended into one supreme effort. The outcome would not have been the same if any one of these players had been different.

Much of the of the narrative portrayed here is soaked in irony and it is fitting to end on one final twist. Jon Rouse, who epitomised the establishment attack on Alsop when in post as the head of CABE (see p.4 above; Rouse, 2004), went on to head up the Housing Corporation but is now the chief executive of the London Borough of Croydon. Clearly he has been reflecting a lot because

he has appointed Alsop to carry out a visionary masterplan for his borough. But according to BD's journalist Helen Crump:

*Will Alsop has unveiled dramatic plans to transform Croydon, vowing it will not become a rerun of his failed vision for Barnsley..... speaking after the event, Alsop promised to "protect" his vision from the fate of his 2002 proposal to remodel Barnsley on a Tuscan hill town, claiming this had not been properly implemented. "What I learned from Barnsley is that you need to be around to protect the vision," he said. "They [Barnsley] haven't really. .... "Alsop understood and helped us restore the historic urban pattern. His team has worked immensely hard in terms of understanding the history of Croydon," Rouse added..... But Steve Houghton, leader of Barnsley council, insisted Alsop's Barnsley vision had been followed "to the letter". "Will did a fantastic job producing a masterplan for the town and a vision that surrounded it, and it's being built," he said. (Crump, 2007)*

So in 2003 Alsop trumpeted his success at Barnsley which Rouse deemed as failure, now Rouse considers Alsop a success and Alsop is branding Barnsley as a failure. The truth is.....



Figures 34, 35, 36, 37:  
Images of Alsop's Croydon masterplan.  
(Crump, 2007)