



Figure 8.36 The Paternoster development: Lord Holford's design, 1967. (a) The figure-ground relationship and (b) a bird's eye view.

which had obtained a long-term lease of the site from the Church Commissioners of the Church of England.

The Holford scheme consisted of narrow rectangular, slab, commercial buildings set within an orthogonal site geometry (see Figure 8.36). Their height was restricted by their closeness to St Paul's – a control imposed by the Church Commissioners and one that still exists. They were designed to provide good light to office interiors. The buildings in day-to-day operation proved to be less than functional. Their shape did not meet the deep-plan requirements for commercial space at the time. Many critics and lay-people thought the development was lifeless and boring – a grim pedestrianized piazza. It was considered to reflect the functional theories of the Bauhaus Rationalist design ideology not British values. Much was shoddily built. During the 1980s the precinct became increasingly abandoned and the site came up for redevelopment.

In 1986, the site ownership (except for Sudbury House) passed from CEGB to a consortium consisting of Stockly, British Land, Unilever and Barclays Bank on a 250-year lease from the church. A year later the

Mountleigh Group acquired Stockly (and its portion of control over the site) and then sold it on to Cisneros of Venezuela. The transactions reflected the buoyancy of the London property market at that time. The search for a design more appropriate for the site than that of Holford began in earnest. Ownership of the lease subsequently changed hands 'promiscuously' several times over the next 10 years (1995–2004). Greycoat and Park Tower acquired the property to be later replaced by Mitsubishi Estates (MEC).

An architectural competition organized by Stuart Lipton, a developer, on behalf of the Mountleigh Group was held in 1986. The figure ground studies of the proposals of the seven shortlisted architects are shown in Figure 8.37. Arup Associates was selected to proceed. Their design was a complicated neo-Rationalist one proposing the use of abstract historical referents in the buildings that formed it. The buildings were also designed to meet the commercial need of the marketplace for deep, highly serviced space. The proposal was criticized by Prince Charles whose views were widely supported by the lay-public. He argued for a more classical approach to design. John Simpson completed another