City Museums, Regeneration and Place

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City Museums

- Backdrop of urban regeneration crucial – but now uncertain - structural context
  - Symbolic economy of cities (Scott, 1997)
- Shift from collections to action (Weil, 1990; Ross, 2004; Message, 2009)
- Crucial role in the construction of place
  - Reflexive; plural view of local culture and place
  - Not a politically neutral process

Museum of Liverpool and Regeneration

- Active construction
- Role of NML key
  - Place making
  - ‘Tourist Gaze’ (Urry, 2003)
- Museum of Liverpool as ‘challeng[ing] preconceptions of the city, breaking down prejudice and feeding into regeneration strategies, to raise community aspirations and promote positive citizenship’ (NML, 2008)

Museum of Liverpool as Icon?

- Architecture a materialization of political-economic shifts
  - Changed political positioning
  - Architectural language shifted
- MoL on significant - and controversial – site
  - Collapse of Fourth Grace project
  - WHS
  - Implications for form

Concluding Comments

- Museums’ social function in a recession
- Increased reflexivity in museum field to be accompanied by critical, engaged research
  - Situating museums ‘in their social place’ crucial
  - Drive for ‘impact’, ‘value for money’ can narrow focus of research

References