

The times they are a changing

Bill Chandler

Bob Dylan was right on, all those years ago – which sort of tells you the generation I am part of. Call it timely, or serendipitous, or coincidence – whatever! No sooner have we published *UDF* 100 and the time has come, at last, for *UDF* to consider going fully electronic.

We have looked to go electronic-only for more than a decade, predating even the plethora of blogs and other online sites relating to urban design. The web site was set up with that in mind. But the punters said, 'nah, we are modern, but we still want our *UDF* hard copy each quarter'. So we continued printing hard copy.

As you are aware, the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects have been distributing *Urban Design Forum* in conjunction with their own hard copy quarterlies as a much-valued service to their members. With the rapid transformations in the publishing world, the AILA publication is now going online-only, so it is timely for *UDF* to do likewise.

There will be a transition period where *UDF* will still be printed, in much smaller numbers, to make sure that those regular and casual readers who obtain their copies from universities or government department front counters can still get them. *UDF* also has a commitment to paid subscribers in Australia and overseas.

The new arrangements start with this edition, *UDF* 101. If you are reading this in hard copy format, you have somehow managed to get one! If you are reading this online, it is because you have reached www.udf.org.au directly or through links on the PIA or AILA websites.

Ongoing contributions

Notwithstanding the many online sites for urban design, there still seems to be a need for an outlet, a forum, for the wide diversity of Australian writers and others - which has been the essence of *Urban Design Forum* since 1986. Feedback from readers, and contributors, to wchandler@bigpond.com will guide how this evolves.

Hard copy subscriptions

It is not yet clear how many readers will still want hard copy. If you do, then email ASAP to bruce@urbaninitiatives.com.au. The cost is \$Aus90 for eight editions (two years), including packing and postage. This usually includes a 'bonus' copy because of the postage threshold weights. The printing arrangements will evolve during the transition period, and it is envisaged that the website will be also be further developed during that time.

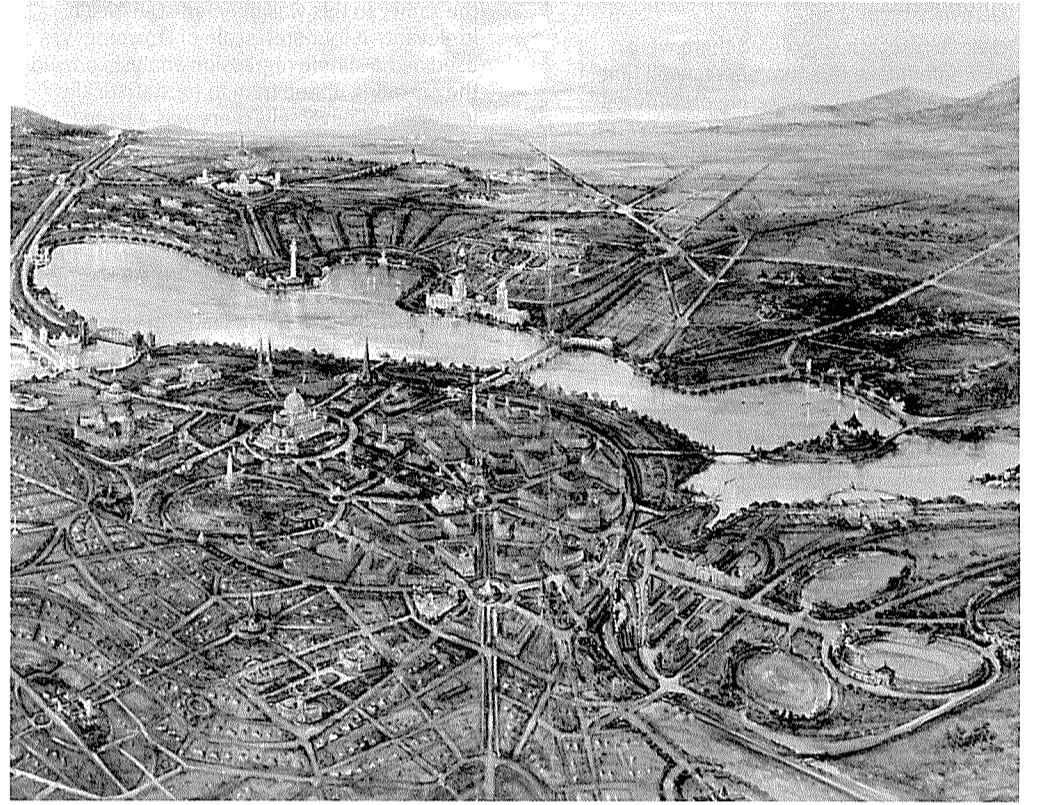
UDF 100 The Book

Needless to say, we rather underestimated the extent of interest in this venture, and the time needed to interact with authors in finalising each contribution. However, we are thrilled with the scope and approach of the 50 authors, and are now putting the book into a printable form.

We are very confident that what started out as 'an interesting idea' will result in a very worthwhile contribution to urban design knowledge and dialogue - with about 100,000+ words and 180+ well-illustrated pages. Details of how you can get a copy will be on the *UDF* website as soon as it is available, and in the June edition of *UDF*.

URBAN DESIGN FORUM

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▲ Competitor number 10 WS Griffiths, RCG Coulter and CH Caswell

Canberra celebrates 100

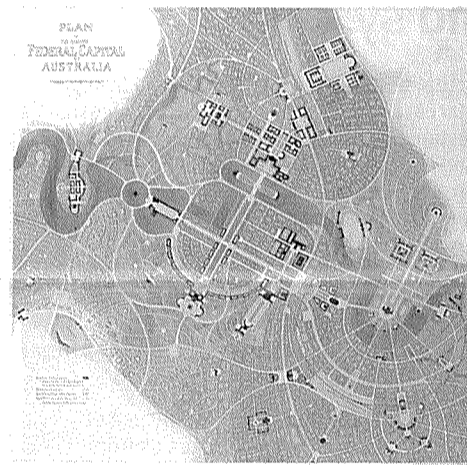
Canberra is renowned internationally, but opinions about Canberra as a city and a place have always varied - from 'inspired design' to 'soulless'. Underpinned by the Walter Burley Griffin/Marion Mahoney competition-winning design, for half a century, it struggled to demonstrate that it was a real capital city, but over recent decades it has blossomed and matured. And now it is celebrating its centenary!

In 1911, designers from around the world were invited to share their vision for a truly planned city. Just like the decision as to where to locate the new capital, the city's final form was also controversial - and apparently the Royal British Institute of Architects attempted to boycott the competition, because they didn't like the control that the Federal Government was retaining over the result. Despite the controversy, 137 entries were lodged from across the globe. Now, a century on, those that made the shortlist are back on display.

To coincide with the centenary, the winning entry - Design 29, by Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin - and some of the rarely-seen finalists have gone on show at the National Archives of Australia, a display showing the turn-of-the-century designs in a new light for the digital era. Visitors can collect iPads and take them around the exhibition with them, unfolding and unlocking a whole new layer of content.

The technology allows people to see what Canberra could look like if the design of Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin had not been selected. You can layer a contemporary Canberra map over one of the design maps and get a feel for how the two relate to each other, or not, as the case may be, and also explore aspects of the Griffin plan which were never implemented.

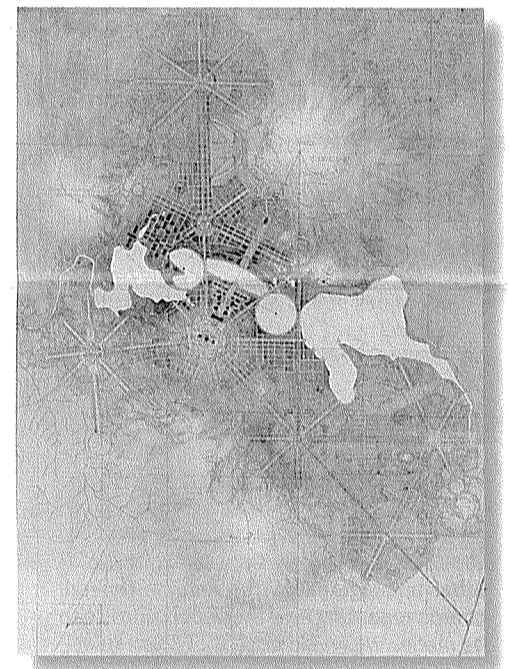
One of the lesser-known aspects of Griffins' design was a planting scheme to cover different hills with pink cherry blossom,



▲ Competitor number 18 Eliel Saarinen

red bottle brush or yellow broome. Despite attempts to look forward, the designs are a reflection of their time and place, and they didn't imagine the scale of population or the dominance of the motor vehicle.

For details of the address and opening times of the exhibition, see www.naa.gov.au



▲ The winning entry, design 29 by Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony Griffin

John Hopkins: English landscape architect with a message

Bruce Echberg

Last November, I received a note from an old friend, John Hopkins, advising of the availability of his new book (reviewed on page 4), and I was quick to jump online and order a copy because John had shown me around the London Olympics site in 2010 - and I knew it was a very special project. While digesting the book, I heard the shocking news of John's premature death on 21 January, through a Guardian obituary published in *The Age*.

This article is a personal recollection of a friend of 30 plus years, (who some of you may have known from his time working in Sydney in the 1980s) and his professional achievements, many of which I only learnt about by browsing the many tributes to his life online. He was only 59, and full of ideas about how to make the world a better place.

John was keen for people to read his new book on the London Olympics site, so they could learn about the rigorous application of *One Planet* principles and criteria through the extended project. He saw this as an important message for our professions.

Just before John's death, we exchanged ideas on a new book he was beginning called *'The Global Garden - ecological economics,*

planning and design for people and planet'. He was very animated about his move to the US and this is an extract from his last email to me. It is still current and encapsulates his passion.

'It seems to me that the US has to take a lead on climate change and the environment. Sandy may have rustled up some political activity, but the political system here it seems to me is broken - I'm not sure they can work this one through.'

The inequity and consequent poverty allied with the rabid right-wing agenda pushed by Fox (yes, Rupert still rules amazingly) and other populist radio and newsprint is just staggering. Americans are largely ignorant of the real issues. It was a relief to see Obama re-elected, but the current 'fiscal cliff' debacle illustrates how polarised and fractured the US is.

My view is that those nations, cities and communities that ignore conventional economics and make the paradigm shift to a steady-state ecological economy are the ones that will prosper in the long-term - not easy in a globalised economy where 'growth' is the mantra of all economists and politicians, and 'growth' means growth in consumption (and pollution) of the planet. In

the words of Herman Daly who is one of my mentors: 'I think the answer is distressingly simple. Without growth the only way to cure poverty is by sharing. But redistribution is anathema. Without growth to push the hoped-for demographic transition, the only way to cure overpopulation is by population control. A second anathema. Without growth the only way to increase funds to invest in environmental repair is by reducing consumption. Anathema number three. Three anathemas and you are out!'

I found this analysis to be a realistic and depressing insight. It is a great pity John didn't get the chance to expand on these ideas in his planned new book. I hope others take up the challenge of trying to save the world by putting fabric on his outline.

John Hopkins was a committed landscape architect who had vision beyond his professional boundaries. He also demonstrated through his role with the London Olympic Delivery Authority over six years that he could deal with the breadth and minutia of a massive project and organisation while keeping the world in perspective.

Bruce Echberg is a Director of Urban Initiatives Pty Ltd and can be contacted at bruce@urbaninitiatives.com.au

What is 'good design'?

The UK National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes information about what constitutes 'good' or 'poor' design. This is useful for practitioners and supports certainty for all involved. The following, which can be considered as the required characteristics of well designed proposals, are mentioned:

- function well over time;
- establish a strong sense of place,
- respond to local character and identity
- create attractive and comfortable places
- optimise the potential of land and buildings
- create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses
- discourage crime and disorder
- create accessible places
- support community cohesion
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Is the Australian definition of 'good design' coincident with this list? For more information about the UK NPPF see www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

Speeding up the trams

Samantha Gelfand

Melbourne has one of the largest and one of the slowest tram networks in the world. The longest single use of time on a journey is dwell time, which is defined as the time it takes for a tram to stop, allow for boarding and alighting passengers and starts moving. Because tram patronage is due to increase in the city, there is a need for punctuality and reliability improvements throughout the network.

Previous research suggested there were three defining factors that affect dwell time: passenger behaviour, ticketing procedures and vehicle design. Despite this, there had been no definitive study linking stop design and dwell time. This is especially important at the moment as the Victorian Government has a large investment program that is converting kerb-side and safety zone stops into platform or 'super stops' for DDA compliance. This study compared the three stop types (pictured) with dwell time, with interesting results for planners and urban developers.



The data survey took place at three tram stops over three days with nine data lots in total during the morning peaks from 7–9am and the afternoon peaks from 3–6pm. We reflected previous research by counting the number of doors, tram class, crowding in the tram and number of passengers boarding and alighting.

From this data the variables were assessed to see if they were statistically significant to the study. The number of doors on each tram was the same, so this was deemed statistically irrelevant. A four-step scale of crowding was used and a simple regression analysis proved the crowding on the tram to be statistically irrelevant. Conversely, there was a large difference in dwell time per person for each tram class and this was found to be statistically relevant. As such, only data from B Class trams was analysed.

Three stop types

What was found was the platform stops had the minimum amount of dwell time for any of the stop types, at just 4.31 seconds. Next were safety zone stops with 7.38 seconds and kerb-side stops with 12.7 seconds. However, these results were reversed when we looked at impact per passenger. In a kerb-side stop, each passenger has an impact factor on the length of dwell time of 0.48, 0.92 for safety zone and 1.10 for platform stops.

This means that for large numbers of passengers (ie 30 or more), kerb-side stops perform the best out of the three stops. Platform stops performed remarkably poorly for large passenger volumes.

For low passenger volumes (ie 15 or less), platform stops have the least amount of dwell time.



▲ Three tram stop designs

One way to explain these results is to investigate the space at the stop. Within the safety zone stop, with the longest dwell time of the three, there is very little space for waiting passengers to move and allow room for alighting passengers. This causes great delay as passengers move about the stop. Likewise, with the new stops the platform, while wider than a safety zone, is filled with fixed furniture, such as seats, ticket machines and rubbish bins.

These extra items on the platform impede passenger movement while boarding and alighting. This could explain the poor performance in dwell time with high passenger movement numbers. This is further compounded by passengers waiting in these two stop types for trams from other routes, a common occurrence in the CBD with many stops having two–three routes sharing the stop.

Conversely, the kerb-side stop allows for great ease of movement in the whole traffic lane that

is devoid of cars. In this instance, boarding passengers can move aside to allow room for alighting passengers. Furthermore, in a kerb-side stop, any passengers waiting for other trams stand on the footpath, far away from the boarding and alighting passengers.

This study is early work into the relationship between dwell time and stop design. Further work by Monash University in Melbourne is investigating the relationship between streetcars, stop type and crowding.

This is an excerpt from a Monash University student research paper by Samantha Harrison (nee Gelfand). The paper won the 2012 ITEANZ Student Award for an outstanding piece of coursework by a transport engineering student.

Samantha is a graduate transport civil infrastructure engineer at Parsons Brinckerhoff. For any queries or more information on the paper email sgelfand@pb.com.au

Improving the background system

Alan March

So much of what we do in urban planning and design is facilitated by 'the system' of rules used to regulate urban space. These rules establish the frameworks in which we work, even while we exercise our personal professional judgements on a daily basis. This provides plenty of benefits, such as relative certainty that core procedures are followed, as in planning scheme amendment or rezoning processes, or in the steps of permit or development assessment processes being followed.

These processes also establish a range of rules for decisions so that, generally speaking, we know who will make decisions about the various things that we are seeking to 'do' in urban and regional places, and the general criteria regarding how those decisions are to be made. We would hope that these rules establish both minimum standards for the qualities of urban places, and set aspirations for achievement so that we can seek improvement over time.

The problem with these complex systems of rules is that it becomes uncertain at a point whether they are actually delivering what we

actually want - as groups of people living in places, and as built environment professionals responsible for helping to create, maintain and improve those places. The cause of this problem is that planning and urban design processes derive their force and moral justification from within governance and collective action processes. At some point, the rules take on a life of their own and, whatever role we play, we realise that we need to play to the success criteria of the regulations to get our project through.

The trouble is that our day to day use of 'the rules' strongly discourages us from questioning and improving these systems. On a site-by-site or project-by-project basis, playing to the rules is a rational and indeed successful way to work as a professional: it's no use proposing a project that has little chance of success. However, when this becomes the main way that we all work across our expanding cities and regions, the defining feature of our built environment professions - spatiality - is lost. To use one example, we are now facing the prospect across Australia of increasing spatial inequity in the long-term, in terms of income, education access, public transport access, health outcomes, and quality of life measures. It is deeply troubling that

planning and design systems do not provide pathways to remedy this.

So why is this happening? This dearth of maintaining a spatial outlook can be explained by the apparatus for higher-tier urban planning having been progressively dismantled since the 1980s across Australia. In parallel, urban planning has been reduced to being an enabling mechanism, rather than being a true forward planning instrument. With occasional exceptions, key agencies for things such as water, state roads, public transport, and major projects are increasingly autonomous and separate. The achievement of planning responsibilities occurs not just through the formal bodies and agencies of planning but, of course, via markets as a driving force for change and improvement. The outcome is a planning system that lacks strength in the fundamental feature that defines planning - spatial control and influence to improve outcomes.

Urban design is not the complete solution to this problem, but it does offer some key elements required to turn this problem around. Where current urban planning decision-making rarely delivers a sound evidence base for policy directions or changes, good urban design can

establish visions of the future at a scale and functionality that people can understand and relate to. Good urban design establishes the ways that a place is meant to function: in terms of transport, interactions between land uses, structures and open spaces; and how this would relate to achievement of wider goals.

Overall, I argue that the knowledge base for justifying planning and urban design decisions is lacking, and also lacking are ways to harness spatial knowledge so that we know the individual and incremental changes 'add up' to the things we want in our communities. The solution is to develop better rule systems that require us to demonstrate the functional contributions that urban design and planning makes. The implication is that we, as professionals, need to provide an active voice outside of current government and the development sector to improve decision making systems, rather than just using them.

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Robin Boyd Foundation Summer School

Rob Deutscher

In February 2013, the Robin Boyd Foundation held its inaugural Summer School in association with the University of Melbourne. The School was a logical extension of the work of the Robin Boyd Foundation under its banner of 'Understanding Design'.

The Summer School was a six day intensive studio based program that provided an opportunity for students to better equip themselves theoretically and practically as architects of the future and to develop critical thinking around architectural design. The chosen site and project brief were a way for the Studio to act as a 'practical think tank' of ideas for projects on the government agenda and public architecture and was on land that could potentially be freed up by the decommissioning of an off ramp from the Westgate freeway along Sturt Street in the heart of the South Melbourne Arts Precinct. This land is currently under consideration by a government working group and the students were required to develop a strong urban design

and contextual response as well as a built form and architectural response.

Boyd's former home in Walsh Street provided a deliberative alternative experience to the studios normally run at the University. There was participation from students from both Melbourne and Monash and it is hoped that in the future the attendance will extend to more Universities throughout Australia.

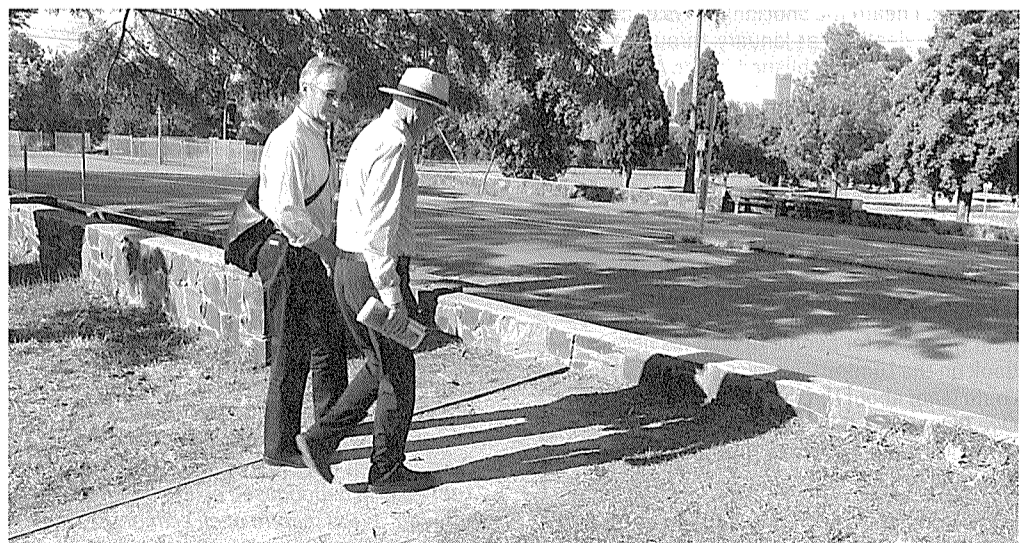
The program for the week was a balance of inputs and outputs and was based around two 'Master' architects who assisted in setting up the design ideas, each giving time to develop a dialogue about the chosen site and to engage in constructive critique. Both John Denton and Rob Adams provide complimentary inputs into the studio and supported the notion of the studio from its inception. Rob Deutscher ran the studio on a day-to-day basis with Tony Lee as Executive Director of the Robin Boyd Foundation providing critical support - and fabulous food.

Additional input was provided by a range of prominent professionals from the design

community in Melbourne as a way of broadening the understanding of the role of public architecture and the role of an architect in public spaces. The feedback from students during the Summer School was very positive with the students benefitting from the various inputs to provoke thought and enjoying

working in groups and working in the Walsh Street house.

Rob Deutscher, Studio Leader Robin Boyd Foundation Summer School February 2013 can be contacted at deutscher_associates@netSPACE.net.au



▲ 'when you design with pedestrians and universal access in mind...' (photo credit: Rod Duncan)

Reflections from the road

Juris Greste

Having crossed five countries in nine weeks and experiencing some of the greatest urban spaces in Beijing, Moscow, Berlin, my head is still buzzing with ideas, observations, inspirations and learnings. A few stand out.

When you are travelling on your own, you meet people. You cannot help but find that as social and herd creatures, the Chinese, Mongolians, Russians, Latvians or Germans are little different from Aussies. The critical conditions which make for good urbanity are much the same. Local political ideologies have left their mark (scars?) on some cities which are likely to be rehabilitated over time. The formerly divided Berlin is already healing. The non-streets that centralised state planning produced in many Russian cities show signs of being humanised.

The great iconic international spaces of Tiananmen Square, Red Square, and Unter den Linden came into being as ceremonial

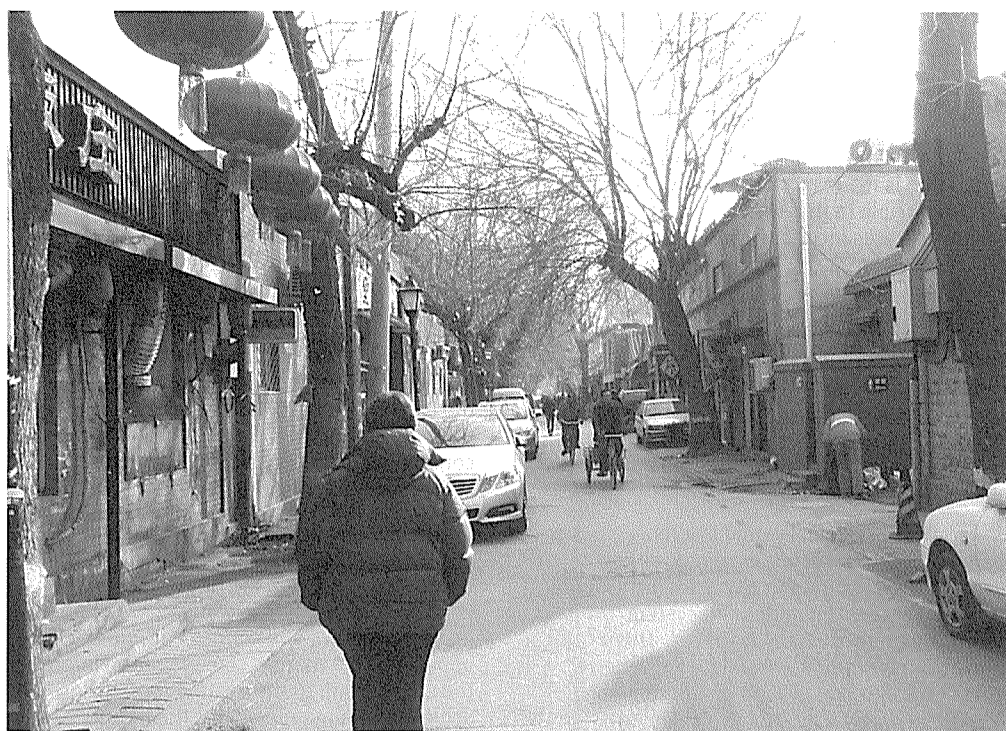


and symbolic spaces. Fundamentally, they still are just spaces. These days, we try too hard to clutter and consumerise our newer public spaces. However, as cultures and regimes change, one sees those shifting attitudes reflected in the older 'sacred' spaces. Tiananmen Square is divided by two oversize digital screens projecting commercial as well as state advertising. Red Square was interrupted by an enormous temporary skating rink during the festive season.

Reassuring markers

Crossing Germany from west to east by road, one passes through numerous villages, large and small. Each has at least one tall church spire acting as a visual reference point for the centre of town. It is a reassuring marker also for the cultural and social focus. While congregations are shrinking, as physical and conceptual icons of community they still serve as nothing else that today's practice can replace. This value is reflected by the remarkable number of churches which have been restored. Many serve also as venues for cultural events and community functions, as they did years ago. You cannot build community spirit around just shopping. You need well-placed real public buildings, and spaces of cultural and social purpose and significance.

Today we make much of the idea of shared spaces. We forget that from time immemorial, all public space was shared by all the users. There is a multitude of shared spaces in most small German towns, still uncluttered by signage and management devices. It is often the mindset and bent of local dominant



bureaucratic managers obsessed with control that complicates our public spaces. Urban life can exist without line markers.

I was fascinated and impressed by how the Germans seem able to exercise either cultural restraint or tight management and controls (or perhaps both) in keeping signage and advertising to a very discrete and impressively well designed standard. You can actually see architectural detail on building fronts which have not been used as scaffolds for hawking commercial presence and wares. One notable and jarring exception are the golden arches which is generally the only sky sign. I would

like to think it cost them dearly for what seem to be exclusive rights.

My observations lead me to conclude that a modest rate of economic growth produces better urbanism. Booming times certainly turn out quantity, but not necessarily quality. Abundant inexpensive capital encourages development activity and generates construction jobs. It has little to do with creating settings for life and human interaction.

Juris Greste is an urban designer based in Brisbane and can be contacted at jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au

Connecting inner city Melbourne

Rob McGauran

Melbourne is at a crossroads. Since the mid-twentieth century, urban planning has prioritised independent car travel. The 1969 Metropolitan Transportation plan recommended 510 kilometres of freeway for Melbourne. Since then, successive state governments have diligently rolled out the majority of this network.

This theme has continued. It is clear that planning for automobile dependence is not the way forward. A growing population, combined with increasing inner-city residential, commercial, entertainment and educational precincts will ensure a Melbourne that is gridlocked - not just logistically, but also economically.

What's down the road?

On its way to eight million people by 2050, Melbourne is facing substantial challenges. After decades of suburban and metropolitan fringe growth, residents are once again streaming into the inner city to make it their home.

As the economic cost of congestion in Melbourne is estimated at \$AU3 billion per year, continued prioritisation of cars is not only dumb urbanism, it is dumb economic policy. It begs the question: what planning will influence the adoption of more sustainable transportation?

From A to B

Clearly, we need to develop a sustainable transport network that connects major employment precincts, residential nodes, service nodes and sport and recreational

facilities. While a multi-modal approach is required, the most immediate and cost-effective role in this solution is active transport.

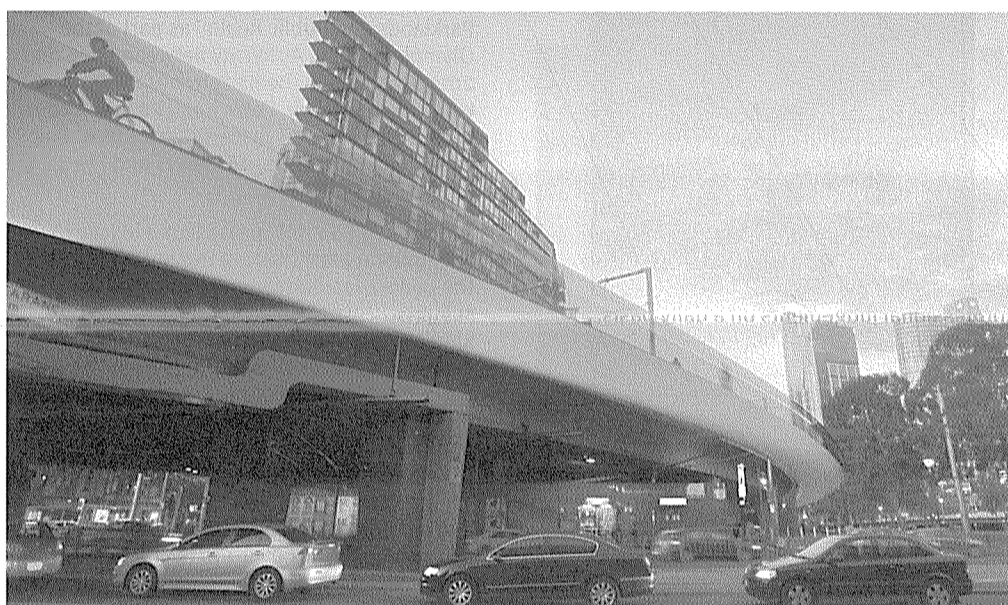
The City of Melbourne, while recognising the importance of enhancing bike movement, continues to assume the central city is the only destination, rather than noting that many journeys will be between nodes around the city, not just in and out of it.

The role of the bicycle is changing for many Melburnians, and a hierarchy of networks to match is needed. In addition to the expansion of the off-road shared bicycle path networks, the city must invest in bicycle freeways to make these shorter journeys around the city viable.

A network of bicycle veloways would: link eastern and western suburbs across the top of the city, and the Federation and Capital City Trails to the south and south-west; create a new north-south connection on the east of the city, new connections between the Bayside trail and Federation trail networks; and new linkages servicing the emerging E-Gate, Fishermans Bend, Dynon Road corridor, Arden/Macaulay and Collingwood areas.

The toll

The cost of a high quality bicycle network would be modest in the context of the overall annual transport and health spending undertaken by all levels of government. An inner city bicycle freeway network would cost a fraction of the several billion dollars planned for the proposed East-West Tunnel, yet has the potential to move comparable numbers in peak periods, boost our productivity and enable a healthier community - and hence reduced recurrent health costs to Melburnians.



▲ Veloway proposal

Unfortunately, increasingly debt-adverse governments are yet to provide this essential infrastructure. Our changing householder demographics and urban densities require this now to ensure we remain one of the world's great liveable cities. The upcoming Metropolitan Planning Strategy must include a robust and funded sustainable transport plan, including a bicycle freeway network. Cycle movement requires less road space and it is often possible to elevate cycle movement above roads and within open space corridors to enable increased bicycle journeys and safety without loss of road capacity or parking, such as the B1 Veloway proposal.

Macro-level planning to pave the way

We need to look beyond the boundaries of local government, especially in the inner

city where there are many municipalities. A metropolitan-wide approach to delivery should be adopted, with support from local government.

While it is evident that we need to tackle the transport bottleneck from a multi-modal perspective, we can make significant gains in modal shift to active transport if we invest now in a high quality network of bicycle freeways.

We are now well into the 21st Century. Moving quickly and decisively is imperative to ensure that sustainable travel plays a major role in Melbourne's future.

Rob McGauran is Director of MGS Architects and can be contacted at rmcgauran@mgsarchitects.com.au

The \$1b new town where nobody's home

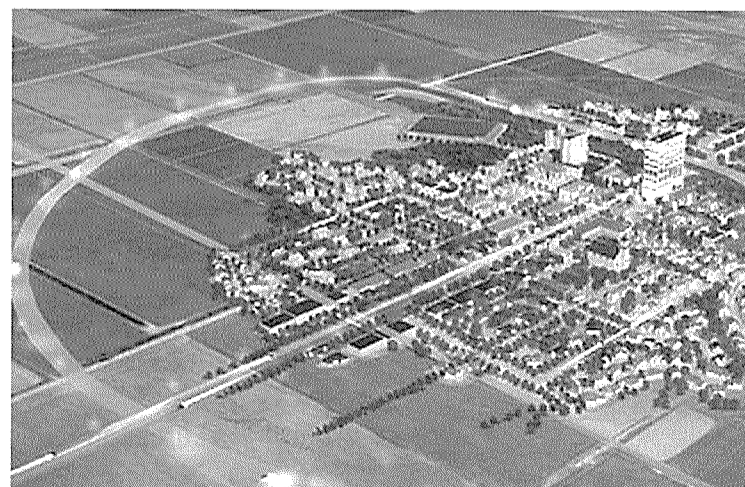
The headline was intriguing. The chance for planners and designers to get on with it without being bothered by real people! The following summarizes what led to the headline.

'A scientific ghost town in the heart of south-eastern New Mexico oil and gas country will hum with the latest next-generation technology - but no people. A \$US1 billion city without residents will be developed in Lea County, near Hobbs, to help researchers test everything from intelligent traffic systems and next-generation wireless networks to automated washing machines and self-flushing toilets.

The town will be modelled after the real city of Rock Hill, South Carolina, complete with highways, houses and commercial buildings, old and new. No one will live there, although they could as houses will include all the necessities, like appliances and plumbing. The point of the town is to enable researchers to test new technologies on existing infrastructure without interfering in everyday life. For instance, while some researchers will be testing smart technologies on old grids, others might be using the streets to test self-driving cars.

Development cost is estimated at \$US400 million, although overall investment in the

project could top \$US1 billion. The project is expected to create 350 permanent jobs and about 3,500 indirect jobs in its design, development, construction and ongoing operational phases. For the full article see www.theage.com.au/technology/sci-tech/the-1b-new-town-where-nobodys-home-20120510-1ydl8.html#ixzz1uQGSzmHj



▲ An artist's impression of the proposed ghost town (photo credit: AP)

Where are we, and are we there yet?

Melissa Pepers

Wayfinding is the key process through which a destination is made more navigable and thus more accessible to its users. It is comprised of many features including the inherent architecture of a space as well as graphical elements such as signage (waymarking).

A successful wayfinding system serves to open a space through clear communication on how to safely and efficiently reach desired destinations, facilities and special features, such as points of interest. The more complex a space is, the more it is reliant on the efficacy of its wayfinding.

As a graphic designer, I would like to share information on how waymarking can successfully contribute to a wayfinding system, and what features enable a sign system to be more understood by its users. This information is about accessibility for general users of a space and is supplementary to any accessibility regulations for the disabled.

Signage stages

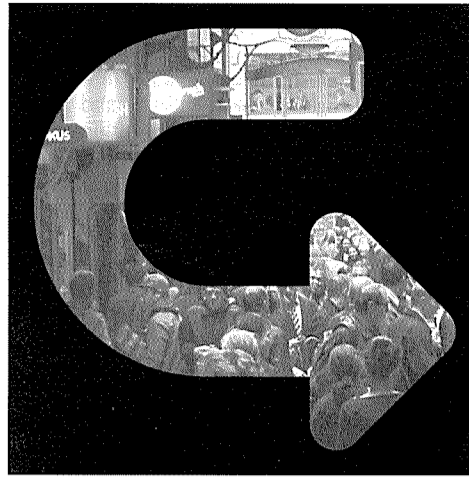
We interact with signage in stages and it is useful to break down a sign system into these stages to best explain how to use signs effectively. The first stage is awareness – a

sign needs to be sufficiently eye-catching so that we notice it within a space, this can be achieved through elements such as scale, contrast and repetition. The signs need to be easily seen in the places where people are likely to require them and to also catch our attention to aid navigation even if we are not actively looking for help.

Once we have noticed the sign, we need to be able to understand the information being presented. This can be achieved through the use of clear type, language and universal symbols. It is important that the content communicated by the text and symbols is obvious, so that the only choice the user has to make is about what information is relevant to them as opposed to working out what that information might mean.

Once we have understood the information and make a decision, and choose our route, it is important that there is signage that reinforces the correct path to the destination. This is achieved through repetition, the frequency of which is determined by the nature of the space.

The last stage is the destination which needs to sufficiently communicate to the user that they have arrived, and in the right place, and where necessary further information on how to engage with that space, whether it is



points of interest related to the culture of the destination or safety procedures.

Waymarking involves not only considerations of layout and design theory, but also of consumer behaviour and semiotics. It is important to understand who the users of a space are in order to create signage that truly resonates with that audience.

Melissa Pepers is Director of Lure Graphics and can be contacted at inquire@luregraphics.com.au

An 'all abilities' playground

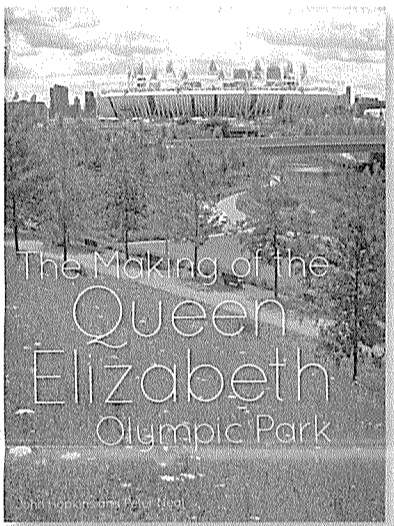
A new playground catering specifically for children with special needs in Ryde, Sydney, is the latest community project to benefit from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts of global professional technical and management support services provider AECOM.

The 'Livvi's Place' playground at Yamble Reserve is a project by the Touched By Olivia Foundation, and caters for children with a range of special needs relating to mobility, vision and hearing, as well as for children affected by spectrum disorders such as autism.

The playground benefited from \$110,000 of pro-bono work completed by AECOM, in addition to receiving financial support from the City of Ryde, State and Federal grants, and pro-bono contributions from other partners. For more information see www.aecom.com

Livvi's Place now joins an award-winning network of inclusive playgrounds across Australia, including sites in Five Dock, Campbelltown, Brisbane and Dubbo.

BOOK REVIEWS



The Making of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

John Hopkins and Peter Neal
(Published by Wiley, 2012)

This new book is more than a description of the design of a park, exceptional as the park is. It is really a blow-by-blow description of the largest urban renewal project ever undertaken in the UK, and the largest building project in Europe at the time. The 2012 Olympic Games were the stimulus for spending six billion pounds in just six years, cleaning up a badly degraded site and delivering the park and sporting infrastructure. One reason the London Olympic bid was successful, and the greatest achievement of the project that is still being realised, is the legacy of green infrastructure and the foundation of an

equitable and sustainable new city within East London which will continue to unfold over the next 25 years.

This book documents the entire process from early planning strategies, the bid, the various master plans and the construction of the project - on budget and ahead of time. John Hopkins, who was 'Project Sponsor for the Parklands and Public Realm' as part of the Olympic Delivery Authority between 2006 and 2011, contributed the narrative of the book while his co-author, Peter Neal, interviewed 14 of the key figures in the project - including politicians, engineers, designers and construction managers.

The park will double in size in the legacy phase as temporary facilities are removed and even the pedestrian bridges are reduced in width to suit post-Olympic demand. The park is a new kind of park, which is very much shaped by its environmental purpose. It is a stormwater drainage and treatment waterway, and flood management system. It also had demanding biodiversity targets to meet, and had to take account of its carbon footprint during construction with on-site soil rehabilitation and carefully balanced earthworks. The legacy parkland will cover over 100 hectares, have eight kilometres of waterways, and half a million new plants.

The planting of vast native meadows on an unprecedented scale served the short-term purpose of mass floral display for the Olympics, and the more important, longer term goal, of meeting demanding biodiversity goals. Victorian Landscape architects will remember Professor James Hitchmore from his days at Burnley Horticultural College. James and his team from the University of Sheffield planned, trialled and managed the meadows. As he explains 'The parklands have substituted a different surface from the traditional mown

lawns that are highly carbon-dependent to one which has an intense biodiversity. This will have a huge impact on the future design of parks'.

Making of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is lavishly illustrated with maps, master plans and design drawings along with numerous, before, in progress and after, photographs through its 287 pages. It is engrossing as an overview of the entire planning and development process if read cover to cover. However it is more likely to be dipped into - to read about anything from the politics, the buildings, the engineering construction, or the planting design.

We in Australia have lots to learn from sophisticated redevelopment projects like this. We should be applying rigorous sustainability criteria to all major greenfield and brownfield developments in our cities. Unfortunately we don't think or plan in this way, letting market forces drive the agenda to our very certain long-term detriment.

Review by Bruce Echberg

The Post Corporate World

David Korten
(Published by Berrett-Koehler, 2000)

Urban design wasn't, I suspect, front of mind when David Korten wrote his 2000 book, 'The Post Corporate World: Life After Capitalism'. Korten laments corporations and capitalism, writing at length about the deleterious impact they have had on community and, in the words of commentator, Noam Chomsky, always put 'profit before people'.

Urban design appears to be diametrically opposed to the essence of corporations and capitalism that clearly have values

epitomizing profit ahead of the needs of people. Practitioners of urban design, at least the good ones, stand opposed to those values, although they recognize and acknowledge the importance of the economic imperative.

Korten said that a small group of people, that is corporations driven by the captains of capitalism, manipulates society's cultural symbols and values to serve its narrow ends, and the processes of cultural reproduction become deeply undemocratic and socially destructive.

A community's built environment reflects its culture and beyond that echoes the difficult to define 'sense of place' it has created. Korten sees the instincts of corporations and capitalism as foreign to life; a life that is enriched when good urban designers can orchestrate post-corporate world design elements, such as: human-scale self-organization; village and neighbourhood clusters; towns and regional centres; renewable energy and self-reliance; mindful livelihoods; interregional electronic communication; and wild spaces.

He discusses 'Lessons of Life's Wisdom' and lists them as: Life favours self-organization; Life is frugal and sharing; Life depends on inclusive, place-based communities; Life rewards co-operation; Life depends on boundaries; Life banks on diversity, creative individuality and shared learning.

Korten's book is clearly not specifically about urban design but, by default, it is for urban designers as it establishes context and broadens our understanding that the built environment is not solely about profit for it is the place of work, play and living, the place in which to build community.

Review by Robert McLean.

Conferences, etc

Mainstreet conference 12-15 May, Melbourne

Mainstreet Australia provides valuable networking, education, support, professional development and strategic direction to stakeholders to promote mainstreets and ensure that they remain at the heart of our communities.

Early bird registration for this conference closes on 28 March. For more information see www.aomevents.com/mainstreet2013

International seminar on urban form 17-20 July, Brisbane

The theme of the conference is 'Urban form at the edge'. For more information see www.isuf2013.com

UrbanIXD Summer School

23 August - 1 September, Split, Croatia.

The UrbanIXD Summer School will be grounded in the emerging discipline of urban interaction design. The School will address the domain

of technologically augmented, data-rich urban environments, with a particular emphasis on human activities, experiences and behaviours. For more information see www.urbanixd.eu

International urban design conference 9-11 September, Sydney

The conference 'UrbanAgiNation' urbanisation /agitation /imagination will examine the future density and infrastructure requirements of our cities.

The conference will explore Liveability, Productivity, Affordability and Efficiency. For more information see www.urbandesignaustralia.com.au

Conference on walking and liveable communities

11-13 September Munich, Germany

The main topic is walking connects! For more information see www.walk21munich.com

European 'cities of vision' study tour

27 September - 5 October, 2013

The 2013 'European cities of vision' study tour

offers elected officials, planners and urban designers the opportunity to visit and learn in depth about two of Europe's most liveable and sustainable cities – Freiburg and Strasbourg.

Tours and talks are given by the planning leaders and staff responsible for these achievements.

All sessions are conducted in English. Participation limited to 20. The program is available at www.livablecities.org/2013-study-tour-program Early registration rate available until 1 May.

ICTC 2013 Conference

16-18 October, Mandurah, Western Australia

The International Cities Town Centres and Communities (ICTC) 2013 Conference call for papers and speakers is now open - abstract submissions close Friday 19 April 2013.

The theme is: Dynamic Cities - Vibrant, Liveable and Innovative. For more information see www.ictcsociety.org

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Web: A new consultant register and an increasing range of related information is available at www.udf.org.au

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