

# SWANSTON STREET GILDING THE SEWER?

Larry Parsons

The recently announced "upgrading" of Swanston Street might appear to be futile cosmetics. What point is there in bluestone footpaths when the street's major problem is seen to be its status as a "traffic sewer"?

Options for tackling the traffic have varied, from grand plans to make the whole street a pedestrian mall to deceptively minor guerilla tactics like switching off the no-turn signs to favour local access at the expense of the speed of through traffic.

Unfortunately, recent pronouncements by Mr. Roper suggest that he sees Swanston Street retaining its present through-traffic emphasis for some time to come, at least ten years if we are to wait for the Western By-Pass.

## Improvements To Begin Anyway

In this light it has been decided to begin the physical improvements prior to traffic changes, not just because this is the simplest course but because physical improvement often lends weight to undertaking traffic control measures. A

change in the image of Swanston Street can change the political will to tackle some of the admittedly complex traffic problems.

The Ministry for Planning's Swanston Street Party was a very positive, if short-lived, image-building exercise. The Council and the Ministry's joint project to upgrade the footpath areas between Flinders Street and Collins Street is significant since it confers a treatment and status upon the street which was previously reserved for prestigious Collins Street.

## Bluestone Paving Plus

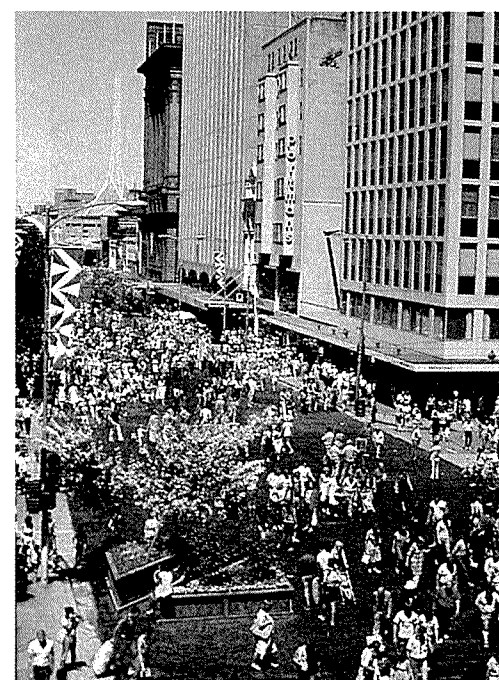
There will be sawn bluestone paving, newly designed bins, drinking fountains and seats, plus a general editing of extraneous signs and poles. The surrounds to St. Paul's will also be upgraded. In particular the clumsy concrete seats will be replaced by more elegant steel strap models, though the "Ladies Only" pavement sign will remain - barring a showdown between the Historic Buildings' Council and the Equal Opportunities people.



▲ ... a traffic sewer

Despite Swanston Street being the home of many civic institutions, the prime object is not to create a neo-fascist ceremonial route - though one does begin to wonder when planning rules are "modified" to facilitate a corporate headquarters as the northern visual focus to match the Shrine to the south. Banners and lamps will provide an effective unifying element for a physically diverse streetscape. The alternative, a tree-lined avenue, is not feasible due to the lack of regular planting space. In any case, not all streets need to be smothered in a cloak of trees.

Even the space for lamps is very limited. If a modest 700mm footpath widening cannot be achieved, some verandahs will have to be cut back so that lamps no longer need to poke crudely through the canopies. Partly for this reason, a new verandah standard has been approved. With few exceptions new verandahs must be a simple cantilevered canopy of a



▲ ... the three day greening

neutral brown colour, with standard mouldings and a defined fascia area for identification signs.

## McDonalds First Up

Ironically the first establishment to employ the standard canopy is likely to be a new McDonald's next to Young and Jackson's.

All of the above measures are quite small in themselves, but they are a beginning. So long as people are not led to expect an impossibly sudden renaissance of Swanston Street, we may yet restore confidence and style to our central street.

Larry Parsons is an Architect and Urban Designer and is Head of the Urban Design Branch at the Melbourne City Council.

## THANKS

The response to UDF No. 1 was very encouraging. Using the politicians measure of effective votes per received letter or phone call, we are pleased that this pioneering venture was both received well, and read!

Distribution for UDF No.1 was limited. In response to requests, our print sum has been increased to 4000 and this issue will reach a much wider audience including interested people in South Australia, Queensland, NSW, Tasmania and a selected overseas list.

### Australia Council Grant

Special thanks goes to the Design Board of the Australia Council which has made a grant to assist the formative editions of UDF. The Australia Council Design Board is taking an increasing interest in urban design and, despite budget cuts, is continuing its program of assistance to municipalities for townscape projects.

### Urban Design Education

The lack of suitable urban design education in Australia is a great concern to many people. This issue of UDF includes a number of contributions from people interested in this area. Future issues will include developments as they occur.

### Your Forum-Be In It!

This issue of UDF includes words from the pens of a wide range of people. The deadline for the next issue (to be published on 1st June 1988) is 5th May. If you have something to show or tell, send it to:

Urban Design Forum  
 Bill Chandler, Convenor, UDF,  
 C/O Loder & Bayly  
 79 Power Street, Hawthorn 3122

## WHAT I DID ON AUSTRALIA DAY ..... "ANOTHER POM DISCOVERS MELBOURNE"

### Ivor Samuels

Wendy Morris' piece in the last Urban Design Forum is a splendid push for Oxford. Although with all the Australian courses now on the stocks it will become even more difficult to justify spending a year on the other side of the world in pursuit of urban design.

Indeed the new courses will need all the local support they can get if they are to survive. For if the British experience has any relevance, and institutions and professional arrangements seem similar enough for parallels to be drawn, it will take more than the current wave of enthusiasm for urban design issue to sustain them. Of the half dozen programs established in the U.K. in the early 1970's only that at Oxford has survived in a form which can be said to contribute to the advancement of an understanding of urban design.

Size is one problem. Another must be the danger of a course being hijacked by one profession or discipline. In Britain we have had the experience of a part time course serving practicing planners being dominated by Neo Rationalist Architecture concepts which seemed to the students to be irrelevant to their everyday work in development control. Urban Design is a practical activity relating to the world of financial institutions and local government as well as architecture theory and if courses do not help practitioners then they do not deserve to survive.

Which brings us back to Melbourne and Oxford. There is no point in comparing the two cities unless you try to establish a set of values which represents a society's expectations of its cities. It is no use bemoaning the lack of variety and course grain of the Australian city from your single storey house on its suburban lot. Australia seems to advise concentrations of money and power and fosters a underlying capitalism. Its cities are the physical manifestations of this. Urban designers will have to work out what this society expects from its cities, the transfer of European criteria will probably not be relevant. We need an Urban Design Forum.

And what did I do on Australia Day? .... I didn't even get a chance to watch the First Fleet on the box because Wendy insisted on driving me 200 km around Melbourne to see such urban design delicacies as Melton and Glen Waverley. Obviously revenge for making our students work so hard at Oxford!

Ivor Samuels is the Principal Lecturer in Urban Design at the Joint Centre for Urban Design at Oxford Polytechnic. He is in Melbourne with the Ministry for Planning and Environment as Nubrik Urban Design Fellow 1988.

## URBAN DESIGN PRACTICAL WORKSHOP IN MARCH 1988

An Urban Design Seminar/Workshop is to be held in March, under the guidance of Ivor Samuels. The seminar/workshop will provide an introduction to the key principles and philosophy of urban design as taught at the Joint Centre for Urban Design at Oxford Polytechnic, as well as other aspects important in the Australian context.

DATES: Tues 15th to Thurs 17th March  
 VENUE: Footscray City Council offices. (Yes! The West - complex with the culinary delights of a multi-cultural community).  
 FORMAT: Day 1 - Seminar, Day 2 & 3 - Workshops with some seminar sessions interspersed.

COST: Approx. \$70 to \$90 (yet to be finalised).

CONTENT: The seminar component will introduce material which directly relates to the five workshop groups.

In addition the urban design process in action will be explored using a recent major development proposal in Melbourne.

COVENOR The workshop is being organised by the Ministry for Planning and Environment. Contact Wendy Morris on 628-5469 for application forms for further details.

NOTE The workshop is already well subscribed with only limited places still available. However the seminar format on Day 1 will enable larger numbers on that day.

**Mario Gutjahr**

While the architecture and planning professions are bemoaning the absence of urban design in their professional education, both in these columns and elsewhere, the **School of Environmental Planning at Melbourne University** is now in its 5th year of offering at least one major professional studio course in urban design.

The course known as **Urban and Site Design** is a requisite subject in the **Master of Landscape Architecture** programme and now runs for 8 weeks, from next year for 12 weeks, of the academic year.

The subject consists of:

a) **studio work** focusing on *one case study* of specific urban landscape design interest. Students work on a project in collaboration with the **Ministry for Planning and Environment** and benefit from the considerable resources of the Ministry, as well as;

b) **a series of lectures**, intended to introduce students to aspects of current urban design practice issues, and to provide them with some background knowledge of urban design history and theory.

Both lectures and the project work draw extensively on current professional practice in urban design, introducing relevant literature, theories, techniques and case studies. The staff includes one full-time academic and several urban design consultants with experience in the private areas of the professional field. In addition, specialist staff, (eg. on transport, on building technology, or on

urban landscaping, ) are brought in to provide substantive and procedural knowledge on particular aspects of the project work.

The unit is approached on the basis that one cannot change or teach another person ( student ) directly and that it is the person him/herself that must be led to discover knowledge. The project work sets the framework for the students to develop their investigative, interpretative, and design skills and thereby, to discover knowledge individually.

Issues fundamental to the discipline of urban design are identified and discussed, including theoretical ones, and students are guided in formulating urban design guidelines and performance standards in their work.

The majority of students is, thus, able to develop a new knowledge base for the discipline - of course, limited by the time constraints in the unit - because they are forced to provide answers and solutions and to make responsible decisions ( verifiable and substantiated ) about the things they are designing.

The specific aims of the subject are to:

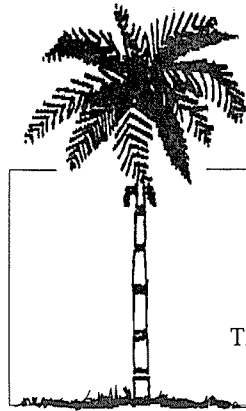
- i. make students aware of the opportunities and complexities of urban ( landscape ) design.

- ii. introduce students to urban design theory and methodology.
- iii. develop student's analytical and design skills.
- iv. make students understand that any urban ( landscape ) design must take place within a given social economic, and political context.

The staff has been careful to avoid the 'internalised' or intuitive approach to the project work in preference to a more 'synoptic' or rational, comprehensive method. This includes, as a first step, the usual elements of data collection and analysis but, and more important, it insists on another step prior to the design of alternative valuations, namely the synthesis.

This is a departure from the traditional comprehensive approach to design found in architecture and design courses, although it is by no means an innovation. By way of explanation, a simple analogy might be made with the game of chess. During the analysis the chess player studies the disposition of the pieces on the board while during the synthesis he suggests a move which needs evaluating against objectives. It is this essential stage of synthesis which students in the subject have come to understand and appreciate as the fundamental, intellectual and creative departure point of any rational design solution or proposal.

**Mario Gutjahr is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Environmental Planning, specialising in urban history and design.**



**BANGALOW PALMS FOR SALE**

The Ministry for Planning and Environment has 38 Bangalow Palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) for sale. The palms are between 5.0 and 6.0 metres tall and are fully acclimatised to southern Victoria's climate. Enquires phone : Mr Jeffrey Mish on 625148

**Gordon Holden**

Discussion on urban design educational matters appear to quickly turn to the issue of what is the most appropriate background discipline for students to have. It is well accepted that urban design courses should be post-graduate rather than under-graduate because of the diverse and complex nature of activities. As to the type of student most suited, there is far less agreement. Usually it is the viewpoint coming from a jealous professional position which generates the most narrow definition.

**A Variety of Urban Design Practitioners**

At QIT it was recognised early that many different professionals were actually working in the area of urban design. For example development control throughout Australia involves many aspects of urban design, as development control officers give interpretations of legislation and opinions which considerably affect buildings, landscape, places and functions in the built environment. Most of those involved in this process come from planning and engineering backgrounds and have little or no design education yet they are, for better or worse, doing it. We would like to see an improvement in the quality of decision making and guidance in development control and believe that courses in urban design should accommodate people from this area.

Our emphasis is on a design approach to improve urban areas and to this end the course builds on the design traditions of architecture and landscape architecture.

**BENALLA'S GEM OF URBAN ART**

**Ian Wight**

Delighted surprise is something to be expected from a holiday in Greece or Turkey, but hardly on a brief visit to **Benalla**.

Finding ourselves with some spare time on the way to the High Plains, we promised ourselves a visit inside **Benalla Art Gallery** - not just the quick but delightful view from the highway of the masterful siting of the Gallery suspended over the lake. Some brick and rubble glimpsed on the opposite bank of the river intrigued. The ruin of a historic pub perhaps?

What we discovered was quite astonishing and defies categorisation expect as a quite remarkable piece of urban art. They call it the Mural project - and there are some beautifully executed ceramic murals which clad the walls. But it is really more like a sculpture - a series of moulded spaces to walk through, climb over, or in which to find a place to stand or sit.

**A Place To Stand Or Sit**

A place to stand or sit.... that is what the Benalla project really is. The ultimate in urban art, a celebration of created space. A terrace overlooking the lake and the famous art gallery, an amphitheatre, a colonnade, even a secret passage. A place for walking, playing, sitting, performing .... a whole city of urban spaces concentrated in a dynamic series. Nor is it without life and humour - the thongaphones require the visitor to supply their own thongs to make the organ like pipes boom across the lake.

So don't by-pass Benalla, be sure to visit the city's latest tourist attraction, but do it

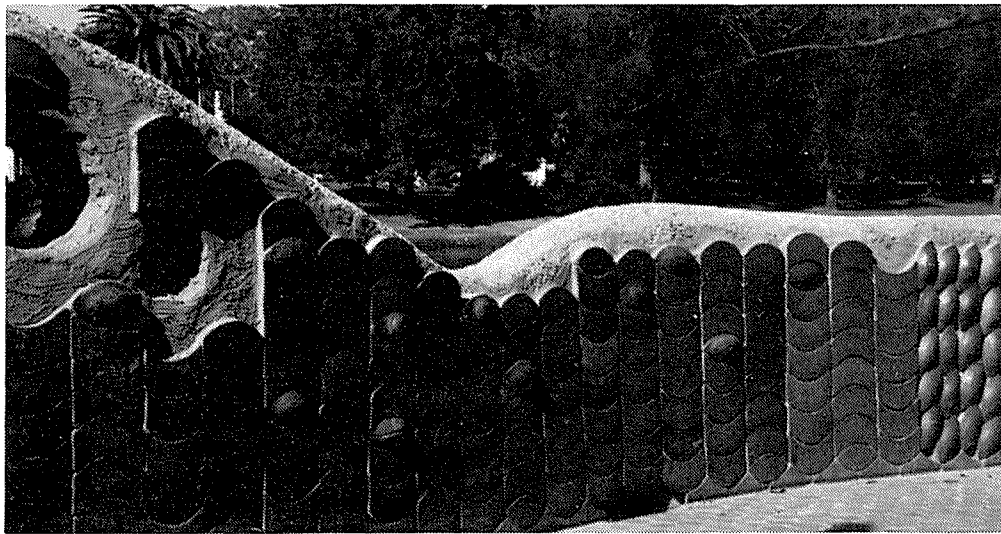
soon. The project in its unfinished state has a dynamism that may be lost if and when the work is ever completed. But it is a project which deserves never to be completed. It should continue to transform the east bank of the lake into a

continuous celebration of space.

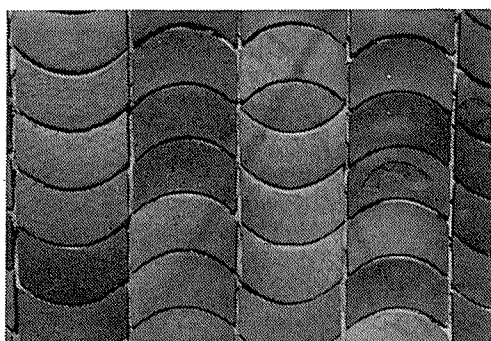
Some credits!

Artist : Judy Lorraine  
Project Co-ordinator : David N. Moore  
Liaison Officer/Artist : David W. Moore

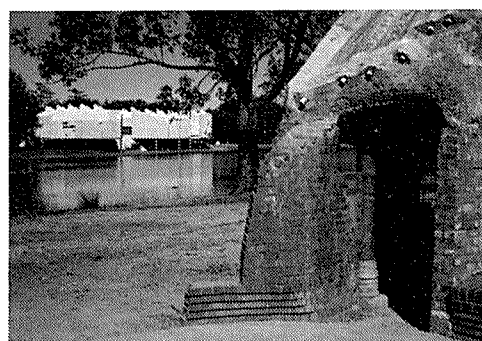
**Ian Wight was an urban arts sceptic. He is a senior planner with the Loder & Bayly group.**



▲ Organic design - exciting patterns as spaces



▲ Close up photo of ceramic tiles



▲ A fitting complement to the Gallery

The research and analysis skills of the planning profession are also considered necessary. The ability to communicate to the public and decision makers and to coordinate others to achieve desired ends is of almost equal importance. We look to build on existing skills and practical experience to provide graduates with the ability to enhance the quality of physical design for local areas through guidance, practice and applied research.

**Course Elements**

Knowledge and skill in the practice of urban design is developed in the course through the study of:

- (i) The context/theories of urban design
- (ii) Urban design issues
- (iii) Techniques and processes of urban design
- (iv) Research methods in urban design

**Staffing**

The course staff is composed of a combination of senior full-time staff members of the Faculty of the Built Environment and part-time staff from government and private practice who are eminent in the professions.

**Some Teething Problems**

Teething problems have derived from determining the amount and type of work part-time mid-career professionals can put into the course so that academic standards are maintained and appropriate skills are developed. Having adopted the multi-professional approach we also accept that each student is looking forward to as far as possible enhance their own sphere of activity, this is desirable but the degree to which this can be accommodated without sacrificing core areas of the course is still being grappled with.



## TOWARDS A BRIEF FOR URBAN DESIGN EDUCATION

### Gordon Rushman RMIT

Urban design is becoming more appreciated by the community and seen to be good business by government and developers. An inevitable outcome is a renewed demand for professional training in our field. Planning education in particular shook off its traditional civic design component in the 1960's and then divorced itself from design issues as well as drawing board activity.

A new start has to be made to give planners, landscapers, architects and others the skills that have been deleted from undergraduate training. Since the first masters degree in urban design by course work was launched at Queensland Institute of Technology in 1987, renewed efforts to start courses are afoot in New South Wales and Victoria and now seem likely to lead to new courses.

### What Type Of Course ?

We now have to ask what should go into an urban design course. It is also necessary to identify the range of skills needed in urban design. Some years ago Richard Bartholomew stated them as follows: The urban designer must:

1. be capable of organizing and managing the planning and design process.
2. be able to analyse existing situations.
3. be a skilled programmer.
4. be able to develop design proposals.
5. be able to compare and evaluate alternative design proposals.
6. be able to assess the potential impact of design proposals.
7. be able to organize and plan the implementation process.
8. have the ability to communicate effectively so that ideas are understood and choices can be explained and justified in a rational and objective way.

To these I would add two further attributes:

9. be able to work with community groups and others as a facilitator of change.
10. be able to objectively appraise the success or otherwise of projects after execution.

A third area of consideration is that appropriate emphasis must be placed on

development of the knowledge base since professional credibility is always dependent upon this. Design skill alone is not nearly enough and this was no doubt part of the reason for the demise of the old tradition of civic design. No project can solve problems if they have not been sufficiently researched and understood.

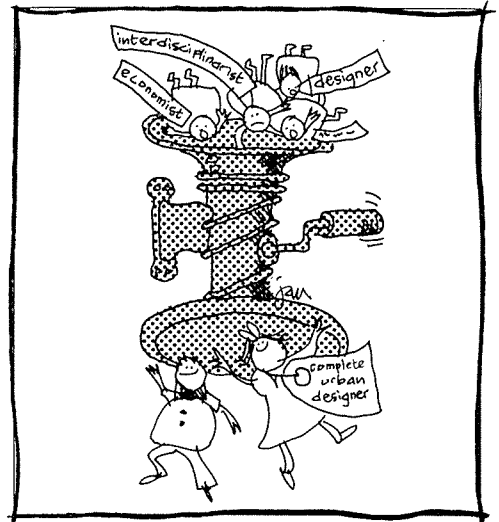
Fourthly, urban design and the development process generally are arenas for interdisciplinary teamwork. Only if urban designers become adept in the area of interdisciplinary activity can they expect to emerge into positions of leadership in the development process.

A fifth area is expertise in development economics and project feasibility. There is no escape, in today's world, from the pervasive influence of finance and the reality of the bottom line.

Other areas requiring inclusion in an urban design course are likely to include:

- urban and cultural history
- morphology - location, site planning, infrastructural, communications
- law affecting the built environment
- design thinking as a process
- crime control and security for people and property within the urban fabric
- organisational management of the design process

And after all that, design itself! Design, that is informed by all the relevant factors, starting as hypothesis formulation (in much the same manner as in science) and going through testing and refinement to achieve an optimal result able to withstand searching scrutiny. Hopefully the outcome will be Firmness, Commodity, Delight and Cost-effectiveness. Squeezing all of this into the equivalent of a two year full-time course is something of a tall order but the effort will be made. If you have differing views on the above agenda then **Urban Design Forum** would like to hear from you.



## ACTION ON CITY SQUARE

Melbourne City Council is proceeding rapidly to achieve a bold new concept for the **City Square and Regent Theatre area**. An agreement has been signed with the **Chase Corporation**.

During the last six months prior to the agreement a concept was developed by the Council which recognized the maximum development potential plus the cultural needs of the central city. While

most other submissions had included for the refurbishment of the **Regent Theatre**, the scheme put together by the **Chase Corporation and Daryl Jackson Architects** was not only within the parameters defined by the Council's development brief but also seriously addressed the issue of reopening the Regent Theatre in a form that would take it through to the 21st Century.

### Water Wall To Go

The proposal will see the upgrading of the City Square including the removal of the water wall and its replacement with a civic edifice in the form of a colonnade. This will

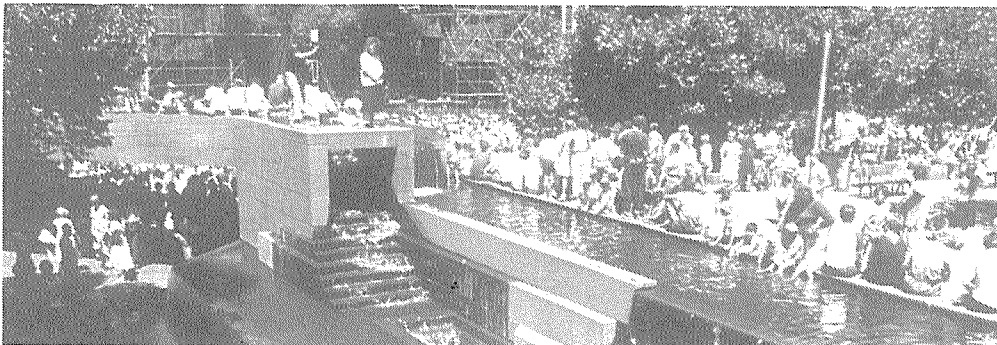
enable activities from beneath the Regent to flow through onto the Square on those occasions when appropriate other activities and weather permit. The scheme contains cinemas under the square and the refurbished Regent Theatre is designed in such a way as to draw people to the Square and allow the various restaurants, entertainment, tourist information and other uses to supplement this activity and generate a busy, yet appropriate, atmosphere in the City Square.

The current programme will see the Council and the Chase Corporation entering into a lease agreement by the

end of March. The Chase Corporation is in the process of applying for a building permit with the Ministry of Planning. It is anticipated that, given the nature of the scheme, the proposal will be fully advertised in order to give all members of the public a chance to comment prior to a planning permit being issued.

### The Challenge

The Melbourne City Council has taken a strong lead. The real challenge it now faces is to ensure that the new urban design for an important City Square is better than the existing.



▲ The Water Wall to go — a considerable loss



▲ The initial sketch by Daryl Jackson

## Rumours & Snippets

Sometimes issues are just emerging and we can't wait for all the details. So in this column we provide news items as they come.

### Is Urban Design possible in Adelaide ?

In a recent issue of "Building and Architecture" (published by the South Australian architects) Ray Bunker tests out the principles of urban design set down in a recent manifesto and concludes that most of Adelaide is not dense enough to qualify as urban. Says Bunker:

"So is the urban design solution for suburbia to raise its density to the desirable figure of about 37 dwellings per hectare of building land or is urban design in Adelaide to be confined to its very few dense parts or - what? There doesn't seem an adequate mechanism for transferring ideas and principles of considerable

richness across cultures, or in identifying the character of a particular city or place and working out how to enhance those qualities."

Which just goes to show that you can't simply transport ideas from one country, or city to another.

### Architecture = Urban Design

We are not sure whether it was just a modern form of typography or a very important philosophical statement. Published by Sydney Consultants Godfrey Spowers and Hallen late last year, the document explored the nature of urban Sydney. But it was the front page heading that really intrigued. "Architecture = Urban Design". Many people involved in Urban Design would dispute the proposition. Then again perhaps it was just a modern form of typography.

### Aspiring Urban Design Immigrants

Wendy Morris returned to Oxford in October, and whilst there she placed advertisements in the principal British architecture and planning journals for

urban designers interested in positions in public and private practice in Melbourne. The response was excellent, and Wendy now has a number of C.V.'s available. So if you are looking to employ an urban designer, contact Wendy on 628-4569.

### A Real Victorian Urban Design Course at Last? Maybe !

The response to last year's letter to Melbourne University and RMIT by key people in urban design practice was very disappointing. Urban Design Forum has ascertained that a meeting about collaboration on an urban design course did take place between Professor Peter McIntyre of Melbourne University and Mr. Leon Van Schaik, head of the Department of Architecture at RMIT. The discussion was not productive and the two institutions are going their separate ways, as they have done in the past.

It is understood that RMIT is proceeding with course development as a stream within its proposed inter-faculty Master of Design by coursework degree and that it may collaborate with Deakin University. The course may focus on live projects to

be undertaken by candidates in the workplace. That sounds promising. If RMIT and the University of Melbourne are now competing to launch courses, we may get one or the other in Melbourne before very long.

### Does Anybody Care About Suburbia ?

It appears that the municipal engineers are striking back. The redraft of the Local Government Act seems to remove the right of appeal against private street construction on the grounds of excessive design or damage to the environment. Does this mean a return to the bad old days of too wide roads, higher costs and more danger ? Contact the RAPI or the National Trust for more details.

### Sydney UD Course Delayed

We had hoped to include details of the urban design course development at Sydney University but all we could discover was that everything has been delayed for at least a year. Perhaps someone else knows what happening?

## CENTRAL MELBOURNE - A PROPERTY CONSULTANTS VIEW

Tony Cooper is a property consultant with Baillieu Knight Frank. He gives another view of urban design in Melbourne.

I was intrigued by Wendy Morris' impressions of Melbourne on returning from Oxford. (UDF No.1) They so closely paralleled my own first impressions six years ago - a feeling of some disappointment that the centre of a major city in a new country could for the most part look so old, tired and ugly. Wendy knows what she wants - more open spaces that "work", more shops, fewer "graph-paper facades". But I am afraid there are often practical reasons why she can't have them.

Take the Plaza behind 500 Collins Street - I confess that the remodelling was originally my idea (although architects chose the colors). The reason was simple. Earlier on, when the pub and bottle shop opened into the foyer, crowds of rowdy youngsters filled the plaza and the open area whenever the sun shone. Tenants constantly complained about paying prestige rents for the privilege of pushing through the "tinnie-crushers" on their way in and out - so the pub has to be moved. You might say that the public's own bad behaviour forced the change.

### A Working, Windy City

Besides, Melbourne is a working city. Most successful open spaces in cities (like Hampstead Heath in London and Central Park in New York) are in residential areas. World-wide, open spaces in business districts (including Trafalgar Square and the Place de la Concorde) tend to be bleak, paved, artificial "no man's lands" besieged by traffic, just like our own City Square.

Wendy would like shops lining all the

streets. So would most planners; but are the shoppers there? Thirty years ago Melbourne's retail heart served the whole metropolitan region - now the paying public prefers air-conditioned suburban centres with lots of free car parking. City retailing has switched almost entirely to the "rag trade", fast food, shoes, jewellery, fancy goods, and office services, and mainly makes a living out of office-workers at lunchtime. So you may be able to force developers to build shops everywhere; but most of them will finish up untenanted, or making a loss and therefore looking messy.

Thirdly, graph-paper facades - yes, Melbourne buildings are pretty boring to look at. The architects must answer for this; nobody instructs them to design boring buildings. One thing I do know, however; the craftsmanship which produced the Oxford buildings which entranced Wendy simply isn't available now.

So, in my view it's no use trying to turn the clock back, or trying to turn Melbourne into another Oxford. It is, and will remain, a workaday city with a windy climate; and most of its inhabitants will continue to spend their evenings and weekend in the suburbs and country, or on Port Phillip Bay; not in the central city.

### What can be done?

So what can be done, particularly in the short term, to make the city less depressing? I would enter a plea for more attention to detail and more resources "on the ground".

Having been professionally involved at one time in maintaining a cathedral city, I can assure Wendy that places like Oxford do not retain their charm by accident. Sensible local authorities have teams of tradesmen and supervisors, backed by an adequate budget.

Anyone who disagrees need only walk a few yards along any street in Melbourne. They are bound to find dozens of items requiring repair, cleaning, painting or other maintenance.

### A check list for action

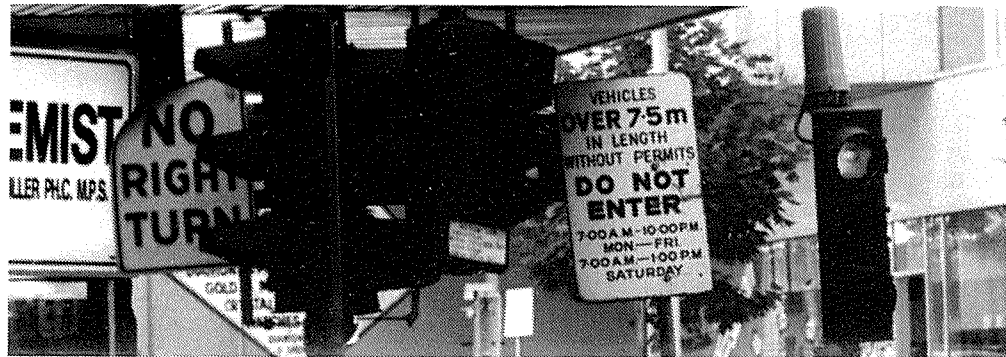
To prove the point I made a brief inspection of the footpath between my office (in 360 Collins Street) and the corner of Elizabeth Street. In a distance of about 150 metres I found the following matters requiring attention.

So here is my recommendation, Wendy - fewer "grand strategies" and more hard work and attention to detail. Does anyone agree?

Item	No.	Immediate	Medium-Term
Traffic Signs and Poles	11	Straighten, Realign, Prepare & Paint	Rationalise & Reduce Number
Tram Standards	6	Remove Fly-Posters, Prepare & Paint	Realign & Reduce Number
Trees	5	Trim, Fertilize, Water	Fit Tree-Grilles
Litter Bins	3	Realign, Prepare & Varnish	Replace/ Augment
Kiosk	1	Prepare & Paint	Negotiate New Structure?
Benches	3	Remove	Establish Sitting-Space at Corner of Elizabeth Street
Electricity Supply Boxes	2	Prepare & Paint	Rationalise/Renew
Traffic Lights	2	Clean/Prepare & Paint/Realign	Replace
Paving Stones		Replace 200 plus cracked stones & realign pavement	Reconstructed Stone with natural stone
Yellow Blocks	80 plus	Remove	



▲ A Piece of History



## Something To Read & Look At Gordon Rushman

### RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS - A MANUAL FOR DESIGNERS

Ian Bentley, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn and Graham Smith, Architectural Press, London 1985. Approx. \$40.00 in Australia.

All of the authors are, or have been, connected with the urban design course at the Oxford Polytechnic. This book is largely the outcome of work in the urban design course and appears to be directed primarily at the present generation of postgraduate students of urban design. It will, however, be extensively referred to the professional practice arena because of its intrinsic merits as a design guide and because it is the first manual for urban designers to appear in English in forty years.

The authors thesis is that seven design characteristics together constitute a responsive environment where a level of vitality, social interaction and visual satisfaction will be found. The characteristics are PERMEABILITY, VARIETY, LEGIBILITY, ROBUSTNESS, VISUAL APPROPRIATENESS, RICHNESS and PERSONALISATION. Each of these is the subject of a chapter and the final chapter deals with PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER.

It must be said that the book does not cover everything that an urban designer needs to know. While the book focuses

on design it deals only briefly with economic issues (feasibility is dealt with in the chapter on Variety) and not at all with social, legal, conservation or political issues. The fine detail of design, survey method and consultation procedures are not covered either. The matter of teamwork, a complex issue which is central to all major projects and their implementation, is not addressed. The art of compromise, which is equally important is not covered either.

While public demand grows for better urban environments, perhaps urban designers have yet to show that they really can deliver the goods. The practical basis of urban design would be well served if the authors of *Responsive Environments* would go on to write two sequels. One should analyse a number of executed projects in terms of permeability, variety etc. as case studies to confirm the relevance of the techniques propounded in the present book. The other should cover the non-design skills which are essential for successful urban design. Until then *Responsive Environments* is commended as a pioneering practical text for aspiring urban designers.

BENTLEY ALCOCK MURRAIN MCGLYNN SMITH

### RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS



A MANUAL FOR DESIGNERS

### ART FOR ARCHITECTURE

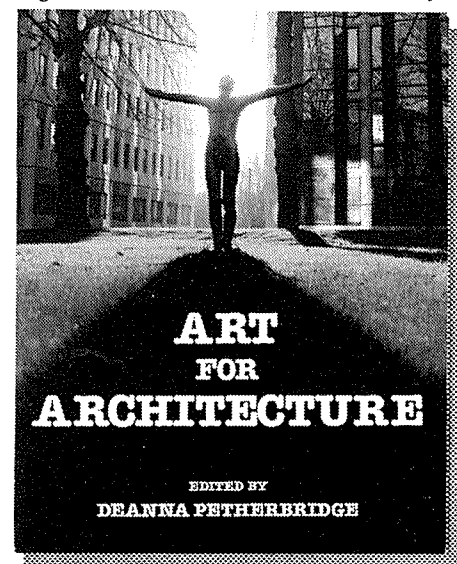
Compiled and edited by Deanna Petherbridge, 1987. The UK Department of Environment in association with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (London).

This extremely comprehensive volume, subtitled, "A Handbook on Commissioning" was compiled and edited by Deanna Petherbridge, the noted English artist and critic. As an artist she exhibits on a national and international basis and as a writer, her work is published regularly in leading British architecture journals. She recently visited Melbourne and Sydney and was able to enter into dialogue in relation to the book itself and to discuss local concerns within the context of her broad background.

The book itself is a direct and serious document on the fact of, and potential for, art, and for increased artist/architect collaboration. She writes "The relationship between architecture and artists in this

country (England) has been a very particular one, mainly because the systems of education and professional institutes of both groups have always been totally independent". This is similar to the Australian pattern and, as a result, the manner of addressing this and related issues has credence in our culture. It is a substantial publication (133 pages) with hundreds of black and white and colour reproductions and is one of those documents that is so thorough that it will retain its credibility as a resource for a long time.

William Kelly



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