

Sydney 2000 Olympic Village Competition

The Olympic village planning and design competition was sponsored by Sydney Olympic Bid Ltd. in association with Property Services Group and was endorsed by HIA, RAPI and RAIA. It was run between March and June this year.

The Judging panel was

Daryl Jackson - Chair, Prominent Melbourne architect, master planner of the village for the Melbourne bid.
Associate Professor John Toon - Town planner, President RAPI.
Glenn Murcutt - Prominent Sydney architect.
Maree White - Olympic basketball team member.
Keith Murton - Asst. Chef de Mission Barcelona.
Nicholas Whitlam - Merchant banker/business executive.
Pam Walkely - Property Editor, Australian Financial Review.

The joint winners were

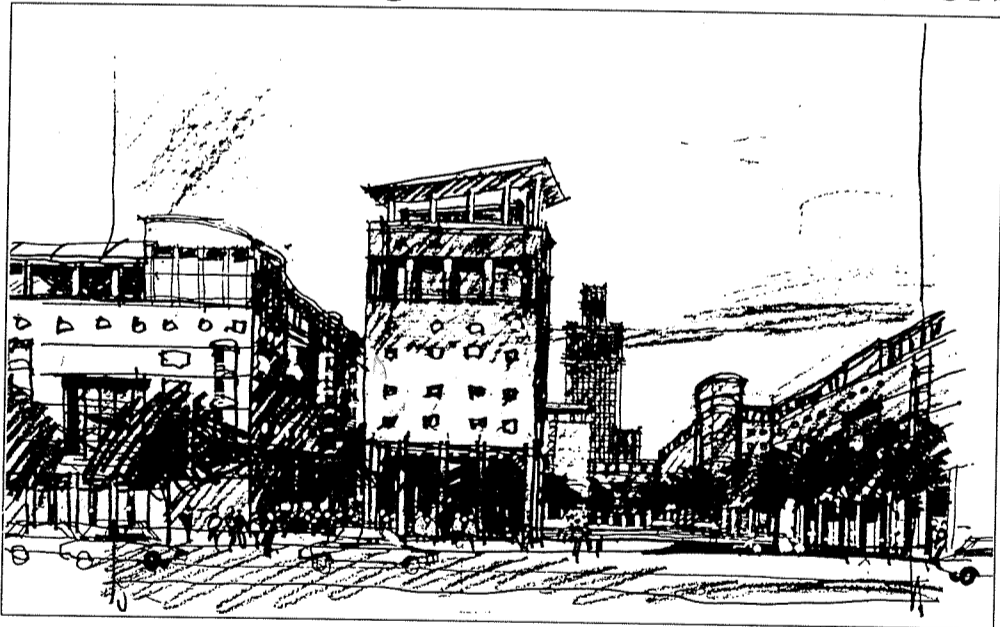
No. 7 Bruce James, Andrew Burges, Peter Soobik, Don Hayman (Bruce James & Partners)
No. 15 Group 6 - Philip Thalys, Peter John Cantrill, Philip Arnold, David Haertsch, Peter Mc Gregor and Malcolm Utley.
No. 65 Roderick Simpson, Andrea Wilson, Peter Tosh, Anne Grimes and Ian Martin.
No 95 Dr John Hocking.

This was an important competition because of the scale and complexity of the project. It differed from Melbourne's approach to developing a village design which involved Government and an appointed consultant master planner, with a range of selected architects developing contrasting housing schemes for different sites.

The jury's departure from the competition conditions, which proposed a first prize of \$50,000 with up to four additional prizes being awarded to a total value of \$25,000, was surprising. The Jury decided to award five equal prizes of \$15,000 and the five winners have been encouraged to work together to produce a combined scheme.

The solution the five teams come up with will become part of the Sydney Olympic 2000 Bid documents which will be handed over to the I.O.C. on Australia Day 1993 in Lausanne. Two of the prize winning schemes are illustrated on page 2 with their jury critiques. All five winning schemes were relatively straight forward urban design proposals and the jury chose not to recognise any of the grander architectural concepts. Principles of ecological sustainability seem to have been a significant jury consideration and important to publicity since the announcement.

Australians recognised in International Urban Design Competition



Andras Kelly, a Tasmanian landscape architect and Peter Edgeley, Melbourne architect and delineator, teamed up with Krzysztof Bieda professor of architecture at Cracow, to prepare an entry in 'The International Competition of Ideas for the Warsaw Central Square' Their entry was selected by a jury led by Rob Krier from over 300 entries and awarded an honourable mention.

The aim of this competition was the securing of an urban and architectural concept for the city core of Warsaw. It was expected that further design studies would be required after the competition before the city core was developed. A special publication devoted to the competition has been produced as well as an exhibition and publishing of the competition in professional journals. The site is the demolished central core of Warsaw. The centre of the 20 Ha site is

dominated by the Palace of Culture and Science Building which is the tallest building in Warsaw. Competition entrants were given a fairly open brief 'to site banks, markets and exchanges, hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars, exhibition halls, galleries, stores, cinemas and other facilities typical of city cores.' Urban design concepts were required to address circulation and parking, building envelopes and uses and public spaces including parks and urban squares. The Palace of Culture and Science Building had to be modified to be incorporated in the new concept. Flexibility to allow the concept to be developed over time and within an uncertain economic climate was also important.

The Kelly, Edgeley, Bieda scheme aimed to reintroduce urban cohesion by redevelopment of the area with mixed use 6-8 storey high density perimeter building blocks.

A National Design School Charrette "Where the City meets the lake"

Over 300 design students across Australia are currently studying Acton Peninsula and the West Basin of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra as their studio project this semester. Sponsored by the National Capital Planning Authority in co-operation with the A.C.T. Planning Authority, the Charrette intends to engage the vision and creative energies of students in programmes of architecture, landscape architecture, planning and urban design in an ideas quest for redevelopment possibilities on Acton Peninsula. Each programme will conduct the charrette in a process which best fits the individual teaching philosophy and schedule of the studio class. The list of participating Universities includes The University of Canberra, The University of New South Wales, The Sydney University of Technology, The University of Sydney, The University of Tasmania, The University of Melbourne, The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, The University of Western Australia, The Queensland University of Technology and The University of Queensland.

The student projects will be exhibited at an Urban Design Community Forum sponsored by the National Capital Planning Authority to be held in Canberra on October 15th - 17th 1992. On Thursday October 15th, from 5 - 8pm, there will be an exhibition opening at Melville Hall on the ANU Campus. Selected finalists will present their schemes on Friday October 17th to a critical review jury. The exhibition will run through Sunday, October 18th. Members of both the local and national community are encouraged to view the projects and witness the design review.

The Australian Living Standards Study

The Australian Institute of Family Studies, a federal statutory authority whose legislative responsibilities include the collection and dissemination of

information related to the well being of families, is currently deeply involved in a study of the living standards of families for the Department of Prime Minister and cabinet.

For the past twelve months or more, they have been in the throes of designing and administering a series of survey instruments which focus on a whole of life approach to living standards.

The survey is being conducted in a variety of locations to reflect inner, middle and outer suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne, an outer area of Adelaide with a different planning background, rural areas of South Australia and Queensland and a reasonably remote area of the Northern Territory.

Up to 500 families in each of twelve areas are being sampled.

A further stage of the Area Study also involves talking to planners, both within and outside the local government area, about issues such as distribution and equity.

The study team expects to complete the major data collection by the end of 1992. Writing of local reports has begun, but that work will continue well into 1993. As well, a final report incorporating data from all areas will be produced.

For more information contact Peter McDonald (household survey) or Christine Kilmartin (area study) at the AIFS on (03) 608 6888.

Australia Council's Community, Environment, Art and Design (CEAD) Program

The environmental and social challenges facing Australia are generating community demand for new visions of a just and sustainable future based on creative new relationships between people and their environments.

The Australia Council is responding to this demand by emphasising the fundamental link between the cultural life of communities and the quality of the built environment.

Through the CEAD program, we aim to foster people's sense of their cultural history, identity and aspirations. We see that, working collaboratively, visual and craft artists, designers and communities have a critical role of developing this vision and expressing it in the built environment. The CEAD program is a joint initiative of Council's Visual Arts/Crafts Board. The seven member CEAD Committee, which meets twice a year, is responsible for both policy formulation and grants decisions.

We offer grants in three categories:

- Artists and designers participating in environmental design
- Community participation in environmental design
- Advocacy, research and training

In nearly three years of operation we have funded a wide range of projects. These address such issues as urban and regional development; cultural tourism; urban growth; design of public spaces and facilities; traffic calming; urban bushland revitalisation and enhancement; and strategies to deal with sensitive development proposals.

Along with funding the best ideas of others, we have developed our own projects. We are negotiating to form partnerships with other organisations to extend collaborative approaches to urban design which integrates social, environmental, cultural, economic and physical aspects. Currently we are looking to boost activities in regions with limited access to skills and resources. As part of a wider strategy we, have commissioned resource materials including a video and book about "Placemaking." We are also looking at ways to promote resource and information sharing between the rapidly expanding group of individuals and organisations who wish to work this way. We are happy to talk to you about the program or put you in touch with others who may give you ideas and the means to develop your own projects. Our phone number is (02) 950 9000 or (008) 22 6912 Tamara Winikoff and Andrew Bryan CEAD Program Officers



Above the Palace of Culture and Science at the centre of Warsaw Central Square.

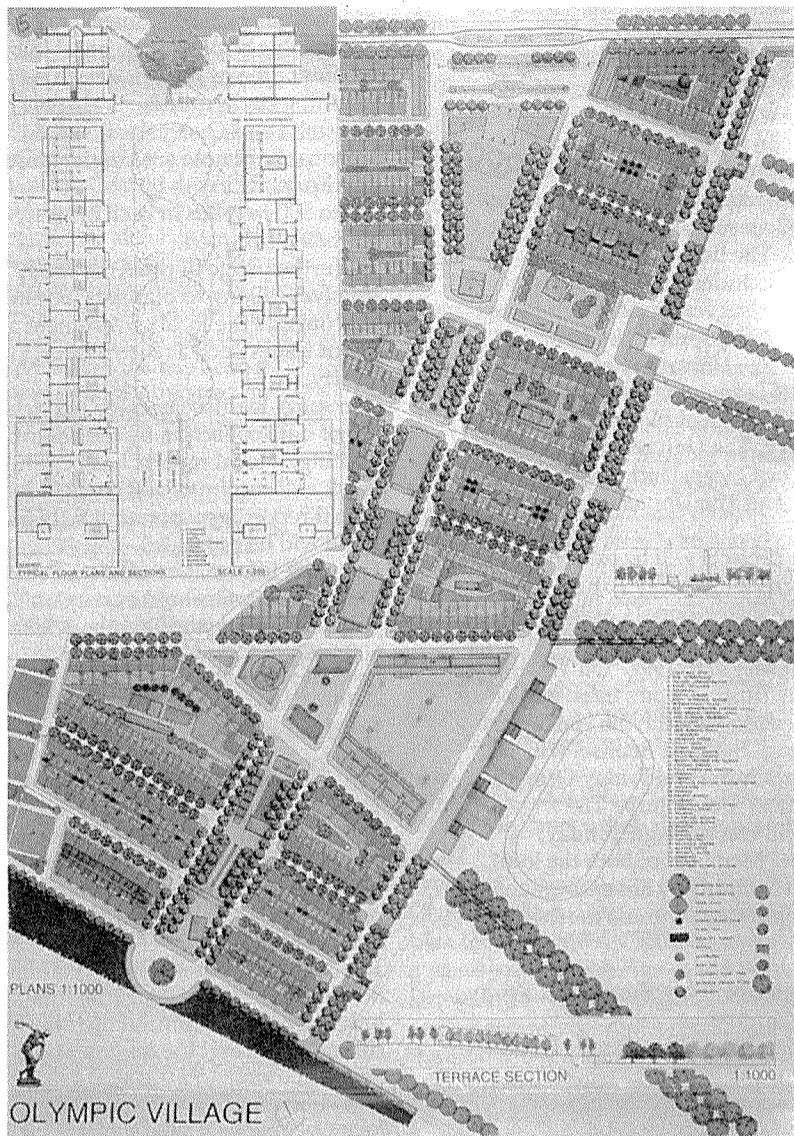
Their proposed street pattern derives from the prewar urban grid. Their use of cohesive perimeter block building fabric was "not intended as nostalgic reminiscence, but a highly effective urban design alternative to the less successful object in space type of city development. The continuity of the building fabric eliminates waste space around buildings. It provides instead a clear definition of hierarchical and useful urban open spaces. The open spaces can vary from busy streets to quieter semi-private courtyards and all other forms of transitional spaces between."

A lecture and slide presentation of this entry and prize winning entries is being planned to occur in Melbourne. Contact Peter Edgeley for details on (03) 699 1756.

Sydney 2000 Olympic Village Competition

Entry no 15 by Group 6

This design is commended for its sensible response to the grid layout of Silverwater; for excellent qualitative urban analysis; and for the sensitivity of the eastern edge of the development as it addresses the wetland. The design of the neighbourhood centre needs further development, particularly in its Olympic mode. There is also a need to develop a better response to carparking, to housing types, to low rise massing, and to variety and choice. In particular the jury appreciates the ideas relating to the urban boulevard which offers a distinctive architectural esplanade and the definition of a promenade overlooking the playing fields and sensitive wetland zones.



Selected comments from the jury report.

The brief for the competition set down a comprehensive, but complex set of requirements.

Their resolution presented some 105 architects and/or planners with a significant challenge.

A key statement of objectives was summarised in an introductory letter to competitors by the Royal Australian Planning Institute, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Housing Industry Association and the Auburn Municipal Council.

"The plan and design for the Olympic Village calls for an imaginative solution to the dual requirements of the brief; one being the exacting requirements for the Olympic Village itself, with its emphasis on security, access to training facilities and major venues, high quality accommodation and an appropriate symbolism in the international centre; the other being the opportunity to develop a model urban consolidation project that will demonstrate attractive, innovate and livable medium density housing appropriate to lifestyle in the 21st Century. The challenging site presents planners and designers with the opportunity to generate a distinctly Australian solution. To our knowledge no previous Olympic Village has achieved distinction as a contribution to urban planning. Here is an opportunity to create a development that will achieve lasting recognition. It is an exciting prospect".

If ever there was a call to arms for Australian Architects and planners this was the moment. There was to be a search for excellence and a desire to symbolise the unique qualities of a Sydney bid for the Games in the village design.

Of course such visionary requests are easier to articulate than accomplish. Inherent in the brief were a number of conflicting objectives, which as the jury came to understand in its assessment process, competitors found difficult to reconcile.

Affordable housing for future sale in western suburban Sydney had to be assembled as an exemplary medium density village, with important considerations being adequate carparking per house (such as Australian families desire), social understanding, energy efficiency, and care for the natural and built heritage.

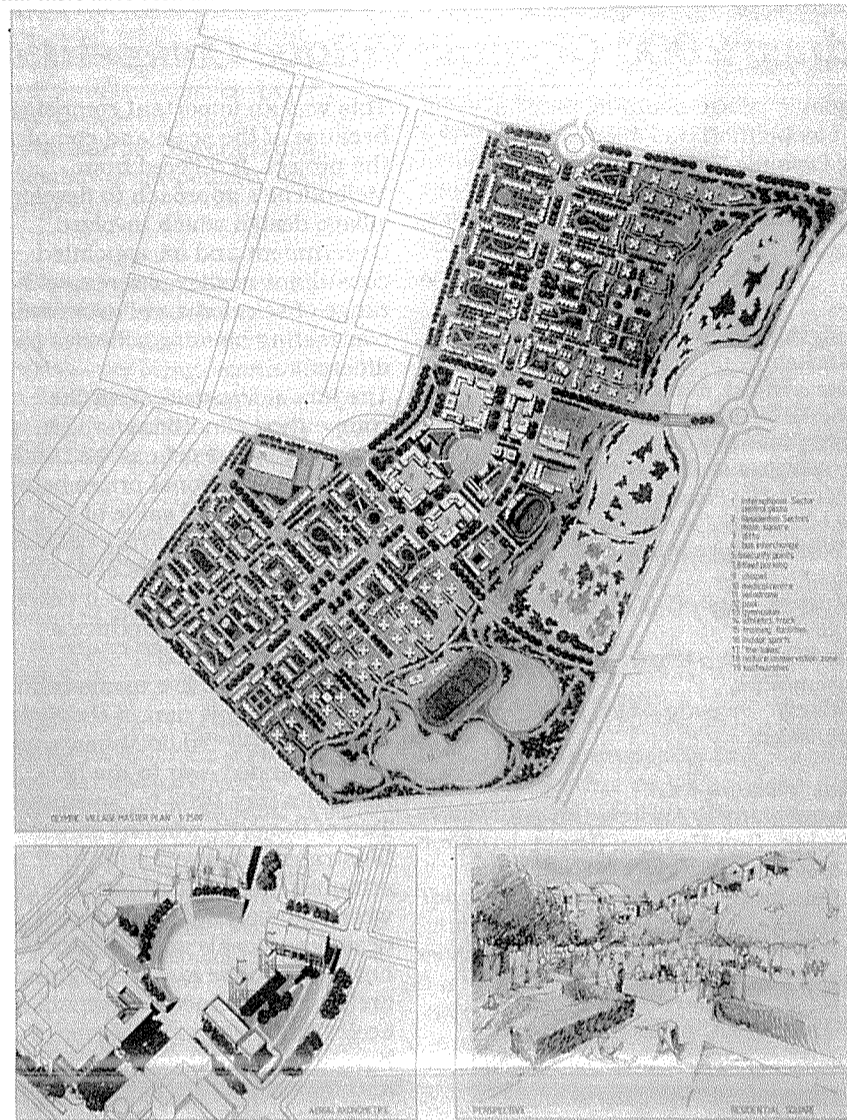
Neighbourhood centre facilities for the 2500 houses had to be arranged for commercial use as shops, local offices, schools or other institutions once the Olympics were over, but for the big event these were to be interpreted as the International Centre and point of assembly for the visiting athletes.

From this Centre links across the wetlands of Haslam's Creek to the Olympic stadium site in Homebush were required.

So it wasn't just a case of providing yet another look at medium density houses and apartments, or of developing an elaborate place for an Olympic party that people, in search of housing, could not afford to pay for after the event. In the opinion of the judges many of the competition entries erred on either side of this critical edge. For instance, some drawings illustrated overblown megastructure proposals that might have been suitable for Pyrmont, Paris or Milan, but not Homebush Bay. Others found it necessary to turn Silverwater into another Surfer's Paradise, forming ecology damaging canals which filled in the

Entry no 95 By Dr John Hockings

The site layout, urban scale and disposition of elements are commended. The Village centre and its likely utilisation for the Olympics and subsequently for residents is appropriately defined. Nevertheless, the housing system illustrated appears too repetitive and lacks any sense of innovation or experimentation. The jury is critical of this aspect, (and of the regularity and repetition of the layout,) in regard to site contours. There is the opportunity to enrich or elaborate the scheme via a more sensitive architectural response. The Olympic mode of the village also requires further elaboration and definition. In summary the jury feels the proposal is realistic, workmanlike affordable and achievable. But could there have been more?



wetlands and destroyed the special character of the bird life and native flora.

In the category of the 'Big Banal' (those symbols that disservice Australian intelligence at tourist resorts), were a series of Lord of the (Olympics) Rings solutions. Those who suggested high rise apartments (after Seoul not favoured by the Olympic users), could not convince the jury that this form of housing was necessary for a new start in Silverwater, particularly at the level of diversity indicated.

Such responses chose to ignore the criteria established within the conditions and failed to find that artistic, even understated, stimulus that Australians seek from their place of residence.

In effect, the jury were looking for real (and realistic) innovation; of how the various housing, heritage, and gently contoured landforms could be drawn together to offer a new basis for public/private ownership; and to reflect some new found identity (and memorability) for prototypical outer suburban expansion. Mercifully, in this case, the usual constraints of Council zoning and establishment financing, twin factors that frequently sap creative strength, were missing and competitors were free to explore ideas.

Thus, in their search amongst the entries, the jury was delighted to find a series of solutions which seriously faced up to the Olympian task, transcended the conflicts and created potentially adaptable, affordable and accountable concepts, without loss of scale, sensibility or style.

The fact that no one solution emerged with singular distinction in all the areas of the brief should not come as a surprise. There were a number of innovative and imaginative ideas in evidence, albeit,

without all the pieces of the demanding jigsaw of site layout, detailed housing solution and village centre design falling into place.

The jury did not find one winner, but five.

All these entries offer significant potential for further interpretation, exploration, resolution and the jury recommends that the promotes split the total prize money for this competition evenly between entries Nos. 7, 15, 44, 65 and 95.

We also recommend that the promoters should brief each of these contestants independently and separately, offering confidential critique, and seeking their co-operation to extend their work.

The jury further recommends that an additional \$35,000 prize money be made available, such that when the eventual winner is declared, a sum of \$50,000 becomes a first prize which accords with the spirit of the original Conditions of Competition.

The jury considers, that as this further piece of work falls outside its jurisdiction (as anonymous assessors) the first prize should be determined by the promoter and/or its advisory. Should the promoter so wish, members of the jury are willing to assist in making further assessment, but it should be recognised as being outside the original circumstances.

The jury commends the promoters and participating organisations for their care in conducting this important competition. It thanks and congratulates all entrants for their imaginative contributions and hard work and it encourages the five winners to encompass critique and continue to further distinguish and resolve their premiated solutions.

A Place to Live

It took nearly four years to prepare and publish *A Place to Live*, the first part of Victoria's long term urban development strategy¹. The strategy looks 40 years ahead and tries to initiate a process of change to deal with new features emerging in our society and in our understanding of urban development.

In 2031, ie, in the lifespan of one generation, 1.8 million more people will be living in Victoria for whom 850,000 new dwellings will need to be constructed with all auxiliary infrastructure. This could all be accommodated in Melbourne. But is this the only possibility? Would this enhance the quality of our lives?

A Place to Live suggests a different approach. It states that future urban development must link economic performance with environmental quality and social well being. It seeks to achieve a better balance of resources and opportunities between different parts of the State.

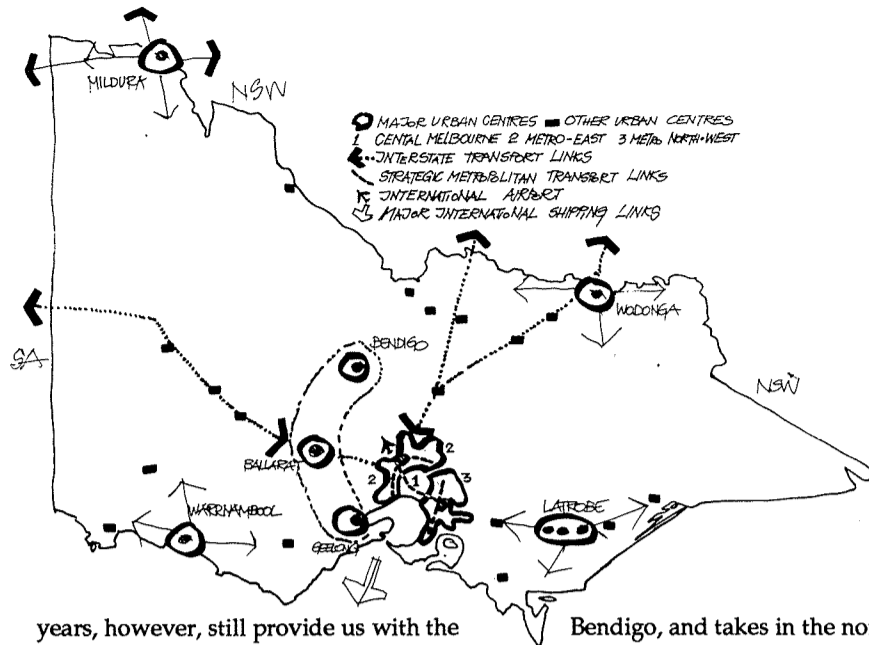
Several initiatives are proposed to achieve this balance:

There will be a stronger emphasis on regional development, more self-contained development of our regions and towns, more efficient use of services through more compact development and higher urban densities (which are now the lowest in the world). The strategy emphasises the importance of integrating transport - particularly public transport - with the location of employment and activity centres.

How all this can be achieved?

In development terms, the next ten years or so, are already defined. The remaining 30

1. Later this year two other components of Victoria's long term strategy will be published *Growth Opportunities for Provincial and Rural Centres* and a *strategy on Ecological Sustainable Development*.



years, however, still provide us with the opportunity for change. The strategy suggests that in the next 40 years a more compact Melbourne should emerge, composed of three regions.

1. The inner city which will strengthen its international and national role;
2. The eastern region of Melbourne which will integrate the eastern and southern suburbs around a main strategic centre focused on Dandenong; and
3. The western and northern suburbs - now only a backdrop to central Melbourne - which will grow to an independent region integrated by the North-western Ringroad, already being constructed, a new, yet to be determined strategic centre in the north-west.

By 2031, improved social and physical services, particularly transport infrastructure, will have generated unprecedented urban development opportunities in the area that *A Place to Live* calls the Central Crescent. This encompasses the three major urban centres closest to Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and

Bendigo, and takes in the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne.

Other regional centres will also prosper as their economic development is realised. The most dynamic growth will be experienced by those centres which fulfil an important role in servicing their own regions. This will specifically be the case with Wodonga, Mildura, Warrnambool, and the Latrobe Valley cities.

The question now is: **how will this concept survive the changes which time might bring?** Obviously the strategy is a forecast, which might experience some changes and variations. However, if based on proper research and broad public participation, the main thrust of that forecast will remain valid and direct actions towards well defined long-term priorities.

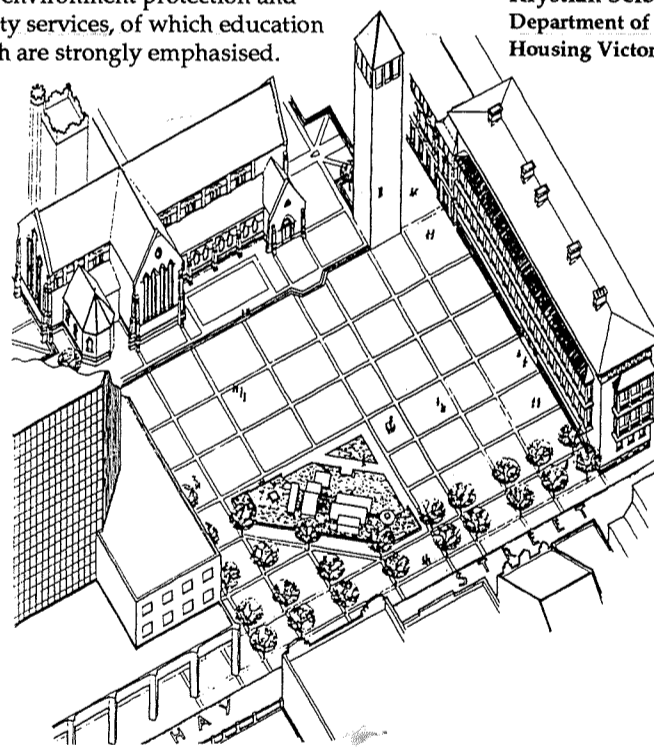
Those priorities outlined in the strategy include administrative measures, infrastructure investment, urban consolidation and policies regarding job creation, environment protection and community services, of which education and health are strongly emphasised.

Proper timing is another major requirement for success. The opportunity for the eastward expansion of Melbourne are coming to an end, as the environmental capacities of the Dandenong Ranges and Western Port are exhausted. At the same time new infrastructure is gearing up to support expansion in the west. The new ringroad, the extension of the international airport, the National Freight Route and Victoria's harbours will make Melbourne, and particularly its western region, the most important transport hub of Australia. Similarly, tertiary institutions recently located in the west will upgrade the educational base of the region.

How does the strategy relate to urban design? The simple answer is, that without proper design, the quality of life outlined in the strategy might not be achieved. Compact development calls for careful and imaginative design not only of our residential areas but activity centres, industrial and redevelopment areas. Infrastructure investment can only be fully utilised if conveniently linked with the activities they are supposed to serve. The changing household and age structure, more than ever, will require a very different approach to the design of our houses, our services, recreation areas and transport systems. In a competitive society quality can only be achieved through efficiency and excellence. The basic aim of urban design relates directly to those principles.

Over the next 40 years the shape of our towns and cities will change. As it is stated in the conclusion of the strategy, we have a choice. 'We can choose to act and achieve the future we want, or we can forsake a vision and just let things happen.' There is a great role which urban designers can and have to play in that process. The choice is ours.

Krystian Seibert
Department of Planning &
Housing Victoria



to Hay Street in the north. The sketch shows what could be done. A bell tower defines the S-W corner. A new facade to the existing building on the east side would create the right scale and character, and allow for a colonnade, with eating spaces spilling into the Square. In the near future, redevelopment of the Playhouse site will create an opportunity for a new pedestrian way from Pier Street, opening up a dramatic view of the Cathedral's east end, and leading, via a small forecourt, to the main Square.

Cathedral Square could become one of the finest urban spaces in Australia.

The proposal is a private initiative, developed in co-operation with the Anglican Church, which owns a bigger part of the land and of the building to be demolished. The State government has been asked to underwrite the project, with

a contribution by the City Council, and perhaps the Commonwealth Government.

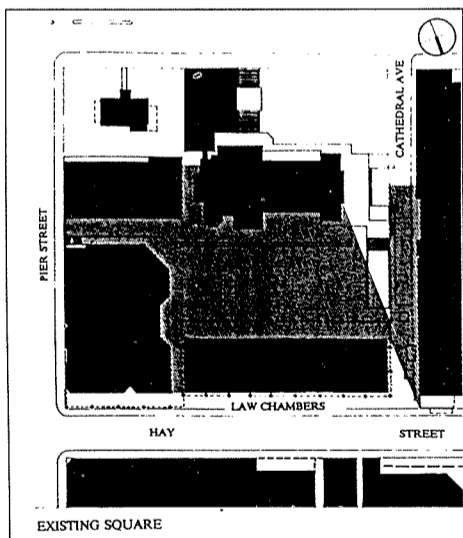
The opportunity has been created by the fact that the Law Chambers building is now outmoded, its leases fall due in the next couple of years, and major expenditure will be needed to refurbish it. Given these and the 28% vacancy rate for office space in the city centre, it is impossible to imagine a more favourable time to demolish the building. Such an opportunity is not likely to occur for another twenty years.

A true civic square, in a capital city which lacks such spaces, is an asset which is virtually priceless. One can only hope that the government and the City Council will have the foresight and vision to seize the opportunity while it is there.

Ken Adam is an architect-planner and urban designer, in private practice.

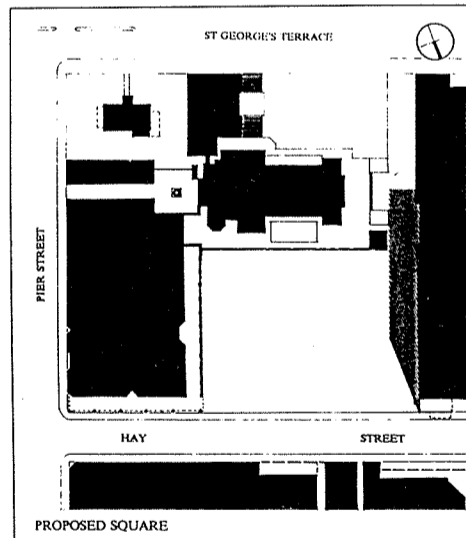
CATHEDRAL SQUARE PERTH

A Proposal for a new City Square



Most visitors remark on how beautiful a city Perth is, by which they usually mean how beautiful it is to look at, either across Perth Water or from the heights of Kings Park. Within the city centre, however, it is a different story. Most people now agree that central Perth is sadly lacking in the qualities of a "good" city. Among other things it lacks the sense of urbanity that is provided by civic squares and other places which provide attractive settings for people in the city. The Cathedral Square proposal is an attempt to fill part of that need, and to capitalise on an opportunity which has arisen at this moment in time.

The redevelopment of Cathedral Square has been a personal dream of mine since 1970, when the present Cathedral Square was built. The bare construction site revealed new views of St. Georges Cathedral and the magnificent Land Titles



Office. The very fine Cathedral is Edmund Blackett's only Western Australian building. The Titles Office, designed by the prolific George Temple-Poole, has an Italianate facade that could stand with pride in any city of the world, not excluding Florence.

The potential of the Square was severely compromised by the Law Chambers building, which forms its north side, blocking it from Hay Street. Not only does this building detract from the setting of the Cathedral and Titles Office, but it casts a shadow over the whole Square in Winter and isolates it from the daily life of the city. Consequently it is a dismal place and almost never used.

The concept of the square is simple. In essence it involves the removal of the Law Chambers building to open up the Square

NEWS FROM VICTORIA

Central Melbourne is currently in a state of frantic construction activity with contractors rushing to complete the Swanston Walk and Bourke Street Mall upgrade projects in time for spring festivals and the Christmas shopping period. The Swanston Walk project is the most significant pedestrianisation initiative ever in Melbourne and has developed in a peculiar Melbourne form. The Walk extends for three blocks along the main north/south civic spine of Melbourne linking the Yarra and the Arts Centre with the Museum and the new Melbourne Central development. The Walk is designed to accept high volumes of trams and also has traffic lanes for service vehicles and cycles along a central reduced roadway. This has created some initial confusion for pedestrians. In typical Melbourne style the selection of Plane trees over Eucalypts has been a major controversy widely debated on radio, TV and in the press over the past six months.

Two further reports on the future of Melbourne Docklands were released in June. "The Docklands Strategy: Background Report", and "The Docklands Strategy" are final reports of the Docklands Task Force which has now been replaced by the Docklands Authority. Many designers are unhappy with the strategy and feel it is a classic case of design by committee. Some of us are tired of debating the future of Docklands and hope that nothing happens on the site for many years to come allowing time for a well conceived urban design to emerge. The new Docklands Authority on the other hand are keen to see things happen and the State Government decision on Melbourne's first casino later this year may see the start of a major redevelopment of Docklands, though other sites close to central Melbourne are apparently still in consideration for the casino.

These two reports are available free from Information Victoria, 318 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne.

NEWS FROM QUEENSLAND

QUT Urban Design course reports that it has settled down to a regular student number of about 20, (45% architects, 45% planners, 10% landscape architects), with four studying full time. The major contributors to the programme this spring are Richard Hayward and Phillip Opher from the Oxford Polytechnic, who are in Brisbane for nearly two months each, one following the other. In the new year Danny O'Hare, (ex Sydney) who is working towards his Ph D in Urban Design at Oxford will take up a full time position in the course.

In conjunction with the Oxford Polytechnic and the Queensland Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning, the QUT has mounted an Urban Design Workshop series. The next session is 10th September on "The role of Urban Design and Guidelines in Providing Housing for Queensland". Richard Hayward will be the key contributor. (Enquiries 07 864 1445 to Paula O'Shea.)

The Queensland Urban Design Forum group are active again under the sponsorship of John Panaretos Planning. (Contact Juris Greste, 07 371 4047, for a programme of future activities.) Many UDF readers will have participated in Gordon Holden's Urban Design questionnaires and interviews in May and June this year. Two working papers have been produced and will be sent to respondents soon. The paper of potentially most interest is titled "Urban Design in Australia: A study of the background, views and activities of the people involved." Here are some extracts from it.

"Background of respondents"

"Though hard comparative figures are not available, with 96% having two or more degrees, it appears that professionals involved in urban design are highly qualified

Perth Foreshore update

UDF No 17 last September reported the successful completion of the International Perth City Foreshore Urban Design Competition with a scheme by Carr, Lynch,, Hack and Sandall of Cambridge Massachusetts.

An extensive consultation process has followed to seek community response to the winning design before taking the next step in it's development. This period of review has not been without it's controversy and the next step involves a \$1.7 million dollar funding of a project team including the winning consultants, use of local consultants and project management staff.

The State Government seems keen to take the next step but is requiring a 50% commitment from the City Council who are divided about whether the next step should be taken. Council's scepticism seems to stem from a number of factors including, unease about possible future financial commitment and conflict with the State Government over who should be planning central Perth. A large proportion of local residential councillors don't see it as a priority for their electorates which are outside central Perth. The final factor is described as "good old Perth conservatism," which is a view that the foreshore area doesn't need any change.

NSW URBAN DESIGN NEWS

Central Sydney urban design plan hits wall?

Prepared in accordance with the 1988 Central Sydney Strategy, the urban design plan for the Sydney CBD was reviewed by a panel of experts earlier in the year. Drawn from various fields such as urban and transport economics, real estate, etc, the experts recommended changes to the 1988 strategy. Most controversial was a proposal from Bob Meyer and Jim

academically. The only comparison uncovered is that with members of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects where it was shown that only about 15% of members had more than one degree. The credibility which may be inferred from the figures is tempered by the results that show only about one fifth of the respondents as having a formal urban design qualification. "Consultants are more satisfied with urban design practice under existing professional umbrellas than officers, who overwhelmingly believe it is not effectively practised. The substantial difference is possibly a reflection of the nature of the activities of the two groups. Officers are regularly involved in reviewing of submissions by consultants, and thereby see the shortfalls across a wide range, whereas consultants are more focused on fewer projects."

"The relatively low activity rate recorded in both "designing" and "management" activities may suggest that urban designers are valued for their diagnostic and advisory skills because of the special skills required."

Important published sources for urban design "A total of 66 references are identified by title name, of these 30 are identified more than once."

"More than half of the listed titles, (58%) are identified as publications from USA authors. There are 20% from UK, 18% from Australia, and 6% from Europe."

"There are very few published references on Australian urban design topics of significant influence. The ones mostly used are of a study or report nature, which are then referred to as guides or precedents to influence the project in hand. This reflects the undeveloped nature of both theory and method in this country which needs to be addressed. The popular overseas sources for Australian urban designers are often of a philosophical nature without particular application. Some sources such as Lynch and Bentley, which provide a strong link between theory and method, are seen by many to be of immediate practical use."

Coleman (AIUS Chairman) to reduce the "as of right" FSR to 5.5:1 and allow increases only on the basis of urban design and environmental considerations.

The plan, and the review report, were then in turn reviewed by an enquiry chaired by Adelaide barrister Brian Hayes. Though his report was due in later July/early August, results are still eagerly awaited. The enquiry is likely to call into question the 1988 Strategy and make substantial changes to the urban design plan. Most developers and owners are opposed to the plan because of its reliance and environmental controls to determine floor space. Valuers, in particular, are concerned that the level of certainty of site potential might be severely reduced.

Values dive

With its office space vacancy rate now at about 20%, Central Sydney is being revalued. Substantial falls in major property valuations are being recorded, undermining the asset backing of many companies, public and private. The only good news is that rates and land taxes will also decrease.

Review of Environmental Planning and Assessment and Heritage Acts

Time has run out for submissions to the NSW Department of Planning in response to its discussion papers on possible changes to both Acts.

Based on the British Town and Country Planning Acts, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was gazetted on September 1 1980. Generally regarded as a success, the Act ushered in a new era of local planning and local planning departments. The proliferation of planning instruments led to a rapid growth of employment in local government planning departments.

Amongst suggested changes to the Act are provisions for plain English planning instruments, appeals against council

refusals to permit spot rezoning of sites, more realistic time frames for the consideration of applications and a reassessment of the relationship between the various levels of plan making.

Changes to the Heritage Act may be more subtle. There has been much recent criticism of the Act and the Heritage Council of NSW for its failure to protect Central Sydney buildings of undisputed significance. Financial considerations have most frequently been the basis for the Council's unwillingness to sanction protective orders. Building owners are pushing to strengthen financial grounds as a consideration in the determination of heritage orders. Conservationists are equally concerned to remove the Council's perceived developer bias in the adoption of financial considerations as a basis for assessing heritage significance.

Michael Neustein

Urban Design Forum Sydney No.1

The inaugural gathering of the Urban Design Forum for Sydney was held on Wednesday 5 August 1992 and was without doubt a success.

Chris Stapleton opened the meeting by defining the UDF as an intimate open forum without the need for an administrative structure, linked to the Urban Design Forum in Melbourne.

It was encouraging to witness open discussion. These include Urban Design as a whole, the 2000 Olympic bid and its impact on the metropolitan area, the need to look further than the CBD and the availability and scope of current urban design education.

The number of issues raised indicates that future meetings need to be held about monthly in the foreseeable future. It is hoped that the UDF New South Wales will provide a platform to present and promote the views of our field. Please contact Fiona Court on (02) 267 5300 for further information.

CONFERENCES

The Government of Perth Western Australia is holding a conference entitled "City Challenge, Towards a vision for Perth into the next century," at about the time of distribution of this edition, 8th to 10th of September 1992. This conference promises an interesting group of speakers from a wide range of perspectives, moderated by Carmel Travers, presenter of Beyond 2000 and a director of the Commission of the Future.

Further information on the conference from Conference secretariat, City Challenge Conference, Conference Management, UWA Extension, The University of Western Australia, NEDLANDS, PERTH WA. 6009, Phone 09 380 3181 Fax, 09 380 1088.

Perhaps we can report on this conference in UDF, 21. City Vision members please take notes!

The culture of landscape architecture, EDGE TOO.

30th September 1992 to October 3rd.

A conference organised by students of the RMIT University and The University of Melbourne.

Contact: The Convenors, Landscape Architecture Students Conference, PO Box 4352

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