

a focus on  
P E R T H

**URBAN DESIGN  
FORUM**  
ISSUE No.27 September 1994

Kenneth Greenberg at : **FORUM '94**

Our keynote participant at Rottnest is to be Kenneth Greenberg, founding principal of Berridge Lewinsberg Greenberg. Prior to establishing his practice, Kenneth was Director, Division of Architecture and Urban Design for the City of Toronto. In that position he was one of the driving forces for urban design as a key component in the resurgence of Downtown Toronto.

Kenneth's urban design group was established in 1978 on the basis of interaction with public agencies and the private sector. To demonstrate that it justified itself, effectively it had to pay for itself. This it did with a whole series of projects including:

- strategic upgradings of the public domain emphasising walkability, security and improvement of environmental standards
- inner city housing and market areas were revitalised through the use of demonstration projects;
- young businesses were seeded in inner city "starter" areas;
- usage of the underground and above ground public transport systems were fully exploited;
- the obsolete waterfront and railway lands, which separated the city from the lakefront, were progressively redeveloped to enhance the linkages.

Since establishing BLG Kenneth has continued to be involved with Toronto in projects such as:

- Building on Mainstreets;
- waterfront master plan for Garrison Common;
- Living Downtown in Toronto;
- The Uptown Core, Oakville;
- transforming Sherway Gardens, Etobicoke for the Bloor-Danforth subway;

He has also worked further afield in:

- Faubourg Quebec, Montreal;
- San Juan Waterfront, Puerto Rico;
- Ij-Oevers, Amsterdam.

In his spare time Kenneth has developed an extensive academic record, delivered papers to many seminars and conferences, held chair positions on design and redevelopment advisory committees, organised exhibitions and been juror for design awards.

*At UD Forum '94*

Kenneth will be a stimulating "hands on" participant familiar with the needs of both the public and private sectors and the ways in which they can interact.

Central Perth and Swan Water ▼



*UDF '94 Conferences*

DOUBLE HEADER

With the surge of enthusiasm for better urban design sweeping Australia, there are two conferences being supported by Urban Design Forum this year. The first will be held 29th September-1st October on Rottnest Island, near Perth (see articles above). Kenneth Greenberg will be a keynote participant, but as with previous UDF conferences all in attendance will be invited (and encouraged) to participate.

The Adelaide UD enthusiasm will be focused on a full day conference on Friday 21st October with local participants and interstate speakers including Peter Droege, Catherin Bull and Steve Axford. The activities will then kick on for the weekend

at Leonard's Mill, a beautiful venue on the rugged coast south of Adelaide.

Both these conferences are of national significance. Given Paul Keating's enthusiasm for urban design, and more recently, Victoria's Jeff Kennett showing interest in the design of cities, it can only be a matter of time before Federal Leader of the Opposition, Alexander Downer realises he too must make a stand for better urban design (we are waiting!).

So, where ever you live or work, make the effort to be an enthusiastic participant in these conferences. The fees are modest. More details on pages 3 & 4. See you there.

Rottnest Island

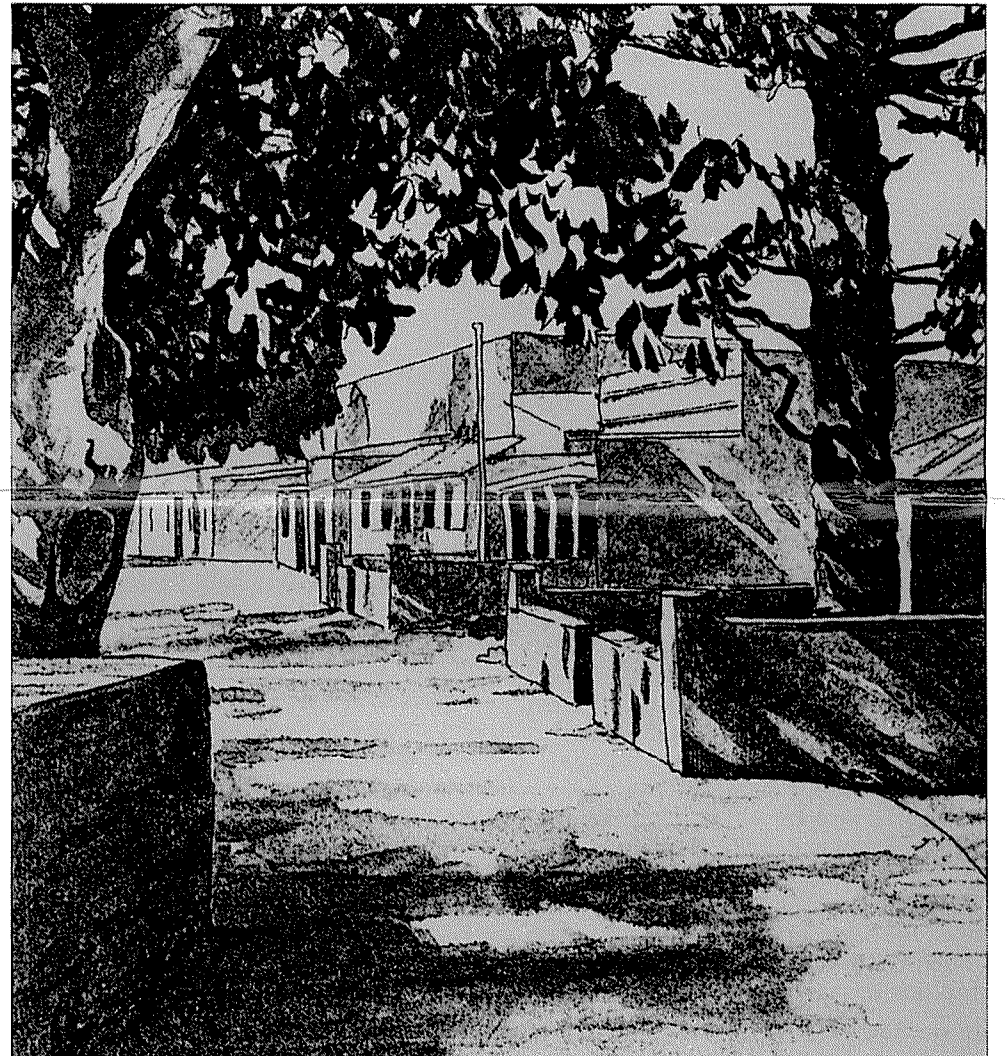
Rottnest Island, 45 minutes by ferry from Fremantle, is one of Western Australia's most popular tourist destinations. It boasts some of the finest beaches and bays in the world together with a unique style of architecture dating back to the 1800's. It has a fascinating history as an Aboriginal penal settlement, a World War I internment camp and a World War II military installation.

There are several heritage trails, including the Vincent Way Heritage Trail. Rottnest Island has one of the finest examples of colonial architecture in WA largely due to the work of one man, Henry Vincent.

Henry Vincent was sent to Rottnest from the mainland Swan River Colony in 1839 to be the Superintendent of the Aboriginal penal colony on Rottnest. After ten years he was transferred to the Fremantle gaol, but returned to Rottnest in 1855 where he remained as Superintendent of the prison until his retirement in 1867.

The Island is an A Class Reserve administered by the Rottnest Island Authority. Accommodation bookings (09) 372 9729; general enquiries (09) 372 9727; facsimile (09) 372 9715. See page 3 for conference details.

Vincent Way Heritage Trail ▼



The Better Cities Program  
In Western Australia

The Better Cities Program is a partnership between the Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, working together with the private sector and the community to make better use of our cities and meet the challenges of the future.

With the support of each of these groups, Better Cities creates urban environments which link people, improve the quality of housing, provide jobs, offer better transport options and deliver long term economic growth and stability. The program also particularly demonstrates how older, disused or under utilised inner city areas can be transformed into vital, renewed areas where people can enjoy all the benefits of city life.

Already significant progress has been made towards revitalising a number of formerly neglected foreshore areas including East Perth, Bunbury, Bayswater Gardens and Ascot Fields. Other projects such as the creation of a new inner city transit system for Perth and the Subiaco Urban Village are well in hand, as is important infrastructure for Fremantle and Stirling.

The outcome of these projects will breathe life back into formerly derelict and forgotten areas and provide innovative solutions to many of our present and future lifestyle needs.

# About ... Perth & Fremantle

... for the uninitiated

Following a long and difficult colonial period, Perth did not display any particular confidence in its future until the 1880's. When confidence was displayed it came in the form of a grand Beaux Arts plan for the foreshore, ahead of the similar grand proposals for Chicago's foreshore redevelopment for the Pre-Columbian Exhibition. This contrasted with the prevailing civic design techniques of the "moving spectator in space" evidenced in the relationship between the former Meteorological Bureau, the Perth foreshore and the nascent Kings Park. In the late 1880's and into the 1890's the WA Gold Boom saw Perth and Fremantle transformed into two notable cities. Both were urbane, street oriented places in the lively Gold Boom styles that marked Federation in WA.

Perth was the focus of rail and tram transport, and the suburbs to which it was connected developed as "transit oriented" communities. The basic city structure was reformed at this time with the focus switching from the river to the railway, freeing the river foreshore to be a visual and recreational resource. The lakes which were filled in along the route of the railway line and the reclamation of the foreshore displaced the last of the aboriginal food supplies from the central city.

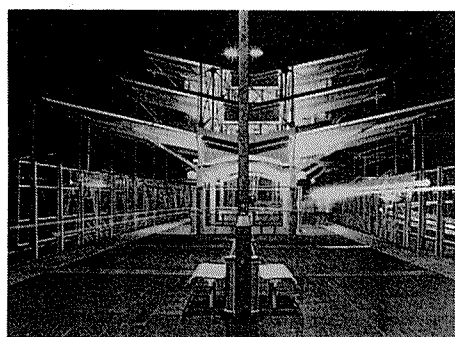
Between the Wars, particularly emerging from the Great Depression, Perth developed its characteristic pattern of arcades through the central block. It also faced issues of repopulating the central city, mixed use development, extension of the financial centre westwards, the difficulties of integrating higher rise buildings within the urban walkup character predominant from the Gold Boom. Neville Cardus referred to Perth as "one of the best kept secrets in the world", when visiting with an English cricket team during the late 1920's.

## Visions for the 21st Century

During the mineral boom of the 1960's and 1970's there was widespread support for a vision of Perth as a "city of the 21st century" with broad streets and high rise buildings of steel and glass. Sir Charles Court was probably the most articulate exponent of this vision. During his term as Premier, the financial district of Perth, central St George's Terrace, was transformed into this vision.

## RAILWAY RENAISSANCE

Forbes and Fitzharding were the architects for the Stirling Railway station. A design award jury said: The previous Labour government successfully electrified the suburban rail system and added a new big leg to serve the northern corridor. The rolling stock and railway stations have set a new standard of service and design.



Now Richard Court is determined to arrest the perceived decline in the fortunes of Central Perth, and to make it a capital worthy of being Australia's stepping stone into Asia. The Premier has announced a vision for Central Perth markedly different from that of his father's time. It would conserve heritage precincts, enhance the major streets and spaces, and draw new activity back into the increasingly monocultured city, traumatised by the real estate collapse of 1989-1990. The current situation has very clear parallels with the issues faced in Central Perth following the Great Depression.

## Fremantle - port city

Celebrated by Architectural Review, a decade ago, as one of the "great port" cities of the world Fremantle is located on a promontory between the river and the ocean, the spine of which is defined by the High Street axis, running from the Round House past the Town Hall. A cross axis stretches from the railway station, adjacent to the port, across High Street and bends into South Terrace (now "cappuccino strip"). Fremantle has a layout of intersecting grids, enriched by a notable ensemble of pattern book development based on Palladian design principles, and some Victorian eccentricities.

Fremantle remained physically separate from Perth, with its distinct character, role and community. With the decline in shipping, particularly for immigration, Fremantle entered a period of stagnation. This spared Fremantle most of the redevelopment pressures of the 1960's and 1970's. With the advent of multi-culturalism (in practice before it became policy) Fremantle became the home of al fresco activity during the early 1980's. During the America's Cup, Fremantle became the entertainment focus for the region. A role which it has continued to consolidate and expand into conferencing and tourism. Fremantle has also led the way in inner city living and the application of performance driven policy enabling negotiation of appropriate development outcomes. Recycling of old and heritage places, infill development and inner city living have all been successfully undertaken in Fremantle.

This new rail system together with the supporting bus system has provided major opportunities for restructuring of the Perth region. This is demonstrated in the evident potential in the sub-regional centres of Joondalup, Midland, Fremantle and Armadale.



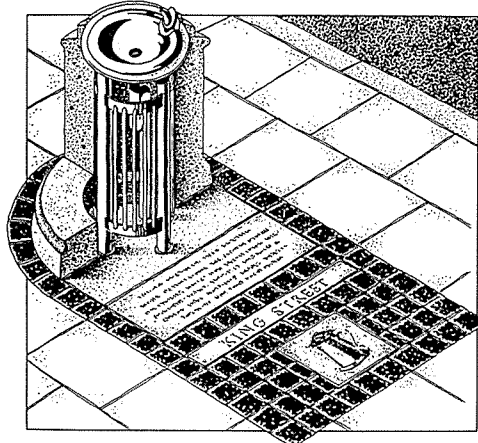
## CENTRAL PERTH

The following range of projects provides an overview of the City of Perth's urban design activities.

### CENTRAL AREA POLICIES REVIEW

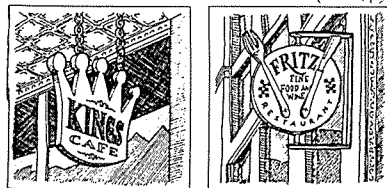
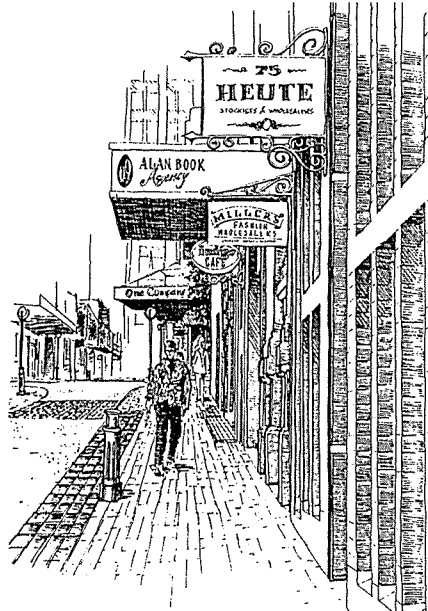
This review, jointly carried out in 1993 by the State Department of Planning and Urban Development and the City of Perth, provides a planning framework for the central city. The Review is still out for public comment but already provides the basis for two current exercises; a review of the City Planning Scheme and preparation of a "Vision for Perth" - master plan of implementable public projects for the next five years.

### PUBLIC SPACES AND PUBLIC LIFE



Following the successful "City Challenge" Conference held in Perth in 1992 the State Government and the City of Perth invited Danish Urban Designer Jan Gehl to carry out a study of public spaces in the central city. Many of its recommendations, such as the need to design a special range of street furniture, are already being taken up and will continue to be implemented as part of the "Vision for Perth".

### KING STREET HERITAGE PRECINCT



King Street is a narrow inner city street that for many years has been the centre for the city's rag trade. The rag trade is slowly moving out, however the precinct still contains the city's most cohesive collection of low rise turn of the century commercial buildings. Joining the fashion houses and boutiques are galleries, cafes and restaurants, studios, specialty retail and residential.

Not too many years ago the street and its buildings were under threat from a road widening by law. Recognition of the precinct's heritage importance saw the City Council revoke the road widening in 1987 and embark on an extensive pro-

gramme of streetscape improvements. Development controls gave protection to the precinct's buildings and design and signage guidelines and colour schemes prepared by the Council continue to be implemented by the precinct's property owners.

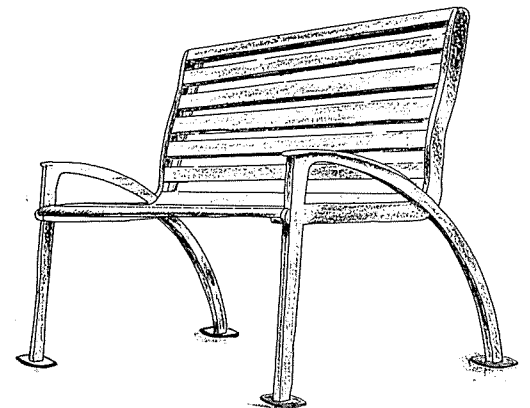
### NORTHBRIDGE

Northbridge is often acknowledged as one of the most attractive and successful entertainment and nightlife districts in Australia. The Council has been progressively carrying out streetscape enhancement works since the mid 80's. During this upgrading process it became apparent that other actions needed to be taken to sustain the Northbridge "environment". A joint Council/State study resulted in design guidelines; and current amendments to the City Planning Scheme significantly limit building heights in the precinct. The City Council's work in Northbridge received the Western Australian Planning Institute's Award for Excellence in 1993.

### LOCAL TOWN CENTRES

Renewed interest in these centres as community and social foci for the city's fringe residential districts encouraged the City Council to carry out a programme of streetscape, landscape and other improvements to these areas. The centres are typical traditional strip shopping areas located on the main roads into the city. Current projects include the Mount Lawley Centre (with paving and furniture designs reinforcing the area's art deco character), Victoria Park (a country town in the city) and West Perth (which used to be one of the city's "grand" residential areas).

### PUBLIC ART



Opportunities to reinforce an area's particular character are significantly enhanced through public art. The art, interwoven into the paving and street furniture, can tell all sorts of stories about the place's past and present. It can also add a touch of fun and whimsy; something that is often lacking in our lives today. All of the City's streetscape projects now include an artist and funding for public art. The art component of the East Victoria Park project received a Western Australian Civic Design Award in 1993.

### RESTRUCTURING THE CITY COUNCIL

The State Government has split the City of Perth into a Capital City of Perth and three new suburban Towns - Cambridge, Shepperton and Vincent. The Premier in announcing the reorganisation said that the "new Capital City administration will work with State Government to transform our beautiful City of Perth into one of the great capitals of the world".

For further information about these projects contact Ian James, Manager - Urban Design, City of Perth, 141 St Georges Terrace, PERTH WA, ph (09) 265 3333, fax (09) 265 3128.



# Kings Park and Botanic Garden Centennial Enhancement Project

Geoff Hawkins

Kings Park is an "icon" of Western Australia. Located approximately 1.5 km from the city centre, it provides spectacular views over the city and Swan River. Being an area of approximately 400 ha, two thirds of which is natural bushland, there are few places in the world where such a large tract of natural bushland exist in the heart of a large city. It is the State's most visited tourist attraction serving an estimated five million visits a year.

It is estimated that about 12,000 species of flowering plants are found in Western Australia, of which only 8,500 have been scientifically described. More than 75 per cent of these are not found anywhere else in the world, and many are under threat of extinction. Less well known, but of growing importance is the Park's internationally recognised scientific research on plants, and its role in propagating, displaying and helping conserve one of the world's richest floras.

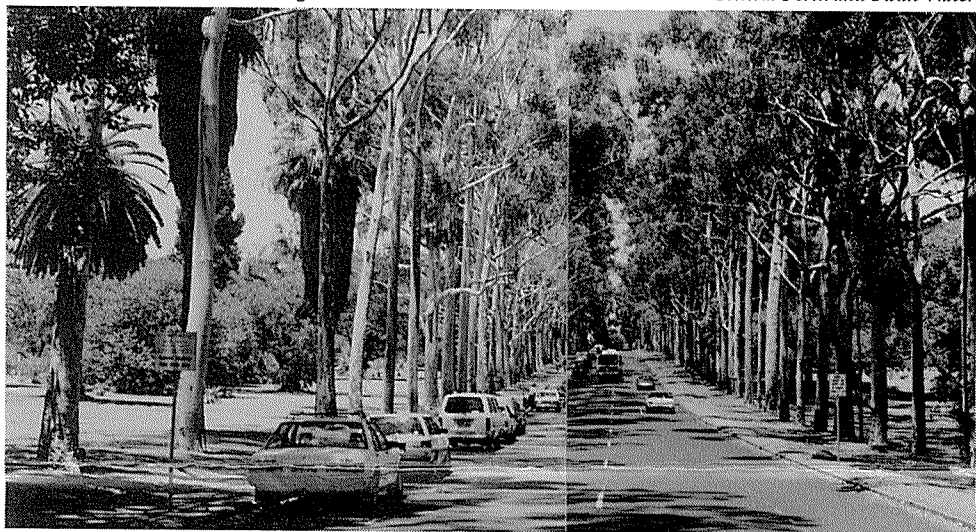
Next year is the centenary of the Kings Park Board. To mark this significant event

and to provide the community the level of service it expects into the 21st century, the Board has embarked upon the "Kings Park and Botanic Garden Centennial Enhancement Project".

The Enhancement Project will formulate plans and undertake works which will establish the vision and strategy for the developed area of the Park. It incorporates the concept of a "Discovery Centre" which focuses on the inextricable relationships between people and plants and will provide a major public information, research and conservation facility without parallel in the southern hemisphere.

The Building Management Authority is currently selecting a multi-disciplinary consortia to formulate the Framework Plan for the Park's developed area and the Botanic Garden Plan, along with the design and implementation of Stage 1 works.

Central Perth and Swan Water ▼



## Fremantle Prison

Conservation and Future Use

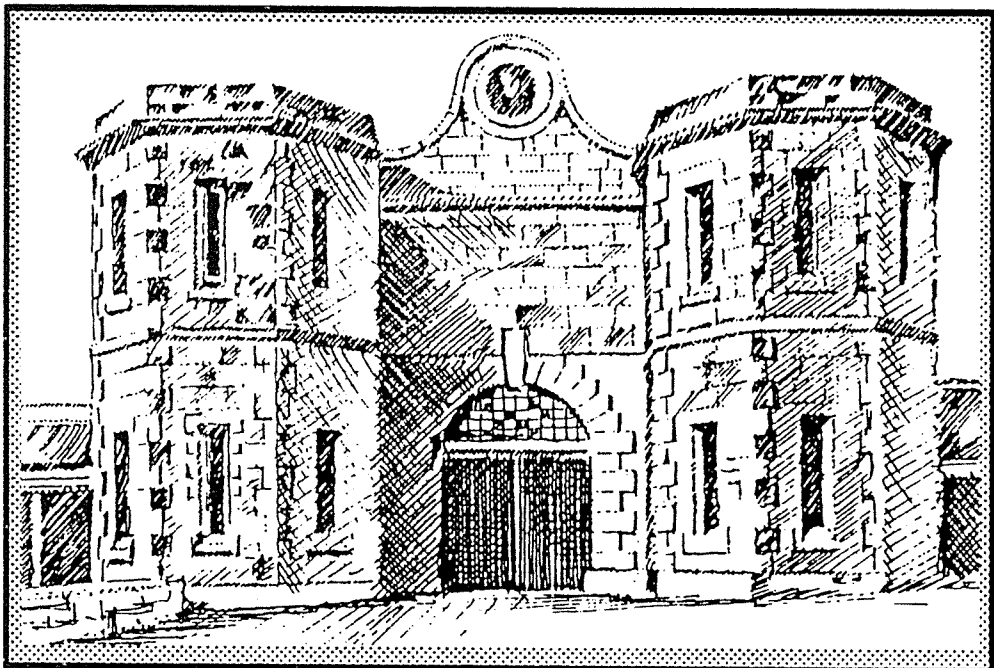
David Heaver

With the decommissioning of the Old Fremantle Prison in November 1991 and the vesting of the property with the Minister for Works, the opportunity was presented to conserve and interpret the prison precinct while attracting new uses to the site and integrating it into the physical, economic social environment of the City of Fremantle.

Within the wider precinct, the sale to Homeswest of the Warden's cottages in Henderson and Holdsworth Streets, enabled the cottages to be refurbished and

additional houses built to create a "hard" edge to the western side of Parry Street. On the prison site itself, most of the Terrace buildings outside the perimeter have been refurbished for residential and office accommodation. Within the walls, TAFE Art Studios, a Children's Literature Centre and a major tourist operation have been established. A Backpackers hostel, a function facility, a Business Incubator Centre and a major museum are planned.

The site is aiming for economic self sufficiency within the next 5 to 10 years.



▲ Fremantle Gaol 1855

## URBAN DESIGN FORUM 94

THURSDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER - SATURDAY 1ST OCTOBER NATIONAL CONFERENCE, ROTTNESST ISLAND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Resurgence of the City

Forum '94 builds on the traditions of previous Forums in Broken Hill and Sydney by providing an opportunity in relaxed surroundings to hear from and speak with others concerned with urban design.

Kenneth Greenberg, the former Principal Urban Designer for the City of Toronto, Canada and now Director of Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd, will be a keynote participant.

Other invited participants include representatives from:

- Prime Minister's Urban Design Taskforce
- Better Cities Programme
- WA State Government
- City of Perth

The State and City are expected to announce a number of 'Grand Projects' for central Perth as part of a long term strategy for its revitalisation.

Representatives from each state will provide a brief overview of urban design

activities in their state. A 'show and tell' session and informal get-togethers will enable all attendees to be involved.

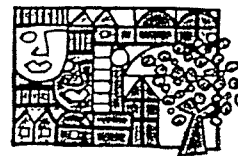
The venue is a former army barracks. Its heritage, architecture and location on Thompson Bay provides an appropriate setting and is within easy access by foot, bicycle or bus to the main settlement about 1 km away.

The Forum is timed to coincide with school holidays and cheap return flights from the eastern states (it is AFL grand final weekend). You can also see WA's wildflowers and collect new vintages from the South-West, the Great Southern and the Swan Valley.

EARLY REGISTRATION AND BOOKING OF TRAVEL IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.

For more information and registration form contact: HP & A 417 ROKEBY ROAD, SUBIACO WA 6008 PH (09) 388 2810 FAX (09) 388 2817

SPONSORED BY "Better Cities"



Better Cities

## Perth Cultural Centre

The Perth Cultural Centre forms the knuckle of the main pedestrian route linking central Perth with the major entertainment precinct of Northbridge.

The Centre has its origins with the reuse of the original Perth Goal to house the Colony's Museum in 1889. Over the years other of the State's major cultural institutions - Museum, Library, Art Gallery and Institute of Contemporary Arts - have been added.

Even though a number of the buildings received architectural awards, the treat-

ment of the public spaces, the lack of activity and interest combined with poor environmental conditions cause people not to stop and enjoy one of Perth's major public places.

A recent study has identified opportunities to rectify the situation and a strategy involving joint public and private development will soon provide a living "heart" for the Centre and reinstate its perimeter streetscapes more in character with Northbridge.

Scope for improving public spaces ▼



## What's happening in Sydney?

After a 5 month hiatus the Sydney "chapter" of the UDF met to catch up on what really is happening in Sydney. Anyone who has been following recent headlines can be forgiven for assuming that the ongoing Cahill Expressway, Pymont and Casino debates are the focus of current urban design. It is certainly the vogue to have a "Vision" for Sydney, and this "Vision" must meet three basic criteria: 1. it must be controversial. 2. it must headline in at least one early edition newspaper, and quote at least one leading architect and 3. it must have a budget that would feed a third world nation for the next ten years. There is no shortage of these "Visions", nor people willing to champion these spectacular projects.

While the abovementioned projects are undoubtedly the most heralded, there is another quieter revolution occurring that is being championed by local government, promoting the smaller less salubrious projects that are in danger of being lost in the rush for gold and glory.

All over greater Sydney regional groups such as IMROC and SHOREROC are gathering to discuss the best ways to tackle community projects. COLLABORATION (the key to successful UD) is occurring. Local government is not only recognising what successful UD has to offer, they are incorporating these principles in planning and practise. Transport structure, landuse interaction, community involvement are no longer just buzz words. Any number of projects are targetted for completion by 2000. Olympic Projects, perhaps Refederation projects, the title or funding category is of no consequence because really it is simply standard "planning", knowing where you are going and what your ETA is. The added bonus is knowing what your neighbour is doing. The UDF is working on ways to help this process.

This recent UDF meeting had 15 attendees and was very energetic. If you missed out fax UDF (02) 267 5301 to get on the list.

# Jerrabomberra Valley

Jan Martin

to be developed at all then it must be done intensely in order to reduce vehicle travel and save other arable land elsewhere.

The judges, noting the diversity of ideas, recommended that a catalogue be compiled from the proposals itemising:

- 1) Technical and planning response to such issues as water catchment, public and private transport, energy use, nurturing bio-diversity, climate change, waste as a resource and building materials; and
- 2) Processes which allow community involvement and self-government, ongoing evaluation, and change in response to unforeseen developments and new or better information.

The winning team included, Alan Rodger, Jan Schapper, Dr Darko Radovic, Karen Gall, the Buchan group, Ove Arup, Melbourne Water and Silvertons.

### Urban Villages

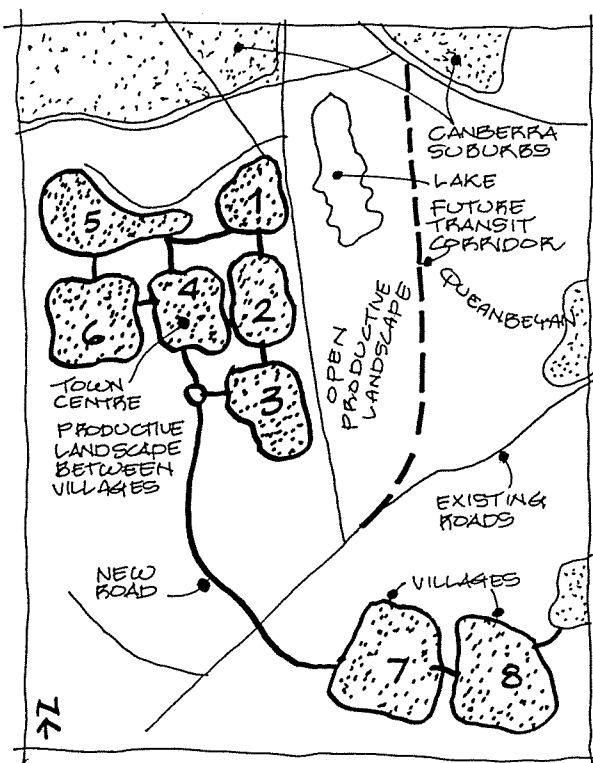
Their proposal envisages a series of eight "Urban Villages" concentrated in areas which are less naturally productive, while intensive agricultural use is made of the

The entries in this OECD-backed national ideas competition for ecologically sustainable development are on show in Canberra. The \$50,000 prize monies were distributed early in August.

Winners were a University of Melbourne team lead by Professor Alan Rodger, second place went to an entry from "MBA Land" and "Creating Place", a team with which your correspondent confesses a substantial involvement, and third was a Canberra based group called "Synectics".

### Lots of Ideas

The organisers got their main wish; lots of ideas about more sustainable development. They got ideas with a lot of diversity and they got some strong common themes. Population capacity ranged widely. A few entrants, asserting that any new urban development is intrinsically unsustainable, nominated a zero population. At the other end of the scale were populations of 70 - 80,000. These were from entrants who believe that if an area is



◀ Winning Entry: (Drawing prepared by and for UDF)

Extract: the second placed entry Figureground of 4 of the 20 "10 minute towns" ▶



# Adelaide Conference on Urban Design

"Breaking the Boundaries; Collaborative Practice & Urban Design"

21st October - Adelaide Town Hall

A one day conference to be held at Adelaide Town Hall which will explore the value and impact of design on cultural, economic and physical aspects of our environment. The importance of interdisciplinary practice, including the arts and new partnerships between government and the private sector will be considered as vital elements of successful urban design.

A range of local speakers will be joined by several interstate presenters. Those invited include, Professor Peter Droegge; University of Sydney, Dr Catherin Bull; NSW Land and Environment Court and Steve Axford; Victorian Department of Planning and Development.

Full registration \$85.00  
Concessions \$60.00

22nd - 23rd October National Urban Design Forum "Governments and Urban Design; Meddlers or Key Players"

"Governments and Urban Design; Meddlers or Key Players"

21st October - Adelaide Town Hall

Two day residential Forum will include a review of the City of Adelaide and State Urban Design Advisory Panels. The venue for the weekend is Leonards Mill at Second Valley a small town located on the beautiful and rugged coast south of Adelaide.

Two day UDF registration including accommodation and food \$250.00.

The conference programme is a partnership between:  
The Collaborations Reference Group, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Crafts Council of SA, Urban Design Unit, Department of Housing and Urban Development, City of Adelaide, Local Government Association, Community Arts Network and the Urban Design Forum.

Form more details contact:  
Sue Rosenthal Conference Co-ordinator  
20 Discombe Road WOODSIDE SA  
Phone + Fax (08) 389 7196

### Adaptability Challenge

The third thread, perhaps the most challenging, is the importance of adaptability and complexity. As Alan Rodger's team put it "Sustainability will not be found through a reduction of uncertainty. Rather it will be achieved through continuing change and development ... Sustainability is therefore to be seen not as an end point but rather as a direction accompanied by a set of guiding principles. It is a carefully chosen journey rather than a destination."

The second team likewise based their proposals on "underlying order, surface complexity" and, using the writings of "post chaos theorists" such as John Holland, assert that it is only a continually evolving system that can be self sustaining.

Both first and second place teams confess therefore, not surprisingly, that having to draw something which looks like an end solution was a bit of a problem!

The competition is part of a broader case study on ecologically sustainable development ideas. These will be developed in a national seminar in September in Canberra and subsequently presented to the "Ecological City Workshop" in Brisbane in October. For further information contact Brian Binning (N.C.P.A.) (06) 271 2888.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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