

URBAN DESIGN IN AUSTRALIA

The report and work of the Prime Minister's Task Force

With the publication of "Urban Design in Australia" the work of the Prime Minister's Task Force is completed.

The Task Force comprised eleven members of the architectural, design, planning and related professions from government academia and the private sector around Australia. The Task Force report was produced as a voluntary effort of members without a secretariat or professional staff. The report was organised and written by members over a twelve month period. We met on around ten occasions to develop the structure and content of the report and to formulate and debate the conclusions and recommendations.

Lively Debate

Meetings were characterised initially by lively debate on urban design as the differing backgrounds, views and experiences of members were expressed, but subsequently evolved towards a more considered and directed response to the terms of reference we had been given.

The Task Force members showed strong commitment and enthusiasm for the task that we had taken on. We felt impressed by the strength of community expectation which emerged over the year about the work of the Task Force.

The report is a primer, just a beginning. The first recommendation - to establish a National Urban Design Review - is put forward to encourage further exploration of the many issues just touched on in our report, and to capitalise on the keen interest

displayed in Australia's urban design shown by such a diverse range of people. Such a Review would also continue to stimulate the debate on how, what, when, where and why urban design can contribute to improving the economic, environmental and social conditions of Australian cities and towns.

The Prime Minister launched the report at the OECD conference "Cities and the Global Economy" in Melbourne in late November. Around 1000 copies of the report were distributed at the launch. Additional copies are now being distributed to AGPS bookshops where they should be for sale before Christmas.

The report is now with the Prime Minister for his consideration.

It is worth noting that the UK Department of the Environment recently published a somewhat comparable report entitled "Quality in Town & Country". A contract has subsequently been let to Oxford's Joint Centre for Urban Design (including UDF contributor Paul Murrain) to provide an implementation strategy for that report. Whether that report had its origins in Prince Charles' enthusiastic meeting with the Task Force in January is unclear!

Wendy Morris

(Wendy Morris was a member of the Urban Design Task Force)

*Responses to "Urban Design in Australia" from UDF correspondents across the country are featured on page 2 and 3.

URBAN DESIGN FORUM

ISSUE No.28

December 1994



▲ Southbank - urban design in Melbourne

reflections on a brief but invigorating visit to:

OZ

My first trip to Australia comprised in total 2 days in Sydney, 5 days in Perth and vicinity, and two days at the *Urban Design Forum 94* on Rottnest Island. Needless to say it is hazardous in the extreme to attempt to draw any significant conclusions from such a compressed and selective visit. Since I have been asked to provide some indication of my impressions, I will try to comply with the request, but I must beg your indulgence for my inevitable errors or oversimplifications.

The first thing I would like to say to the organisers of the Forum and all those I had the pleasure to meet and exchange views with is to express my heartfelt thanks for your very gracious hospitality and the opportunity to visit parts of your extraordinarily beautiful and evocative country.

I am tempted first of all to fall back on that overworked truism about travel illuminating as much the place left as the place visited. In this particular instance it works for I saw another version, somewhat altered, of many characteristics of my own country.

Similarities With Canada

As the great white north has come to stand for Canada, the image of Australia abroad is often the Outback although we are both highly urbanised societies. In the great art galleries of both our countries one finds very few urban scenes until quite recently. (In preparation for my visit my daughter took me to see *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert!*)

We occupy vast territories, with relatively small populations and a powerful mythology of the land. We share a common European heritage and similar chronologies of settlement. Our cities initially draw upon and adapted the same urban typologies to suit local climate and

available materials. In both cases, we tried very hard at first to recreate the European setting by ignoring or suppressing the local flora and fauna.

And the parallels still continue. We both have unresolved issues with native or aboriginal peoples which weigh heavily on the national psyche. We are both experiencing new migration which is altering the face of our populations, our diets, our attitudes to street life and our future economic alliances and trading patterns. Though you are at a much greater distance we are both bombarded with American culture and lifestyle and are forced to struggle to assert our distinctive cultural identities.

The somewhat unexpected impression I got is that in some curious way we have come to resemble each other more than either of us now resemble our European antecedents or the pervasive American paradigm. With particular reference to cities I sense the recent emergence of a dynamic and largely positive form of urban life in both countries which is loose and relaxed, active, vital, and expressive. I also of course note lots of similar problems and inheritance of regulations, standards, and practices in new urban areas all based on over-accommodating the automobile and in particular the urgent need for an overview of city and regions.

Some Specific Comments

I will risk a few specific comments about the places I saw:

Sydney

- The "Rocks" was allowed to specialise far too much on tourism at the expense of the staples of daily life.

- Circular Quay has a very particular charm.

- The Botanic Gardens are a splendid urban park.

- Downtown shopping on Pitt and George Streets with the great open arcades have a rare quality and liveliness.

- The inner city suburbs like Paddington and Kings Cross are very appealing places and useful models of urban form and still appropriate building types.

- Darling Harbour with its high-tech imagery, multiplicity of new facilities and monorail, exhibits a curious kind of universal placelessness.

Perth

- The large-grained grid in the core, the Central Railway Station, with its square and the adjacent shopping arcades cutting through the long long blocks - have very interesting texture and vitality.

- Is there an opportunity to boldly repair previous errors in the next generation of work on the Cultural Centre block and link it to Northbridge?

- King's Park - One of the world's great urban parks and an extremely valuable ecological resource.

- King Street is a lovely example of subtle and sophisticated new streetscape work and design guidance.

- Too many one way streets!

- The new C.A.T.S. (bus system) has great potential as a catalyst for urban regeneration.

- The East Perth project and its "excavation" of Claise Brook held great promise.

Fremantle

- a gem, it is an intact piece of historic urban fabric. Its redevelopment appears to be overseen with great skill and care.

Rottnest Island

- is an extraordinary resource. Can its touristic exploitation be kept in bounds?

Joondalup Centre

- the most perplexing thing I saw. Some of the public space and streetscape work was excellent, but its vastly exaggerated scale and disconnectedness from the urban fabric are reminiscent of the worst miscalculations of new town planning. (Correction - The most perplexing thing I saw was really the Australian Rules Football Match between the Eagles and the Cats!).

The Urban Design Forum was itself an excellent event, small but dedicated. An encouraging example for us. It is extremely valuable to foster the kind of sharing and cross-fertilisation of ideas and projects which took place there. In a very important sense, the making of cities is becoming more intentionally physical and tangible again. And this is the group of people who can do it. I thank you once again for the opportunity to have spent some time with you.

Ken Greenberg is a principle of Berridge, Lewinsberg, Greenberg in Toronto, and was keynote speaker at Urban Design Forum '94 on Rottnest Island.

We have all been anxiously awaiting this report which has been slowly evolving for almost a year. The Prime Minister's charter to "review the quality of urban design in Australia and make recommendations for improvement," had many people involved with the design of Australian cities looking forward to the Task Force recommendations.

UDF has canvassed a range of brief individual responses from senior practitioners around Australia. Hopefully this will be just the beginning of the debate and UDF, as Australia's first specialised urban design newsletter will have an important role to play in extending the discussion. Lets hear from more readers in our next edition.

My first reaction to the document is to wonder how serious the whole exercise has been. Firstly the Task Force is quite a diverse and dispersed group contributing their time on a voluntary basis. The document is slim and lacks detail in its analysis and recommendations.

Case studies are limited to Australian examples so we don't get any indication of where we sit in a world urban design context. Those examples included are quite well selected for their relevance but they are also quite brief and tend to read a little like publicity brochures. As a Melburnian I am well aware of the limited impact of the Western Suburbs Action Program, the ugly

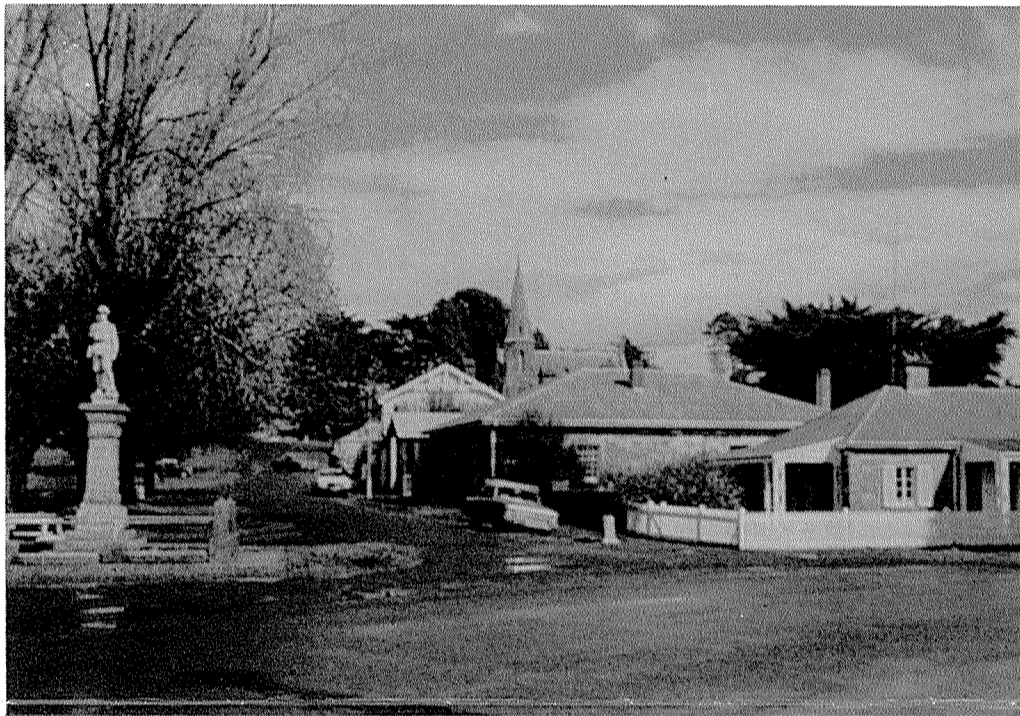
aspects of the Southbank development and the failures of M.C.C. with some of its urban controls and projects, (Melbourne City Square for example) though many of its achievements are admirable and good models. Perhaps we should also have some case studies on bad examples of urban design with critique on how they might be avoided in the future.

The Task Force report is all embracing with recommendations extending beyond existing large cities to aboriginal settlements, coastal towns and rural towns and regional planning. Government at all levels, the development industry and the education industry are all encompassed by

the recommendations. Perhaps this is to be expected from a committee of this nature and this charter. One wonders how the Prime Minister is going to prioritise and act on these recommendations.

The actions that follow in 1995 will be the big test of this Task Force Report and the Prime Minister's commitment to good urban design. We should all be pleased that this start has been made and hopeful that some actions and funding follow the words.

Bruce Echberg
Urban Designer in private practice
Melbourne



▲ Ross Township - Tasmania

The Challenge of a Life in Urban Design

Jan Martin Comments from Canberra....

The joy and the challenge of a life in urban design is its synoptic nature. Good urban designers make connections! Therefore, in the age of specialists, it is a calling which carries a big responsibility; to draw things together and thus improve the public realm. This truth permeates the Prime Minister's task force report and explains its stress on good education and on mechanisms which cut across functional divisions.

"(Architects and planners) drifted apart leaving the area of urban design largely abandoned, a desert criss-crossed by other highly specialised disciplines. Today there is an emerging interest to reconnect."

The report is concise and solid; full of hard comment and practical recommendations. I like its emphasis on flexibility ("controls should facilitate not inhibit good design") on outcomes, on organisational change. It has many recipes; better training, a national Urban Design Review (hey, a job for UDF!?) a national urban design prize, incentive-based guidelines, many others.

Here in Canberra there have been some wry comments about the National Capital Planning Authority being touted as a sort of national urban design conscience. In fact the Authority is already in the field as an urban design consultancy. Canberra, the planning paradigm, also gets an inferential mention when large monolithic development authorities are discussed. "They deliver environments frequently

criticised as too sterile, exclusive, mono-functional ..."

Yes, well, hurtful things like that are said about Canberra. Though whether the *planning* of Canberra has had much to do with *urban design* as currently defined, is moot. Ironically, in moving to pluralism and consultation the ACT has just made a decision which - in response to resident concern - will slow the ability for its inner areas to change, to achieve the lively diversity this report expresses.

Some Untested Assertions

I wouldn't agree with every word in the document. It repeats some untested assertions. In contrast I would look for greater emphasis on evaluation and monitoring. It proposes more competitions in urban design which would work against inclusionary, community-based solutions.

But I carp, for this is a strong document. Currently its biggest strength is that the PM backs it. This gives a momentum which we can all help to maintain. When UK architects rounded on Prince Charles for venturing into their domain, the late (great) Francis Tibbalds and his colleagues, seizing the opportunity, fed the Prince good lines and sound concepts. Well maybe we have our prince. Certainly this report has good lines. It could lead to exciting times and concrete benefits, but that's up to all of us.

Jan Martin
Urban Designer in Private Practice

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR GORDON HOLDEN COMMENTS FROM QUEENSLAND

A flip through the headings and sub-headings of the document leaves one with the impression that the Task Force has provided a report of comprehensive scope. For this they are to be congratulated. My commentary will focus on a central matter, that of linked education and research, although there are many other issues worthy of discussion.

The report rightly highlights the significance of urban design education for the Nation. The need for extensive educational programs cannot be overemphasised. A 1992 study* of urban design practitioners in Australia concluded that despite the high percentage of urban designers with advanced qualifications, overall their knowledge and methods of practice remains immature relative to available knowledge. When we consider that the survey was targeted at 'specialists', this finding is alarming. What is even more alarming is that there are considerably more people actually involved in urban design decision making than surveyed who have no, or at best very little, education in the field.

Not Just "more beautiful"

The Prime Minister has placed urban design on the National agenda in order to improve our cities, not simply to make them more beautiful but to enrich their livability, equitability and sustainability. This is a huge undertaking which requires considerably higher levels of knowledge and skills than available at the moment. The shortfall can be made up through research and education, as the report suggests by a range of means including: 'mid-career' courses; 'open-learning' packages; 'disseminated research'; undergraduate professional education; and 'improved theory and criticism'. Educational institutions and the professions can interact with Government to bring much of this about, however not without appropriate funding. As it stands the urban design courses in Australia can hardly retain financial viability, let alone develop and nurture the critical mass of people necessary to impact on practice, research and education.

The need to increase funding for education and research would appear to be the critical underpinning element required for a quality urban design activity in Australia. All of the other recommendations would likely result in 'flashes in the pan' unless there is development of expertise to sustain the process of improvement. A few institutions saw the need for urban design education and research some years ago and 'invested' resources in order to establish the

necessary foundations by way of 'boutique' courses. However they have all struggled because the existing Government education funding formula is inadequate for relatively small units. I'm surprised that the report did not recognise this endemic problem and suggest ways to address it. Perhaps 'special' funding should be provided for priority programs.

A few other points

- *Design Workshops* a sound process!
- *Design Review Panels* caution! - many problems with this in the USA. Tends to overemphasise aesthetics at the expense of workability and comfort.
- *National Urban Design Research Network* ... a great idea!
- *Competitions* caution! - unlike buildings, the 'client' for most urban design is the wider community. To be responsive, the design-brief design-development needs to involve many people. This is unsuitable for competitions except to appoint a designer not choose a design.
- *Design Codes & Guidelines* absolutely necessary if urban design is going to achieve its potential and the expectations for a quality outcome. Thorough analysis, explicit underpinning and formalised performance testing is required.
- *Australia Prize for Urban Design* a good idea to generate community awareness but it received unbalanced attention in the document.
- *National Capital Planning Authority to manage Commonwealth Government involvement in Urban Design* A poor idea! Don't burden a bright new initiative with potentially-prejudicial baggage.
- *Governments to lead by good example* If only!!! Credibility rests on this.
- *Urban Design to receive ARC recognition and 'Centre' status* A positive way to accelerate action in the area. A single centre should be avoided. Urban design must be encouraged in all States.

The report is a good read for the 'converted'. We should encourage the Commonwealth Government to take action.

*Holden G. (1992)
Urban Design in Australia - A Study of the Education and Activities of the People involved
QUT Working Paper

DROEGE ON THE PM'S **TASK FORCE**

At the Adelaide conference, Professor Peter Droege spoke with passion and a striking depth of understanding about the work of the Prime Minister's Task Force on Urban Design. Separation of design disciplines he said had led to a breaking up of consideration of the city as an organic whole with unsatisfactory results. A new organic approach would see city design in its most ambitious form. Universal general principles of quality of life would be interpreted locally to provide the basis of an environmental approach to city planning and design. Design of cities as economic engines of post modern societies bridges the professions. Links to history are important in city design but areas must be opened for adaptation.

Seven major urban design interests were identified by Professor Droege: capital cities, regional centres rural towns, residential suburbs, coastal development, aboriginal settlements, infrastructure networks.

A new millennium programme to purchase development rights for coastal areas may

Breaking the Boundaries

Collaborative Practice and Urban Design

As a precursor to the 4th National UDF conference on the role of government and urban design, a one day conference was held at the Adelaide Town Hall, courtesy of the Right Honourable Henry Ninio, Lord Mayor, who enthusiastically welcomed the assembled delegates. Making up the audience were a wide range of design, arts and planning professionals from SA, WA, ACT and Victoria.

In his key note address Professor Peter Droege provided a valuable overview of urban design issues from the perspective of his involvement as part of the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force. A Melbourne focused presentation from Steve Axford and Amanda Millis from the Victorian Urban Design Unit, demonstrated through several current projects, the importance of strategic planning in addressing the urban design needs of a major metropolitan area.

A Key Role For Artists

Arts activity in SA came to the fore with a presentation from Winnie Pelz, CEO of the SA Department of Arts and Cultural Development. The slides showed a wide range of projects supported by the Department's Art for Public Places programme over the last few years, and indicated that the new Liberal government will continue with this program.

The reality of making it all happen from the perspective of the development sector was forcefully brought home by a spirited paper by Fergus Simpson, Managing Director of Kinsmen P/L. Simpson's hypothetical proposition centred around a clearer understanding of the interlinked quality of life and economic development components of the urban environment and mechanisms 'to make it happen'.

The next two speakers, Adrian Pilton, Director of Denton Corker Marshall and Richard Brecknock, Consulting Artist from Adelaide, brought a private practice perspective to the debate. Pilton discussed recent urban design activity in Sydney and raised the need for clearer agendas from city and state. Brecknock proposed a range of opportunities for artists to contribute as important professionals in urban design projects, while urging that people do not get carried away with the idealism of collaboration.

Finally, the last two speakers, City of Adelaide Alderman Jane Rann and artist

be an important and controversial recommendation of the Task Force.

Of the many other aspects discussed, more urban design research stood out as a priority. Professor Droege proposed a national urban design research network, working across the disciplines, creating a shared language and shared knowledge in a post-post modern society where fragmented philosophies seek common ground. The city will no longer be viewed as machine parts.

Linkages to ecological sustainability must be established. Codes should be reinterpreted to become pro-active devices. Emphasis on a strategic approach would see a distinction between policy development and development control.

Finally, a call for leadership by example from all levels of Government through management of assets, incentives and restructuring organisations towards quality outcomes.

and School of Art lecturer Ann Newmarch, focused on the role of elected members and the potential for input from the community. Alderman Rann called for greater political commitment to the valuing of urban design and stressed the importance for better strategic planning of projects for the good of the city. Newmarch ended the conference papers with a very human view of urban environments with a review of community art projects undertaken in the City of Prospect.

Out of the final workshop sessions came a number of recommendations; the main ones being; the need for effective long term financial and political visions for development - need for improved co-operation between government departments and levels of government - to raise the communities awareness of the value of good design - to raise the level of debate on urban design issues.

The Next Steps

The final sessions on Sunday morning were devoted to developing an agenda of ongoing actions in three key areas:

Education priorities for action include assessment of the RAlA Built Environment Program for schools, a study of international models (Italy, Spain, Denmark) for school curriculum material and an issue of Urban Design Forum devoted to education for both professionals and the community.

Two areas of **research** were identified for follow up. Approaches are to be made to AIUS, AHURI and at a political level to ascertain the level of support for the concept of design as research. Secondly the State Urban Design Unit in South Australia has undertaken to carry out a literature search of research providing evidence of the tangible benefits of good urban design practice, for use in marketing urban design to local government and the community.

With regard to **debate and communications**, a network was established to prepare this response to the findings of the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force and a commitment given to enhancing this UDF broadsheet as a prime clearing house for urban design issues. A number of topics were identified for early publication including cross-discipline education. The use of Internet to facilitate information was also supported.

Comment from South Australia

At the recent design conferences in Adelaide delegates looking at opportunities to promote urban design were confronted with the "what is it" question by the Task Force. Their answers like those of the Task Force, reflected the complexity of the subject and the consequent difficulty of 'selling' a concept which is easily understood by the community.

The Report has a number of obvious merits: it raises the political profile of the subject, it provides a summary of the many factors affecting the development and redevelopment of Australian Cities and it suggests some ways forward including a stronger role for the Commonwealth, (not least in better management of its own assets). Commonwealth intervention may of course raise the hackles of state governments, particularly in view of the recommendation for increased funding for local government. The Prime Ministers personal interest in the subject will have its political downside too, but history shows the importance to cities of patronage at the highest level.

In South Australia, the recently formed Urban Design Unit and State Urban Design Advisory Panel, while attending to a limited development control role, have concentrated on developing a strategic action plan which reflects many of the issues in the Task Force's recommendations, including city centre policy, local government reform and support, research, and

URBAN DESIGN IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Western Australian Government recently took a significant step in recognising the value of urban design with the announcement of its 'Perth A Place for People' - a program for "the beautification and revitalisation of the city of Perth". The program identifies a number of initiatives ranging from:

- Eastern Gateway - Starting at the Victoria Park end of the Causeway, the eastern gateway to the City will be enhanced to provide landscape excellence;

- The Civic Domain and Foreshore - The creation of a garden and civic domain extending from the river to a new Town Square, minimising traffic and emphasising pedestrian comfort; to

- Transport improvements, including the introduction of a new Central Area Transport System.

The Collaborations Committee

a forum for change

In Adelaide in 1988 a practitioner lobby group was formed called the Collaborations Committee. At its inception it was a joint committee of the Crafts Council of SA (CCSA) and the SA chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA). It was not long however, before two additional organisations became involved, these being the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) and the Design Institute of Australia (DIA).

Throughout its existence the committee has worked enthusiastically to develop strong links between the professional groups and actively lobby for a greater role for the arts in built environment. To achieve these aims the partnership organisations have conducted professional training workshops, facilitated tertiary programmes, produced publications, established residency programmes and organised public forums.

Over the first few years the emphasis was more on the relationship between architecture and the arts, this however is evolving into a broader concern for the

education and promotion. With respect to education, the Report concentrates on practitioners and decision makers, whereas we are particularly keen to see strong programs in primary and secondary schools, building on the very effective natural environment curriculum established in the last two decades to eventually achieve a comparable demand in the community for best practice in the urban environment.

The strong emphasis of the Task Force on research is to be applauded and it is in that area in particular that the Commonwealth could offer resources and a central co-ordinating function. We are currently looking to establish what data exists on the value of good urban design with the eventual aim of developing a body of material which can be used in a variety of ways to demonstrate "its" tangible benefits to decision makers and the community. No doubt this process will illuminate many gaps in the literature which will which could be taken up by a co-ordinated national research program and some immediate funding for it would provide a starting point.

The Report is a welcome milestone in the re-emergence of urban design. Its translation into policy and practice will be watched with great interest.

Peter Dungey - Manager Urban Design
South Australian Department of Housing
and Urban Development

The Government is also restructuring central Perth's local government boundaries and its management. Only time will tell whether these actions will extend to cover the full range of tools identified in the Task Force Report (Section 5.11 - 5.15) as being available to government to improve the design of urban areas.

As recognised in the Report, Fremantle provides a notable example of a community and local authority which identified the value of its urban heritage, recognised the threats to it and took effective action. It is now one of the best known and admired historic centres of Australia. Other historic towns in Western Australia could take up the challenge given the support, hopefully flowing from the recommendations of the Report.

Geoff Hawkins
Building Management Authority WA

built environment generally. Therefore, the focus has moved to urban design and the implications of a wider need for interdisciplinary practice. This shift of emphasis led to the organisation of the "Breaking the Boundaries; Collaborative Practice and Urban Design" conference held in Adelaide on the 21st of October, and the hosting of the follow on UDF event at Leonards Mill on the 22nd and 23rd of October.

Widening the debate

The current evolution of "Collaborations", and supported by the outcomes of the UDF weekend, has identified an opportunity to widen the membership of the committee to provide a forum for planners and development interests to extend the debate on built environment issues in this state. In addition to local issues the UDF event demonstrated a real need for national debate and the formation of a strong network of urban professionals. Hopefully "Collaborations" will have a part to play in this national forum.

Richard Brecknock

NORTH TERRACE URBAN DESIGN STUDY

The Process ... Where To Now?

The original plan by Colonel William Light gave the City of Adelaide its unique and well known setting within a surrounding frame of broad parklands.

Over the years North Terrace has become the pre-eminent "edge" of the CBD now offering an extraordinary interface between the retail and commercial heart and the major cultural institutions, public places and parklands across the street.

Redressing Neglect

Nevertheless the general 2 km long environment of North Terrace has gradually become blighted by haphazard and neglected furnishings and amenity, and away from its central "cultural precinct" it experiences considerable security problems at night.

Following a major initiative by the City of Adelaide in 1992, the North Terrace Urban Design Study was conceived as a means to redress many years of neglect along one of the most significant street environments in Australia; one having enormous value to the residents of Adelaide and South Australia but also of national, and potentially international significance.

In late 1992 after a competition where various groups of consultants submitted initial ideas for North Terrace, Land Systems EBC, Landscape Architects and Urban Designers, leading a group of specialist consultants on behalf of the Hassell Group, won the right to carry out the study which would culminate in the preparation of a Concept Plan for the rejuvenation of the entire length of North Terrace, including linkages to adjacent precincts.

The Study Group consultants included architects, traffic and parking engineers, urban planners, heritage experts and urban art consultants with additional experts becoming involved as the study progressed. In addition numerous departments and individuals from both the Corporation of the City of Adelaide and the State Government were involved.

Management of the study through the necessary, prolonged and comprehensive consultation programme required skill and patience, given the special status of North Terrace and the numerous high profile stakeholders and major players involved. In addition, the general public were to be sometimes highly vocal, with resulting impacts on the city and state politicians involved in the process.

After an intensive programme of inventory and analysis along the street, interviews and workshops, working parties and public displays, a set of detailed objectives were developed to guide in the preparation of the Concept Plan.

Ongoing Consultation

As this occurred, the ongoing consultation programme continued to reinforce outcomes, fine tune objectives and foster a sense of unified support for the project. Overall the sense of consensus and positive impetus achieved by the study was enormously encouraging for an urban renewal project as high profile as this one.

Following preparation of the final Concept Plan and Report, the City of Adelaide approached the State Government with a view to a 50/50 arrangement for funding to



▲ North Terrace proposal - near Lion Arts Centre

implement the project. Cabinet's decision was to delay the project due to "economic difficulties" and perhaps because funding already committed for extensions to the State Art Gallery were seen as a sufficient contribution to the North Terrace precinct in the 1994 budget.

With continuing strong support for the upgrade coming from sections of the media and important organisations such as the Tourist Commission, Department of the Arts & Cultural Development and the Economic Development Authority, to name only several, it is hopefully only a matter of time before implementation becomes reality.

It is essential that ongoing progress by individual institutions e.g. the development of the University of SA's City West Campus and a master plan for the Royal Adelaide Hospital, are conducted to reflect the framework of the Concept Plan

so that a cohesive and coherent result is achieved for the North Terrace streetscape as a whole.

But perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from the real or perceived dislocation between the study process itself and the political agenda for implementation is the need for real political commitment from start to finish and an understanding by key politicians of the wide range of benefits for the community of such a project.

The involvement of key political figures and reinforcement of political connections is essential throughout the whole time frame of such projects so that impetus, unity and support laboriously built up remain nurtured and undiluted.

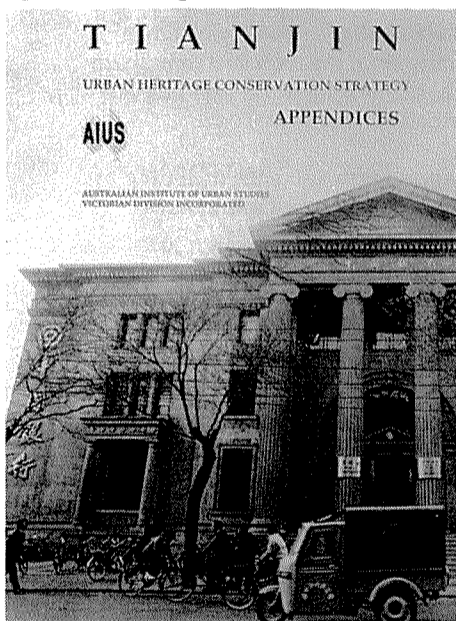
John Bedford Senior Landscape Architect (Project Manager - North Terrace Urban Design Study)

Book Review

Nathan Alexander and Gordon Rushman, editors (1994), **TIANJIN URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION STRATEGY**. 2 vols 658pp. Australian Institute of Urban Studies Victorian Division Inc., GPO Box 2620W, Melbourne, 3001. \$100 plus \$15 p&p.

This is a report on one of the most fascinating topics in modern history, urban design, architecture and conservation, namely the interaction between Western and Eastern cultures as they came into uneasy contact in the four centuries up to the second world war. From the end of the second Opium War in 1860 until the second world war nine foreign powers led by Britain and France developed concession areas in Tianjin as their base for trade and cultural imperialism in northern China. Forty five years after the revolution of 1949 this extensive tangible evidence of China's humiliation by the West and Japan is now perceived as positive evidence of long standing trading links between East and West and has considerable tourism potential. It is still nearly intact as a conspectus of the European styles of architecture in an alien environment and with several notable examples of urban design included in it.

The team of volunteers from Melbourne have done a valuable service in documenting the buildings, defining urban conservation areas and providing broad-scale advice for the planning authorities in Tianjin based on the use of Burra Charter methodology. There are major contributions from Susan Balderstone, Miles Lewis and Richard Peterson. Historic urban form will benefit from this



study as well as the buildings and conservation areas. The historic areas and notable urban design include the Old City, Jiefangbei Road (the main commercial thoroughfare with more than a passing resemblance to Collins Street), and elegant circular park in the former French area, the former Piazza Marco Polo in the former Italian area and the Five Great Roads area as an English style garden suburb.

The report shows that sister city relationships such as Melbourne - Tianjin mean much more than high level junketing and that valuable outcomes can be achieved through technical co-operation. For those of us in the West it is an example of who we should document and care for the areas of historic urban fabric with policies developed out of careful research and documentation.

Conferences Coming Up

Local Environmental Action

LOCALINKS is a national forum which will bring together people from local government, communities and workplaces to focus on environmental action at the local level. This national conference which will be held in Melbourne 10-12 May 1995, will address environmental management, making links, and people and the environment. For further information contact Chris Johnston, Context Pty Ltd, (03) 380 6933.

Portraits of Planning

To be held in Adelaide 24-26 July 1995, this unique conference will bring together professionals from a range of disciplines to discuss ideas and best practice from Australia and overseas in order to stimulate further advances in positive planning and development. For more details phone Festival City Promotions (08) 363 1307.

Making Cities Livable

The 17th International Making Cities Livable Conference will be held in Freiburg Breisgau, Germany 5-9 September 1995. The theme will focus on the New Urban Neighbourhoods. Deadline for submission of papers is 1 February. For more details contact Suzanne H. Crowhurst Lennard in California by fax 408-626-9080.

Urban Development Development Conference

A showcase for the latest and the best in urban waterfront development from around the world, this conference will be held at Darling Harbour Sydney 2-4 April 1995. For further details contact the secretariat on (02) 262 2277.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Urban Design Forum is published for information and interest by the **Urban Design Forum Incorporated**. The views in UDF are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of organisations with which they are associated.

Word processing, artwork and layout: Melbourne City Council, Urban Design & Architecture Division (Howard Lindsay).

Distribution: This edition is distributed as a supplement to the "Australian Planner" (RAPA) Reg. Pub. No.SBP 0566, by Local Government Associations in each State, by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) and to various other interested people in Australia and overseas.

Editors: Rob Adams, Bill Chandler, Bruce Eckberg, Wendy Morris.
Contributions for UDF 29 DEADLINE: February 10th 1995. Send to: Bill Chandler, 12 Vincent Street, Surrey Hills 3127.