

U R B A N D E S I G N & M A J O R G O V E R N M E N T P R O J E C T S

"Business leaders and commentators now agree that Victoria is emerging as the most dynamic progressive state in Australia .... The new Major Projects Unit (MPU) will be a vital part of reaching that goal". John Cain, 1988, referring to a new development facilitation unit dealing with major Government land parcels.

To check out whether this bold claim by Victoria's Premier also applies to leadership in urban design, Urban Design Forum recently interviewed Evan Walker, MLA, who heads the MPU. (The following report is an edited version of a generously given hour long interview).

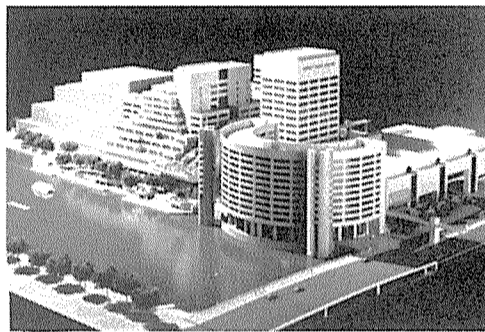
UDF: Given the large-scale, rapid change nature of MPU projects, the potential for the MPU to be a major positive, or negative force in urban design is considerable. However the urban design component in the MPU's work is not very evident.

EW: That's a fair comment. The MPU is an implementation arm. I set up urban design at the Ministry for Planning and Environment (MPE) and think that the MPE must maintain a strong urban design arm and advise Government on urban design, not just on statutory planning and

traditional planning. The MPU was set up to deal with large projects, to overcome the runaround in government departments.

UDF: Will the MPU facilitate projects regardless of their urban design qualities?

EW: No, and the government would not expect that of us. We quickly reassess the project using our best skills. We assume however, that the client department has got its policy decisions right. If we do need further qualitative work, we call in private sector consultants.



▲ Opportunities: Some lost, some remain

UDF: Your intentions about urban design are good, but the real challenge is to make the intentions reality. Take Southbank.

What happened to the intentions to include housing, high quality public spaces, and urban art? Is it just becoming another commercial office area, another "North Sydney"? Is anyone in government managing the urban design of Southbank or is it just up to the whim of the developers?

EW: No. There is no wastage of the work done by MPE. The work of the MPE is still being used and they have a continuing and key role. The vision for the river and Southbank was established when I was Minister and our MPU decisions are not made outside the MPE policy base.

The policy for 20% of the development to be housing has been sustained, but the debate about how to do it continues. The Treasurer and the Department of Management and Budget are keen to get as much as possible for the government land and we are aware that housing lowers the land value.

In qualitative decisions about urban design we will follow the urban design directives of the MPE.

UDF: The Convention Centre is in major contravention of both the spirit and intention of the Government policy about preventing overshadowing of the river, and respect for the river environment.

EW: I don't accept all that. The overshadowing provision doesn't start until Spencer Street. Jim Kennan made the decision to approve the development, but on my advice. I agreed to the developers approach and accepted that it sits in the river, but not further than the old staging.

UDF: It just happens to be about 30 times higher than the old pier, though.

EW: I'm not saying it's OK, like an old pier. I accept that it may not fit with the spirit of planning intent for the River, and the City Council complained at the time, but I defend that it should sit in the river.

UDF: Many have seen this south-west part of the City as the dead end. People have difficulty in finding Batman Park, for instance. Couldn't the Convention Centre have been better designed to contribute to the attraction for pedestrians.

EW: It offers "people" uses: you can walk through it and under it, have a drink, something to eat. We have rejected a link bridge to Batman Park. Maybe we can get under Spencer Street Bridge. I am conscious of the delicacy of the issue and I have had to defend it a lot, but I shall not accept that it was not thought about. The critics will have to believe that it was thought about and that they don't like the decision, rather than saying that nobody thought about it.

UDF: How important is urban design? There is a common view that urban design both costs more money and causes delays.

EW: No. We look for the opportunity to do it well rather than badly, and that's not a question of money, it's more a question of sensitivity.

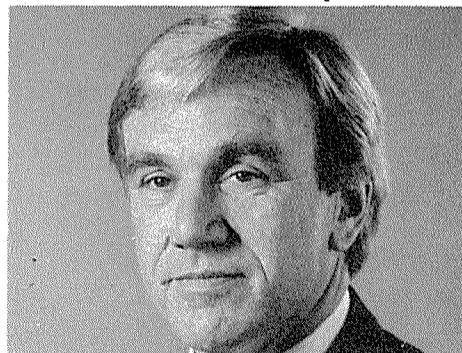
UDF: How do you balance the strategic needs of the Government with the legitimate rights of people in a local area, for example at Bayside or at Willsmere.



EW: That brings us to process and in every instance the MPU is involved in process. One of the problems is that genuine consultation invites disagreement. It's a community's right to have a say. We aim to proceed with a process where good decisions will be made but they won't always please everybody. That's the tough bit. When the local people become more aware, that often adds to the quality.

UDF: How much is your government prepared to improve urban design, by trading off its policy of maximising profit to achieve other policies (eg. to achieve more inner city housing).

EW: I think Government has often walked away from the tough decisions in statutory planning. Highest and best use is not always just the highest dollar value. I'm continuing to have to educate my colleagues on the difference between optimum and maximum use, to achieve healthy, well balanced development.



▲ Evan Walker

The tools of development envelopes, density, use, and related public components can now be used as the real controls to achieve good urban design. The undermining influence can be the developer saying "we won't go ahead unless our profit is greater". I believe our community, through their governments, have to get tougher with this, where we are convinced that a project is profitable. Until we are good at this we will be a bit subject to being sold things that we shouldn't be sold. We are getting better at it. And the MPU is building its skills in this area.

Is This Melbourne's Urban Design Spring Festival ?



Events 29th August - 7th September

An exciting fortnight of conferences, workshops and less formal sessions relevant to urban design occurs in Melbourne as spring beckons us out to enjoy the qualities of our urban habitat.

Planning and Developing Australia RAPI National Conference 29th August - 1st September. Melbourne University. Includes sessions directly related to urban design.

UDF Forum and Dinner

Monday 29th August

All welcome, with a special invitation to interstate visitors.

Meet for drinks and discussion from 5.15pm at the Japanese Room, Architecture Building, Melbourne University, then dinner at 7.30pm at L'Aragosta D'Oro Restaurant, 171 Lygon Street, Carlton

Issues In Landscape Architecture Education

Tuesday 30th August - Lecture

Professor David Yencken (School of Environmental Planning, Melbourne University) will outline future directions for the Masters course in Landscape Architecture, including its relationship to urban design. He will draw on recent observations of international teaching practise in the field.

5.30-7.30pm, 6th Floor, Architecture Building, University of Melbourne.

Urban Design In Central Business Districts

Friday 3rd September

AIUS Seminar - Professors Ralph Monheim and Hanns Adrian from Germany, will present new directions for improved pedestrian access, and public space treatment for increased liveability.

2-5pm Ministry for Planning and Environment (ground floor theatre), 477 Collins Street, Melbourne. \$15. Contact Gordon Rushman ph. 660-2448 or Pat Whately ph. 628-5343.

Creative Cities Conference 5th-7th September

National Gallery, St. Kilda Road.

Sponsored by UNESCO and locals. Exciting range of overseas speakers and local workshops, directed at community role in determining urban space quality; and specifically the contribution of the creative arts to public spaces.

Public sessions include:

6.30pm, 5th September : Placemaking: Baltimore & other Cities, John Jerde, Jerde Partnership.

8.00pm, 6th September : Cities of the Future, Dr. Rashmi Mayur, Urban Development Institute, Bombay. Details Diane Cockroft, MPE 628-5014

Central City Traffic Issues

Monday 5th September - Workshop

A one-day workshop involving Professors Monheim and Adrian and local speakers, covering the Melbourne C.A.T.S. study, and central city transport issues and problems in Germany. (Contact Rob Cockburn, M.P.E., ph. 628 5111).

The German Experience With Light Rail Systems

Tuesday 6th September - Lecture

Professor Hanns Adrian will outline the Hannover example. Contact Kristian Siebert, M.P.E., ph.628 5111.

UDF Group Lunch

Tuesday 13th September

Review The Festival! Regular monthly informal lunch at Wholemeal Inn, 182 Collins Street, Melbourne, 12.30pm. Contact Bill Chandler 819-1144.

U . D . F

UDF was initiated in Victoria by a diverse group of professionals who shared a concern for and interest in better urban design. Although still based in Victoria UDF is distributed nationally, acknowledging the increasing interest in urban design all round Australia.

The main aim of UDF is to provide an ongoing forum for information, ideas and views about urban design. Contributions are welcomed and may be sent directly to:

Urban Design Forum  
c/o Bill Chandler, Convenor  
Loder & Bayly, 79 Power Street, Hawthorn  
Vic 3122, Ph. (03) 819-1144

or via the following interstate correspondents:

Barry Sheldon, c/o Department of Architecture, Tasmania State Institute of Technology, Hobart, Ph. (002) 38-4385

Stephen Hamnett, c/o School of the Built Environment, South Australian Institute of Technology, Adelaide, Ph. (08) 236-2311

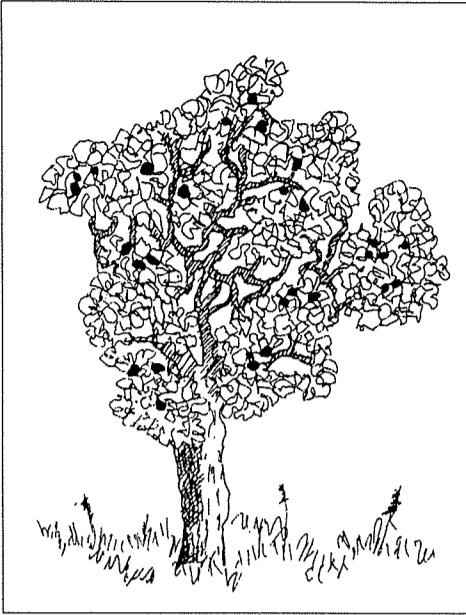
Gordon Holden, c/o Department of Architecture, Queensland Institute of Technology, Brisbane, Ph. (07) 223-2677

Ralph Stanton, Planning and Design Consultant, Perth, Ph. (09) 382-1069

The deadline for UDF 5 (December) is 1st November, 1988.

Editors: Rob Adams, Bill Chandler, Wendy Morris.

## Provide Design Inspiration In The Pilbara



Imagine a town where houses have their front doors to pathways at the back; a maze of roads where you drive 3 km to get 300 metres; paths where you won't walk because of the trolls under the little bridges; where there's a K-Mart with nothing but desert as backdrop; and rising from the plain, a seven storey apartment block that would look more at home as inner Manchester council housing.

This inconceivable place is South Hedland (pop. 8000), and it, together with Port Hedland (pop. 6500) handle the major iron ore exports from the Pilbara.

The old port town straddles the coastal sand dune, whilst 'South' is a government-designed town built from around 1970 to an adaption of the Radburn layout. Port

Hedland is perceived as a dirty, hot and ugly place, and South as a modern planning failure.

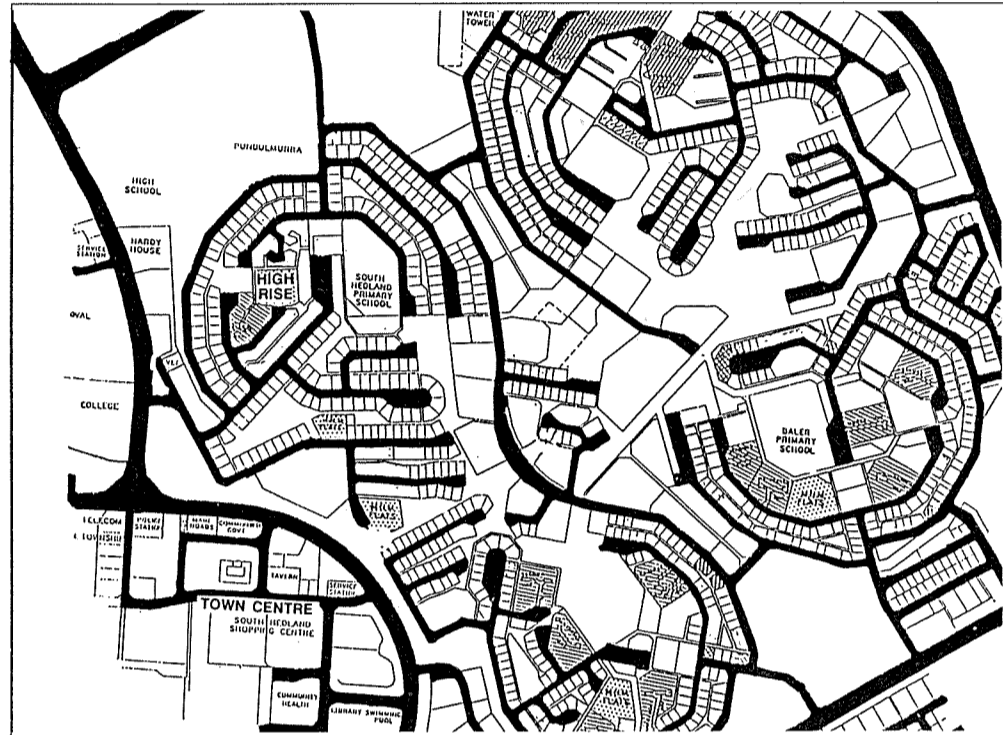
### Townscape Workshop

The Port Hedland Townscape Workshop was initiated by the W.A. State Planning Commission. It involved 10 designers and 8 local advisers in an action-packed week in June, producing both design ideas for various physical problems and generating enthusiasm and commitment to change.

The Townscape Team, distinctive in green and gold T-shirts, quickly generated a high

profile through daily media sessions, public meetings, community surveys and local working groups. It tackled eleven main projects, and these have since been presented as a report for action to the two enthusiastic townscape committees.

Projects in Port Hedland addressed problems of low morale and negative image, and promoted solutions which turned 'liabilities' such as the industrial landscape into assets, particularly for tourism. The town centre, always small, had been decimated by a new town-edge shopping centre, so a business improvement program was also initiated.



### Community In Crisis

However South Hedland really provided the challenges. Most striking was the strong and direct relationship evident between the inappropriate physical form and the high levels of social dysfunction. Law and order is the biggest local issue, and it is due to the lack of safety, security, privacy and comfort within the residential areas. Even the neighbourhoods with their tortuous road layout and separate walkways, are known as "Cell 1, Cell 2" etc.

The townscape "rehabilitation" projects range from a broad scale restructure plan for the major roads, paths, open spaces and development sites (where permeability and legibility evaluations were critical), through to a detailed look at one street, Mauger Place, to show how walkways could be closed off, houses and gardens 'turned around', and roads converted to safe multi-functional streets.

### Stranded Centre

The town centre (inappropriately located on the edge!) also received attention with proposals to create a main street and key public spaces, generating a community focus out of a scatter of sand-stranded air-conditioned boxes. Here the extreme climate and unique social conditions were critical considerations.

And the little-known pundul tree, otherwise known as the desert walnut, has rapidly achieved stardom status as the likely 'emblem' of South Hedland. Its tough, a survivor, but it needs termites to initially release the seed from the pod. Once released it thrives. Equally we anticipate that once the people of South Hedland are released from their maze, they too will thrive.

Charles Johnson (State Planning Commission, W.A.) and Wendy Morris (Ministry for Planning and Environment, Victoria) were joint co-ordinators of the Port Hedland Townscape Workshop.

## URBAN DESIGN, ECONOMICS, POLITICS AND SOCIETY ... the serial continued.

by Juris Greste

Among the more engaging portions of U.D.F. have been the exchanges between Tony Cooper, Wendy Morris and Margo Huxley on the role of urban design. I believe the answers are to be found somewhere between the apparently opposing approaches of Morris and Cooper.

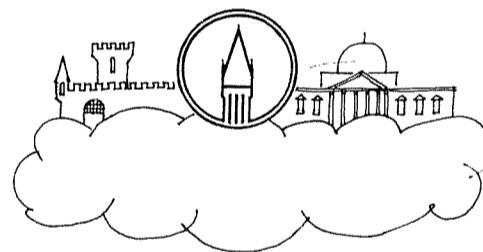
Of course developers and investors will not do anything which does not produce a healthy profit as well as meet other investment objectives. It clearly is unrealistic to expect of urban design anything that does not fit with social, economic and political conditions. However some of the actors on the urban stage these days are so big and powerful that their interests are very often against the interests of the lesser actors - the people in the street. To endeavour to protect the interests of the individual we have bigger unions for workers, consumer protection agencies for consumers, motoring organisations to speak for road users, conservation groups to advocate for the mute environment.

The primary aim of urban design must surely be to see that the public interest at the level of three dimensional form and scale of the street, is protected. The model of Oxford or other old European cities may not be directly applicable to Australian cities. However the need to make our urban environment more humanly enriching, rewarding and responsive to peoples' needs is highly relevant, whether

the methods and precedents are inspired by Europe or the Orient.

The fact that, for the last 40 years, the form and quality of our cities has been largely determined by the interest of big capital is not necessarily setting a deterministic or inevitable pattern. Many urban design objectives do not always represent large additional costs to a project. Additional costs can often be offset by additional development. What is needed is an approach of greater collaborative and creative negotiation between the public and private interests. Notwithstanding the fact that urban design is indeed an intensely political activity and an inherently economic one, the political, social and economic interests of the ordinary city user have tended to be swamped by the giants. The real world is also made up of people. I suspect that given the chance, a lot of city users would vote for pieces of Oxford inspired urban design instead of "graph-paper" solutions.

Apart from insufficient knowledge and understanding of what makes good public urban spaces in our contemporary cities, one of the difficulties is that many of the so called public spaces are private areas to which the public is merely given access. "Tinny crushing rowdy youngsters" in the city are just as much a product of the social/economic conditions as prestige rent paying tenants. The real world needs cities with public spaces and amenities which meet the needs of all city users.



## R • M • I • T Masters Degree In Urban Design

Gordon Rushman,  
Course Co-ordinator

The RMIT intends to introduce its masters degree by coursework in Urban Design in February 1989. Urban design will be one of several course streams within a two year full-time Master of Design degree.

The new degree is a collaborative venture by RMIT's faculties of Art, Engineering, Environmental Design and Construction and the Graduate School of Management. All course streams will share a common core of seven subjects, comprising 25% of the course, covering research method, the environment of design, design thinking, advanced design communication and management of design.

The urban design stream is intended for candidates who are employed by firms and public sector authorities which are, or will be, engaged in urban design. It is anticipated that 'live' projects will be used both as case studies and as design projects within the course. Most students will be practising designers from architecture, landscape, town planning, engineering

and design disciplines. Candidates will be expected to remain in employment whilst committing about 24 hours per week to the course. Most classes will be timetabled for late afternoon and early evening.

Within the urban design stream, lecture subjects will comprise 25% of the course and project work 50%. In some cases lecture courses will be directly linked to project work. The 'real life' thrust of project work will be both within the RMIT tradition and highly relevant to the emergence of urban design as one of the quality of life concerns that now preoccupy society in the post-industrial, post-scarcity era. The M. Des. degree and the urban design stream in particular are intended to reinforce the capacity and credibility of designers in resolving society's increasingly complex problems.

Applications for the course should be accompanied by a C.V. and directed to Gordon Rushman, Department of Architecture, RMIT, G.P.O. Box 2476 V. Melbourne, 3001. Telephone to Elizabeth Adamska on 660-2823.

### "Australia Council - Double Jeopardy"

The irony is amusing, but not funny. If the Design Board of the Australia Council had not provided a supporting grant, you would not be reading UDF now. But the Design Board has recently been abolished. With the demise of the Design Board, the Federal Government has given up its last vestige of interest in the design of our cities and towns. Blinded in its drive toward "economic rationalism", it has failed to realize what the governments of many countries have already grasped - good design is good economics.

# SYDNEY

## THE ANTI CITY

By Claire Wagner

Planners talk of the 'vibrant street life' of cities overseas, and institutions like the NDCD put coloured umbrellas on their drawings to encourage people to live up the streets, in predictable ignorance of social facts. Street life is vibrant when whole families live in the city. The domestic background of the Plaka, where visitors join in the Athenians' daily routine, is the basis of the heightened experience; in this sense street music can be likened to songs around the piano.

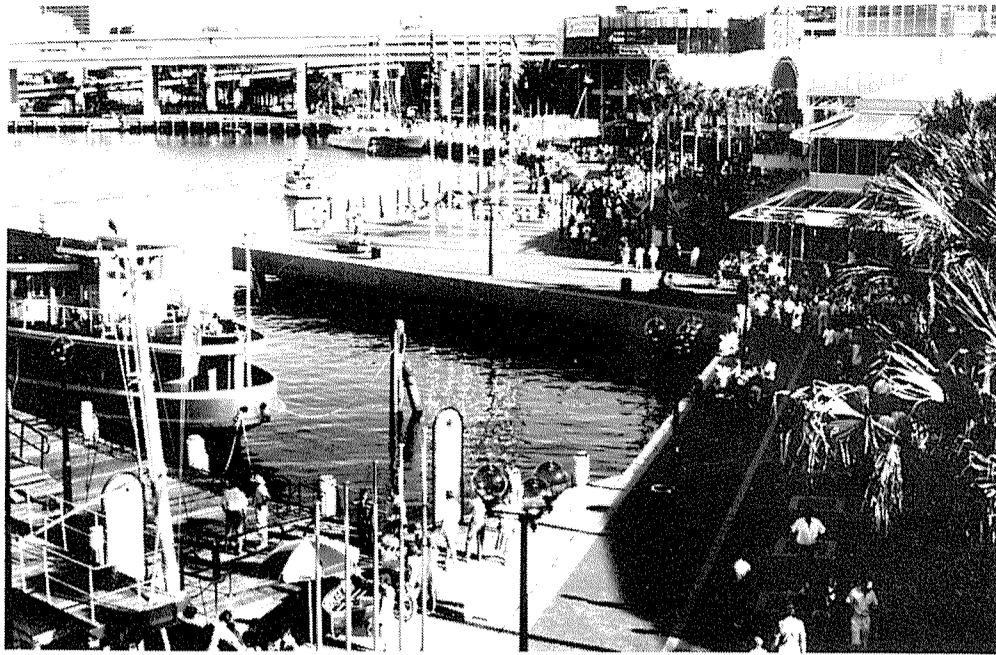
### A Risque Funfair

Australians see inner city living as a sort of risque funfair, a view which has been realised in the degradation of Kings Cross from a mild bohemia to a centre of vice. By the same token we devalue the domestic in relegating it to suburbia, where specially designed trolleys convey children around supermarkets.

Until very recently a traditional working class community lived at The Rocks in Sydney. Their terraces are turned over to tourist kitsch, arty lamp standards and crafty boutiques, as human scale has become a rare commodity in the anti-city.

### Rail Above and Tunnels Under

Sydney's anti-city sentiment is nowhere more manifest than in the controversy over the monorail. No weight of distinguished professional opinion could compensate for the public unconcern for what used to be a centre, and prevail against Ministerial hubris. The monorail, installed to take tourists from their hotels to a non-existent casino in Darling Harbour, now disfigures the northern facade of the restored Queen Victoria building. This project, though rightly acclaimed, has become the point of



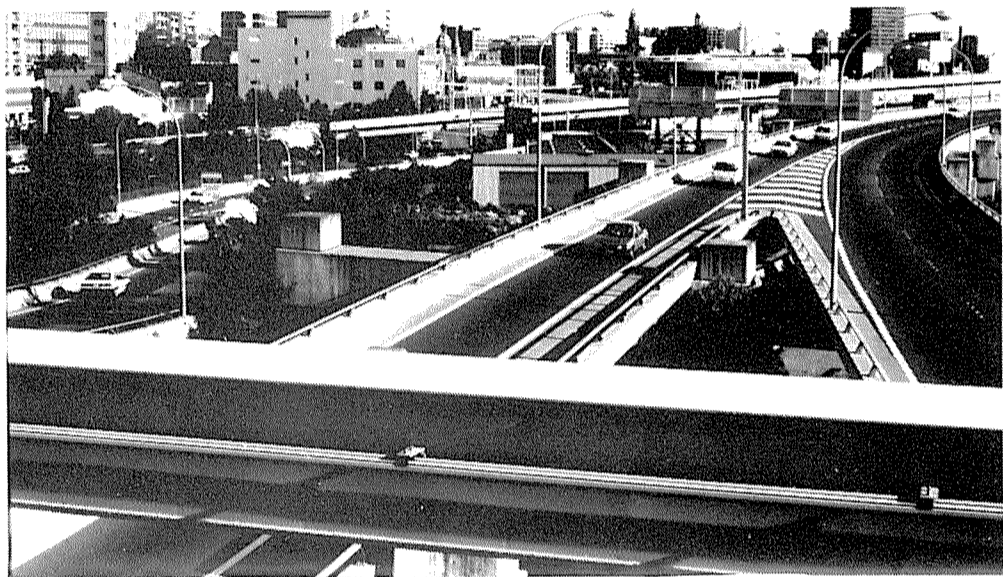
departure for the elimination of streetscape, in the form of underground tunnels with atriums turning their backs to the street, made sunless by the elbowing tall buildings. Where older buildings once addressed the street, intake points with the welcoming quality of vacuum cleaners ingurgitate the bulk handled pedestrians. On weekdays, catering for every consumer fetish, the tunnels are crammed with boutiques and stalls selling exotic take-aways, with nowhere domestically comfortable to eat them. On weekends the centre is closed and empty but for duty-free shops. No one considers that in a funfair, tastes jade, or that the commercial advantage is short term. For the scene is frankly boring.

### People Out; Pastiche In

No one really wants people in the city. Harbour views, once the casual perquisite of all strollers, are inaccessible at tenth floor level. Since the 1950's many cultural and social meeting places have gone, whilst office developers are filling the

loveless vacuum with short-term monuments to the obsolescing paper technology. In its nouveauriche style Sydney cultivates antiquarianism and aestheticism, by conserving facades and old stairways beside new and frankly temporary buildings, and in blinkered debates over the architectural merit of individual buildings as street manners disappear down the tunnel.

There are good things still. The Opera House concourse is exciting at night, with its views of Harbour lights, the buzz of enthusiastic concert-goers, and the sense of occasion. Macquarie Street still has its old personality, including the well restored Parliament House, Barracks, Mint and Hospital complexes, and an engaging new monument, a plaque to Matthew Flinders' cat. The street is presently surmounted by elaborately strutted Bicentennial arches supporting a tinselly substance, (attributable to the author of the monorail), temporary (one hopes) and, along with some tinny obelisks, wonderfully symbolic.



## Rumours & Snippets

### Suburbia

Adelaide will host this years' national A.I.U.S. conference entitled **Australian Suburbs - A Re-appraisal**. The conference promises lively debate on whether our suburbs represent consumer sovereignty, capitalist conspiracy or something else. September 29-30th. Contact John Hodgson, ph. (08) 218-7211.

### "Cities Not For Cars" Germans Visit

Two prominent German planners and urban designers are presently visiting Melbourne to conduct seminars and workshops. Professor Hanns Adrian is executive planner and architect in Hannover. In addition to broader urban redevelopment strategies, he is well known for his outstanding work on integration of pedestrian amenities and public transport.

Professor Rolf Monheim from Beyreuth, is acclaimed for his work on pedestrianisation schemes and traffic management in urban centres and residential areas. Details of some of their activities are included in the Events listing.

### Mall Design Competition

Dandenong City Council is presently running an open competition for design of the McRae Street Mall in the Dandenong District Centre.

### Camberwell Shopping Centre Saga

That residents do care about the future form and character of their town centres is at last loud and clear in the Camberwell area. The Podgor proposal for an enclosed shopping complex attached to the lively and traditional Burke Road shopping centre received planning approval last year. However the sale of an integral road has generated 6000 objections. The residents (who include a good sprinkling of designers, planners and architects!) have now put forward a modified proposal, whilst at the recent Council elections the balance of power has swung to those opposing the project.

### City Square Re-shape

Congratulations to the MCC for proposing a re-design of Melbourne's City Square. Solving its problems is complex and needs further debate. Already the A.I.L.A. has prepared a detailed submission outlining major concerns with the new plan.

### Sydney University Urban Design Course Update

Sydney University's urban design course, due to start in 1989, will not start until a Professor of Urban Design has been appointed. Two overseas applicants have turned down offers, and the post is about to be re-advertised. Recently, several other overseas academics have been approached to take on the job for the first six or twelve months from either the beginning or middle of 1989. The course will be principally a post-graduate full time structure, but it may also be offered on a part-time basis.

## Forrest Place

By Charles Johnson

### PERTH'S NEW CIVIC SQUARE

The redevelopment of one of Perth's most important civic spaces will be completed in a few months. The \$191 million Forrest Place project provides a setting for the historic GPO and includes remodelling the existing civic square, development of the Myer Forrest Chase shopping centre and construction of a State Government office on Wellington Street.

The excellent contextual design quality of this office building provides a well defined edge to the square. However, a disturbing and dominating element in the square is the system of overpasses that link the shopping centre to the railway station and the city centre. This "bold new concept" in civic square design - the all weather square-

viewing experience from an elevated vantage point - maximises user comfort and minimises exposure to the elements whilst dramatically reducing maintenance costs incurred in the traditional square design by the erosive forces of persistently applied human feet.

The overpass across the Wellington St. end of the square has created a particularly undesirable and unnecessary barrier between the square and the historic railway station. Gone is the easy sense of closure that the station landmark provided, and the view of the station clock that kept time for the lunch hour users of the square and those beyond.



Brisbane is currently receiving much buzz from Expo and much attention from developers with mega-scale projects. The Brisbane City Council (in response?) is introducing a new town plan which includes urban design matters, and an urban design guide may soon be published. Meanwhile, urban activist groups have decided to form the "Urban Coalition" as a support network for community groups concerned about urban change.

**Juris Grete, Lecturer in Urban Design at Q.I.T., outlines the latest moves.**

## Post EXPO Development

Early this year the Queensland Government chose a "preferred developer" for the 40 hectare Expo site without public disclosure of tender details, and apparently minimal participation of the Brisbane City Council. The scheme proposed a canal through the site to create an island for a World Trade Centre, convention centre and hotel/casino. The site, which formed an intimate part of South Brisbane was to become a scatter of towers, leaving a third as public parkland.

Strong public reaction to the secrecy and, no doubt, to the proposal, has forced a new round of tendering, and establishment of the South Brisbane Redevelopment Authority. The Council is now in equal partnership with the State Government and the Expo Authority; a major gain for the citizens of Brisbane in determining the future form of their city.

## Worlds Tallest Building

Taller, thinner high-rise .... is this the only way to go? Mainsell Investments Pty Ltd

are proposing the world's tallest building in Brisbane. "Brisbane Central," of 107 storeys, would tower over Brisbane's present tallest of 50 storeys. The issue has split the community. Brisbane City Council, about to bring in a 65 storey height limit, opposes it. Its supporters (with strong representation from the steel fabrication industry) have launched a big media campaign to win public support for it, claiming that "the alternative is bulky and squat buildings; a return to the past". An independent court of review ruled against the proposal, but gave the developer the right of appeal ... the next round cannot be far off.

## Queensland Centre

One of the largest blocks in the Brisbane CBD - at the western end of George Street - has recently been cleared, removing some of the most colourful commercial activity in the city. Little is known about the "Queensland Centre" proposed for the site, beyond that it is likely to be the biggest superblock development in the city, and will contain "Commercial, Retail, Accommodation, Entertainment, Tourism." according to a large billboard on the site. This project promises to be a challenge for the new B.C.C. urban design objectives.

## Remember The Bellevue?

At the east end of George Street, in front of the State Governments' Works Centre Building is a quite attractive (on the drawing board?) public space. However this lonely little square remains largely unused, except possibly by the ghosts of the patrons of the former Bellevue Hotel. Its fine old facade defined this corner and complemented the historic Queensland Club building opposite.

A quick reflection on the design qualities associated with successful urban spaces helps identify the problems of this one: building entries do not address it; bland facades are dominant and blinds restrict views from edge users; a coffee shop is tucked away so as not to spill out into the square, and there's not a comfortable seat to be seen. Perhaps it was just never meant to be used?

## Urban Design in Brisbane's New Town Plan

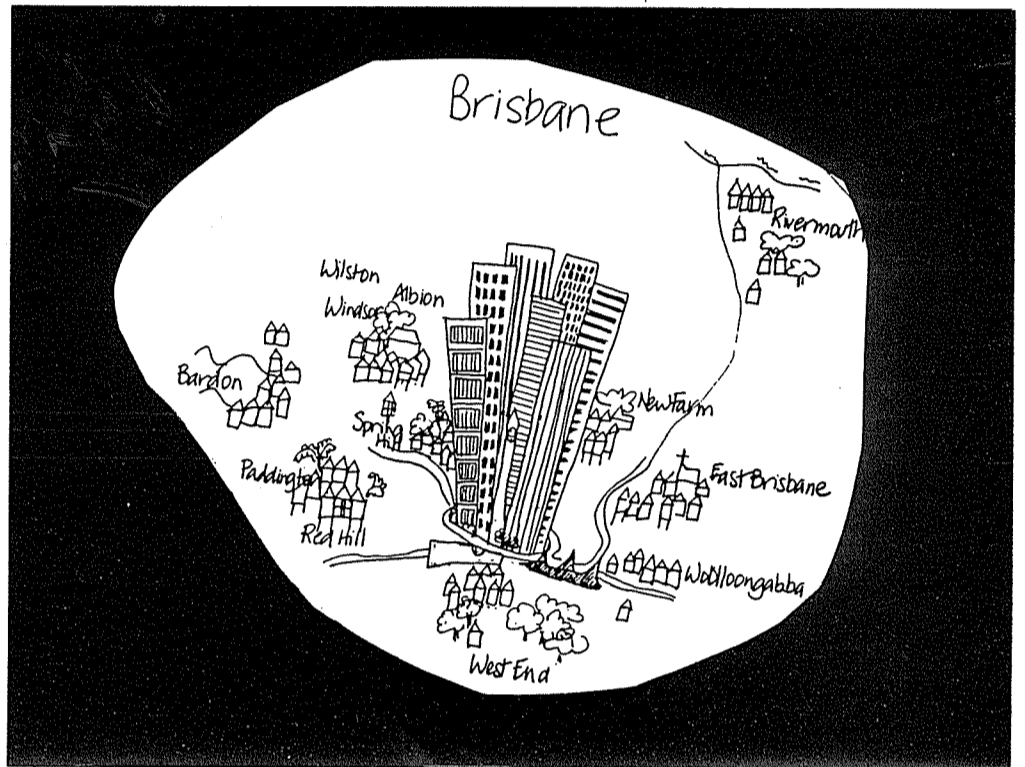
A new Town Plan for Brisbane has recently been approved and it contains for the first time some encouraging, if indirect, references to urban design principles. Rather than generate quality urban spaces solely out of events such as the Commonwealth Games (we got the Queen

Street Mall out of that) and Expo (new riverside amenities), it shows the B.C.C. is aware that urban quality for the bulk of the city is experienced from the streets at pavement level.

Pedestrian quality is promoted in terms of surface treatments, accessibility and through-block links. Interest at ground floor level in the retail heart is to be maintained, whilst sun, rain and wind conditions are to be considered. Towers are to have podiums along the street alignment. Historic buildings and precincts are noted; however preservation tools appear limited to a negotiation and bonus system.

It is rumoured that ways of achieving these good intentions may soon be published in an Urban Design Guide.

Brisbane as perceived by the Urban Coalition ▼



## BOOK NOTES

### Urban Design Guidelines Corporation of the City of Adelaide 1988.

Urban Design Guidelines has been released by the Corporation to accompany and illustrate the "General Principles and Statements of Desired Future Character" which form part of the 1986-1991 City of Adelaide Plan.

It contains an introductory section outlining the pattern of elements (parklands, streets, squares, etc.) which make up Adelaide's formal character. This is followed by six sections on design principles dealing with Alignment, Orientation, Scale, Amenity (eg. microclimate, overlooking), Heritage Character and Townscape Context (composition, proportion, articulation, fenestration, materials, colors and finishes), and then examples of local case studies showing the kinds of development which might be achieved in each of the City's districts by following the Guidelines. The document is profusely illustrated with photographs, drawings and plans.

Urban design guidelines as a city-wide planning tool are almost unknown in Australia. Thus, by virtue of their intent and content alone, Adelaide's guidelines are of more than parochial interest. But also, it is their method of linking the desired future character statement to explanation and illustration of design principle, to demonstrated case study, which should promote a wider than local readership.

That being so, the Guidelines also give rise to questions and issues which demand critical discussion of a kind not possible

here. Inevitably I am inclined to compare Adelaide's progress in urban design with that of other cities, especially the other southern capitals. In Urban Design Guidelines, there is more to be found compactly in one volume than in any single Melbourne publication. And that in itself is an achievement. But the various urban design documents relating to Melbourne (from Grids and Greenery to Technical Notes for urban details) do seem to display a degree of consistency, resolution and sophistication beyond that of Adelaide's. While compared to Hobart, Adelaide is streets ahead, with its Urban Design Guidelines recommend reading for all.

**Urban Design Guidelines**  
Department of City Planning, City of Adelaide, GPO Box 2252, ADELAIDE 5001. (\$11.00 plus \$2.50 postage).

**Barrie Sheldon is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Architecture, Tasmanian State Institute of Technology.**

### Acknowledgements

Urban Design Forum is published by the UDF Group for information and interest. The views in UDF are those of its authors and do not necessarily represent the views of organisations with which they are associated. Special acknowledgement is given for assistance with this edition to: **Word processing, artwork and layout:** Melbourne City Council, Urban Design & Architecture Division, (Michelle Paton).

## Farewell, Larry

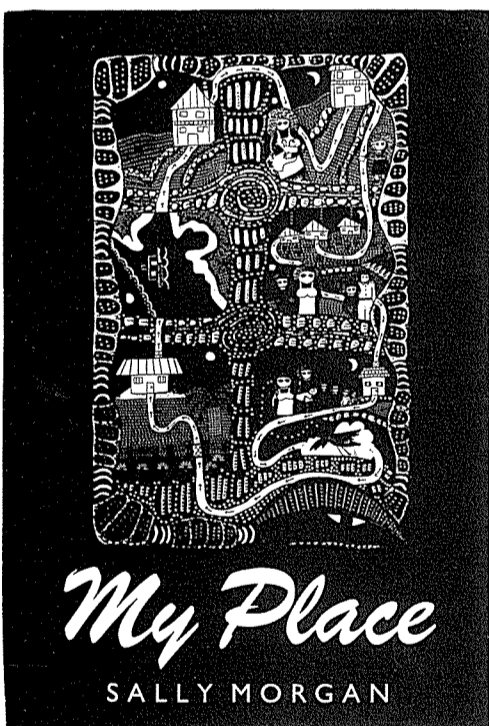
Larry Parsons, Head of the Urban Design Unit at Melbourne City Council, and an active contributor to Urban Design Forum, is moving to Spain in September. Larry will work in private practise there.

Larry returned to Melbourne from Oman in 1986 to join the inaugural MCC urban design team. He has been instrumental in its significant achievements and high profile in the areas of development control, master planning of areas such as Carlton Gardens and Batman Park, Technical Notes on the City's character and development guidelines for important City sites, such as Lynch's Bridge and the Spencer Street Power Station.

Cr. Lecki Ord, former Lord Mayor said that, "Larry leaves Melbourne a better city as a result of his work here; he will be impossible to replace."

UDF wishes Larry all the best in his new role.

**Funding:** This project was assisted by the Design Board of the Australia Council, the Federal Government Arts Funding and Advisory body. **Distribution:** This edition is distributed as a supplement to the "Australian Planner" (RIPA) Reg. Pub. No. SBP 0566, "The Architect" (RAIA, Victoria) Reg. Pub. No. VBQ 0375, by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) and to various other interested people in Australia and overseas.



**My Place,**  
Sally Morgan, Fremantle Arts Press, 1988

What's a note on a book about a Perth woman, discovering her aboriginal ancestry, doing in an Urban Design magazine eh? Well, it's an absolutely magnificent book, a humorous detective story, a vivid indictment of the off-hand way Australia's resident people were subjugated, and an uplifting insight into a rich supportive society.

The title of the book is however explained, defined and amplified. At the end Sally Morgan has discovered her place in space, in life, and in spirit. This strong sense of belonging and identification is one which, it goes without saying, urban designers are striving for.

Review by Jan Martin