

# Has urban design moved into the mainstream yet?

When *Urban Design Forum* was established in the mid 1980s, the term 'urban design' was a tad novel and the practice in its infancy. The mainstream design professions sort of assumed that their members did it, but there was not much consensus of exactly what 'it' was, its significance or potential. So, over the past 20 years, what progress have we made? Are our cities and towns better for our efforts?

It might be too soon to say that Urban Design has 'arrived', but it has entered the consciousness of the nation's psyche through now having three of its proponents honoured with Order of Australia awards - alongside sports people, pop stars, politicians, business types, scientists and social workers.

## William Joseph Kelly OAM

In January this year, Bill Kelly became the most recent recipient of an Order of Australia award. The official citation says: *For service to the arts as a visual artist, and to urban design.* Kelly literally grew up in four of Olmstead's parks and, as a very young artist, created small drawings and paintings on site in each of them. He has since exhibited his art in over 20 countries and 100 cities from Melbourne to New York City to Durban to Tokyo. Much of this work reflects his commitment to human rights, social justice, reconciliation and peace - acknowledged by his receipt in 2006 of the Courage of Conscience Award (USA) - values also reflected in his urban design work.

Though always an artist first, Bill puts great credibility in the relationship of public space and architecture to culture and to the evolution of community, and believes firmly in the power of true collaboration to achieve positive outcomes.

He was a founding member of *Urban Design Forum*, collaborated on the design of Westgate Park, All Nations Park, was artist consultant to the Docklands Authority for eight years, artist collaborator on Balaclava Community Housing (City of Port Philip), and a member of the team for Inkerman Oasis which won the Stockholm Prize for planning toward sustainable development.

## Robert John Adams AM

In June 2007, Rob Adams was made a Member of the Order of Australia. The official citation was *"For service to urban design, town planning and architecture through the implementation of programs, projects and policies that have transformed the City of Melbourne."*

Rob was a founding member of *Urban Design Forum*. Rob has played a central role over the past two decades in making Melbourne one of the world's most liveable cities. He has consistently taken a proactive and highly professional role, displaying leadership as well as responding to public and political concern in a career that has reshaped Melbourne and set an example for cities throughout Australia.



▲ Rob Adams in front of CH2, Melbourne City Council's sustainable new office building

Crucial to this is Rob's understanding that making a good city requires not only bright ideas, but the work of many talented and creative people capable of turning ideas into reality and capable of maintaining the qualities that make a city liveable. Testament to this is the 100 design awards won by the City over the last 15 years.

Rob also was the recipient of the SACS Local Government Award 2007 and the Committee for Melbourne's Achiever Award 2007

## Juris Greste OAM

In January 2007, Juris Greste was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. The official citation was: *"For service to urban design, particularly through raising community awareness of the need for high quality and sustainable environments, to professional associations and to education."*

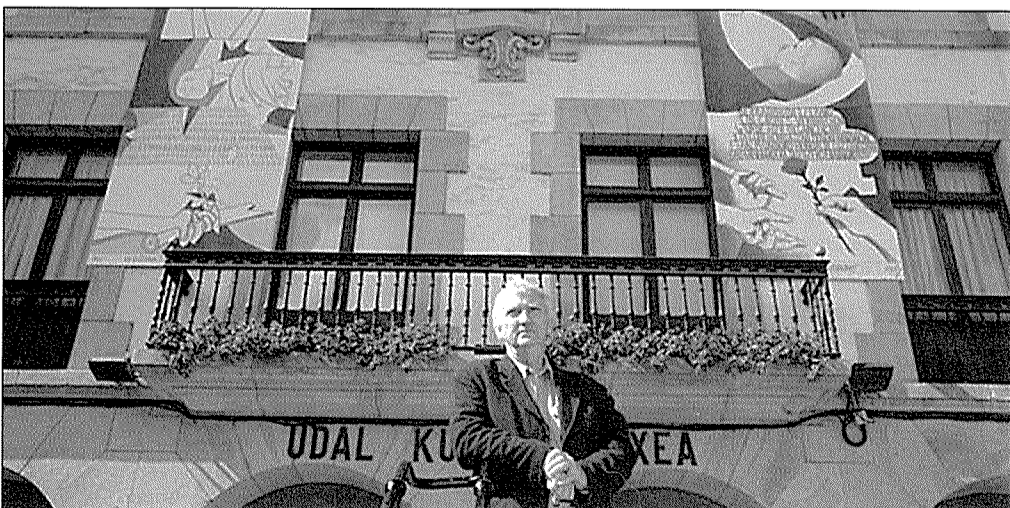
Juris has been a long standing senior committee member of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies (Qld) and the Urban Design Alliance of Queensland, active as a community representative and urban design advocate, writer and educator in Queensland.

Following 20 years as a practicing architect, Juris moved to education. He taught design and a range of other subjects at Queensland University of Technology as a full time academic member of staff for over 10 years, and continues to teach part time. He has a Master of Arts degree in Urban Design (with Distinction) from the Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, and was a Queensland recipient of '2004 Year of the Built Environment' exemplar award.

Juris has extensive knowledge and experience in urban design and development both as an employed senior urban designer and as a consultant. After leaving QUT, he worked with some of Queensland's largest architectural firms designing a range of large local and international projects. He is a regular contributor to *Urban Design Forum*.



▲ Juris Greste, justifiably proud of his OAM

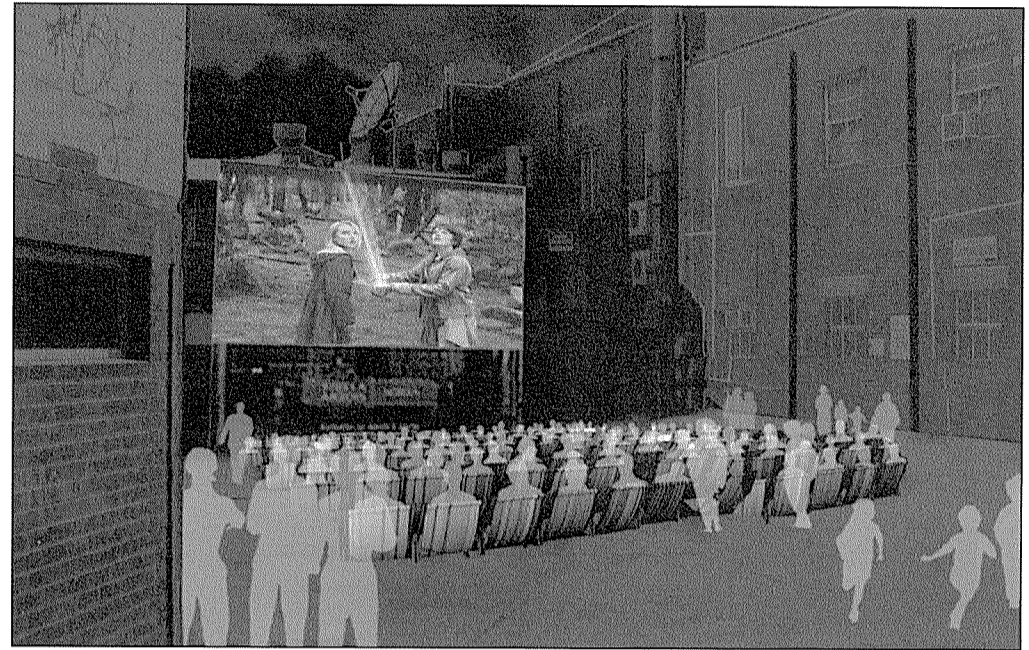


▲ Bill Kelly with his Guernica (Gernika) art panels

# URBAN DESIGN FORUM

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▲ Box Hill Laneways outdoor cinema proposal

## Re/discovering our city

Carolynne MacNaughtan and Steve Schutt

What inspires us to re/discover the intricacies of our city? An observation. An invitation. A spatial reconfiguration. Change.

The redevelopment of the Box Hill, (Victoria) laneways follows a minimalistic approach. An approach from the outset that allows one to *perceive differently...and discover beauty where one would never have perceived it before.* (S, M,L,XL. Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, The Monacelli Press) The project is enriched by subtle, incremental changes that invite users to re/discover their city. It harnesses physical and social change, and enlivens a dead space.

The Box Hill site is subservient to its context. It is bounded by a newly constructed mall and bordered by two main roads - Whitehorse Road and Station Street, in the heart of the Box Hill CBD. The laneways are in a prime position for improved pedestrian movements and within a stone's throw of the transport interchange and institutional, medical, educational precincts and mass development occurring in this Principal Activity Centre and Transit City.

The approach to enlivening the laneways is minimalistic. It is woven with an Asian influence - an existence that dominates the immediate surrounds and offers additional importance to maximising use of the lanes.

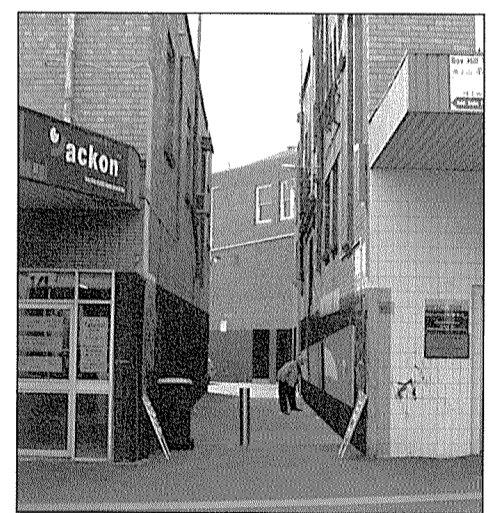
The project involves a series of activations that respect the urban architecture and landscape forms. The activations will be staged and will harness various local and state project partners - local artists, local education institutions, the youth of Box Hill. The approach provides a rearticulation of space. Provision of niche activities. Activations through Summer events. The creation of colour concentrations. The channelling of movements.

The plans envisage vibrant entry gateways for maximum contrast against the monotonous urban backdrop, seasonally changed ephemeral artworks, permeations of colour and lighting for excitement and enthralling, seasonal night cinemas, hawker night markets, produce day markets... to simply bring life to the lanes.

The project is evolving, and community consultation is underway to allow Council and its community to reclaim dead space, and encourage people to venture beyond the known.

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Steve Schutt is Director at Hansen Partnership and can be contacted at [sschutt@hansen-online.com.au](mailto:sschutt@hansen-online.com.au)



▲ Visual art entry

## Are 'Sustainable Cities' still on the agenda?

Rod Duncan

They say a week is a long time in politics. So what happens after one year?

*"She said Rudd told her his top priorities were education, climate change, sustainable cities, federal-state relations and broadband. Fix all these, and productivity would rise, he said, leading to a buoyant economy.* (a quote from Margot Saville's book 'The Taking of Bennelong', referring to Maxine McKew's meeting with Kevin Rudd on 19 January, 2007).

The Rudd initiative of the April Australia2020 Summit: great to see some blue sky thinking by the new government toward a fresh national agenda...but something seems to be missing from the list. It became pretty apparent to me in Europe that quality cities

are now recognised as the prerequisite for progressing lots of other policy objectives. This doesn't seem to have registered here yet - or are we blinded by the myth of 'liveable city' superiority from seeing that most new development is abysmal?

What can we do to raise the profile of an agenda like: 'Competitive and Sustainable Cities: quality platforms for prosperity, equity, innovation and environmental balance' for the Summit?

Rod Duncan is manager of the City Centre Program, a place-based initiative of the City of Greater Bendigo. He can be contacted at [r.duncan@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:r.duncan@bendigo.vic.gov.au)

# Childers Street

## – creating a sustainable knowledge and arts heart in Canberra's city centre

Trina McFarlane

Acland Street in St Kilda, Sydney's King Street Wharf/Darling Harbour and Grey Street/South Bank in Brisbane are vibrant inner-city areas transformed through urban regeneration. Childers Street precinct is also undergoing major change. From a rundown, under-utilised backwater in Canberra's city centre, the precinct is emerging as an exciting destination.

The precinct is a key initiative identified in the ACT Planning and Land Authority's *City West Master Plan* (UDF66 June 2004). Extensive stakeholder input was sought through an iterative process, with strong cooperation from the Australian National University (ANU),



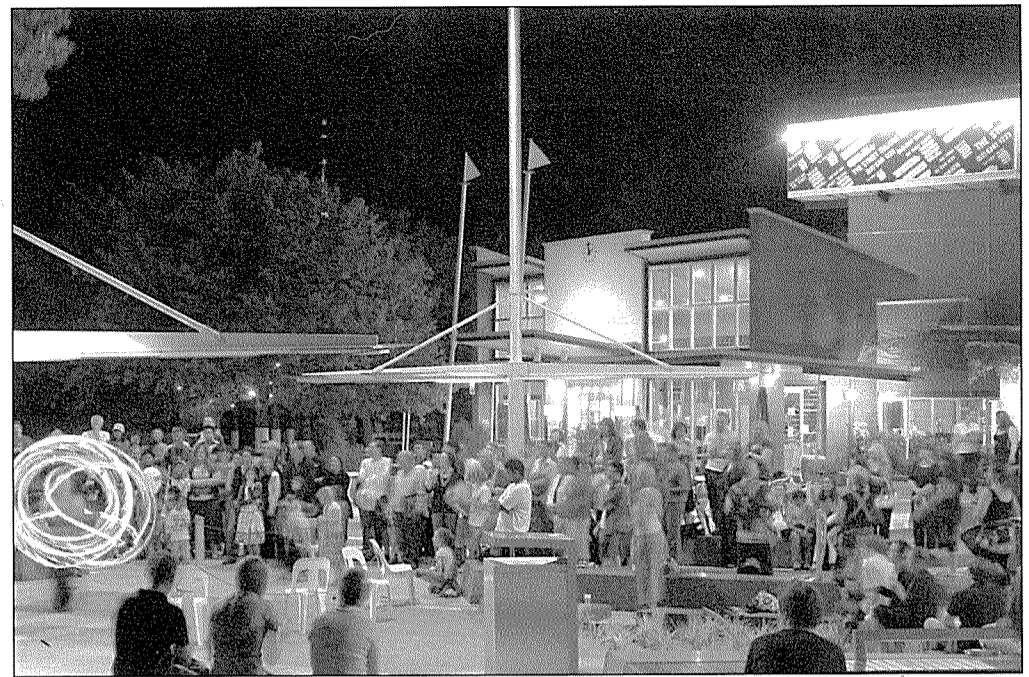
▲ Integrated street architectural elements

the community and within government - from master planning to practical completion. A triple-bottom-line approach is taken, with key objectives to establish the precinct as a model for sustainable development, with an identifiable community spirit, and that is 'leading edge' in design and development.

Childers Street 'Arts Heart' public realm upgrade is the outcome of this visionary planning study for City West. The Authority considered it paramount in developing the 'Arts Heart' brief that the solution epitomises the aspirations of the master plan. The Authority's goal for the public realm, in partnership with EDAW, is to create an innovative urban design framework for a multifunctional, shared-use zone to support incremental mixed-use development and assist in generating a dynamic precinct. The design encapsulates the synergies between the ANU, community, arts, commercial and residential activities of the City, bringing 'town and gown' together.

### A paradigm shift

The urban design-led response is based on a paradigm shift in planning, design and use of the public realm in Canberra. The aim is to raise design standards through innovation and testing standards and guidelines. The design challenges usual perceptions by taking an integrated approach to streetscape elements - furniture, lighting, artwork and water sensitive urban design - to establish a unique, 'funked-up' suite for the precinct, and demonstrates versatility for application in the rest of the City centre. With increasing



▲ Street party opening

awareness of climate change and drought affecting urban landscapes, the design demonstrates responsiveness to the environment by capturing runoff from the street in rain gardens to naturally irrigate plants.

The built outcome achieves these goals, and the water sensitive urban design measures in the public realm are a first for the City centre. Given a significant percentage of the modest \$6.5m budget was spent on redirecting services, the 'Arts Heart' design is a remarkable outcome. The 'Arts Heart' officially opened with a street party in February 2007. *Canberra Central Movement Study* by Intelligent Space (UDF79 September 2007) reinforces the role of pedestrians in the precinct, and gives the impetus for the design of a park and remaining streets to complete

the public realm upgrade in 2009.

*The ANU Exchange* is a major catalyst for development of sites in the precinct. This partnership between the ANU and ACT Government is delivering in part on the *City West Master Plan*, with accommodation completed for 500 students, and more on the way. New apartments nearby are seeing more people permanently residing in the City centre. These new choices in housing offered are contributing to making the City a more vibrant and interesting place.

*Trina McFarlane is Senior Urban Planner at the ACT Planning and Land Authority and can be contacted at trina.mcfarlane@act.gov.au (Images courtesy of EDAW, photography by Michael Clarkson)*

# News from Abu Dhabi

Nathan Alexander

Abu Dhabi is a city with a population almost the same size as Adelaide: it feels like a much bigger city because of the large dense central city, the impressive skyline, and the amount of construction activity. The population is about 20% Emiratis, 10% Westerners, and 70% other expatriates, mostly southern Indians, Pakistanis and Philipinos.

I rent an apartment overlooking the city, the ocean and Lulu Island, a large 'oasis' park. My apartment is about ten years old - high ceilings, two bedrooms, a maid's room, three toilets, tiled floors, Villaroy and Boch bathroom fittings, green doors and bright



▲ The Corniche and central Abu Dhabi

blue window frames. (Almost all the apartment towers here are designed by engineers with no input from architects or interior designers!) I live on the 14th floor.

I have a choice of three supermarkets within a five minute walk. I usually shop at the closest one, which is also the most upmarket. It has a very wide range of groceries from around the world, including almost everything I would get at a supermarket in Adelaide. It does miss out on Vegemite and Twisties, but makes up for this by stocking mangosteens, camel milk, many varieties of dates, and lots else besides.

The weather here is always extreme - extremely hot in summer, extremely pleasant now. Winter temperatures are not cold, just nicely warm. No need for coats or even jackets. No rain to worry about either! The easy living in winter helps to make up for the brutal conditions in summer.

The decree establishing the Urban Planning Council and its powers was handed down last September. As well as setting the strategic vision for all spatial development of the emirate, we will:

- establish planning policies, regulations and guidelines
- give or withhold planning approval for major developments (and any others we want to 'call in' from the municipalities)
- regulate the timing of development (to avoid flooding the market)
- audit approval processes of any other body involved in giving development approvals.



▲ A typical street in central Abu Dhabi

This makes us, theoretically at least, the most powerful spatial planning agency that I know of in the world.

The UPC has a consultant budget for the period September 2007 to December 2009 of over \$25m, and an intention to start over fifty-five projects in that time. These range from strategic plans for large districts of the city, through design guidelines for new urban areas, development regulations for the entire city, redesign of two of the major roads, to vastly improve pedestrian conditions and general amenity.

We recently had a week-long charrette with an international team of planners and designers, this time to design Al Ain, a city of 300,000 people with the incredibly low density of less than one household per hectare. Led by the loquacious and ever-energetic Larry Beasley, formerly head of planning at the City of Vancouver, the charrette produced an excellent vision for Al Ain, including largely avoiding more sprawl and instead creating greater density in the existing city area.

The charrette was immediately followed by our first Urban Design Review Panel, a team of five international experts to review eight of the biggest projects here. The smallest project is the population size and \$ value of the redevelopment of the Adelaide port area, the largest for several hundred thousand people.

For those interested in more detail, see

[www.pricetags.ca/pricetags/pricetags98.pdf](http://www.pricetags.ca/pricetags/pricetags98.pdf). This edition of the urbanism emag from Vancouver reproduces a talk Larry Beasley gave recently on his work in Abu Dhabi. It gives a background to what I am doing here.

*Nathan Alexander moved from Adelaide eight months ago to work as a Director with the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council. He can be contacted by email: nathan.alexander@upc.gov.ae*



▲ *Imaging the city of the future. Is this what Ziggy Switkowski has in mind when he promotes nuclear power for Australia? In 2006 Dr Switkowski was appointed by the now-defeated Howard Government to chair an inquiry into the viability of a domestic nuclear power industry. He is currently chairman of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)*



▲ View from my living room balcony

# ACNU08 in Brisbane

Juris Greste

The rationale of large numbers does not prove anything. However, it does say something. In February, 400 people gathered in Brisbane to once again hear the Australian new urbanist message. Many had invested the whole week to participate in an 'Enquiry by Design' master class or a charrette course prior to the conference itself.

From the delegates list, it is not possible to tell which of the participants were regular members of the ACNU congregation, but it was clear that a good number were first timers. It was also encouraging to note that many were in the early stages of their professional careers. One way or the other, clearly the ACNU community is growing and many are at least interested to find out what is going on.

It is my regular lament that those who ought to hear a conference message usually are not there. Nevertheless, the delegates list is always very illuminating. On this occasion, 117 delegates - close to a third - represented local authorities or public institutions. This is an encouraging number if only as a sign that more of our arms of government are taking notice of urban design. However, teaching institutions in the main had chosen to remain aloof with only six representatives registered. Ipswich City Council takes the 'biggest contingent' prize with 14 and Waitakere City Council (NZ) a close second at 10.

When there is a rich three-day feast, served up by some of the world's most highly credentialed and skilled cooks, it is difficult to filter out the most interesting and nourishing morsels. In the end, each 'diner' will take what they came for or wanted to sample. Here are the special bits that I savoured.

The conference was officially opened by Colin Jensen, Coordinator General, Director General, Department of Infrastructure and Planning. Regrettably some of the images were a little off target for this conference audience. In Queensland, planning has now been divorced from the Local Government Department and coupled with Infrastructure. This writer has reservations about the wisdom of this union.

## Policy makers asleep at the wheel

Evan Jones produced the first sermon with a sobering prognosis. "We are only 30 years away from climate catastrophe, fossil fuel depletion and an aged and almost stable population. This means that the decisions we make in the next 10 to 20 years [and I think we have already missed the start] will dictate the shape, liveability and sustainability of Australian cities for the whole of the 21st Century. There is no second chance". Yet, most of our major policy makers seem to be asleep at the wheel!

Paul Murrain opened his presentation with David Engwicht's mantra that '*the purpose of the city is to facilitate and maximise exchange while minimising the need for travel*'. This axiom deserves to be tattooed on the forehead of everyone with any kind of role in the making and management of cities

and towns so that they see it in the mirror every morning. I will also carefully file away a few other of Paul's metaphors and epigrams: *many development strategies are obese; the DNA of towns is the streets; the grid is still the fundamental element of the urban buzz; we should know more about The Social Logic of Space* (look it up on the net if this leaves you puzzled); *don't let the architecture fight in the street*.

Peter Richards gave an overview of where New Urbanism has been in Queensland, especially in the south-east. Moved we have, but it seems ever so frustratingly slowly. Peter reminded that, above all, the major stumbling block for lots of people is developing the right mind set - to think/imagine a town instead of merely infrastructure, property, traffic or markets.

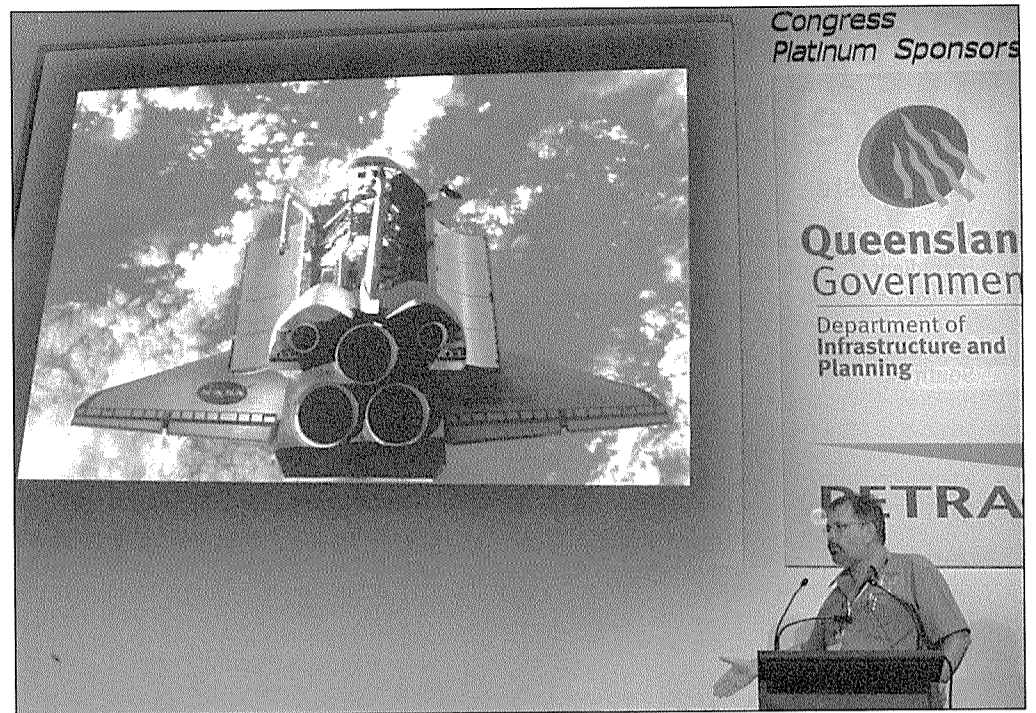
While some delegates were doing a quick inspection of South East Queensland's more significant recent greenfield projects, Chip Kaufman and crew lead us through a quick New Urbanism Primer. It all seemed a little too obvious - well interconnected neighbourhoods with their own walkable-distance local amenities. However, I particularly warm to the idea of schools not only being on smaller sites but located so that they can actually be more convenient for everyone and treated as one of the most important elements of the urban fabric. It is absurd that around 3pm, the local roads get choked worse than peak hour and there is little chance the drivers can do another errand while picking the kids up from school.

## Intuition confirmed?

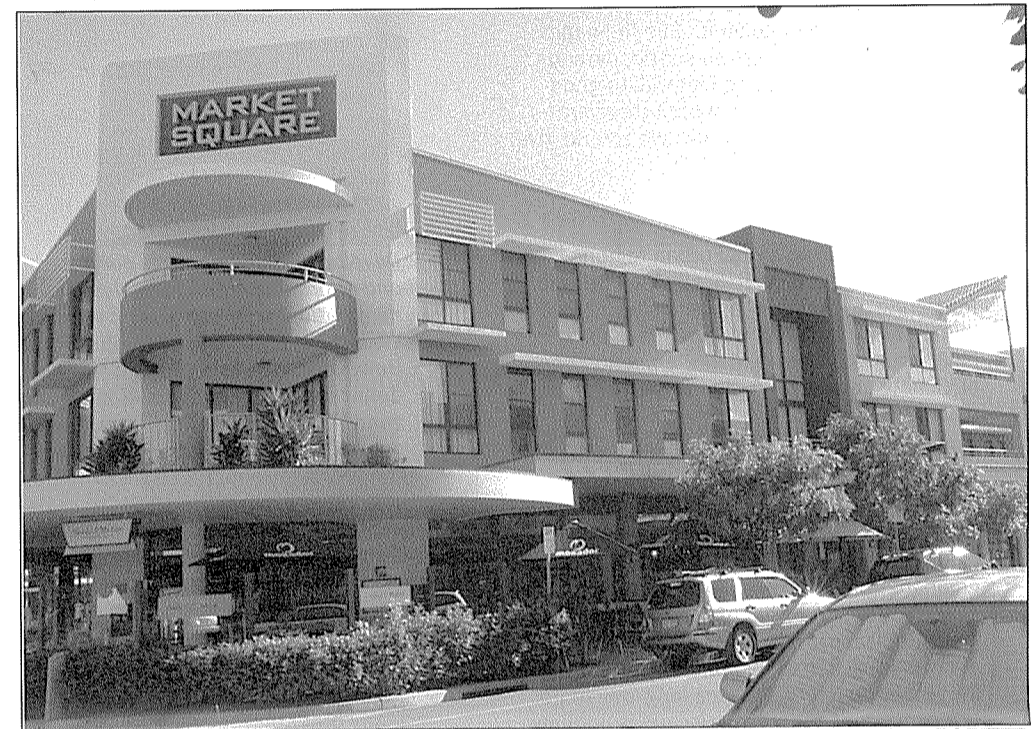
Victor Dover observed that while initially New Urbanism was largely intuitive, as time has passed we now have research results which confirm most of the basic concepts and principles. Victor also assured us that the New Urban ideas are not just for greenfield locations [just as well] but also for urban regenerations and applicable to other urban problems. However, to this fan, Victor excels in his graphic communication of what is possible with his seductive and highly credible 'before' and 'after' illustrations.

With the graphic technology at our disposal, why do our planners and policy-makers still waste everyone's time using language-based surveys and 'consultations' which mean a different thing to every participant rather than employ more graphic/virtual reality examinations of what is possible and might be? We truly need to be re-imagining our cities and towns. However, words do also have power. Victor used the expression 'mixed income housing' instead of affordable, welfare, etc. This kind of relabelling is sometimes called social marketing, but do we not need more mixed income housing? What does 'affordable' really mean? Is it a euphemism for cheap?

Day 1 was wrapped up by Stephen Bowers, the ever present conference chair and chief conductor. To Stephen, the only way to



▲ Stephen Bowers with his urban design launch vehicle  
▼ Varsity Lakes central street



"do" urban design is through the enquiry by design (EbD) process because any other way of engaging with the community is "*doing planning by exhaustion*". Of course, it does not matter if you exhaust the EbD leaders! To him, the accelerating development delivery vehicle is the charrette, dramatically illustrated by an intergalactic vehicle in full flight! Stephen's testimony was given added credibility as he represents a sector of the development industry.

## Successes claimed under NU banner

The following two days logged and reviewed the spectrum of projects and successes claimed under the New Urbanism banner. Regrettably, insufficient time and intellect was applied to strategies on how and where the broader message of the concepts, principles and structures of a better way of putting together our cities and towns can be broadcast and implemented. The core material of a conference of this kind ought to be taken on a tour of all of our cities and provinces every year. Urban design education (in all senses and levels) is too dispersed and a very feeble level for an occasional conference to make the kind of difference that this country badly needs.

Of the various round-up comments, the one that stuck in my memory is Paul Murrain's "*For consumer capitalism, certainty is more important than truth*" - worth pondering. As long as you give them certainty and predictability, you may be able to get more than you expect?

## Coping with the inevitable?

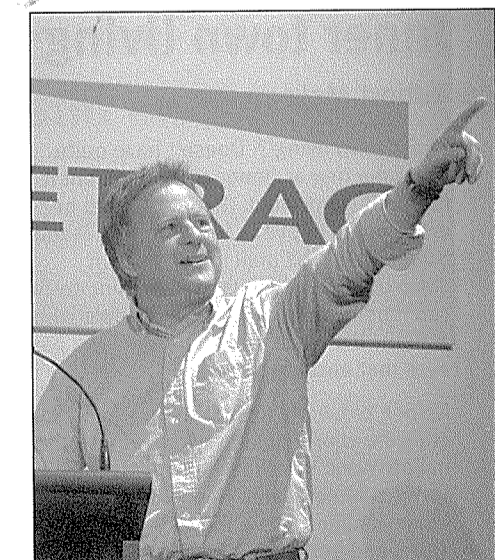
We will not arrest global warming and its consequences! Our non-renewable energy will decline and exhaust itself. Our demographic and social change cycle will not be reversed for at least another couple of generations. Helping our cities to cope with the inevitable should be our primary mission. Whatever your own 'confession' to urban design, we need it more now than ever. For a cohesive approach to these challenges, the ACNU agenda seems to be the best insurance to minimise the pain.

An assuring sign of the acknowledgement of urban design importance and the ACNU route to it was the impressively large number of major sponsors, including Queensland Government's Department of Infrastructure and Planning. Let us hope that this means a genuine embrace of better urban practice and not merely a marketing opportunity.

This reporter is probably not the most appropriate to reflect on the feast, having been selling this cuisine for two decades. However, while I did not experience any new 'road to Damascus' revelations, I did come away encouraged that the last 20 years have not quite been for naught: that urban design is moving ahead, however slowly; that there are still people with zeal and passion for urban quality; that a strong message is being broadcast. As for ACNU, in the absence of any other strong voices or championing from our universities and other institutions, it is the only coherent message in town.

Juris Greste OAM participated at the conference at the invitation of the organising committee, and can be contacted at [jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au)

(Photos courtesy of Wendy Morris and Juris Greste)



▲ And God commanded  
- "Let there be ACNU" - Paul Murrain



▲ Orion Town Centre Main Street

# Subtropicality – the secret ingredient in SEQ?

Juris Greste

It seems that the secret and missing ingredient in South East Queensland's urban design recipe has been found – subtropicality! There are similarities in regional plans of Greater Vancouver, Portland, Melbourne and South East Queensland. However, the SEQ document is claimed to be distinctive in that it advocates for subtropical design. This quality has floated up in recent years as the feature which will give the region unique distinction and produce superior urbanity. Since this idea seems to have emerged from Brisbane City Council in recent years, it has gained unchallenged status as a 'must have' component of local urban design. This commentary is not intended to undermine the initiative. However, without wanting to earn the title of the supreme heretic, there are a few observations which are worth making.

Subtropicality seems to be rather a shadowy and elusive quality because we are still searching for a handle on it. See the paper referred to below. If it is so subtle, perhaps it is not as important and material to good urbanity as is thought. I submit there are other urban qualities to which we should give much higher priority.

## Design assimilation or cosmetic effect

It seems that other global urban regions have not felt the need to specifically include 'mild temperate' or 'hot arid' as requisite criteria in their city making strategies. Perhaps they have intuitively assimilated the phenomenon of climate and place in their design and planning thinking.

Are we sure we are not looking for a cosmetic effect to create a more distinct image. If it is promotion and marketing driven, there are likely to be more direct and overt devices we can use. Did this 'movement' emanate from the city's previous 'City Image' concerns for some kind of competitive edge? If subtropical expression and qualities are intended also to respond to cultural landscape issues, we have a long way to go. The concept of cultural landscape is not new. Why have we not embraced it before?

If it is local character we are seeking, there are other means and routes to it than the narrow path of 'subtropicality'. The geography is as much a part of place heritage as any built element. Yet, we seem to have considerable difficulty in responding to our local geography and topography.

After attending to what we can do within public territory, too much depends on the quality of architecture. Contemporary modernism seems to be too internationally homogenised to be capable of supporting a distinctive and broadly based local expression. How dedicated are the architecture schools to a search for subtropical character? We are still in a desperate plight to credibly respond to the built Queensland heritage, let alone the shadowy figure of subtropicality.

## What happens when climate changes?

Our climate is changing and the signs that we might be able to arrest that change are not very promising. There is a possibility that in another 20 or so years, SEQ could be in a different climatic zone. How confident can

we be that we are backing the right horse?

Would it not make more sense to pursue the objectives and practices of sustainability and give it primacy in all our planning and urban place making? Urban design education in Queensland is and has been in a parlous state for many years. A Centre for Subtropical Design (CSD) has been established within Queensland University of Technology. This dissipates the already scarce resources and intellectual energies further. Would it not bring a higher dividend if they were utilised to broaden the front of disseminating general urban design knowledge and understanding which is more fundamental to high urban quality than merely promoting one aspect of it?

According to the CSD web site, it intends to:

- *Inspire design suited to the subtropical climate, landscapes and lifestyle.* Leading by inspiration is commendable. However, there are numerous other important qualities and objectives we are unable to achieve by various planning and design instruments. If legislation, guidelines and other tools have not been very effective, are we now down to the last resort of 'inspiration'?
- *Develop and demonstrate comfortable and affordable subtropical design for our neighbourhoods, homes and workplaces.* Who could argue with the value of that! However, in the face of multi-million dollar marketing budgets of air conditioning companies (as well as power supply utilities), I wonder just how much the CSD has spent on public promotion and advertising of the merits of cross-ventilation and appropriate orientation? Only extreme costs of power and air conditioning systems will have significant impact on that one. Worthy, but misplaced effort.
- *Share knowledge and experience of subtropical design.* A good idea, but how many other places are there that need our advice? In any case, subtropics is not even a major climatic region on my atlas. Should we not be placing higher priority on including knowledge on designing for climate as a core component of all built environment education programs? Leaving it after graduation is an acknowledgement of failure.

Some early research on this broad topic has been done by Drs. Danny O'Hare and Bishna Bajracharya for their paper 'Integrating subtropical design in transit oriented developments of South East Queensland' (see <http://urbandesiginaustralia.com.au>) I submit that their findings support the uncertainties expressed here. It also confirms that subtropical 'expression' is little more than merely good urbanism (which by most definitions responds to the breadth of qualities of place, including climate).

Let's just get on with educating more people to not only design good places but also commission them, discriminate for quality and see enough value in them to invest appropriately.

Juris Greste OAM can be contacted at [jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jandlgreste@optusnet.com.au)

## Inner town living

Robert McLean

'Inner town living'? Doesn't have quite the same ring as 'inner city living', but it is equally important. People should be encouraged to live in Shepparton's Maude Street Mall. The mall needs its own community, not just its present nine-to-five community, rather a group of people who actually live there and so become the passive eyes that encourage safety.

No one presently lives in the mall and so, once the shops close, save the movie theatre in East Walk, the city's heart stops beating. I have a rather idyllic view of how it would be - I see families living above, or behind, every store, and in the evenings the mall, which had been alive with shoppers all day, would be equally alive in the evenings with locals socialising, children playing and the pulse of

life stores arouse during the day would continue into the night bringing life, and with it, safety.

The entire mall is zoned Commercial One, but with the appropriate encouragement, living areas could be created. Immediately I can hear those of a mercenary nature crying about the cost of integrating living areas with an expensive Commercial One zone, but it is those very living areas that bring life, vitality and, importantly, safety to a mall that is near deserted as darkness descends.

The key word is integration – if those who live and understand urban design, and so the workings and life of cities, are invited to be involved they will ensure a workable blend, enabling the community to become vital and strong as it grows. The rating structure for



▲ Kelvin Grove streetscape in Brisbane: Is this sub-tropicality?

## Cycling Resource Centre

An on-line information hub on cycling, the Australian Bicycle Council's new Cycling Resource Centre, is a convenient and user friendly 'one stop shop' for those involved in the planning and provision of cycling facilities and programs. It provides planners, engineers and others access to a wide range of topics in one central location. It will also be of interest to cycling groups and cyclists generally. Users can access thousands of on-line pages with information and links

covering: engineering and planning; education and training; encouragement and promotion; enforcement and road safety; recreation; funding; and research.

The Cycling Resource Centre provides direct links to relevant cycling information on Australian state and territory government agency websites, national and international news articles and research covering Australia and New Zealand. For more information see [www.cyclingresourcecentre.org.au](http://www.cyclingresourcecentre.org.au)

## Conferences

### Walk21 Barcelona 2008

8-10 October 2008

Catalunya Camina and the City of Barcelona are proud to co-host the 9th annual Walk21 conference, Walk21 Barcelona 2008: 'Walk with Barcelona – a moving city'. The conference themes - Political Vision, Civic Pride and Technical Expertise - reflect our desire to make this a conference that focuses on the relationships that enable people to develop sustainable and vibrant healthy communities, where people can and do choose to walk. Pre- and post-conference workshops and activities will be held and there will be a range of walkshops offered as part of the conference itself. For more information see [www.barcelonawalk21.com](http://www.barcelonawalk21.com)

### 46th International Making Cities Livable Conference

1-5 June 2008 Santa Fe NM USA

IMCL has an exciting new initiative in partnership with the National Town Builders Association. Together with city representatives, developers and experts in child health and development, we are creating Guidelines for Child-friendly Neighbourhoods and Cities to integrate nature and community life into the built environment.

Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods* has given new impetus to IMCL's long-

standing focus on children. When the Guidelines and Certification Program are enacted, children's lives will be profoundly improved – and a liveable city for children is a liveable city for all! We invite you to help shape this program.

For more information about the program see [www.livablecities.org/46ConfSantaFe.htm](http://www.livablecities.org/46ConfSantaFe.htm)

### Intercultural Cities Conference

1-3 May 2008 Liverpool UK

In the cities of today and tomorrow, how can people from different cultures really live together - rather than just rub alongside one another? As part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Intercultural Cities Conference, will look at migration, diversity and urban life in a fresh way. New thinking is needed on how diverse communities can co-operate in productive harmony instead of leading parallel or antagonistic lives.

The three day event will feature various European and international speakers, with a format that pursues maximum interaction between delegates and speakers. There will also be the opportunity to get out into Liverpool to see some examples of intercultural dialogue. Full details can be found at <http://inter.culture.info/icc> including the early bird booking fee, available until 31 March.

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