

# We don't need to keep on sprawling

Rob Adams

More than 80% of Australians and over half of the world's population now live in cities — cities that are responsible, directly or indirectly, for nearly 75% of the world's greenhouse gases. The design and operation of our cities is therefore a critical challenge facing humanity in the 21st century. Our successes or failures to transform cities over the next 20 years will be a key legacy to future generations.

It is important to realise that in 2029 over 90% of the infrastructure of Australian cities would have been built prior to 2010. Transformation, by this definition, cannot simply be read as rebuilding infrastructure but rather will need to, in the main, involve the rationalisation and better utilization of our existing infrastructure. Only one thing is certain: if we continue to understand, develop and utilise our infrastructure in the traditional ways of the 20th century, we are doomed to perpetuate our current problems.

## Dream or nightmare

The garden city movement promised us the dream that we could live in the countryside and work in the city, while modernism turned us away from pragmatic, locally-based solutions and towards international solutions supported by technologies (such as air conditioning) that no longer made 'place-influenced design' a necessity. Overlay this mindset with an over-reaction to the ills of the industrial city and the emergence of the motor car and you have the root causes of the current form of our cities — namely low density, widely spread, specific activity zoned cities where the motor car dominates our public realm and public transport has been largely marginalised.

Recent research undertaken by Curtin University that found that for every 1,000 dwellings, the costs for infill and fringe developments are \$309 million and \$653 million respectively. Additional fringe development costs incurred include hard infrastructure such as power and water, increased transport and health costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore by encouraging infill development, the economic savings to society would equate to over \$300 million per 1,000 housing units, in Melbourne's case \$110,000,000,000 over the next 50 years. That figure does not take account of the indirect benefits. This research adds considerably to concerns about the unending sprawl of our cities and strengthens the case for more compact settlement patterns.

## Sustainability and liveability

We have reached an interesting time when the drivers of sustainable cities are the same as the drivers of liveable cities, namely, mixed use, connectivity, high quality public realm, local character and adaptability. When these characteristics come together, as they do for example in Barcelona, they provide an alchemy of sustainability, social benefit and economic vitality.

A new paradigm for Australian cities should recognise the need to not only direct future development to Activity Centres around rail infrastructure (which most are planning) but also to recognise the enormous development potential of the road-based public transport corridors created by bus and tram movements. Curitiba in Brazil, for example, has pioneered development of the 'linear city', using a trunk Bus Rapid Transit network as the foundation for medium rise high density development, surrounded by low density development.

## Urban Corridors, Productive Suburbs

Over the next decade in Melbourne, Urban Corridors (9% of the city) along with Activity

Centres, will need to become known as the most desirable locations for new urban development. The aim should be that, by 2029, the key linear transport corridors will have developed into medium-rise high density corridors that connect all the activity centres, and provide easy access to high quality public transport from the adjacent 'productive suburbs'. Development of these corridors would take development pressure off the existing suburbs (91% of the city), which can then develop as the new 'green lungs' of our metropolitan areas.

Australians have a love affair with the suburban block with its detached single dwelling and extensive greenery. This deep seated empathy is not going to change in the short term, nor are these areas going to be rebuilt by 2029. Attempting to retro-fit significantly increased density development in areas not well serviced by public transport is unlikely to be a viable proposition. Instead we need to enhance the quality of these suburban areas, while introducing greater sustainability.

One of the key issues arising from *Melbourne 2030* was the inability to implement the strategy rapidly enough to give confidence to the community and the development industry. The key to implementation is the ability to provide simple pragmatic guidelines and then use exemplar projects that can quickly and successfully produce results that demonstrate the efficacy of the new approach. In a recent study for the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development by SGS, a simple one page set of Urban Design Guidelines were developed that were capable of ensuring high quality urban design outcomes. If these guidelines were to be tested along a designated tram route, such as Nicholson Street, North Fitzroy or Lygon Street, North Carlton - where there is sufficient road width to give dedicated road space to trams - it would be possible to demonstrate the practical results within a few years.

## Small scale infrastructure superior

A related shift in thinking is to recognise that our cities are not necessarily best served by large scale infrastructure. Current thinking that power generation and water supply can only succeed through the provision of large centralised infrastructure limits our options and ability to not only climate proof our cities, but also defend them against the extreme weather events. Smaller distributed solutions are not only more efficient and economical in their requirement and use of distribution networks but are also, as a result of their distributed nature, less vulnerable to extreme circumstances.

\$20 billion invested in conventional infrastructure, through the new Commonwealth Building Australia Fund, will give us conventional outcomes. \$20 billion invested in 'new age' technologies could see us become a world leader. The proposal to transform our cities is one that relies on small investments at all levels of Local, State and Federal Government, with complementary private investment encouraged by government policy direction. The end result will be a transformation of our cities, and nothing less will resolve the current problems confronting us.

We must not keep on sprawling!

Rob Adams AM is Director Design and Urban Environment at the City of Melbourne, and Professor at Melbourne University. The above abstracts are from a recent report and a paper 'Transforming Australian cities for a more financially viable and sustainable future.' For more information Rob can be contacted at [rob.adams@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:rob.adams@melbourne.vic.gov.au)

in Australia and to encourage cities, towns and emerging settlements of all sizes to strive similarly for improvement. It acknowledges the critical role of good urban design in the development of our cities and towns. Prime Minister, The Hon. Kevin Rudd is now Patron of the Award.

The Award is hosted by the Planning Institute of Australia, with support from Australian Institute of Architects, Property Council of Australia, Green Building Council of Australia, Association of Consulting Engineers Australia and Urban Design Forum. The nomination form is available at [www.planning.org.au](http://www.planning.org.au)

## Australian Award for Urban Design 2009

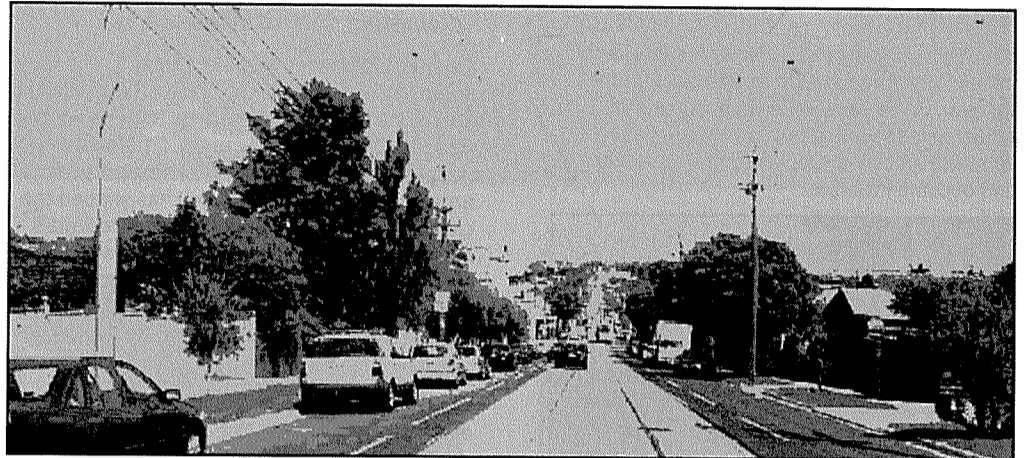
Nominations for the 2009 Australia Award for Urban Design close 26 June. This is your opportunity to highlight leading examples of urban design in Australia. Have you been involved in a recent project demonstrating excellence and innovation in all elements of urban design? Are you aware of recent Australian urban design initiatives, projects or developments that deserve national recognition?

The Australia Award for Urban Design was created by the Urban Design Taskforce set up by then PM Paul Keating, and was first awarded in 1996. It was established to recognise urban design projects of high quality

# URBAN DESIGN FORUM

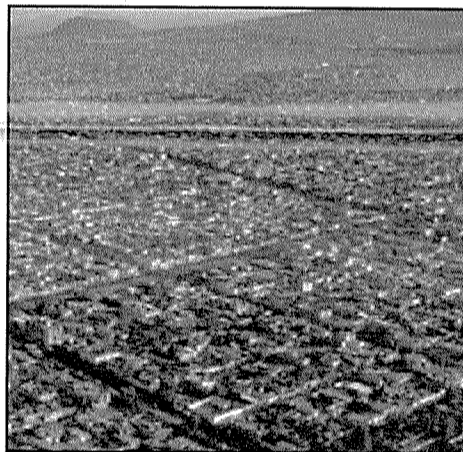
ISSUE No. 86

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▲ Maribynong Road study area

▼...and possible future



▲ This built form and transport mode are no longer sustainable

## Victoria and NSW get together on better design

Recently, key players in urban design in Victoria and NSW met in Melbourne for a one-day creative workshop on how to achieve better design outcomes. In recognition of the skilled nature of design assessment, some Victorian councils and jurisdictions elsewhere in Australia and overseas have been turning to the use of Design Review Panels. The workshop was convened with a view to more fully explore this option and to act as a catalyst for identifying other possibilities and thinking.

The agenda was listening and learning, and planning for action to address challenges,

particularly the current tsunami in urban finances — the global financial crisis and responses to it. The day was initiated by Geoffrey London, Victorian Government Architect, Jane Monk, Chair of the Victorian Planning Minister's Priority Development Panel, the DPCD's Urban Design team. Key presentations were by NSW practitioners Ken Maher, Chairman, Hassel Architects, Peter Mould, NSW Government Architect, and Frank Stanicic, Principle of Stanicic Associates Architects. Related articles are on pages 2 & 3.

## Urban Design meets the Stimulus!

It may sound like a scary film title, but its importance is great and immediate. A major national, and international, response to the so-called 'global financial crisis' is to throw very large sums of money at projects with the aim of stimulating the economy. This presents a major opportunity for urban design — and a major challenge.

Some politicians and bureaucrats just want to see the money spent as quickly as possible, and are prepared to sweep aside any impediments — including normal planning and design considerations. Others are more insightful and creative, and understand that, if sound environment, planning and design principles are not part of the speeded up reality, then the mistakes may become obvious very quickly, and bring both a public

and political backlash. We are in a high risk environment which demands effective risk management as well as speed.

### Submit your ideas now

With the common understanding that urban design is as much about functionality (ie how a place works) as about aesthetics, this edition of Urban Design Forum includes a number of relevant articles. Given that this is a live and urgent challenge, readers are invited to submit their ideas about how best urban design can interact with the 'GFC' and the 'Stimulus'. Send contributions, maximum 400 words, and a good pic or two, to [wchandler@bigpond.com](mailto:wchandler@bigpond.com) by 1 July for publishing consideration in the next edition.



# The Art of the City

Jenaya Shepherd

While public art is considered for the people, for those who wouldn't go into an art gallery, examples from around the world show it can be much, much more. It can invigorate the urban mundane, become an attraction and even make a place. We know this - it has been a topic of debate for years.

Why then is public art still a design postscript here in Perth?

'Plop' art, as some call it, rarely fuses with its milieu. A statue here, an abstract sculpture there or, in the case of Perth, everywhere! Whilst nice to look at once or twice, these addenda quickly dissolve into the cityscape and become invisible.



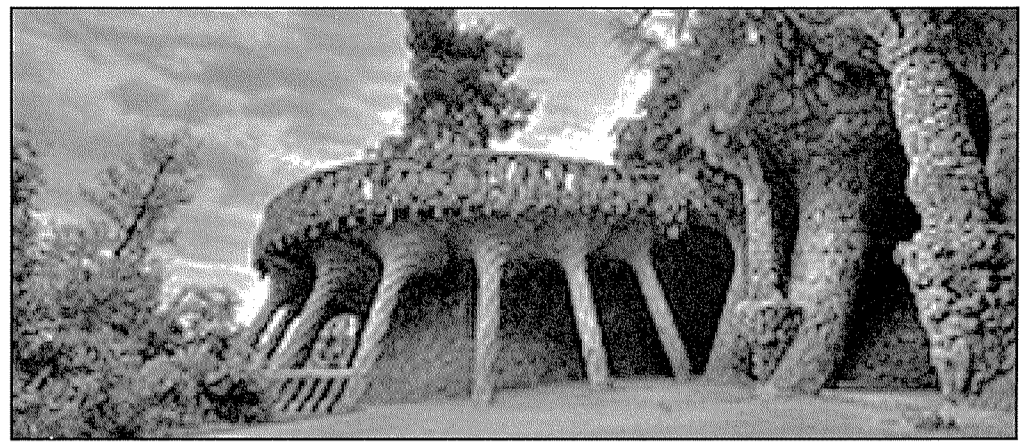
▲ Basic's Sea Organ, Zadar, Croatia

Returning to Perth after a decade overseas, I'll admit I am bemused by our approach to public art and its role in the public realm. European cities seem to deal with the topic effortlessly, building art into the urban structure. Public art is for the people, so why not integrate it within the functionality of space and identity of place? Why not bring artists along in the design process? Public art with place making benefits!

## Celebrating poetics in the everyday

Celebrating poetics in the everyday has made some of the world's great places. Park Guell in Barcelona immediately springs to mind. Antoni Gaudi's city park speaks to the Catalan people and visitors alike. Meshing art with urban functionality, Park Guell has shaped the city's identity and become one of Barcelona's most famous attractions. It remains strongly connected to the people of Barcelona, used foremost as city park for local inhabitants to escape the hustle and bustle of city living.

Involving artists during the conceptual stage of design can lead to the creation of extraordinary places. The Sea Organ, located on the shores of Zadar, Croatia, is a simple but elegant installation by Nikola Basic. Basic's vision was for white marble steps to invite people to the water's edge, while underneath



▲ Gaudi's Park Guell in Barcelona

tuned pipes 'play' music by the movement of the sea: the chords depend on the size and velocity of the waves. This urban installation has reconnected the people of Zadar with the sea, while creating a beautiful and popular place to gather in the city.

A fun and quirky example of art within the urban form is the "Broadway Dance Steps", an installation by John Mackie in Seattle. The project was commissioned as part of a civil maintenance program. A new pavement was going in anyway, so why not make it more interesting? Art was literally incorporated into the street by setting brass shoe prints into the pavement to make up a series of dance

steps. "1, 2, 3, 1,2,3 -- Quick, quick, slow. Quick, quick, slow" says a sign above the steps making up the Rumba.

Mackie explains this work as a representation of the choreography of the street. Noting movement of people in a city is like 'dancing'. He likes the surprise of doing public art saying: "I get people on their way to work. I get people on their way shopping, when they don't expect it." This seems a good philosophy for a practice which aims to bring art to the people.

Jenaya Shepherd is Senior Urban Designer at the Urban Design Centre of Western Australia and can be contacted at [jshepherd@udcwa.org](mailto:jshepherd@udcwa.org)

# Is it acceptable, or is it the best?

Sylvia Georges

A recent decision by VCAT (Victorian planning appeals tribunal) for a proposed development on a conspicuous corner site in Burke Road Camberwell demonstrated that design outcomes need not be the 'best' or 'ideal' - "acceptable" is more than enough. However, when we think about it: what is an acceptable design outcome? Who has the right to make a decision on what is acceptable or not? And, acceptable to whom and by what standards?

The site is more than 1,000 square metres, with two frontages, the main frontage facing Burke Road - a major north-south spine. Sitting on the edge between the residential and business zones, and occupying the north-east corner of an important intersection, the site literally marks the entry to a neighbourhood activity centre. With lower scale dwellings to the north and east, and a vast reserve to the west across Burke Road, the site has a few sensitive interface issues to address. Abutting the site to the east is a public car park, followed by single dwellings, mostly used for medical and community purposes.

## Four-storey residential apartments

The application was for a four-storey residential apartment building, with the built form including a two-storey podium-like mass, followed by another two levels atop. The upper levels are setback slightly from the street edge, but some sections protrude in the setback zone.

The four-storey height was not seen as an issue as presented to VCAT, mainly because of the site's location on the edge of an activity centre, its high exposure, a relatively large site size and multiple frontages. All these factors make it a good candidate for a higher density residential development.

However, with the building used exclusively for residential, many of the ground floor

apartments ended up with their private open space facing the adjoining roads. Those facing Burke Road are contained within a 9m setback zone, while those facing south are built almost directly on the street edge, with balconies elevated by less than half a metre above the footpath level.

## Key issues

Key issues included the actual mix of activities on site or more precisely, lack of it, and the poor interface with the public domain, which relates to the corner design (both physically ie in terms of built edge, and functionally ie in terms of use). Undoubtedly, the transitional nature and special location of the site necessitates a specifically tailored design solution, with each interface treated differently to address its sensitivity and uniqueness.

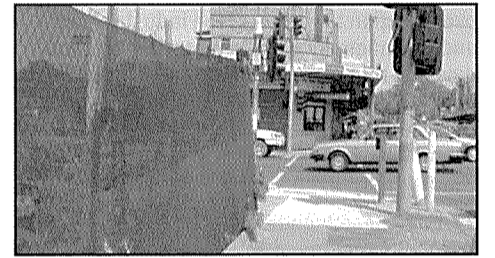
A good interface with the public domain should offer high design quality and activity, especially on sites at main intersections and within such proximity to activity centres. In many instances, it can revitalise an entire activity centre and better integrate it with its context.

"Activity" is a key ingredient for the creation of successful, liveable and safe public places. Building facades frame spaces, and therefore form a key component of the public realm. They should be designed to reach out to the street and offer an active frontage onto the space, adding interest and vitality to the street. Street life is dependent on the level of animation and interaction between the building and the street. The more transparent and open the facades are, the friendlier, livelier and safer are the streets. Facades that turn their backs to the roads undermine entire streetscapes, resulting in many safety and security problems.

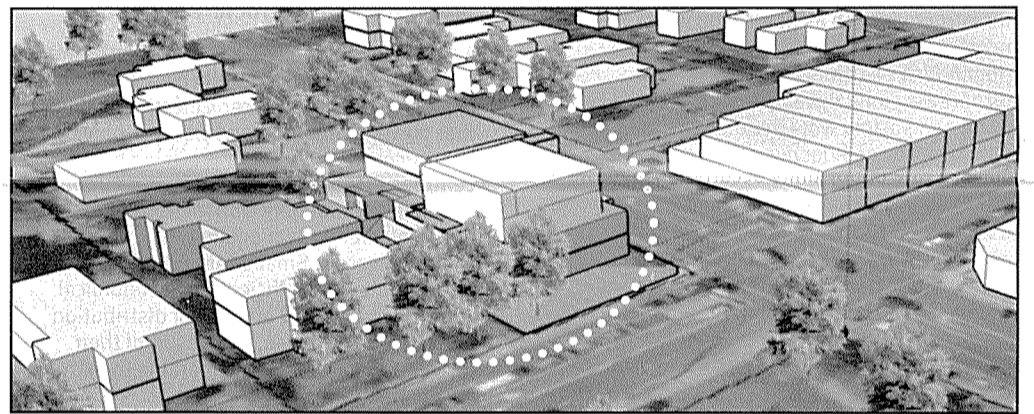
My argument is simple and straightforward. Producing the 'ideal design response' to a site is not an impossible task. A good and

thorough contextual analysis produces a responsive design outcome, which is unique to the site. 'Good design' is one that sensitively responds and positively contributes to the overall qualities of existing streets. It is one that creates buildings that are specifically and distinctively tailored to suit and 'fit within' their local contexts, adding to and enhancing their surrounding environment, 'the public realm'.

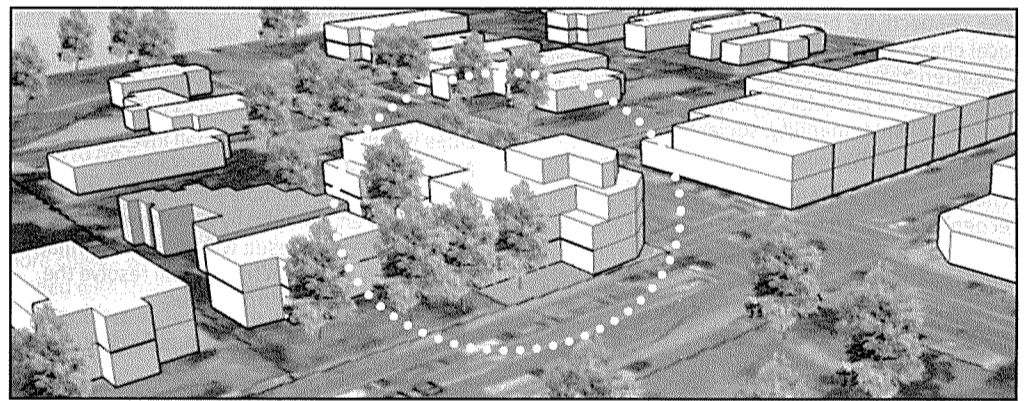
Sylvia Georges is Urban Designer at the City of Boroondara, and be contacted at [Sylvia.Georges@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:Sylvia.Georges@boroondara.vic.gov.au)



▲ The subject Camberwell site and shopping centre



▲ Proposed building envelope as approved by VCAT



▲ Alternative building envelope, context-tailored design approach, creating a building mass with a corner emphasis an active harder and higher edge form that reaches out to connect with the street and shopping centre across, while stepping back and down as it moves to the north and east, to sensitively respond to adjoining interfaces.

# Better design outcomes

Jane Monk

It has been 13 years since the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) introduced Clause 19.03 as the State Policy for Design and Built Form. The policy served to confirm, for the first time, that design was a relevant matter to take into account in the assessment of planning applications. Tribunal decisions suggesting that design assessment was akin to judging a beauty contest had muddied the waters.

The policy lists design principles to be had regard to, and over time has included reference to Departmental guidelines for activity centre design, higher density residential development, and safety. Otherwise, little has changed and the policy remains primarily a list of principles to be balanced against other, sometimes thought competing policies, and administered by mostly unskilled practitioners - including local government councillors - in the

assessment of planning permit applications.

Despite Clause 19.03, the consistent requirement for a site analysis and design response statement, and the many local provisions referencing good quality architecture and contemporary design, the quality of built form outcomes remains a focus for contention in the planning process, giving rise to delay and controversy in the processing of development applications. This adds considerably to cost and affordability and, because single dwelling development is generally exempt from planning permission, single dwellings become a line of least resistance making development at the fringe on greenfield sites easier than any reworking or increasing density in established areas.

Victoria's significant demographic change and population growth, as well as the need for new approaches to address climate change

and the global financial crisis, means there is increasing urgency to address this lack of confidence in the planning system's ability to deliver good built form outcomes.

## Different tools and processes

The Government is presently looking to different tools and decision making mechanisms to support the pace of change required to meet the pressures of household and population growth. New residential zones, a new activity centre zone and an urban renewal zone are under consideration. A number of activity centres have also been targeted for accelerated change as Central Activities Districts (CADs), and Principal Activity Centres (PACs). In addition, Development Assessment Committees (DACs) are proposed, starting with the five PACs of Camberwell, Preston, Coburg, Doncaster Hill and Geelong.

Government has moved to accelerate development approvals, leaving open the imperative to ensure that in haste, design quality is maintained and the outcomes not become the subject of future controversy. The current review of the Planning and Environment Act and the recent release of the Urban Design Charter, together with pressures for development, offer a context for reviewing Victoria's approach to ensuring a planning system that can expeditiously deliver good quality built form outcomes.

Confidence in the planning scheme's ability to deliver well-designed built form outcomes will be challenged by this pace for change. At issue then is how confidence levels can be improved in terms of public processes, skills and understanding.

Jane Monk is Chair of the Victorian Planning Minister's Priority Development Panel.



# Housing unplugged

Frank Stanisc

If you want to read the changes in a society, then look no further than the design of its housing. Housing is a form of cultural design, as important as the design of iconic structures such as event, arts and media buildings. More than any other form of architecture, housing responds quickly to cultural shifts – demographics, consolidation, global recession and climate change. In this respect, housing is perhaps more important than the celebrated icons, as the living environment forms the launch pad for much of our lives

Much of the current focus in collective housing in Sydney is on reconciling environmental performance with density – enshrined in SEPP 65 and its related Residential Flat Design Code. While the architecture of living spaces cannot be grounded solely on sustainable performance or demographic profiles, new morphologies need to be developed to reconcile the shift towards unplugged, compact living. After all, the ability to transform the ordinary is confirmation that our lives are not controlled by adverse global economic forces.

For many years now my company has been developing new morphologies based on the spatial structure of access galleries and cross-over planning. With its origin in the constructivist experiments of the 1920s in the former USSR, cross-over design remain relevant today and are a springboard for exploration.

## Three recent projects

The characteristics of unplugged environments are expressed in three recent projects:

Mondrian, Edo and Coda. Their building design focuses on passive design principles which generate breathing and tempered environments where the division between inside and outside is removed.

Mondrian, in Green Square, designed in the aftermath of the Sydney 'Green' Olympics, exploded the congested, central core model to create a series of finger buildings and courtyards organised around a public spine which maximised the building's perimeter. The project was a landscape of fragments where cross flow replaced air conditioning and radiant heat sinks replaced radiators.

Edo at Woolloomooloo, is in many respects a distillation of the ideas of Mondrian, a return to essentials, where cross flow is created by the use of induced air flow from the multi-storey, Edo gallery - a sink of cool air - to the pixilated and operable western façade.

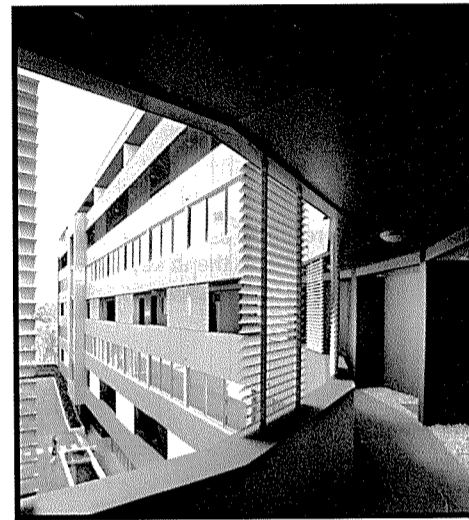
Coda, our most recent project, explores 'unplugged' design through three primary design strategies: permeability, pathways and volume. The design is based on cross-over gallery circulation and a honeycomb spatial structure to create a more responsive and flexible living environment. The two-storey living spaces, accessed from open access galleries, allow the environment to breathe naturally, eliminating the need for air conditioning. The building is capped with exceptional sky terraces and generous roof terraces sitting under a grand sweeping parasol.

Frank Stanisc presented his ideas at the recent design day in Melbourne. He is Principle of Stanisc Associates Architects, and can be contacted at [fs@stanisc.com.au](mailto:fs@stanisc.com.au)

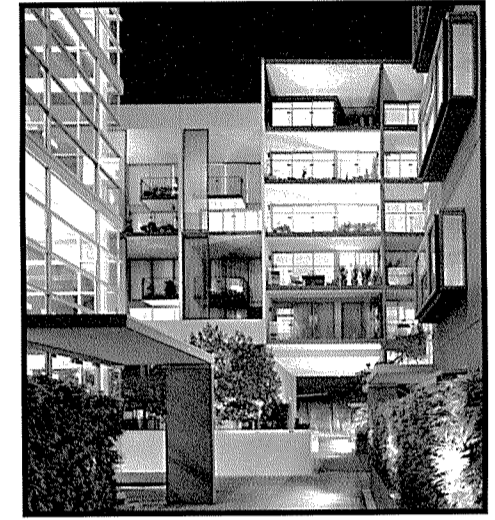


▲ Edo

▼ Coda



▼ Mondrian



# SEPP 65: ensuring better apartment design in NSW

Ken Maher

*"Sydney needs a facelift — we must create better, more liveable and sustainable suburbs."* So said Bob Carr, NSW Premier, in 2000. And that was the beginning of a major change of approach to apartment design in NSW.

Back in the heady days of the Sydney Olympic Games, a rare opportunity occurred in relation to the quality of the built environment in NSW. Appalled by the ugly buildings lining the route between his home in Maroubra and his city office, Premier Carr took a personal interest in the design of apartment buildings. At that time, I was Chair of the Urban Design Advisory Committee (UDAC), and we were asked what could be done to improve the situation. Given strata title laws which make the demolition of apartment buildings almost impossible, then their design quality is a matter of long term public interest, and given the Government interest we needed to propose some actions which were achievable, precise and effective.

No one remedy exists to achieve better design. Rather than attempting to prescribe or define attributes of good design we looked at the

issue in another way. We determined that three key circumstances influence the quality of our built world.

First, and foremost, is the ability and skill of the designers. Good design cannot occur without good designers. Competency in design needs to be understood, recognised and delivered as a valuable resource to the community.

Second are the requirements for more intelligent and effective controls over development processes. None of us wishes to be over regulated. Achieving a balance between individual and collective interests is at the core of this matter. Any effective controls have to recognise the value of and nurture creativity while protecting the public against unacceptable impacts. This is all the more difficult a challenge as this is all about values.

Third is the matter of development assessment. The quality of assessment under local government current processes is highly variable. Council officers often have little or no design training. Councillors are subject to political pressures, and are often ill equipped to make judgements on design issues. This situation leads to much frustration.

Following industry forums, public consultation, and regular meetings with the Director General of Planning and the Premier, a comprehensive report was published ("Achieving Better Design", Urban Design Advisory Committee, 2000. Subsequent legislation SEPP65 was gazetted in July 2002, at its core the intention to elevate design as a measure in the planning system. In September 2002 an important supporting document was published (Residential Flat Design Code Urban Design Advisory Service, 2002). This is the 'how to' document of achieving better urban design, sustainability, architectural design, and landscape design outcomes.

The SEPP requires all residential developments over two storeys, or four dwellings to be designed and certified by Registered Architects. This proposal places considerable responsibility on architects, and with it comes the obligation to ensure education and skill levels are adequate. In parallel, the Architect's Act was amended to provide mechanisms to recognise the value of existing practitioners who are adequately skilled but not Registered Architects.

The SEPP provides more rigorous requirements for the preparation of Development Applications. With the question of assessment, the SEPP provides for the introduction of expert advisory panels for Councils. This is intended to bring a greater level design judgement to the assessment process and de-politicise the process. The advice of panels is made public, and can be considered in the instance of a court challenge.

Those of us interested in the quality of towns and cities need to work towards better design outcomes through more intelligent planning processes. We need to ensure there is a confidence in design as an agent for a better and more sustainable world. Importantly, we need to sustain the interests of politicians in design. These NSW reforms are an important first step and other states could benefit from similar legislation.

Ken Maher presented this information to the creative design day in Melbourne and can be contacted at [mbarrett@hassell.com.au](mailto:mbarrett@hassell.com.au) Ken is Professor, Faculty of Built Environment, UNSW, Chairman, HASSELL, and was recently awarded the prestigious RAI Gold Medal.

# Crossing borders – reviewing design outcomes

Geoffrey London

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA) operates with the belief that good design really does make a significant difference to levels of amenity and quality of life. So, in the recent workshop we were keen to examine policy tools and mechanisms that provide for good design outcomes and processes. We found very supportive partners in the Priority Development Panel (PDP) and the Urban Design Unit (UDU), both operating with the same belief in the benefits of good design.

It was a risk, but one worth taking. We were interested in casting the net wide for new ways to promote and reinforce the value of good design and raise design quality standards here in Victoria. The invitation went out to all our guests and much to our delight nearly all accepted and participated in a full day of open exchange and creative conversations.

It seemed to us that the NSW experience had much to teach us in Victoria. Since 2002, SEPP65 has mandated that architects design residential flat developments of more than four flats and/or three storeys and more and, through its Design Code, ensured measurable design and environmental outcomes. The SEPP also sets out the terms of reference for establishing Design Review Panels to provide

expert advice to local Councils on the design merits of residential flat developments being assessed for development approvals.

## Design knowledge and expertise

The policy is important in that it reinforces and formalises the importance of design knowledge and expertise to support improved amenity and good design outcomes in residential flat developments. This policy was developed in direct response to the poor base quality of design in apartments being built at the time, and to other current issues in Sydney including rapid growth, urban sprawl, and changes in societal perceptions regarding denser living which established the need for well designed developments and high standards of amenity.

Clearly, these issues also impact on us in Melbourne. Concern around global economic instability adds another overlay to the current urban landscape and presents us with a unique opportunity to ensure that the quality and sustainability of the built environment is seen as an integral part of the strategies formulated to stimulate economic growth and development in Victoria.

In casting the net wide, the OVGA has also been inspired by the work of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment



▲ The recent Victoria/NSW better design workshop

(CABE) in England which has, for some years produced and published an exceptional range of research and tools on design and runs a successful design review service. Scotland has followed suit with the release of its far reaching Architecture Policy in 2007 and the establishment of Architecture and Design Scotland as an independent resource to direct the Policy and advise on design for government.

We have had extremely positive feedback from attendees about the workshop – it seems

that further cross-border conversations and exchanges are inevitable. Nobody is about to take Melbourne's "global reputation for design excellence in the built environment" for granted. Maintaining and enhancing this position and safeguarding the quality of life in our towns and cities in the face of economic instability will be a serious test.

Geoffrey London is the Victorian Government Architect and can be contacted at [Kate.Mallyon@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:Kate.Mallyon@dpc.vic.gov.au)

## Women's Planning Network DVD launch

The Women's Planning Network research 'From Accidental Planner to Agent Provocateur: 60 years of women in Victorian Planning' was recently launched by Jenny Mikakos, Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Planning.

This research, which comprises a report and short film, was undertaken by the University of Melbourne (Dr Carolyn Whitzman, Dr David Nichols and Jana Perkovic) and part funded by the Minister for Planning via a heritage grant linked to the recent centenary of suffrage in

Victoria. This research starts the process of recording and celebrating the role of women in planning and reveals the changing role of women in society and it is hoped that it will inspire a national research project, as well as further work in Victoria. You can download the report and similarly order a copy of the short film DVD at [www.wpn.org.au](http://www.wpn.org.au).



▲ All smiles at the launch of the Women's Planning Network DVD

## Sydney gets creative

Launched as part of Creative Sydney 2009, the inaugural Creative Catalysts list has been drawn up to honour and expose 100 inspirational and innovative Sydneysiders who have made a unique contribution to the city's creative culture.

The list includes people involved in urban design and city culture. The selection was from over 700 people put forward, by a range of industry advisors and others. The result is naturally subjective and intended to encourage debate. For more information see [www.creativesydney.com.au/sydneys-creative-catalysts/](http://www.creativesydney.com.au/sydneys-creative-catalysts/)

## New publications

### eco-urbanity

edited by Darko Radovic

This book brings together two of Darko's passions - concepts of environmental sustainability and urbanity. The book was conceived during his professorship at the University of Tokyo (2006-08), when he invited a group of leading academics and practitioners of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and urban planning to discuss some of the most critical questions which face those professions. Darko's own research established the philosophical and theoretical framework for the meeting and, eventually, the book itself. The invitees provided a range of interesting case studies and topics for detailed discussion. Richly illustrated, the book is aimed at both academic and professional audiences, as well as the broader public interested in the potential of sustainable approaches to production of space.

### Urban Design and Planning

Urban Design and Planning is a quarterly journal launched last year, as part of the established Proceedings series of journals of the UK Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE). It features refereed papers and short articles on all urban design and planning topics, covering topics such as sustainable settlements, community regeneration, urban infrastructure and transport systems, with particular emphasis on the interfaces between urban policy, design, construction and management. See [www.urbandesignandplanning.com](http://www.urbandesignandplanning.com) The current edition includes an article by Jon Lang, Professor, at UNSW on International urban design: theory and practice.

## Conferences

### 2nd International Urban Design Conference

Gold Coast 2-4 September 2009

The conference theme is Survival: Implementing tomorrow's city. Our cities are facing far greater challenges in this era of failing global markets, climate change, peak oil, unprecedented population and urban growth in the face of diminishing natural habitats. We've identified these threats and risks, but how are we to implement a successful blueprint for tomorrow's sustainable city? See [www.urbandesignaustralia.com.au/](http://www.urbandesignaustralia.com.au/)

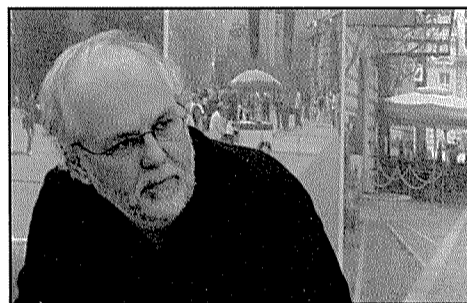
### ICTC Society 2009

The International Cities, Towns & Communities Society (ICTC) 2009 conference and exhibition will be held at Deakin University Waterfront Campus, Geelong, Victoria from Tuesday 27 October to Friday 30 October 2009. Membership of the ICTC Society (no charge) and more details are available at [www.ictcsociety.org/](http://www.ictcsociety.org/)

## Victorian Urban Design Charter

The much awaited Urban Design Charter was recently launched by Planning Minister, Justin Madden. The Charter commits the State Government and other signatories to making Victoria's cities and towns more liveable through good urban design. It has been developed over a number of years by the Department of Planning and Community Development's Urban Design Unit, in consultation with the Victorian Government Architect's Office and with input from a number of other government and industry stakeholders.

The Charter is presented as a very readable AO poster, and promotes the 12 key aspects



▲ Darko Radovic

### Urban Logic

Urban Logic is a new inspirational website for the planning, engineering, architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture professions around the world. Based in Auckland, NZ, it is an online web magazine devoted to the future of the built environment. Urban Logic delivers a daily diffusion of inspiration from around the world. Check it out at: [www.urban-logic.com](http://www.urban-logic.com) If you have any questions contact [info@urban-logic.com](mailto:info@urban-logic.com)

### www.talkingwalking.net

Andrew Stuck is the creative producer of some interesting websites including [www.rethinkingcities.net](http://www.rethinkingcities.net) and a series of interviews on [www.talkingwalking.net](http://www.talkingwalking.net) The Talking Walking idea was sparked off at a Walking and Art residency at the Banff Centre of Arts in October 2007, with the first podcast published in February 2008. Andrew can also be contacted at [andrew@talkingwalking.net](mailto:andrew@talkingwalking.net)

### NZ Urban Design website is now live!

The New Zealand Urban Design Forum website is now up and running. Check it out at [www.urbandesignforum.org.nz](http://www.urbandesignforum.org.nz)

### More Footprints Less Carbon

Walk21 New York City, October 2009. 10th International Conference on Walking and Liveable Communities. For more details see [www.walk21.com](http://www.walk21.com)

### EAROPH conferences

EAROPH as a non-governmental multi-sectorial organisation encompassing the private, public and academic sector was established to foster the exchange of insights and experiences among countries in the Asia, Australasia and the Pacific region. It promotes a better understanding of human settlements and encourages excellence in planning, development and management to improve the quality of life and sustainability of human settlements. See [www.earoph.info](http://www.earoph.info)

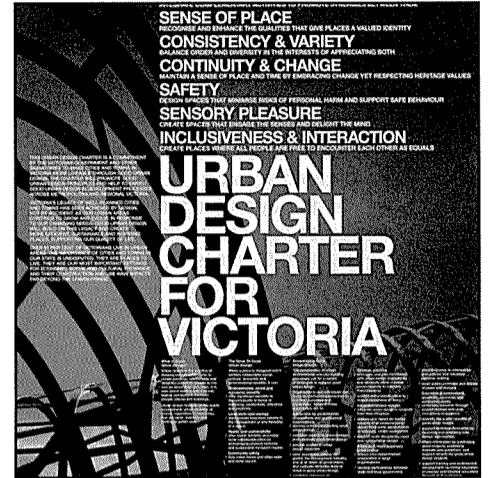
### CITYNET Yokohama Congress 2009

"Harmonious cities for our future" 7-11 September 2009, Yokohama, Japan. See [www.city.yokohama.jp/me/keiei/kaikou/150/en/](http://www.city.yokohama.jp/me/keiei/kaikou/150/en/)

### 42nd EAROPH Regional Conference

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 5 October 2009. - "Affordable Housing - from nomadic life to city life".

of good urban design: structure, accessibility, legibility, animation, fit and function, complementary mixed uses, sense of place, consistency and variety, continuity and change, safety, sensory pleasure and inclusiveness. The expectation is that when these principles are collectively present, the certainty of creating well used, valued, memorable places is assured. The Charter is being distributed to Local Governments, Government agencies and departments, and all other built environment industry stakeholders. Email your name and address to [urbandesigncharter@dpcd.vic.gov.au](mailto:urbandesigncharter@dpcd.vic.gov.au) to receive a copy.



## Planning and design in Sweden and Australia

### Jenny Laarson

The Rotary Foundation's Group Study Exchange (GSE) program is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for businesspeople and professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 who are in the early stages of their careers. The program provides travel grants for teams to exchange visits in paired areas of different countries. For four to six weeks, team members experience the host country's culture and institutions, observe how their vocations are practiced abroad, develop personal and professional relationships, and exchange ideas. I was one of the lucky ones to have the good fortune to visit Melbourne through GSE for five weeks. It was a wonderful experience and something I'll never forget!

We were travelling for 30 hours, to literally the other side of the world, and you're expecting it to be more different than it really is. Isn't that strange? And especially when you're talking with other city planners you tend to notice how similarly we think about different things.

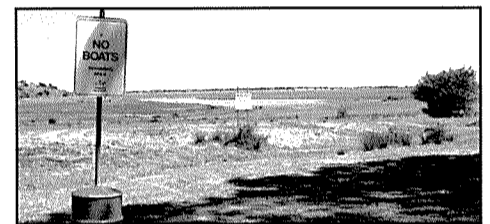
All of us in the GSE-team were amazed by all the sculptures in Melbourne. It was so exciting to take a walk in the city, not knowing what waits around the corner. My favourite sculpture was in the Docklands. Another thing we noticed was how clean it was. How can we achieve that back home? Sweden is otherwise known to be a clean country, I think. But it is starting to change. Why is that? I think that perhaps Australians have more of an individual responsibility for society and, for example, do more charity work. In Sweden we're in one way spoiled with that the government takes care of everything, including the litter. Is this a bad consequence of a strong state?

### Biggest difference is sprawl

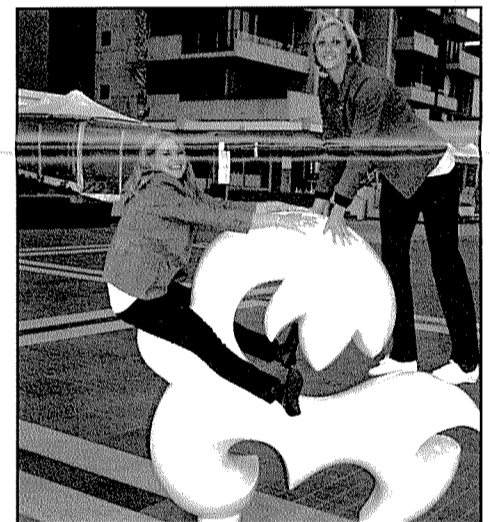
I think the biggest difference in planning in Sweden and in Australia is the urban sprawl. Even small settlements in Sweden have an increased density in the city or town centre, with buildings about 3-4 storeys high. It's a great task that the planners in Melbourne have in front of them, in trying to achieve the vision of 'Melbourne 2030'.

The local governments in Sweden have more power over planning issues than in Australia, and the planning schemes tend to be more detailed in Sweden, except for when it comes to heritage and native vegetation, where Australia has stronger regulations. We often hear that 'compared to you, we don't have old buildings'. But maybe due to your short history in architecture and buildings you seem to be more aware of their value and perhaps have protected more of this later history of architecture than we have done.

To see the consequences of the drought makes you appreciate what you have more, and it makes you very aware of how the future may unfold. Even if there is just the slightest chance that climate change is a consequence of human behaviour, we must see the necessity of good



▲ The drought was very obvious and made us appreciate what we have back home so much more



▲ My favourite sculpture in Melbourne, Docklands

planning for sustainable development, with higher density for the cities and good public transport.

It will be very interesting to welcome the outgoing team from Australia to Sweden and to see how they find Sweden and our relatively small cities.

Jenny is now back in Sweden and can be contacted at [jenny.larsson@jonkoping.se](mailto:jenny.larsson@jonkoping.se)

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**Web:** A new consultant register and an increasing range of related information is available at [www.udf.org.au](http://www.udf.org.au)

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