

An irregular publication for the members of the Town Planning Research Group.
(not for general publication or republication)

This Issue an Urban Renewal Issue.

- 1. Three Quotations.....
 - (a) Trade Unions
 - (b) A Church Mission
 - (c) Students
- 2. Happy Valley.....A Case History.
or
The Housing Commission has Disqualified Itself as a Planning Authority.

1/34/0

Three Quotations.

(a) Trade Union. Mr. Ken Carr Secretary of the Furnishing Trades Soc.
on Labor Hour 28.6.70.

"In many respects trade unions in the past have concentrated too much just on purely wage issues when their members are affected by political decisions which affect their very lives, whether at work or at home, and it is about time that the Trade Union Movement did in fact get into these social areas and assist members, not only on the factory floor but during their whole life, their families and so on."

Mr. Carr then explained about a ban the trade unions have placed on the demolition of houses by the H. C. V. and said that a meeting of delegates from trade unions and a number of other organisations was to be held at the Fitzroy Town Hall on July 14th. to discuss plans for implementing a better housing policy.

He emphasised....."Let me make this clear, as far as we're concerned we believe that the Housing Commission should be the authority in these areas for the building and so on that goes on, but it is a matter of planning and residents participation in the future of these areas that we're concerned about. We believe though, as I said earlier, that the Housing Commission should be the building authority."

(b) A Church Mission. From Brotherhood Action, June 1970 in an article entitled "Plea for Urban Renewal and Planning Authority", Rev. Peter Hollingworth...

"Where important aspects of people's lives are being planned for en masse (whether this involves the demolition of their present homes or the erection of new housing) they have the right to participate in all major stages of the planning process. Many individual householders believe that they are powerless once the Housing Comm. decides to declare their area for redevelopment purposes. Far more consultation is needed on the local level."

(c) Students "Farrago" published this brief article on June 19, 1970.
"Paint - In "

"The people of Vere Street, Richmond are standing firm in their struggle against the Housing Commission bulldozers. This Sunday they are showing positive forms of resistance by starting to renovate their homes..... especially help the older people fix their homes.

"Many activists are already involved with the people of Vere Street, but many more are needed. So come down on Sunday afternoon 21st June for painting and discussions in the streets."

2/34/0.

Happy Valley.....A Case History

The Housing Commission Has Disqualified Itself as a Planning Authority

Most of the focus of public attention has been on the Housing Commission as an insensitive bulldozing acquirer of houses from people who don't want to shift, doing many of them economic injustice in the meantime.

Happy Valley cont.

Some of the focus of public opinion has been on the Commission's recent concentration on high-rise flats as almost the sole method on inner-suburban re-housing, in which role the Commission has emerged as specially gifted to make high density as a whole thoroughly unpopular by the mis-use of high-rise, firstly placing families with children in them, and secondly by insisting they have no interior or exterior amenities.

A tiny segment of publicity has been directed at yet another Commission foible. the building of high-rise without extra schools, kindergartens, community centres and other ancillary services being ready for them.

But what is overlooked is that, under the present Government, the policy of the Housing Commission is to sell about 50% of acquired land to big private enterprise to create a brave new world on choice three acre paddocks in the inner areas.

In this 50% the Commission claims that it specifies high standards which private enterprise must observe.

But the "other half" of the Commission's activities induces a strange unnatural silence from the daily press. In fact, if the November 1969 "peg-out" demonstration mentioned below, every time news was given that O.Y.O flats had been built without drying yards, the press "re-wrote" the news to make it appear that it was Housing Commission flats which were the culprits (Which was not the case!)

Perhaps it is not so unnatural. After all, old boy, you can't go attacking one of the big advertisers!

What follows is one of those precious areas of non-news amounting to 50% of Commission acquired land use in the inner areas which condemns the Commission as a planning authority (as distinct from a construction authority) as surely as its public housing functions.

3/34/0

"Planning" of the HOTHAM GARDENS ESTATE.

In 1960, an experiment in redevelopment was launched in North Melbourne with the blessing of the Victorian Government. The then Minister of Housing H. Petty, returned from overseas and inspired a co-operative effort to show just what a fine experiment in urban living could be created by the co-operation of State instrumentalities and private enterprise.

The Royal Institute of Architects nominated a panel of leading members. The Master Builders Association co-operated, involving 14 master builders in a non-profit organisation, and the Housing Commission acquired the land, demolished the buildings on it and sold it to the master builders, who built own-your-own flats in a garden setting to the design of the architects.

The result was Hotham Gardens Estate, which commenced with a flying start to a high standard.

In the first six years about two hundred flats were built, under this co-op. scheme. However, in 1967 the residents of Hotham Gardens became alarmed when work on the Harris Street Redevelopment site indicated that the quality of the project was deteriorating. A protest meeting of nearly every flat owner was attended by the newly appointed Minister of Housing Mr. Meagher and the residents made it clear to the Minister that they were concerned about the changes in the plans for the Harris St. site.

The best way to describe this deterioration is to quote from "Cross Section" the bulletin produced by the University of Melbourne dept. of Architecture (June 1., 1967)

"A fundamental principle (of the Hotham Gardens Estate scheme. . . . editor) was eventually to close Harris Street, to through traffic and treat the area as park for the inhabitants. But someone has sold out in principle and in fact, for now between O'Shanassy Street, and Harris Street, work is in progress on a series of slab blocks in manganese brick by A. V. Jennings Builders. According to their plan, cars will use Harris Street, as an access way to carports (of which there is only one for every three flats) and parallel street parking will bring rows of cars within 15 feet of the double glass doors and balconies of a pleasant block which faces south to Harris Street. Each new block is in plan a "U" shape with narrow court across which living and bedrooms face each other. Open space, neighbourly planning, visual continuity, sensible

Happy Valley cont.

orientation, notions of privacy and hopes for architecture have gone. In advance we know that the excuses will be "Its gotta make money" neither a necessary nor sufficient argument for the damage that is being done to the enviroment. What ever happened to the R. V. I. A. panel, whatever happened to the M. B. A. non profit co-op, whatever happened to the Housing Commission ? " (our emphasis Ed.)

The changed plans for Harris Street were bad enough, but worse was to come. In 1968 it became apparant that the site of a shopping centre on the west side of Abbotsford St., in the area known as "Happy Valley" was intended for own -your-own flats and not for shops.

Hearing this proposal the North Melbourne Association appealed to the Minister of Housing in April 1968 and suggested.

- (a) a master plan of the immediate area to be prepared.
- (b) that the original standards for redevelopment by private develppers be strictly maintained and
- (c) adequate shopping facilities, at least equal in number and area to those existing, be maintained, with off-street parking facilities added.

Three weeks later the Housing Commission proclaimed the Happy Valley area as a reclamation area. Naming it the Lothian Street Redevelopment Area. They did not announce any overall plan of redevelopment nor did they refer to the fact of the shopping area.

After six months of non-committal responce from the Minister and the Housing Commission, public interest and protest began as the Commission proceeded with its acquitition.

- 1) All shop owners petitioned.
- 2) 700 local shoppers also objected to this redevelopment.
- 3) The Service Companies of the own-your-own flats, representing 425 occupants, expressed their disapproval.

In January 1969 the North Melbourne Association again approached the Minister and a deputation submitted a professionally prepared document entitled "Proposals for Lothian St. Development" (i. e. Happy Valley) which outlined proposals for redevelopment of the ares, considering local needs and complete with architectural sketches of the proposed shops.

It was suggested that there be a new, modern shopping centre, having off-street parking on the same site, but set-back, so that existing shops could continue in business during redevelopment, thus ensuring continuity of trade and community assoc-iations.

Another nine months of correspondence followed, during which time the Commission began the demolition of some shops. despite a decision by the Melbourne City Council to support the Association for the replacement of shops.

When the popular coin laundrette closed in October the local residents demonstrated their dissatisfaction in a "Peg-Out" protest, attended by some 250 persons and backed by a 500 signature petition. This was the occaision that Lady Godiva rode again.

On the day afterthe demonstration the Minister disclosed to the Press for the first time that there were in fact plans for new shops.

But the shops proposed in the Commission's plan were not to be situated in the Happy Valley site, but were to be located within the small nearby group of shops in Haines Street. Four new shops were to be built and eleven would be lost in Happy Valley. a net loss of seven shops. . . . and a drastic reduction in usable retail area.

Especially serious was the fact that there was insufficient room in the Haines Street centre to accomodate a single comparatively large, self-service grocery which was then thriving in Happy Valley.

The Association studied the Commission's proposals and conducted surveys from which a futher document was prepared entitled "Retail Requirements in Happy Valley". This was submitted by deputation to the Minister in December 1969. This document stated why the Commission's proposal was unsatisfactory and analysed the requirements of the community setting out the type, number and area of shops that were desirable, supported by references to professional planning standards. It included a proposal by the owner of the Happy Valley self service grocery to rebuild his own shop and two more shops to the Commission's design if the Commission's tender for the land was in small enough parcels for this purpose.

Happy Valley cont.

Finally, on April 6, 1970, some two years after the first representation to the Minister, the Association was advised that the Commission disagreed with the arguments brought forward in "Retail Requirements for Happy Valley" and the old Happy Valley site would be redeveloped exclusively as a residential area.

The Housing Commission Has Failed.

From the earliest submissions to the Minister the Association had requested that the Commission produce and put on public display any plans for redevelopment of the area, to allow a reasonable time for local residents and business people to examine the same, discuss the proposals and suggest alternatives...

But instead the Commissions decisions on these matters has

- 1) Deprived the local residents of necessary shops which were popularly demanded.
- 2) Compelled the local residents to use their cars to shop elsewhere, thus increasing the congestion and the parking problems of inner suburbs.
- 3) Deprived the local community members without cars of adequate shops.
- 4) By forcing six migrant shopkeepers to other places of business, destroyed a centre of migrant social activity.
- 5) Rejected an opportunity to provide this area with an imaginative combination of shops and houses, complete with landscaped off-street parking which could have pioneered the way to a finer concept of urban renewal.
- 6) Effectively ignored proposals for calling tenders suitable for small businessmen in favour of the old method of calling tenders only capable of being accepted by big developers.
- 7) Refused all requests to make plans for the affected area before acquiring and demolishing began.
- 8) Refused requests to publish plans before making decisions.

4/34/0

News The Dailies Don't Publish.

The Case of Bruno D'Anna.

Any planner accused of any of these eight dealy sins should hang his head in shame.

However, perhaps an old-time planner trained in the school of thought of "large-scale re-development on large tracts of land" might be forgiven, or at least understood, for his methods of calling tenders.

The story of Bruno D'Anna, to follow, is a story which you, dear reader, might well put in the hands of any well-intentioned but rather old-fashioned planner (if you happen to know any such), and should certainly make known as widely as you can amongst the citizenry.

Just to the North of the "Happy Valley" block, there is 2.75 acres known as the "Wood Street Redevelopment Area" on which one of A. V. Jennings Companies is currently building O. Y. O. flats. This cost the Commission \$605,000. to acquire and demolish and it was sold to Jennings for \$203,300. (185% subsidy in effect.)

The "Happy Valley" block (officially known as the Lothian St., Re-devel.) of nearly three acres is, right now, almost completely demolished with all the "Happy Valley" shops pulled down, except Horrie the Butcher, T. A. E., and D'Anna Self-Service Grocery.

Horrie is famous for his sausages, the T. A. E. is such a rich enterprise that the Commission cannot afford to compensate it, but has decided to re-house it----but D'Anna. That is real news-----The story of the small businessman who made a bid to be allowed to redevelop the land that the Housing Commission had reclaimed from him!

In November 1968 Mr Bruno D'Anna along with other shopkeepers..... petitioned the Commission asking for the retention of the shops, or if the Commission did in fact demolish, they requested that the Commission erect new shops in their place and permit owners of the existing shops to lease or purchase.

The shopkeepers were supported in this by a petition of 700 shoppers. In December 1969 Mr. D'Anna made an offer to the Housing Commission to redevelop his own freehold as part of the reclaimed Lothian St. Reclamation Area. Mr. D'Anna proposed that he would rebuild his own shop or build a larger shop, or he said he was prepared to build several new shops and to sell or let them to other shopkeepers, giving preference to the present "Happy Valley" shopkeepers,

D'Anna Story cont.

Mr. D'Anna pointed out that he could not invest in the whole 3 acres of the Lothian St. scheme. Only a very big company could do this. Mr. D'Anna has explained the position in the following words.

"We want a small parcel of land on which to build new shops in Abbotsford Street, (Happy Valley) We realise that the design of the shops would have to fit in with the other buildings and we are prepared to plan our section as part of the larger scheme. But, if the big redevelopment firms are not prepared to build shops because they feel there is some risk financially involved, it is only fair that the local business-man, who can estimate the success of the venture, is given a chance to build shops on the site."

Mr. D'Anna's offer gave the Housing Commission a chance to show that the Minister of Housing really is concerned to see that planning is for the people and that a project is not dictated by the need for a big redeveloper to be sure that a project returns a maximum profit. Over six months have passed since Mr. D'Anna made his offer.

5/34/0

In The Legislative Assembly.

A timely tailpiece is what Mr. Meagher said in the Legislative Assembly on 29th October 1969 (about a month Before Mr. D'Anna made his historic offer.)

"It is essential that the rights of the community and those of the individual be carefully balanced. Procedures must therefore be adopted to ensure that not only justice is done, but that it is clearly seen to be done," and on the same day he also stated, ...

"Increases in population densities brought about by the redevelopment of areas must be accompanied by the provision of the many other services which a community must enjoy if an adequate human environment is to be maintained or created," and still quoting Mr. Meagher.....

"accessibility of residents to transport, work, shopping and other facilities are an essential part of the replanning of the metropolis." !!!!!

P.S. The re-elected Premier, Mr. Bolte, has again nominated Mr. Meagher as Minister of Housing. He still has time to see that the Housing Commission particularises his generalisations.

POLLUTION POSTERS.

Pollution is challenging life.

We want a poster to challenge pollution.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths Society and the Meat Industry Union are sponsoring an Exhibition of Posters and a Seminar on Pollution on Friday August 14, at 8 p.m., at the A.E.U. Rooms, 174 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne.

Details of this action against pollution can be obtained from one of the sponsoring unions.

Correction. 1. Irregular No .33 at p. 8. under heading "The D.L.P." sentence: "Dr. Colin Clark, former economic advisor to the Cain Government should have read.... "former economic advisor to the Gair Government (i.e, when Gair.... now D.L.P. Senator was Premier of Queensland. Correction 2. 1st line of 3rd par. page 9. should read 20 cities