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An Irregular publication for the members of the Town Planning Research Group
(not for general publication or re-publication)

This Issue;

1. Good Stuff on Urban Renewal
2. Comments on Residential Planning Standards.
3. Information on Pre-school Care.

1/31/0

1. Good Stuff on Urban Renewal

The Committee for Urban Action seems to be here to stay. Whilst the average sensible Melbourne citizen was either preparing for Xmas vacations, enjoying them or recovering from the ordeal, the Committee of Urban Action sub-committee on the Urban Renewal Bills was meeting and working furiously.

This seems to be one of the few organisations that has really done some homework, and it is not surprising therefore that, it had already produced and in early February, circulated to all State politicians a second document on the bills before Parliament called "Principles for an Urban Renewal Bill." The first document unavoidably was negative, criticising features of the Urban Renewal Bills that looked like being rushed through Parliament last November.

This second document is positive, advancing criteria, principles and even proposals for detailed legislative guidance.

Part 1. An Introduction Summarising the Principles.

Part 2. Amplification of the Principles.

Part 3. Proposals for Legislation.

The whole document is well worth reading, and the keen student who has a special interest in this subject might be lucky to get a copy if he contacts Mr. D. Beauchamp 26 McArthur Place, Carlton.

For those with less time or special interest we re-publish the short Part 1, summary of the principles.

As a high - minded yet realistic statement of principles we cannot flaw it. There does seem to be, however, one questionable argument in the amplification on the section "The Housing Commission and Urban Renewal." Our criticism here of one argument in the document, however, does not detract at all from its all over stand - points nor from its conclusions. It is dealt with below (see "Two Arguments Too Many.") The situation here reminds us of the line from Langton Hughes's poem "Talking Union" about a strike in America. After detailing all the unspeakable things about their boss, one striker shouts: "Bet he beats his wife!" It's good for a laugh; might even help, temporarily, to keep up spirits. But it is really somewhat irrelevant to the strike issue. In the same way, in the excitement of the immediate struggle with the Housing Commission, it is best to prove the case, rather than overprove it.

2/31/0

"Principles for an Urban Renewal Bill"
Statement by the Committee for Urban Action
Part One.

Introduction

All urban renewal should be within the framework of ONE Urban Renewal Act. This urban renewal legislation should provide a framework for organising and controlling the changes which are either occurring already, or which should occur, but cannot do so under existing circumstances.

The cost of these changes will be enormous in many ways, both financially and socially. We must accept the principle that the economic cost must be born by the whole community, and not subsidised by the losses of the individuals.

Likewise we must accept the responsibility of the whole community to the social costs implicit in many aspects of urban renewal. Urban renewal concerns people living in established communities. The object of the urban renewal should be the improvement of community environment and facilities. Urban renewal should avoid

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.....the break-up of communities or the dispersion of people when demolition or large physical changes are inescapable. To date, all urban renewal activities have resulted in severe disruption of community life in favour of outside groups of people.

The justification for renewal of any area should be that everyone affected by it is made better off, or some people are made better off and no-one is made worse off.

It is our belief that the legislation before Parliament does not adequately incorporate the following important points.

1. Conform to Planning Outlines

Before any urban renewal can be considered, there must be an overall strategy plan for Melbourne and its future development, which contains future development areas, target densities, standards of amenities, land use and transportation network. The formulation of a strategy plan should involve public participation.

Any urban renewal must conform to the requirements of the overall plan. The planning Authority should issue a directive to a renewal agency setting out the necessary guidelines and limitations to ensure that any renewal proposal conforms to the overall planning and housing objectives.

The overall Planning Authority should be the centre of research for urban renewal.

2. Public Participation

Full provision must be made for public participation in all stages of planning renewal. The minimum requirements to achieve this are: -

(a) Notice of intention to prepare a renewal proposal, accompanied by a statement of reasons and aims to be made available to the people affected.

(b) Preparation and publication of all survey material related to all aspects of the proposed renewal area.

(c) Public statement by the renewal agency of the options for the area and their implications.

(d) The public should be able to make submissions to the renewal agency at each stage during the preparation of the renewal proposal. The renewal agency should consider, and give reasons for accepting or rejecting these submissions. (The present Bills only allow for public objections after a proposal has been completed.)

(e) All changes to a renewal scheme should be required to be exhibited and be open to public debate and objection.

3. Community Welfare.

A renewal agency must consider not only the highly visible community fabric, but also its less visible life patterns and social nature.

(a) The survey agency must include research into the social structure, behaviour and needs of the community affected.

(b) The published "options" and the final "proposals" must include an analysis of the effects on the community life of any proposed changes, and must present steps to minimise or avoid undesirable effects.

4. Compensation.

Where there is compulsory acquisition of property, compensation should be such as to enable a displaced owner or occupier to obtain at least equivalent accommodation with out loss.

5. Phasing Programme of a Renewal Scheme.

An approved renewal scheme should include a phased programme for renewal, specifying which amenities must be provided at each stage of renewal. This programme should be binding on the agency and if priorities are changed there should be a re-exhibition of the amended scheme and changed list of priorities.

6. The Housing Commission and Urban Renewal

The provision of low income housing should be separate from urban renewal. The Housing Commission should concentrate its resources and skills on firstly housing the

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..... 14,000 applicants on its waiting - list, and then on creating a surplus housing stock for those people likely to be displaced by urban renewal.

The Housing Commission should only be involved in an urban renewal scheme when requested by a renewal agency to provide public housing in a renewal area.

3/31/0

Two Arguments Too Many

Examine item 6. above. The emphasis here is that the Housing Commission should concentrate in building low - income housing and on creating a surplus housing stock. It should be involved in urban renewal only to the extent of providing housing as directed by the renewal agency.

Quite right ! that's what is wanted at the moment! Stop the Commission's heartless clearing of often renovatable houses and scattering the communities living in them! Stop the Commission building, in the main, only one type of high- density housing and giving the desperate no proper choice of housing types! Let the Commission concentrate on buildingbuilding more in fact!.....but only where directed by a renewal agency that has some real planning -- sociological comprehension.

In the amplification, however, two undertones emerge, until they are nearly over-tones;-

1. The Commission is not needed as much in the 1970's as it was in the 1930's and private enterprise subsidised by Government grants and mortgage money should be encouraged to renovate old houses in the inner suburbs and build new ones in the outer suburbs.

2. Flat- building should be abandoned by the Commission in favour of suburban estates of villa- houses said to be cheaper.

We can readily understand and sympathise with the origins of these viewpoints. Point one. springs from the attitude; "why pull my house down and force me to live where I don't want to? Give me the money instead, and I'll improve my own house!" Point two. springs from the equally understandable sentiment: "You want to pull down my house to build a high-rise flat I don't want to live in? Go and build somewhere else! Any way you're wasting public money!"

The critical sentiment in both is ; "leave me alone!" the after thoughts: "Give me the money instead." may be a good argument, in a proper case, and then again it may not. The after thought "You're wasting money" may or may not be true; it is not proved. The after thought "Go to the outer suburbs" is not a good argument.

4/31/0

There are, in fact, two other arguments that could equally serve the same main purpose of confining the Commission to construction of housing as directed by an urban renewal authority properly based on sociological - planning principles and, at the same time, in a proper case, renovate owner's home instead of forcing him out of it against his will, namely;-

3. Public agencies, or citizens co-operatives, could play a bigger part in low-income housing assisted by Government grants and mortgages, both to renovate old houses in the inner suburbs, or to build new villa units (or high density) in the outer suburbs, as well as increasing numbers of low-income earners

4. The Housing Commission could be directed to build at an increasing rate a bigger variety and better design of high- density units initially on non-residential land in the inner areas, suitable for middle-income earners to live in the increasingly popular inner areas.

The trend otherwise, would be to vanish the very poor to the outer suburbs, allowing only the rich and the very rich into the inner suburbs either in better type high-rise or expensively renovated older houses.

The point of view advanced here is that neither points 1and2 or points 3and4 are critical for the Committee of Urban Action's case to get a real planning body with modern sociological understanding in charge of urban renewal.

On this latter point maybe every progressive and well informed citizen can agree. But on points 1and2 or points 3and4 there needs much more to be said and proved on both sides: nor has the position been presented in a balanced way above! But the

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..... imbalance of land 2 has been met by what may be an imbalance of 3 and 4.

"Irregular" intends in the May issue (No. 32) to publish in full the section amplifying "The Housing Commission on Urban Renewal," from the C. U. A. "Principles for an Urban Renewal Bill." so readers can judge for themselves and comments of readers will then be invited for the next issue (No. 33). Despite what we have said about the undertones and overtones, which we have isolated into points 1 and 2, there are other valuable facts, viewpoints and arguments interwoven in the section.

5/31/0

Comments on Residential Planning Standards
(Comment by a practising architect on MMBW Residential Planning Standards)
by "Borough"

Present Crisis - Generated Regulations.

Regulations have a habit of crystallising in time of crisis. The cynic may be tempted to say that it is only in a time of crisis that the existence of a problem dawns upon the slow wits, of those "Set in judgement over us!" The first attempts at regulating housing standards in England arose with the Public Health Act of 1875 from the inhuman living conditions of the tenements built by speculators to house the rapidly increasing numbers of workers in the factories of the Industrial Revolution. The wretchedness of these over crowded industrial slums led to the reaction which has directed the character of English and Australian town growth ever since.

Or when the crisis arrived which brought the Victorian Uniform Building Regulations into being - the housing boom after the war, naturally the English type of regulation was used - whether consciously or unconsciously as a model. And "The Englishman's house is his castle." The principles derived from the "Garden City" which was intended to get people back to the land, and thought of the small house in its garden as the only dwelling fit for a right - minded Anglo-Saxon -- a kind of miniature small holding for part-time peasants, led to the stipulation of the minimum site dimensions, minimum frontages, minimum set back from boundaries, maximum build - up percentage of site, and maximum height of residential buildings, which are still with us, and have created the urban (?) environment in which we now live.

The U. B. R. although primarily designed to control the standards of building of individual houses (or flats) have had, primarily through the clauses of chapter 8, the effect of town planning regulations, which coupled with the powers conferred on Municipal Councils in the U. B. R. 's and the Zoning Regulations of the M. M. B. W. have led irresistibly to the growth of the sub-urbs which is spreading inexorably over our once pleasant countryside.

This muddling, hit -and- miss, prejudice prompted, reaction-founded method of controlling town growth is no way to obtain good towns. Considering each house as an independent unit and disregarding the interrelationship of buildings, or the overall environment, has led to an endless succession of similar (but never identical) minimal standard boxes spread endlessly along fingers of development even more rapidly groping into the countryside, with a complete lack of regional character, aesthetic value, or provision for community needs. So although the inhabitants are physically better-off than their counterparts in the industrial slums of nineteenth - century Birmingham, they are in effect living in aesthetic and social slums.

Apart from their obvious drawbacks in terms of planning control, from the practical point of view the most obvious negative affects of the U. B. R. on the growth of Melbourne have been:

1. The overriding pre-occupation with minimal standards referred to the traditional sub-division site, has not only led to the creation of a dismally standardised and monotonous environment, but to the uneconomic use of roads, public transport and utilities, and also to the vast distances between community centres (if any) schools, recreational facilities.

One side effect of this spreading of the community "butter" so thin over the land is the ever increasing use of the motor car, which is indispensable for reasonable movement of people, but which requires even more space- consuming roads and car- parks, thus continuously compounding the problem. The Brave New World

cont.

..... envisaged by the MMBW Transportation Plan is a reductio ad absurdum of this effect.

2. The one-building - oneblock provision, applying indiscriminately to houses and flats, leads to unknown and uncontrollable densities, making impossible any pre-planning or even assessment of public amenities.

3. The application of regulations designed for one - family houses to flats has led to the very sub-standard conditions the regulations were designed to avoid, with a complete lack of regard for sunlight, or daylight, open space of even minimum requirements for a decent standard of living.

6/31/0

Improvements and Deficiencies of Proposed MMBW Standards

It is the rapid increase in flat construction over the past few years which is the crisis which has alarmed the MMBW into formulating their new Residential Planning Standards, recognising that further development in accordance with the present planning scheme and UBR would result in poor environment!

In stating the problem to be solved, the Standards show an awareness of town planning principles naturally not found in the UBR., with their very much more limited scope. It realises that the combination of accidental dwelling densities and minimum standards, with the lack of planning for services, facilities and overall environment inherent in the present system leads to a "depressing" city -- a value judgement very refreshing in an official publication.

The Standards point out the very pressing need to return to first principles, by controlling, in terms of both of total metropolitan requirements and local amenity requirements, the following factors:

1. Areas and densities
2. Co-ordination with planning of employment location, transport, public services and facilities etc., and the need to integrate each small scale area of planning into an overall scheme.

The Standards propose to do this by zoning the city for dwelling density and type, considered on a large scale, that is in terms of Area Densities rather than the present piece - meal, site by site controls

In considering proposals for development standards of amenities will be required in relation to daylight, sunlight, landscape, noise, access, parking, local traffic flow etc., and the importance of the relationships of buildings, and the organisation of the space about buildings is recognised.

This all adds up to a vast improvement on the "town planning" controls exercised, often accidentally, by the UBR. - many of whose clauses are directly in conflict with acceptable town planning principles. The provision for comprehensive planning for each area and the whole city, the standardisation of controls, the possibility of density control, the flexibility of standards based on performance rather than on rigid rules, the consideration of amenities such as daylight, space, sunlight, noise control, privacy; these are all great steps forward.

However it appears to me, at least, that these are three main deficiencies in the standards.

1. There is still an obvious bias towards the detached house, which is clearly considered the ideal type of dwelling and is thus permitted in all zones, whether high or low density. This has the effect of limiting density control to maximum density, whereas the setting of a minimum density for each zone is necessary for effective planning,

2. Within the terms of reference the Standards cannot of course control the machineries of the Department of Public Works, Education etc. However unless a system of compulsory co-ordination with the providers of public facilities is set up, so that development of an area can only proceed as roads, schools, community centres sufficient to their needs are provided, we will continue the disasters of the present.

3. There are no provisions for the protection of areas which already provide a high standard of social and aesthetic amenity, and for which any but the most careful development would almost certainly lead to a downgrading of standards.

cont.

I am of course, thinking of the inner suburbs. A scheme such as is now common in many areas of the U. S. of A for sensitive rehabilitation of old suburbs, with spot developement where absolutely necessary, must take the place of the "bulldozer" ethic.

7/31/0

Figures on Pre-school Care.

Two valuable reports on the care of Pre-school children were released late in February 1970. Their reports are...

1. "Caring for Children of One Parent Families and Working Wives" by the Victorian Council of Social Services, 107 Russell Street, Melbourne.
2. A Survey by the Federal Department of Labour and National Service on Child Care.

Here are some figures from these reports:...

<u>Date</u>	<u>For the Whole of Victoria</u>		
	<u>Commercial Minding</u>	<u>Subsidised Day Cnt.</u>	<u>Kinder.</u>
Number	251	15	736
Attendance	4,333	700	* 35,400
Fees per week	\$10...*14	Sliding scale	about \$1.
Age	Babies to 5 years	Babies to 5 years	3 to 5 yrs
Duration	All day	All day	$\frac{1}{2}$ day

* This figure from Hansard not from reports.

At least 18 Councils have discussed the establishment of day nurseries with officers of the Victorian Department of Health in recent times; so far plans have only been submitted for two new centres, Collingwood and Coburg.

E. C. C. O.
Your Children Calling

The same week as these reports were released a meeting was called by the Union of Australian Women to launch a new type of child care organisation. This will be called E. C. C. O., the initials for Everybody's Child Care Organisation. This is the type of organisation which can help Trade Unions to be more vocal about the care of children. In addition to the launching of E. C. C. O., a number of Trade Unions have met to discuss child care problems. An All Day Conference on Child Care will be held on Wednesday, May 13th. The initiative for this Conference has come from the A. E. U. and other Unions in co-operation with the U. A. W.

Stop Press (1) Another all day Seminar on Child Care has been called by the Employers Federation for April 24th. News of this received March 24th.

Stop Press (2) In addition to the problems of child care for working mothers another modern problem is the high proportion of young children in high density estates. Figures from Hansard March 18th, 1970, "... Total child population in high rise developments would be in the vicinity of 6,900... 46.4% of these children are aged between 1 and 5 years." (Facts and figures from reply by Mr. Meagher)