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This Issue:

Three Reports from the Middle Suburbs.....

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- 2) Oakleigh....Shopkeepers Do Their Home Work.
- 3) Camberwell...The Craig Play Centre.

One article on inner suburban history.

- 4) North Melbourne ...Where Have All the Landlords Gone ?

And Two Quotations...

- 5) An Architect says "Architecture is a Social Profession"
- 6) A Student of Architecture says "Concern for People"

I/37/ '70 Markets at the Cross Roads.

Do the names Market St. or Market Lane in the suburbs of Fitzroy, Oakleigh, Sunshine, Footscray, Newport and St. Kilda indicate that once markets flourished in these suburbs ?

There is plenty of evidence to show that although a number of markets have been closed no new retail market has been opened in Melbourne suburbs since 1910. So the opening of the Preston Market in August this year was hailed as headline news.

At Preston the railway line and the tram track run parallel and are separated by about 200 yards. Naturally along the tram track there has developed a ribbon of shops; but the needs of industry dominated the immediate surroundings of the Preston station and until a few years ago a timber yard and a tannery occupied most of the area behind the shops which front onto High St directly opposite the Town Hall. Now, here between the station and the Town Hall there has been built the Preston Market !

This two million dollar project has 250 stalls. These are listed as 46 greengrocers, 19 butchers, 15 delicatessen, 8 refreshments and food stalls and 130 stalls selling miscellaneous goods... clothing, shoes, hardware, manchester and so on, including a T.A.B.. The Market is open Thursday, Fridays and on Saturday mornings.

A team of three young men in their early twenties designed and built the Market. All the stalls are under cover, but walkways between are open to the sky. The perishable food stalls are well protected from dust, dirt and heat by being enclosed in a glass, flyproof section. There are no stairs to climb, no ramps, no doors to open, no lifts and no escalators; there are a few seats and potted shrubs, a pocket-handkerchief "adventure" playground and a vast sea of treeless asphalt car parking!

It is reported that the High St. traders (except perhaps a couple of green grocers) rejoice in the opening of the Market. Most of the High St. traders have market stalls and in addition the increased number of shoppers coming to Preston have improved their normal trade.

The daily papers wrote that "It is a Market that still retains the age-old styles of selling"; "It helps to put some fun back into shopping"; "It will develop conversation and friendship between shopkeepers and customers". Perhaps it does; but only perhaps. For fun, old style shopping or friendship opportunities have not been the motivating force behind the establishment of the Preston Market

(Markets at the Cross Roads continued.)

This market is a real estate investment, This is why it is not possible to compare this market with the markets which were established by the City Fathers in bygone days. It was not the Preston Council that decided to build the Market. This is what Mr Leon Jolson, a real estate agent has to say about the origin of this new "Market"

"For years I've had the urge to ^{build} and operate a market myself. I decided that Preston was the right sort of area."

Of course the Preston Council claimed some credit for the Market on the day Sir Arthur Rylah opened it; but it was Mr Jolson who made the newspaper headlines and it will be Mr Jolson who decided whether old-style shopping friendship and fun are profitable or not.

Despite this fact the Preston Market has broken the prevalent trend of establishing shopping centres which are only accessible by car (Chadstone, Northlands, Southlands and Doncaster are all miles from rail transport) Preston is served by train, tram and bus as well as car. But to date, in an effort to squeeze in as many cars as possible ~~there~~ has been no provision made for a dignified pedestrian access from the station to the Market. Shoppers must thread their way through parked cars and juggle their jeeps and prams up awkward station steps.

It would cost very little to update the Preston station and its environs and to reserve and landscape a pedestrian path to the Market from the station. The streets around the Market, such as Cramer St., are also an obstacle race for the pedestrian with cars projecting over the narrow footpath. These are perhaps pinpricking complaints, but, they are indicative of the concentration on easy access for shoppers who come by car and the total neglect of any of the needs of the pedestrian shopper or those who use train, tram or bus.

Mr. Jolson has said "I want this Market to be a place of noise and activity and when the housewife arrives back home I want her to feel exhilarated." Well, it is a place of noise and activity on Thursday, Friday and on Saturday mornings; but, what happens on the other days or in the evenings? Jane Jacobs gave many warnings about the need for mixed primary uses and we end this article with a timely warning from Jane.

After listing the dire consequences of "the extreme conditions of currently unbalanced spread of people in lower Manhattan" she then states on page 173 ...

"Unless a plan for a district which lacks spread of people through time of day gets at the cause of the trouble, the best that can be done is to replace old stagnation with new. It may look cleaner for a while, but that is not much to buy with a lot of money."

2/37/70

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Shop Keepers Do Their Home Work.

"We won because we presented the better case, we did our homework" This is the explanation given by Alfred Levy for the decision by the Board of Works to refuse permission to Myers to establish a Target store at the corner of Warrigal Rd and Centre Rd. Oakleigh.

This is how they did their homework.

1. They called a meeting of all shopkeepers and invited along the local M.F., the Mayor and Councillors from the adjoining municipalities and the leaders from eight suburban Chambers of Commerce.

2. At this meeting they elected ^a committee of 10 and money was subscribed for a fund.

3. They engaged solicitors and town planners, did traffic counts, lodged hundreds of objections and petitions with the Board of Works, took out full page advertisements in the local papers and door knocked

4. They produced figures showing that within a two mile radius of the proposed store there were already 613 convenience shops (butchers, greengocers, milk bars) 400 service shops (banks service stations) and 400 comparision shops (clothing and furniture etc.)

The battle cost the shop keepers \$1300. Speaking for the traders Mr Levy said..

"I think we proved that there is a place in the community and a desire by citizens for the small neighbourhood store. Our fight was not against the Myer organisation. We are objecting to any developer coming into our area. We felt the locals had enough shops available to them."

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3/37/ '70

The Craig PlayCentre.

The Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria have established 12 supervised playcentres throughout Melbpurne. Nine of these are in the inner suburban area, one is at Doveton and another at Alamein and one is a Playmobile which operates in H.C.V. areas mainly in the inner suburbs.

The Play Centre at Alamein is on land owned by the Camberwell Council. It is next to a state school, in the midst of a H.C.V. estate, and it is known as the Craig Play Centre.

This Centre has existed for twelve years, it has a pre-school play group of about 30 little ones each day, it is a meeting place for girls and boys after school and it is the main recreation centre for the families of the district.. It is staffed by two play-leaders, one is qualified and the other is a student in training."

The Cost of the Centre

Since this Centre was first established the Camberwell Council has borne the main running costs. In the twelve months from 1968 to '69 the centre was subsidised by the Council by \$4,305. The parents raised another \$700 and the Centre also received about 1/12 (approx \$1000) of the State Gov. grant which is paid to the Playgrounds Assoc (The Annual grant from the State Govt. is \$12000 and this is divided between the 12 supervised playgrounds) The Council also assist the Centre by giving it permissive occupancy of the site and buildings.

Government Subsidy for Salaries is Needed

This year the Camberwell Council will cut back the subsidy from about \$4000 (4 thousand) to \$180 a year , this will bring the subsidy in line with that which the Council gives to kindergartens (six dollars a year for each child attending the kindergarten)

The Council have said that they are prepared to continue to give occupancy of the buildings and that they will support the Playgrounds Association in any renewed approach for direct government subsidy for playleaders salaries.

Thirty years ago the Government grant for kindergartens was in a lump sum which was then divided between the various pre-school centres. When the subsidy system was related to the number of children at each centre of an approved building, equipment and staff, the network of kindergartens expanded rapidly because the more elastic subsidy system allowed for local initiative to be rewarded. Although the present method of kindergarten subsidy has some limitations, it is nevertheless a much more effective way of distributing government finance than the present cramping system of a lump sum for all supervised playgrounds.

Our comment.. The Craig Centre has proved that there is a need for this type of facility not only in the inner areas but also in the middle and outer suburbs. Is it to go out of existence or will its example be emulated in other areas ?

4/37/ '70

Where Have All the Landlord Gone ?

This article is the result of the discovery of some minute books, letters and other documents of the North Melbourne Tenants League. This organisation seems to have existed from the middle 1930s to the end of the 1940s. For a considerable period of this time Mr Bill Borland was Hon. Secretary and Rev. Hankinson (Cof E.) was the Chairman.

So rapidly is our society changing that some of the campaigns of the period seem strange to us today, yet barely 22 years have passed since this organisation was at its peak!

Reclamation Requested .

"Don't Destroy Carlton" or "This House is Not for Sale to the H.C.V." are appropriate slogans for today, but, in 1944 the Rev. Hankinson wrote to the H.C.V. regarding the area bounded by Molesworth St., Haines St., and Abbotsford St. asking for the slums to be abolished and for "new houses to replace slum dwellings in slum surroundings. It would give a lift up to the spirit of the community (a very important thing) and it would set a standard and an ideal for others to follow."

More Power to the H.C.V.

A short time after the H.C.V. was established the North Melbourne citizens had high hopes of it planning in a really comprehensive way. Hundreds signed the following petition in October 1938:

"We the undersigned residents of North and West Melbourne respectfully ask that the City Council be restrained in its intention of allowing a Skin Store to be erected in North Melbourne until such time as the Housing Commission shall have power to supervise such projects and determine their location." (The words "and factories" should be included after North Melb, typist's omission)

Fair Rents and Evictions.

With home ownership in Australia reaching a world record the aims of the Tenants League would not attract much support today. The constitution stated...

- A) To actively represent the interest of the tenants generally.
- B) Assist tenants in obtaining repairs to premises and obtain fair rent determinations, resisting unfair treatment and evictions, defending their rights generally as tenants.
- C) To obtain all possible legal and technical assistance for tenants.

Co-operation and Combined Action

While many things have changed the basic way the Tenants League was organised resembles the organisations which are at present emerging in the suburbs of Melbourne. The Aims of the League continue with....

- D) To co-operate with and assist similar organisations in other districts.
- E) To promote active interest in the housing needs of the district and express the views of its members on such needs.
- F) To co-operate with other bodies in campaigns for better housing conditions generally.

Child Care and Elderly Citizens

In 1942 the League circularised schools to seek co-operation in a campaign for better child care facilities.

In 1945 the League paid £50 to secure an apartment house in Villiers St., They renovated this house and arranged for pensioners to move from houses of squalor to this co-operative apartment house.

(Where Have All the Landlords Gone? continued)

Architects Gave Assistance.

The 1970 Brooks Cres, Fitzroy example of architects helping householders in a campaign for better housing is in the tradition of help that was given by architects to the North Melbourne people.

In a letter to the League Mr Robert J. Rolfe, Hon. Sec. of an organisation called the Architectural Research Group wrote that Mr. P. Pearce was to be the representative of the Group to assist "with your movement in its present proposals to undertake some form of planning project for part of North Melbourne". The letter then goes on to state.....

"It has been suggested that practical help could be given in the following ways....

1. Advice as to the nature and extent of survey required, assistance in co-relating material required.

2. Appointment of representative to act on planning committee

3. Preparation of sketch plans and or models."

This letter is dated Feb. 1947. There is no material in the documents to show if plans were developed. But, in earlier minutes several architects are mentioned and the assistance they gave with investigating slum houses is recorded not only by written descriptions but also by blue-prints of the houses inspected. Those mentioned are Mr J. Walker, and Mr Rule.

Worked as a Team

The local citizens committee and the architects seemed to have worked as a team. One of the members of the Tenants League would make the first report describing the visible condition of the house both inside and outside. Then members of the Architectural Research Group would investigate the structure, making a blueprint of the property and valuing it. Then a "Court Advocate" would represent the tenants in the Fair Rents Court. The Court Advocates were members of the Tenants League.

In the Minutes of April 31, 1944 it is stated "It was suggested that for advocates we should look to housewives and shift workers."

On a number of the reports are the result of the court hearings "House renovated" or "Rent Reduced and house renovated thoroughly" or "repaired thoroughly".

Statistics and People

Today it is difficult to imagine the type of slum dwellings that existed in the 1930s and right up to the end of the 1940s. The documents of the Tenants League makes the statistics of the 1937 Slum Abolition Report much more real. Here are some statistics from that report.

Of the house inspected 49 % had no bathroom, 96% had no kitchen sink, 22% had floor on ground level 83% had kitchen ceilings less than eight feet high, and 38% had party walls (walls between dwellings) of timber framework covered with hessian or paper.

And a few descriptions of inspections by the Tenants League...

"Mr Oliver, tenant 140 Eades Place, Mr Coventry owner. Weather board, 4 rooms, wind and rain comes in through cracks near door and window, walls and ceilings cracked, putty loose, bath 4ft 6", no copper, no troughs, no water inside, rat infested"

"Mrs Jackson, 513 Victoria St. West, Melb, Mr Fallon owner. 4 rooms brick, 15/- week. All rooms damp, rat infested, vermin infested, electric light in two rooms, no laundry or bathroom. no water inside."

5/37/ '70

"Architecture is a Social Profession"

"If architects and planners wish to consider themselves as the real leaders (and why not?) they must learn to look at their involvement differently.

"Architecture is a social profession. Every successful architect knows that good results involve an act of persuasion, whether it is the persuasion of the client, the public, the machinery of state, the purse strings or the recalcitrant material. Why then do architects bury their heads in the sands of their code of ethics when it comes to understanding, and organising, the forces by which their best ideas can be put into effect?"

These are the concluding words of David Yencken in an article in "Architect 9". Mr Yencken is one of the founders and Joint Managing Director of Merchant Builders Pty Ltd.

He called his article "Failure" because it is about the "failure to improve architectural education, failure to move and infiltrate the public service in areas like planning and public works; failure to think and act like leaders in the industry; above all failure to understand that planning and architectural ideas are nearly valueless unless there is a good grasp of the techniques necessary to make them work"

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6/37/70

"Concern for People"

"Ink" is a publication produced by the Australasian Architectural Students Association. In a recent issue of this paper it is stated.....

"As men entering a profession we are concerned with the advance of that profession to develop a society based on fundamental human values."

"Architects cannot remain aloof from people and communities, afraid to acknowledge that other men also know something about their environment and afraid to lessen their professional distances and learn from the users."

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37/ '70

Some Comments on Recreation Centres for Children

(Space allows for further comment on Play Centres. This is really a continuation of 3/37/'70)

At the seminar organised by the Victorian Employers Federation on Absenteeism and Child Care Centres, the Mayor of Oakleigh, Cr Harris, pointed out that travelling time to and from work in the middle and outer suburbs resulted in working mothers being away from home for longer periods than mothers in inner suburbs,

Although the Craig Centre has not been established to directly assist with child care while mothers are working, Centres such as this one can be adapted to serve the purpose of child care as well as recreation centre.

Subsidy Needs Fourfold Increase.

Most existing recreational services for children and youth operate on grants from the Youth Advisory Council which operates with the Social Welfare Department. In the last annual report of the Youth Advisory Council the following figures were given of the grants sought by recreation organisation and received by them:

1967/68

Applied For
\$1,285,280

Allocated
\$280,194

A little more than one quarter of the sum applied for was granted.