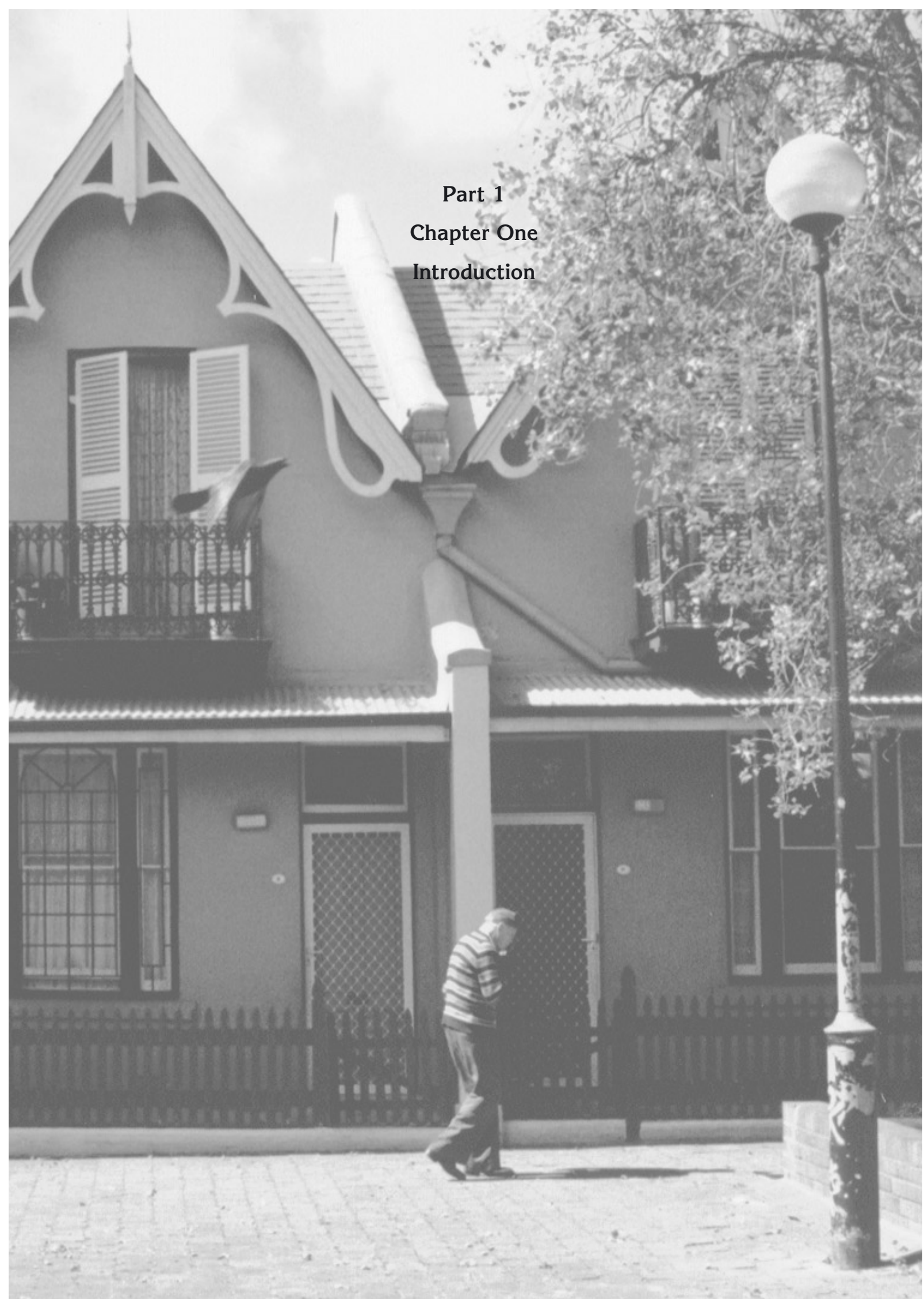


Part 1
Chapter One
Introduction



Chapter 1

Introduction

- 1.1 Aims of the research
- 1.2 Theoretical and practical considerations
- 1.3 Methodology - approach, resources and methods
- 1.4 Summary

1.1 Aims of the Research

The broad aim of the research is to assess:

The influence of urban design on the outcomes of the Better Cities Program.

The Better Cities Program (BCP), or Building Better Cities Program (BBCP) as it was first known, was initiated in 1991 by the Commonwealth Government and involved widely varying initiatives, called Area Strategies, in 26 locations throughout Australia.

The particular aims of the research were to discover and document the achievements of the BCP in urban design. The research aimed to provide an understanding to the extent that it is revealed, of the strengths and weaknesses of the BCP's role, objectives and processes in relation to urban design, and suggest modifications which could address shortcomings in the future. These observations are discussed further in Chapter Five Summary and Conclusions. The thesis then is an overview of the genesis and processes involved in the BCP and a detailed urban design analysis of its initiatives known as Area Strategies. It draws from this very broad analysis, the specific issues and outcomes related to urban design.

It was perceived that whilst not centrally an urban design program the BCP fell short of known urban design principles that could reasonably be expected to be present, given that the achievements of better cities is dependent in large part on better urban design. Hence, in researching the subject area the tasks included the identification and verification of urban design principles in theory - herein referred to as 'enduring strands' - and to test their presence in BCP projects. Testing was through critical analysis of a wide range of BCP documents; rigorous reviews of BCP constructed projects and interviews and surveys with critical analysis of the stated views of experts involved in the Better Cities Program.

The research fills a gap in the knowledge, since no known overview of urban design in regard to the BCP was found to have been undertaken prior to, during, or following this work. The Program remains the single most extensive Federal Government initiative ever undertaken in the regeneration of the built environment - and the cost, (including both BCP I and BCP II) of the order of \$2.3 billion - disregarding the considerable increases above this figure through the multiplier. To evaluate in urban design terms the Area Strategies of the entire program, in preference to selecting a small sample of the projects, required the development of a methodology, sufficiently rigorous to interrogate the evaluations from several positions. The methodology is discussed in detail in Section 1.3 in this Chapter. Initially, a small number of Area Strategies was considered for the research, but on reflection it was decided that a small selection was too limited a sample to arrive at any urban design recommendations useful to future programs of the magnitude and diversity of the BCP. The objective also was that the lessons learnt from a comprehensive study would have equal applicability to smaller individual studies other than the BCP.

1.1.2 Research outcomes

The outcomes of the research are believed to be an original contribution to urban design practice, particularly in an Australian context, in that they:

- evolved the 'enduring strands' as an on-going agenda for achieving better environments;
- documented and co-ordinated previously uncollected material;

- analysed the Program's objectives and processes as developed by the protagonists of the Better Cities Program and also in part of the earlier Department of Urban and Regional Development Program (DURD);
- commented, where apparent, on the theoretical and practice positions adopted by the proponents and designers;
- assessed the effectiveness of the Better Cities Program role, objectives and processes as they relate to urban design, and
- pointed the way as to how future programs of the nature of the BCP, but also smaller programs may benefit from the findings of the research.

1.1.3 Thesis structure

To assist accessibility to the material, the thesis is grouped into two parts, namely:

Part 1

Part 1 sets out the research aims, approaches and methods, and the characteristics of urban design, in the context of this research, together with an outline of the genesis and nature of the Program.

To sustain readability all material that is not immediately pertinent to the discourse in both Parts 1 and 2 has been referenced and relegated to the Appendices, other than the end notes which immediately follow each chapter.

Part 2

Part 2 documents the results of the research, the evaluations of the case studies, the distillation of key issues leading to the Summary and Conclusions.

The conclusions reached arise out of the research and do not constitute policy recommendations to Government for future urban initiatives such as the BCP. Such recommendations would be the subject of a separate study.

1.2 Theoretical and Practical Considerations

1.2.1 Introduction

This section establishes the practical and theoretical limitations to the research.

The research and thesis is focused on the urban design outcomes of the Better Cities Program, a Commonwealth Government initiative of the Hawke and later Keating Labor Governments. Originally, the Program was called Building Better Cities (BBCP) but later changed to the Better Cities Program (BCP). The Program was in two phases. The first phase saw the initial Commonwealth-State agreement signed in December 1991 leading to signed agreements with all States and Territories by February 1993 and by then the Program was well established. The second phase was announced in May 1995 but was shortly to be terminated under the incoming Howard Coalition Government in March 1996. However, the new Government announced it would meet all commitments of the first phase, but limit those of the second phase only to those entered into at that time.

The Program had a number of objectives, which are discussed further in Chapter Three, but essentially its aim was to take selected State Government urban projects that were in many ways 'ready to go', but lacked the required finance to start. The contribution of Commonwealth funding allowed these 26 Area Strategies, as these various State initiatives were called, to commence in accordance with stipulated processes and conditions.

The core of the research is to evaluate and determine how successful were these Area Strategies outcomes in urban design terms. To this end some 22 of the 26 Area Strategies were visited and researched. Those not visited were for reasons of their remoteness and lesser relevance to the study.

The research also returned to the only other Australian Federal Government initiative into city regeneration and redevelopment: the Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) December 1972 – November 1975, also under a Labor Government, that of then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. This return was to seek out any continuities between the two programs but particularly those related to urban design.

The method of this exploration is outlined further in this chapter and returned to again in Chapter Three.

1.2.2 Theoretical considerations

Broadbent reminds us that the ancient Greeks distinguished three basic ways of thinking. He pursues these ways and their application in the design and planning of the built environment. The three ways are:

'(1) starting - and sometimes finishing with pure geometric layouts,
(2) starting with concern for or what the human senses would experience, and
(3) finding out by trial-and-error what could be made to stand up ...' (Broadbent, G. 1990, p. 79).

'These three basic ways of thinking were developed, over the centuries, into coherent and rival philosophies: Empiricism, which puts its trust in the human senses; Rationalism which does not, preferring to work in logical steps from first principles and Pragmatism which prefers things which are known to work in practice' (*ibid* p. 79).

Over time the refining of these modes of thinking commanded the attentions of a number of significant philosophers. In the case of Empiricism these include Bacon, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. 'According to Locke, all our ideas are based on sensation - receiving information by means of our senses - and on reflection, that is contemplating later what the senses have told us' (*ibid* p. 80). 'Once we have built up our ideas in this way, we can operate on them by such processes as thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing and willing on which basis is founded our understanding' (*ibid* p. 80).

The Empiricists then accept the evidence of their sensations, comparing new experiences with the previous experiences and so move forward advancing in knowledge. Hence, the Empiricists' approach is inductive, and does not revert to first principles in each and every instance, but advances through previous experience and knowledge, this being the only possible approach in an everyday sense, in the design of the physical world of engineering, architecture and particularly that of urban design.

The Empiricist position was attacked by Rationalists such as Descartes who believed our senses can be confused and therefore we must seek for universal truths which can be obtained by thinking logically. Essentially Rationalism is that 'things can exist without the benefit of anyone's ever experiencing them. And these include such concepts from arithmetic and geometry as number, shape, three dimensional form and so on' (*ibid* p. 84), hence, the familiar statement *cogito, ergo sum*: I think therefore I am. Descartes favoured architectural works being the outcome of one design hand as superior to those where a number of designers had been involved. This view is totally antithetical to that of urban design which cannot come about, certainly in major undertakings, without the combined experience and skills of many professionals.

Pragmatism is the understanding of objects by thinking about their practical consequences. Contributors to this field of enquiry include the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952) (*ibid* p. 84). Peirce is believed to be the first to apply the methods of science and technology to thinking in general, and indeed to him is attributed the coining of the word Pragmatism. James saw Pragmatism as an extension of Empiricism.

Pragmatism is certainly very much part of everyday thinking, and as technologies and objects multiply with the purported practical outcomes of saving time, making life easier, adding to one's 'life style' and other inducements and enhancements, one cannot but be struck that whilst some of the promises are delivered, there paradoxically has not been a revolution in human wellbeing as a result of Pragmatic thought processes.

Broadbent then pursues these three ways of thinking to those who either consciously or possibly merely by temperament, are seen as to belonging essentially to one 'school' or the other.

In terms of the Empiricists, Broadbent focuses less on the process of empirical thought and its influence than on the essentially landscaped outcomes of a number of historical practitioners, including: Addison, Burke, Alison, Gilpin, Price, Payne Knight and others and more on their aesthetic goals and preoccupations with the Picturesque. This is disappointing in that whilst urban designers are equally mindful of good aesthetic outcomes, the range of activity that comprises this field today could have benefited from this distinguished scholar's insights over a considerably wider and present day spectrum of Empirical urban design enquiry.

Broadbent again returns to historical figures in identifying those practitioners who with their often 'ideal' geometrical forms are seen to belong to the Rationalist school. Such figures - some with still familiar names due to their reinstatement by the post modernists - include Laugier,

Quartremere, Boullée and Ledoux. However, the far more recent Aldo Rossi is seen as a Rationalist, and as such is certainly correctly identified, with his preoccupation with architectural 'types'.

It is not necessary to dwell further on these historical figures, since the point in identifying how some design practitioners gravitate to an essentially predominant mode of thinking and designing has been established.

Broadbent ranges over several strands of Pragmatism including those reformers who spoke and acted on behalf of the working classes in the new industrialised cities. One such example includes the various Public Health Acts, establishing minimum construction, space and sewage disposal standards in the interests of improving public health. Less socially conscious are Haussmann's boulevards, more a pragmatic device for crowd control following the revolution of 1841, than a concern with slum clearance for public health reasons. Other examples cited by Broadbent are the adherents of the Garden City Movement, such as Howard's Garden City and Stein's neighbourhood unit, a movement concerned with the issues of health, fresh air, sense of community, remoteness from industry and pedestrian safety from heavy traffic achieved by means of grade or cul-de-sac separation.

Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse, a vertical city with its site coverage of 15%, with the remainder given over to circulation and extensive gardens, is considered in the Pragmatic mould, in its vision for the improved health and wellbeing of the city's inhabitants. However, the replication of Le Corbusier's vertical housing units throughout the western world established that many social networks had not been acknowledged and provided for, and the vision frequently led to socially dysfunctional outcomes more than it advanced a positive new era in city living. It is possible that Le Corbusier's vision is more Rationalist than Pragmatic. The design of the built world has attracted its fair share of Rationalists, being those who speculate *a priori*, that is, the contemplation of some national concept prior to its subsequent testing by experience. The modernists would seem to have frequently adopted this mode of theorising, particularly in regard to what they believed would be the life-enhancing experience of modern design to the occupants of public housing. The built outcomes, as mentioned above, and the occupants' responses were frequently sadly at odds with the theories.

It is opportune at this juncture to pause and to consider what then is the theoretical basis of urban design? From observation and from many years involvement in urban design practice, it is clear that urban design draws upon the three modes of thinking: Empirical, Rationalist and Pragmatic. This was endorsed in the responses to the Questionnaire, question Q 27, 'The urban design approach can be Empirical (trusting in human senses), Rational (ie, logical steps from first principles) or Pragmatic (employing things that are known to work). Which is your preferred approach? (refer Appendix C - Summary of the Responses to the Questionnaire).

Nonetheless, Empiricism is the principal method for advancing urban design solutions. It is that mode of thinking that proceeds on knowledge based on experience. ' "All knowledge", says Kant "begins with experience"; and "all knowledge" says Locke "comes from experience" ' (Hobhouse, L.T. 1896, *The Theory of Knowledge. A Contribution to Some Problems of Logic and Metaphysics*).

Given the time, cost and responsibility to the public of urban design outcomes, the theoretical position adopted in this thesis is based on the Empirical approach.

Rationalism is evident in the adoption of earlier geometric devices as in the Beaux Arts axis, a useful tool if used appropriately, for organising spatial relationships. Other geometric devices such as the circle and square for courtyards can also have their place. In the case studies in Chapter Four attention is drawn to these modes where appropriate, for a number of Area Strate-

gies; as in the axis terminating in circles each end at Launceston, the circular courtyard housing at Lynch's Bridge and the unremitting lineal path at Honeysuckle. All these instances are examples of Rationalism, and in these particular examples all could have been handled substantially better in design terms. The new urbanists have frequently utilised quite rigid geometry in their layouts, as they attempt to capture the communal spirit of small town America. This more recent urban design direction should be the subject of continuing social analysis to see if the Rationalist planning imprint and the detailed design guidelines that accompany the plans have been suitable instruments in contributing to the desired small town community outcome. There are clearly doubts as the new urbanist community of Seaside, used as a set for the film *'The Truman Show'* which satirised it heavily in terms of the superficiality of social exchange and the absence of genuine rapport amongst the citizens.

Pragmatism is encountered in urban design with the ever increasing requirements to comply with acts, regulations and council requirements that are concerned with public health and safety. The exacting requirements of some of the provisions of Development Control Plans, Plans of Management and Conservation Management Plans are cases in point. There are many others.

Pragmatism is encountered in the ready availability of construction and technology, of things working properly, of ramps being comfortable for people with disabilities, of stair treads and risers being safe and in conformity with the Building Code of Australia and its Australian Standards by reference. These requirements are many and demanding.

Modernism, Postmodernism and Deconstructivism

The research does not explore the theories of the modernist or postmodernist movements, or in their manifestations as architectural design and planning movements. Such explorations require a separate study, and at best would have only theoretical and tenuous links to the nature of this research. The reductionism of modernism with its characteristic disengagement with richness and complexity, with built outcomes of frequently poorly conceived public housing, exposed and wind-swept public places and disdain of context and the environment is not what this research is about.

The chronology of events with the decline of modernism and the ascendancy of urban design indicates a limited degree of overlap where the former, had it been so inclined, might have learnt from the latter.

Nor is the eclecticism of the postmodernist movement with its 'witty', frequently quirky historical references and design ambiguities in the nature of this research. Urban examples would include the spirit-crushing monumental inhuman-scale buildings and spaces of La Défense in Paris and the high-rise housing of Boffil and the Taller in France. (1) as well as the technically and socially flawed Piazza d'Italia, New Orleans, Louisiana, by Charles Moore. The Piazza is rapidly becoming degraded in its finishes and has become a place for the homeless.

Rather, the research works at making comprehensible and accessible in everyday terms, the demanding world of urban design and its vocabulary, in the context of the BCP. Whilst the work and writings of Charles Jencks, Peter Eisenman and Michael Graves (2) have made their contribution to urban design, they are at variance with the approach of this research. Similarly, Robert Venturi is a postmodernist *par excellence*, with his stimulating studies, writings and contributions to the debate on urban form, particularly the Las Vegas studies (Venturi, R. 1972, *Learning From Las Vegas*); however, his substantial contributions pursued different paths to this research.

The position adopted here is that the modern movement was at its zenith in the 1960s and as the BCP followed well after the decline of modernism, it is in a chronological sense only, post-modern. This is not to say that there are not contemporary theorists dealing with the postmodern issues of urbanism; there are, as Nan Ellin demonstrates in her research (Ellin, N. 1996, *Postmodern Urbanism*).

Whilst Ellin recognises the modernist/postmodernist debate and indeed can enter it, she also, and much more importantly, climbs to higher ground in the analysis of the social urban issues of today.

The substantial shifts in the areas of formal and aesthetic advances; environmental practice including ecologically sustainable development (ESD) together with heritage and conservation theory and philosophy; social analyses and community participation - in its widest sense - are the 'postmodern' developments in urban design. These changes are both political and cultural, and together are an about-face on the modernist and postmodernist movements. It is these advances that urban design has had to integrate into its methods and are therefore pursued further in this research.

Deconstructivism has little relationship with urban design as defined in this thesis, other than as 'puzzle pieces' in the urban landscape. Satisfying urban design is about coherence, legibility and vitality; it is not about destabilising conjunctions and perplexing meanings. If urban design was aligned with any philosophical stance it would be in the nature of Utilitarianism, that of the greatest good for the greatest number, but carried out with technical excellence, artistic integrity and social concern. This does not mean that rewarding urban design is about bland common-denominator solutions of perceived human needs. It is decidedly about the creation of stimulating, emotionally satisfying and deeply human urban environments. Urban deconstructivist solutions, such as the Parc de la Villette, and the Tschumi-Derrida debate have demonstrated few positive outcomes by way of creating satisfying urban environments and do not fall within the ambit of this research. (3)

Architecture, planning and urban design

This research is not about architecture or city planning, but about urban design. The position adopted here is that urban design as a recognised professional activity in contemporary society came about since architecture was frequently limited in its context focus, and planning was frequently preoccupied with its social, economic and statutory agenda.

There was an increasing need perceived for 'someone' to bring together the 'bits' of the city in a comprehensive, integrated and flexible manner. This need is now being filled by the urban designer. The viewpoint taken here is that urban design overlaps both planning and architecture, and this view is pursued further in Chapter Two - The Nature of Urban Design. Urban Design is a creative discipline. Whilst it is cognisant of, and may engage with, the Empirical, Rationalist and Pragmatic perspectives and carefully take account of all the competing demands and voices and leave the way open for future change, it is at its very essence a creative art form.

An urban outcome may be a journey of many individual design accretions over time, but equally it may be a 'one-off', not infrequently an intervention into an existing city fabric, an act of fusing together the many competing demands in the one action. Those who live and work in the design world know what it is 'when it all comes together' and there is an inspired fitness of the outcome.

It is, however, one thing to know a phenomenon but an entirely different matter to describe it. Much has been written about the design process, and the urban design process is no exception, with some of it at variance with the philosophical position adopted in this research. Notwithstanding, this research did not greatly benefit from the exploration of this literature. In the context of this research the creative act of design has been well encapsulated by Koestler (Koestler, A. 1970, p. 120) although he uses the term artistic creation:

Thus at one end of the scale we have discoveries which seem to be due to more or less conscious, logical reasoning, and at the other end sudden insights which seem to emerge spontaneously from the depth of the unconscious. The same polarity of logic and intuition will be found to prevail in the methods and techniques of artistic creation. It is summed up by two opposite pronouncements: Bernard Shaw's 'Ninety percent perspiration, ten percent inspiration', on the one hand, Picasso's 'I do not seek, I find.' (je ne cherche pas, je trouve), on the other.

Personal experience supported by writers such as Koestler provides the essential meaning of 'design' for this research. At its very essence urban design, and especially great urban design, evokes strong and rewarding emotional responses, thus establishing itself as a creative art form.

1.2.3 Practical limitations

The scope of any research has boundaries, and the following addresses the limits of this study. The ensuing matters were considered in detail during the research, but could not be pursued further, due to thesis word limitations and the absence of immediate relevance to the research. However, the position adopted on these matters calls for brief comment.

Infrastructure

Conventional infrastructure, particularly services, and contemporary transportation methods are not challenged. However, full acknowledgment and credit is given to those Area Strategies that have seriously implemented one of the Better Cities Program's five objectives, that of ecologically sustainable development (ESD), and incorporated schemes, particularly those of water management, that reduce demands upon conventional services infrastructure. Also, the view that urban form can have its origins in the positioning of infrastructure, such as 'pipes in the ground', is fully supported.

Economics

Economic considerations and evaluations as to their success or otherwise are part of urban development and occur, particularly in the BCP, in several forms.

- Economic growth and micro economic reform

This was one of the program's five objectives and is fully recognised in this research, although its realisation varied considerably between the various Area Strategies.

- Cost-benefit analysis

It is customary for all responsible development projects to be evaluated in terms of cost-benefit analysis using such tools as internal rate of return, net present value and discounted cash flow techniques. In the cases of BCP Area Strategies these were required to meet the usual tests of merit with the application of cost-benefit analysis. The test of merit looks at all costs and benefits generated, including both financial and external costs and benefits, with the latter not priced but to do with matters of 'confidence' being 'knock-on' effects. (4) It seems the BCP did, in the main, meet the tests of merit. The Program was the subject of a number of audits, including that of the

Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). Such processes are essential to responsible urban development and are not challenged in this research.

- Commercial realities

It is sometimes the case that one, or some, of the original components planned for urban development cannot be realised and that other initiatives need to be substituted for the original intention. Whilst the economic and built form outcomes will change, the position adopted in this thesis is that if the established principles of good urban design are pursued, then altered commercial opportunities and constraints constitute a challenge and not a justification for indifferent urban design outcomes.

The virtual city

There can be little doubt that urban form will change as the internet web sites and electronic mail approach to goods and services takes increasing hold. There is already sufficient activity in many areas to indicate substantial change can be expected. Banking, supermarket shopping and people working from home are but a small sample of areas where change is already entrenched and may soon be reflected in urban form. The field of enquiry is a stimulating one, but lies outside the area of research, other than to acknowledge its coming but unpredictable influence on urban design (Mitchell, W.J. 1995, *City of Bits*).

Source material

The material for the research was of necessity drawn from Australian, American and European sources. Difficulties of material availability from other cultures and its translation were factors in limiting this focus, but such extended forays, if undertaken, would have made the research impossible to contain. Although the source material was contained, the presence of and reference to, other cultures within an Australian urban design context was not so constrained.

Australia is undeniably a multicultural society, with around 200 nationalities (Australian Bureau of Statistics) and 150 or so religions (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), (5) and the many dimensions of cultural difference need to find their expression, compatible with other competing needs, in urban form. Such understanding and acknowledgment is returned to in Chapter 2 in the enduring strands particularly those of the public domain, conservation and heritage, public art and social, particularly community participation, although there are resonances in other strands, for example, housing.

Time

There is need for a caveat on time in research such as this. Some of the Program's Area Strategies are essentially complete and so extant for the moment. Others are progressing and adapting to commercial realities as they tack towards their first impression of 'completeness'. Others still, difficult to discern at present as comprehensive physical entities, are nonetheless laying down basic foundations, frequently in infrastructure, as the first essential stage in their eventual realisation.

Hence, this research might require some modification if it were conducted, say five years later, when some currently incomplete Area Strategies might be more comprehensive than presently seen. Nonetheless, change and adaptation are inseparable from urban design outcomes, but the position maintained in this research is that if sound design principles are adopted, then good outcomes will result despite or even because of change. In this sense the correct location of 'pipes in the ground' is as much part of urban design as the public art in the civic square.

Summary

The preceding matters (Section 1.2.3) lying at or beyond the limits of core concerns of this research have been commented upon to clear the way for the essential research issues.

1.3 Methodology - Approach, Resources and Methods

1.3.1 Initial approach

Initially the research commenced with an analysis of various BCP reports, visits to the majority of Area Strategies in all States, with the exception of the Northern Territory, and a selective review of architectural, planning and particularly urban design literature, both past and contemporary. The literature review embraced theoretical positions, design movements and built outcomes.

As these enquiries deepened and the research advanced, the following resources were consolidated and methods refined to give focus and rigour to the research aims. For purposes of clarification resources have been separated from the processes.

1.3.2 Research resources (Coded R1, R2 and R3)

The research resources were:

- R1 Literature reviews
- R2 Interviews
- R3 Case Studies of the Area Strategies

R1 Literature reviews

A literature review of earlier and contemporary writings focused on the 'enduring strands' of urban design which are discussed in further detail in Chapter 2, 'The Nature and Role of Urban Design'.

A literature review of BCP, DURD and related areas was undertaken. This study led to the amassing of over two hundred individual documents relating to BCP alone, the most useful of which, for the purposes of further research, are contained in the Selected Bibliography for the Better Cities Program.

The extent of critical literature on the BCP in terms 'of involving or exercising careful judgement of observation' (Oxford p. 424) was found to be exceedingly small, and was limited to critical appraisal of the origins of the program and not the case studies. Such critical literature as could be found on the BCP, predominantly in journal articles is discussed in Chapter Three - Genesis and Nature of BCP, and includes the trenchant observations of Badcock and Beer and the more supportive comments of Spiller and Campbell, the latter two holding significant roles in the development of the Program. Troy indirectly in his *The Perils of Urban Consolidation*, is at least in regard to the issue of consolidation - a significant component of the BCP housing initiatives - an opponent of the Program. However, despite the absence of critical literature, as defined above on the BCP, there was a diversity of written documentation on the Program which is covered here, but repeated for convenience in Chapter Five, 5.2 Conclusions - Theoretical and Practical.

The diversity of existing written documentation included, but was not limited to the following:

- official Program processes as covered in Section 3.3.2 BCP Processes and Outcomes;
- BCP Newsletters for various Area Strategies;
- Agreements between the Commonwealth and the States in which Area Strategies were to be implemented;
- external financial audits;

- Area Strategy performance evaluations;
- monographs with substantial reference to the Program;
- journal articles on the Program;
- individual Area Strategy marketing and sales information;
- national and community newspapers, including broadsheets from specific interest or pressure groups;
- Area Strategy design guidelines;
- transcripts of speeches;
- housing design manuals;
- consultant reports;
- published conference and seminar papers as in the *Occasional Paper Series*;
- statutory documents such as the *Sydney Regional Plan No 26*, and
- urban design guidelines.

It was from the above resources that both general information on the Program and specific information on the Area Strategies was drawn. Such information that was used from this resource has been acknowledged in the text and the chapter end notes. One of the most useful resources from the above list was the *Occasional Paper Series* being a compilation of seminar papers on planning, urban design, environmental and ecological issues that ran during the life of the BCP. Of these dozen volumes, there were a small number that dealt with focused issues of selected Area Strategies, from papers delivered by professionals who had first hand knowledge derived from direct involvement in the particular initiatives. The most relevant of these *Occasional Paper Series* are to be found in the References. The remainder of the above references were seen as uniformly valuable and used where required in the progress of the research and evolution of the thesis. Whilst *The Report* (refer Conventions) was seen as a valuable resource on matters of scope of the various Area Strategies, it contained nothing by way of information on urban design. The above sources were used in Chapter Four - Case Studies and have been acknowledged in the end notes.

R2 Interviews

Over 40 interviews and discussions were conducted with selected people, including experts in specialised aspects of the Program and also DURD. Interviewees were those with expertise in particular enduring strands; those who had a senior and overseeing role in major Area Strategies - leading to the highly focused analyses of selected projects contained in Appendix C - The Questionnaire, and those who had a significant role in the Program's political or administrative realms. All interviews and discussions were committed to hard copy records. The range of information sought was quite separate from the detailed Questionnaire - Appendix C, and therefore, there could be no standard questionnaire format. For example, those interviewed with an overall strategic view of the Program would include previous Prime Minister, Paul Keating, former Minister Brian Howe, and 'architects' of the Program Professor Lyndsay Neilson, Professor Geoff Campbell and Marcus Spiller. Where specialist input was required on a number of the 'enduring strands', advice was sought as in the case of Public Art from Ms Jacky Talbot; in matters of Safety

and Security (CPTED) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design from Ms Wendy Sarkisian and Social - in terms of cultural planning - Ms Sandi Davis. All of these specialists, whilst not part of the Program, provided invaluable advice on their particular fields which comprised a number of the enduring strands.

All of the interviews were recorded, dated, shared with the supervisors and provided an immense research resource in the order of 24,000 words, and for this reason was not included in the thesis as an Appendix, as the work was already very close to the desirable limit of 100,000 words. The resource remains with the author and can be shared with any future researcher. A list of those interviewed, their position and the area of their contribution is contained in Appendix A - Interviews, Discussions and Acknowledgements. The Acknowledgements are a record of this material, and its very diversity precludes the drawing out of key elements for inclusion, particularly in Chapter Four. The material has been used specifically to support critical appraisal of individual case studies as acknowledged in the end notes.

R3 Case studies

Over a three-year research period, field inspections of some 22 of the 26 BCP Area Strategies and two of the most significant DURD urban renewal projects, Woolloomooloo and Glebe, were carried out (Refer Appendix D - The Matrices). These field trips involved extensive photographing of the various Area Strategies and discussions with personnel involved. All field trips were committed to detailed reports.

1.3.3 Research Methods (Coded M1, M2, M3, M4, M5 and M6)

The individual research methods were:

- M1 Nature and Role of Urban Design – the ‘enduring strands’ and their comparison with the Prime Minister’s Urban Design Task Force criteria (Appendix B)
- M2 The Questionnaire
- M3 The Enduring Strands and the Questionnaire
- M4 The Matrices
- M5 Comparison of BCP processes and outcomes with this research
- M6 Comparison between the objectives DURD and BCP

M1 Nature and role of urban design – the ‘enduring strands’ and their comparison with the Prime Minister’s Urban Design Task Force criteria.

Assessment of the Program’s urban design outcomes required the establishment of urban design criteria. These criteria when established were called ‘enduring strands’, and the nature and role of urban design is embodied in these ‘enduring strands’. The collective name of ‘enduring strands’ was the result of extensive experience in the practice of urban design (refer Matrix D1), parallels with the findings of the Task Force and the procedures for the Ultimo-Pyrmont Area Strategy (refer Section 4.4.1 Conclusions) and the literature review.

The strands endurance and continuing relevance established that they were the most comprehensive, and therefore, the most meaningful group of criteria for evaluation of the Area Strategies. Together with the enduring strands, the selected Area Strategies were evaluated against design criteria in the Prime Minister’s Urban Design Task Force (*Urban Design in Australia Report by the Prime Minister’s Urban Design Task Force. 1994*). The Task Force document was selected as it is the only recent, and indeed the only known, official Commonwealth of Australia document to establish a considered view point on urban design. The Task Force Report was published November 1994 so its relevance is that it arrived in the mid-life of the Program.

A detailed comparison was made between the enduring strands and the Prime Minister's Task Force on 'What is good urban design' (pp. 11-12) and 'the most urgent urban design needs continue to be' (pp 13-15) referred to now in this context as primary and secondary levels of criteria (refer Appendix B - Nature and Role of Urban Design - The Enduring Strands and Their Comparison with the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force criteria). The degree of alignment between the enduring strands and the urban design criteria of the Task Force is close and more than sufficient to claim a strong reinforcement to the choice of the strands.

The Task Force provided a further source of expert opinion in urban design. The authors of the document are recognised professionals and hence, through the alignment of the enduring strands with the Task Force findings, there is further expert support of the urban design evaluation criteria of the enduring strands. The authors of the document present a formidable array of urban design expertise and comprised: John Mant (Convenor), Catherin Bull, Espie Dods, Peter Droege, Neville Gruzman, Michael Llewellyn Smith, Wendy Morris, Alex Tzannes, Evan Walker and David Yencken.

M2 The Questionnaire

Early in the research arose the important question of the nature and recipients of a mail-out questionnaire. The question raised several issues, which included the following:

1. What would be the nature of the questionnaire? Given the scope of the research, it was inevitable that it would be wide-ranging, searching and extensive and could not be confined to basic questions requiring simple yes/no answers readily disposed of in a minimum time by busy people.
2. Mail-out questionnaires experience a disappointing response rate, and a check on a number of surveys into questionnaires and response rates did little to engender confidence in such an initiative.
3. Who indeed would be the recipients, given that many of the design consultants engaged had specialised but limited involvement in particular Area Strategies, had long since departed from particular projects, whose records and recollections might be imperfect, and in some cases whose whereabouts were uncertain? Alternatively, questionnaires might have been directed to occupants of the Area Strategies, but this was such a diverse group, extending over twelve enduring strands, that the enormity of the task and the uncertainty of an effective return rate indicated that this course of action was inherently unworkable.

After consideration of these issues, it was decided that the most rewarding course of action was to firstly limit a questionnaire to Category 1 projects (refer below); secondly, to seek out specific and detailed comment, that is, expert opinion from those with a senior role and long association with the BCP or with specialised knowledge in one of the enduring strands, and thirdly, to apply one's own experience both as a practitioner and lecturer in urban design.

Such an approach interrogated the Area Strategies from three positions: by personal analysis through the evaluation of Area Strategies based on the theoretical position of Empiricism; by critical literature, where available, but mostly from a more abundant source of descriptive literature and by expert opinion through many interviews, discussions and the Questionnaires.

The decision as to whether to employ a detailed questionnaire of restricted distribution as opposed to one of wide distribution proved to be the correct decision as the detailed questionnaire (Appendix C - The Questionnaire) on the five selected Area Strategies required face-to-face follow-up with the selected respondents and return air travel to Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle

and Perth to achieve their completion, an unrealistic expenditure of time, if considered for a broadly based mail-out questionnaire, even if the latter were a possibility.

The evolution of the Questionnaire finally culminated in 30 questions covering a wide range of BCP and urban design issues. The Questionnaire was tested in prototype form before being revised and being sent to the selected recipients. Those who participated in the testing of the Questionnaire, and the enduring strands as a prototype included John Byrne (Director - Urban Design and Planning, Department of Housing Queensland) and Bob Meyer (Director - DEM Planning and Urban Design) together with valued contributions from the supervisors Emeritus Professor Peter Webber and Senior Lecturer Colin James.

The application of the Questionnaire was confined only to Category 1 Area Strategies for the following reasons:

- Category 1 Area Strategies provided the 'richest lode' of research material;
- The Questionnaire was time-consuming both in its administration and in the demands upon those interviewed. It required a face-to-face interview of some duration. The material was then typed up and returned to the interviewee for review. The interviewee's corrections were then incorporated into the final version of the Questionnaire. The full Questionnaire was applied only to the following Area Strategies: Ultimo-Pyrmont, Honeysuckle and Environs, Inner Melbourne and Rivers (Lynch's Bridge), Inner North East Suburbs Brisbane and East Perth.

M3 The enduring strands and the Questionnaire

The enduring strands and their essential linkages to the questionnaire are tabulated below:

- buildings and their grouping (Q2, Q4, Q5, Q8, Q9, Q13, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q23, Q29);
- public domain (Q4, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q10, Q13, Q19, Q23, Q24, Q25);
- safety and security (Q3, Q5, Q9, Q23, Q25);
- activity (Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q13, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q23, Q25);
- conservation and heritage (Q4, Q8, Q13, Q17, Q23, Q24);
- landscape (Q2, Q4, Q8, Q19, Q23, Q24, Q25);
- environment (Q2, Q4, Q8, Q9, Q13, Q18, Q19, Q23, Q24);
- ecological response (Q2, Q4, Q7, Q10, Q13, Q20, Q23, Q24);
- circulation (Q2, Q4, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q13, Q22, Q19, Q23);
- public art (Q8, Q23, Q24, Q25);
- social (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q16, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q23, Q25), and
- management processes (Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q19, Q21, Q25, Q23, Q27).

M4 The Matrices

There are two matrices (Refer Appendix D) as follows:

- Appendix D1 is the matrix derived from urban design project involvement.

The Matrix D1 is derived from the practice of urban design with the projects on the x-x axis, and the enduring strands on the y-y axis. It was this project involvement, and in turn the Matrix that contributed to this approach as a method of implementing and assessing urban design outcomes.

- Appendix D2 is the matrix derived from the BCP Area Strategies.

The Matrix D2 also places the Area Strategies on the x-x axis and the evaluating criteria - the enduring strands - on the y-y axis in order to achieve the differentiation between, and categorisation of, the various BCP Area Strategies.

The differentiation of the BCP Area Strategies is an element of the Matrix, and provides the following categories.

Category 1

Category 1 Area Strategies exhibit containment and concentration of many of the enduring strands in the one project, namely Ultimo-Pyrmont, Honeysuckle and Environs, Inner Melbourne and Rivers (Lynch's Bridge), Inner North East Suburbs Brisbane and East Perth. It is this category that was the subject of The Questionnaire.

Category 2

Category 2 Area Strategies include those that are dispersed, corridor projects being an example, and those that contain meritorious demonstrations of one or more of the enduring strands, as for example, conservation or landscaping. An example of conservation was the adaptive reuse of the Eveleigh Workshops (NSW) and an example of landscaping, the waterfront work at Ascot Fields (WA). These Category 2 Area Strategies serve to support and reinforce the lessons derived from Category 1, but as a group are not as comprehensive in an urban design sense.

Category 3

Category 3 Area Strategies are those projects that by their lack of relevance, minor significance or indifferent quality have little to offer the research.

Category 1 Area Strategies are the main concentration of research material, whilst Category 2 provide supportive case study reinforcement of particular 'enduring strands'. The projects in Category 3 have a minor or no further place in the research.

Accordingly, the research focused on the Category 1 Area Strategies, reinforced by the lessons learnt from Category 2 initiatives, since this approach provided the richest source of research material. The final outcome of the research is a summary of findings that, if transformed by others as a separate undertaking, could become one of the essential elements of an urban design policy for other Government initiatives such as DURD and BCP.

M5 Comparison of BCP processes and outcomes with this research

Because the BCP had many processes and outcomes, a comparison with the objectives of this research - achieved by identifying the enduring strands in the BCP processes and outcomes - became an extended study. However, this was done and is pursued further in Section 3.3 The Better Cities Program and Processes. It was found that the BCP had a range of outcome expecta-

tions, of which this research forms only one integral part, but a part which was not on the whole separately identified in the Program.

The connections were limited but in summary form comprised the currently known Program processes and outcomes:

- 1 Better Cities Proposal Selection Process
- 2 Measuring and Monitoring of Outcome Process
- 3 Demonstration Projects Assessment Process
- 4 Audit Process
- 5 Head Agreement Process
- 6 Monitoring and Accountability Process
- 7 Funding Process
- 8 The Program Management Process
- 9 Evaluation Process

Of the above processes only two were of definite relevance to the research, namely:

- 3 Demonstration Projects Assessment Process
- 4 Audit Process

Of the remaining processes the following were of marginal relevance:

- 1 Better Cities Proposal Selection Process
- 2 Measuring and Monitoring of Outcome Process
- 5 Head Agreement Process
- 6 Monitoring and Accountability Process

And those left were not deemed relevant, namely:

- 7 Funding Process
- 8 The Program Management Process
- 9 Evaluation Process

M6 Comparison between the objectives of DURD and BCP

Possibly for either political or professional reasons, some of those interviewed who had had an influential role in either DURD or BCP expressed some degree of antipathy to the other program. Nonetheless, comparisons between the two programs were seen as important to the research. Despite the separation in time between the programs and the antipathy expressed by some, there was much achieved in some of the DURD initiatives and the political climate of the time that influenced BCP.

The individual processes M1 to M6 are all interlinked through the enduring strands. This both focused and strengthened the overall research approach.

Recurring key words or themes

Almost without exception the recurring key words or themes that were found in the BCP are also found in DURD. The following is the list extracted from the BCP. The only matters not found in DURD but which occur in BCP are in '**bold**', but otherwise both programs shared the following objectives:

- i demonstration project(s) - innovative processes;
- ii infrastructure projects;
- iii integration: this occurs in several contexts, such as Commonwealth, State and Local Government integration, Government and private sector integration, and the various elements of planning and their integration. In the case of DURD, this is generally construed in the context of the integration of the three levels of government;
- iv equity and social justice;
- v **catalytic effects**;
- vi **urban consolidation**;
- vii economic efficiency; and
- viii affordable housing (linked to issues of equity).

There can be little doubt that both programs ran into 'institutional barriers', Treasury in particular, but also at times with Commonwealth and State relationships.

Other key words or themes found in DURD are as follows. Those in '*bold italics*', are unique to DURD and do not have a counterpart in BCP, although BCP may have employed the extension of these matters. Where this has occurred, as for example in heritage, notes on continuity from DURD to BCP are provided in brackets.

- ix access to services (This objective is common to both programs);
- x *National Urban Strategy* (There appeared no BCP counterpart to this DURD strategy);
- xi create employment (This objective occurred in both programs);
- xii *growth centres* (DURD pursued discrete growth centres to contain growth whilst BCP generally pursued a policy of urban consolidation);
- xiii rehabilitation projects (Both programs contain rehabilitation projects. In the case of DURD these seem to be focused on housing - Glebe and Woolloomooloo are cases in point - but in the BCP Program rehabilitation is a much wider-ranging activity, including not only housing but also the regeneration/adaptive reuse of ports, rail yards and other industrial centres of activity now long past their 'use-by dates');
- xiv *Land Commission* (This initiative was unique to DURD), and
- xv *National Estate and Australian Heritage Commission*;
These were seminal initiatives of the time and have over the intervening period between DURD and BCP become integral with planning and urban design processes. To the Government that created DURD must go the credit of instituting and raising awareness of these previously nationally neglected concerns which BCP would have 'taken on board' as a matter of course.

xvi *Environmental (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974;*

Again, as above, the Environment (Impact of Proposals) Act was a very important initiative at the time, and marked a turning point in Australian environmental awareness. Over the intervening period between DURD and the BCP, appropriate and considered responses to 'the environment' became an essential obligation in planning and urban design processes. The environment, as ecological sustainable development (ESD), was one of the five objectives of the BCP.

xvii *Area Improvement Programs (AIPs);*

Area Improvement Programs (AIPs) were unique to DURD, and the BCP concept of Area Strategy cannot be regarded as the equivalent, or even as an extension of the DURD AIPs. Although many aspects of the BCP's Area Strategies contained considerations of improvements to areas, these were part of an overall area and do not appear to have the concentrated focus of the DURD AIPs.

What emerges from this comparison are:

- the substantial number of common objectives shared by both programs;
- the essential differences in the two programs in objectives, scale and processes;
- the original and significant initiatives of the Government that initiated DURD in the matters of the National Estate, Heritage Commission and the Environmental (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974; and
- the value of a comparison of two DURD - BCP 'linking' examples, namely Woolloomooloo and Glebe housing, to seek out continuities between the two programs despite the passage of time.

A summary analysis of comparisons between DURD and BCP is developed further in Chapter Three, and in Part 2. The comparisons are based on the following criteria for both programs, namely its origins, key words and themes (covered in this chapter), processes and outcomes, seven key elements and case studies.

The BCP elements were:

- 1 The reasons for BCP
- 2 The objectives of the BCP
- 3 Area Strategies
- 4 Role of the BCP
- 5 Demonstration projects
- 6 Evaluations
- 7 Government reports

To assist in any cross-referencing the DURD elements have been reviewed using exactly the same listing as 1-7 above.

1.4 Summary

The preceding approach, resources and methods comprise the unified approach to the research and will be referred to throughout the thesis.

End Notes - Chapter One

- (1) The location of La Défense away from the historic heart of Paris was undeniably a sensible move, but the area itself remains one of a bleak and overpowering scale when compared with the intimate and human scale of the old city.

Equally inhuman in scale are the apartment blocks for the disadvantaged of France designed by the Spanish architect Boffil and the Taller. The insensitivity of scale and detail of these apartments is critically confronted in the fine SBS television series 'Architecture at the Crossroads', episode entitled: 'Houses Fit For People'.

- (2) Charles Jencks

A comprehensive overview of Jencks work is to be found in *A + U* (Architecture and Urbanism) 1986, January extra edition, *Charles Jencks*.

Peter Eisenman

Peter Eisenman's work is to be found in the following reference:

Tzonis, A., Lefaivre, L. & Diamond, R. 1995, *Architecture in North America Since 1960*, Thames & Hudson, London.

Michael Graves

A wide range of Grave's work is to be found in the following references:

Michael Graves Buildings & Projects 1966-1981 1982, Essay by Vincent Scully, edited by Karen Vogel Wheeler, Peter Arnell, Ted Bickford, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York.

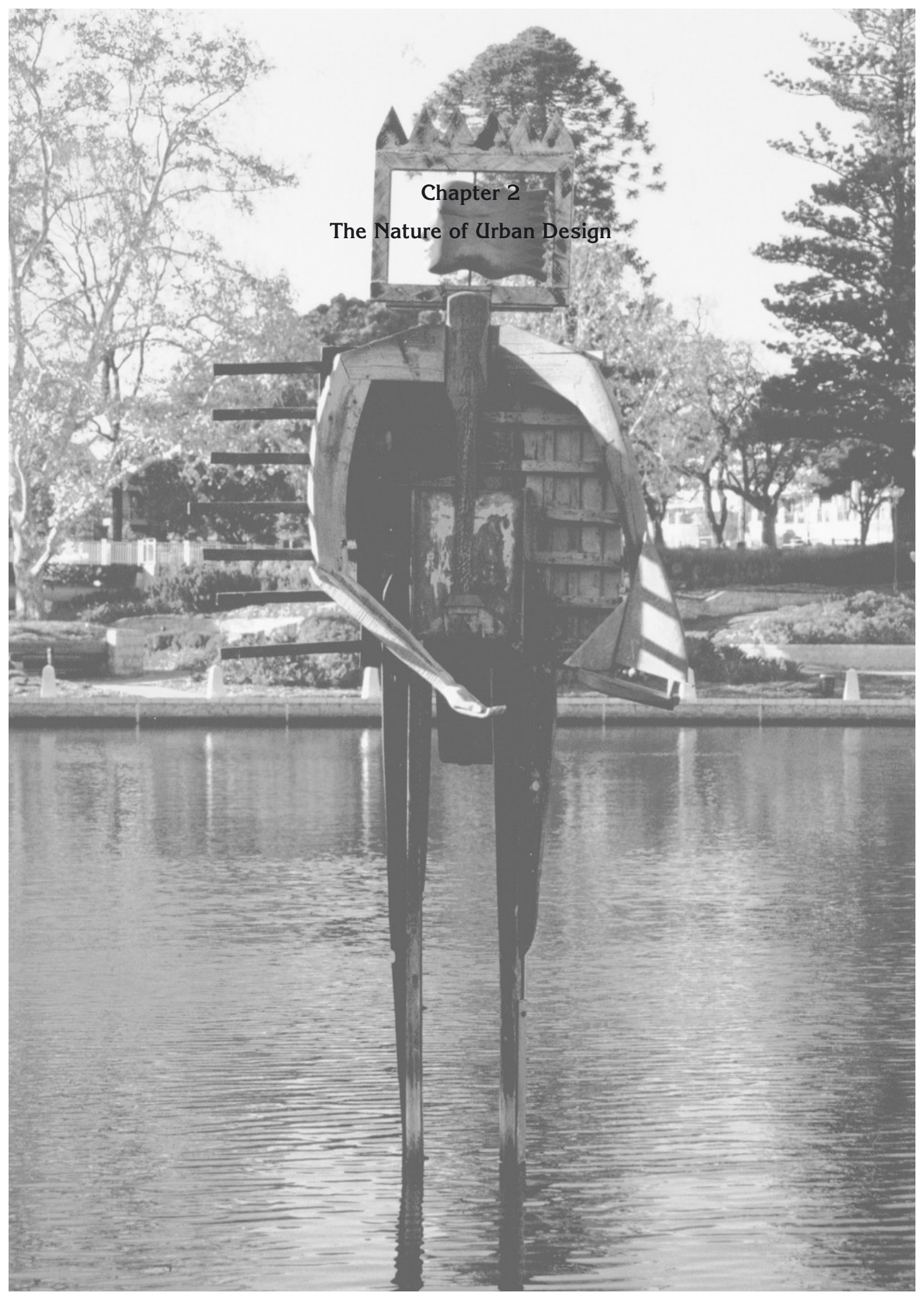
Michael Graves Buildings & Projects 1982-1989 1999, edited by Karen Vogel Nichols, Patrick J. Burke & Caroline Hancock. Essays by Robert Maxwell, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Princeton Architectural Press, USA.

- (3) The further pursuit of Parc de la Villette and the philosophy of deconstructivism is assisted by the following accessible text.

'Deconstruction. A Student Guide. UIA (International Union of Architects)' 1991, in *Journal of Architectural Theory & Criticism*, (ed.) by Jorge Glusberg, Academy Editions, London.

In French: *Vaisseau de Pierres 2* 1987, Parc-Ville Villette Architectures, Champ Vallo.

- (4) Discussion with Marcus Spiller, planner-economist, (12 February 1999) involved in giving detailed 'shape' to the Program's procedures and processes. (refer Acknowledgments)
- (5) Discussion with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.



Chapter 2
The Nature of Urban Design

Chapter 2

The Nature of Urban Design

- 2.1 The Origins of Urban Design
- 2.2 Urban Design as a Formalised Concept and Discipline
- 2.3 The Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force
- 2.4 The Enduring Strands
- 2.5 Application of the Enduring Strands
- 2.6 Summary

2.1 The Origins of Urban Design

Urban design - whether consciously or unconsciously - is intrinsic to the development and building of towns and cities, and is timeless. Obviously it reflects the political and cultural form of the society; its manifestations can be observed from the earliest known cities. In the twentieth century with the development of planning theory it began to be defined or conceived of in a holistic way, firstly by the early planners, Geddes, and Abercrombie, then - and partly concurrently - by the modernists, particularly Le Corbusier who had very strong views about city form, and more recently by the British and US theorists in the 1960s - 1990s, with innumerable variations and convolutions especially in the postmodern era.

Urban design by its very nature does not lend itself to brief definitions as the definitions that follow illustrate. One can say with truth that in its most distilled form urban design allows the endless manipulation of static and dynamic elements in accordance with the prevailing cultural values of the time. The static elements are the 'bits' such as buildings, roads, public art, public spaces, landscape and other fixed elements. The dynamics are the people and their movements, the machines for movement, the elements of wind, sun and water, the movements through the infrastructure networks and the growth and death of cities or their parts. The theories prescribe the way these two fundamentals should come together, and at various times have been influenced by the contemplations of Vitruvius, Plato, Geddes, Le Corbusier, Rossi, the New Urbanists, Jacobs, the Feminists and Marxists, and by the processes of Feng Shui, ESDs, LEPs, DCPs. (1)

The viewpoint of static and dynamic elements is both brief and true, but the picture provided does not inform one of the *nature* and *role* of urban design.

Whilst urban designers can heed and borrow from the efforts of past and present urban theorists and practitioners, the difficulty of compactly stating the case for urban design remains. Whilst the work of Geddes, with survey, analysis and design; Lynch, with his paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks; Bentley, *et al*, with permeability, variety, legibility, robustness, visual appropriateness, richness and personalisation; Jacob's four conditions; Alexander's 253 patterns; Rossi with houses, monuments and types; Cullen with serial vision, place and context and others who all make a valuable contribution to urban discourse, they remain but contributors to the wider universe of urban design. At a Government authority level in the UK, DETR (Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) and CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) list the objectives of character, continuity and enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity. They also cite the criteria of the Property Council of Australia, which continues to explore the relationship between good urban design and better investment outcomes. Their criteria are:

- degree of 'community equity', measured in public space design, of amenity quality, area accessibility and vitality, and diversity;
- level of environmental performance, measured in terms of climatic responsiveness, and other environmental and sustainability indicators;
- responsiveness to qualities of the urban context and landscape, and to historical characteristics;
- relevance to present and future, measured through the degree of purposeful innovation;
- ability to change over time;
- impact on public life and community perception, and
- professional excellence in inputs such as development concept, planning, architecture and design, facility management and development upkeep. (2)

Given the preceding, the way ahead is to understand this multifaceted nature of urban design and to seek out those who have contributed to it as a formalised concept and discipline.

2.2 Urban Design as a Formalised Concept and Discipline

Jonathan Barnett (Barnett, J. 1982, p.13) identified the first academic urban design curriculum in the United States as commencing in 1957 at the University of Pennsylvania in their Civic Design Program, to be followed shortly after in 1960 by Harvard's Urban Design Program. Growth in this subject area ensued swiftly with many other courses becoming available either as a degree or a major within architecture or planning.

Barnett then traces the rapid growth of urban design as a vocation in cities, counties, planning departments, development agencies and the private sector, and believes that, 'today, almost every element of the city has been designed successfully somewhere, although these elements have never been put together in one place. There is solid evidence that a designed city is more than a presumption.'

Jon Lang (Lang, J. 1994, p. 127) questions whether it is possible to develop a 'more encompassing approach' to urban design and if conceptually possible is it then capable of implementation? Lang, together with others, believes the enquiry is worth the effort, and states the case that:

Urban design as a primarily public act can be redesigned. In its redesign, urban design needs: (1) to be seen within a moral order, (2) to understand its potential contribution in a changing world, (3) to deal with new realities of life rather than the problems of the past, (4) to recognise its political nature, (5) to see itself as a collaborative act, (6) to have a future orientation, (7) *to be based on experiential knowledge, and (8) to follow a knowledge-based approach to design.* To meet these needs urban design will further need to be based on an interactionist philosophy. *It will have to draw on both rationalist and empiricist thinking while firmly rooted in the latter approach. (emphasis added)*

The definition whilst extended - like other such definitions of urban design grappling with a multifaceted activity - encompasses a wide range of constituent parts that are regarded as the legitimate province of urban design. These constituents are clear and definite and include a moral or ethical position, which may become outcomes of concerns such as equity, equal access and well designed affordable housing; an ability to adapt to change; the acknowledgment of political realities and the perception of design as a collaborative act based on an experiential knowledge approach.

Gosling and Maitland (Gosling, D. & Maitland, B. 1984, p. 7) in citing the United Kingdom experience recount that in 1971 The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) issued a report on the need for people specifically trained in urban design. The report arose out of disquiet over the 'dissociation' of architecture and planning, the professions most involved with the design of the urban environment.

The report, at that time, advanced a definition of urban design:

Urban design is an integral part of the process of city and regional planning. It is primarily and essentially three-dimensional design but must also deal with the non-visual aspects of environment such as noise, smell or feelings of danger and safety, which contribute significantly to the character of an area. Its major characteristic is the arrangement of the physical objects and human activities which make up the environment; this space and the relationship of the elements in it is essentially external, as distinct from internal space. Urban design includes a concern for the relationship of new development to existing city form as much as to the social, political and economic demands and resources available. It is equally concerned with the relationship of different forms of movement to urban development.

The definition, again extended, covers the scope of urban design well, in that it identifies key concepts of the third dimension, sensory responses, safety; the relationship of 'bits', spaces and occupants, the fit between new and existing and a concern with social, political and economic demands and availability of resources.

Greed and Roberts (Greed, C. & Roberts, M., 1998, p. 7) enlarge upon the United Kingdom's urban design vocational experience and that of The Urban Design Group, an association of both professionals and non-professionals. The Group advances on several fronts including those of a learned society, a pressure group, an organiser of talks, events, conference and community participation, as well as journal publishers - *Urban Design Quarterly* and as Government lobbyists. 'Design' is the operative word as 'controversy exists over the extent to which professionals from a background which has not contained a substantial design content, such as the majority of planners, can ever become fully fledged designers.'

To the preceding can be added the Australian experience: tertiary courses in urban design, although small in number; the initiative of the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force 1994; The National Urban Design Education Strategy - Australian Council of Building Design Professions Ltd, Canberra 1996 and the RAlA National Urban Design Policy National Consultation Network 1999. (3)

Whilst Australia may not have lacked an awareness of urban design issues, it is not unreasonable to ask why it lagged so far behind the US and the UK to formally review the need for research, training and the establishment of programs in educational institutions and government policy. The time lags compared with the US and the UK are of the order of 40 and 25 years respectively. One redeeming consideration is that perceptive Australian practitioners, academics and possibly some government agencies had 'grasped the nettle' earlier than indicated by the above dates, producing both capable designers and good urban design outcomes.

The preceding definitions all serve to increase an understanding of the nature and role of urban design; however, the intention of this research is to proceed with the definitions and their extended development set out in the *Urban Design in Australia, Report by the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force*.

2.3 The Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force

The Report by the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force contains clear and comprehensive statements on the nature of urban design, particularly in an Australian context. However, exception can be taken to the statement of not depending on universal principles, since they exist and are frequently applied in urban design. An example would be row housing and the respect accorded to issues of width, height, scale and detail to produce harmonious outcomes. Adherence to these principles has prevailed through medieval, Renaissance and Georgian periods to the present day, and departures from them result in visually jarring and aesthetically unpleasant urban design outcomes (*Urban Design in Australia*, p. 5).

Good urban design is concerned with visual meaning, functional efficiency and broad access to change in cities and towns. It does not depend on universal principles or national codes but is grounded in local characteristics and needs, so much so that it is often hard to notice, being distinguished by natural fit with the site and context. Urban design manifests itself in many ways, but is always centred on the quality of the *public realm* (original emphasis).

The Report continues, 'drawing upon the work of the US urbanist William Lyman Porter, we have identified a set of criteria for good urban design' (p. 11-12).

Good urban design:

- 'demonstrates design excellence in urban development and architecture;
- distributes benefits widely in the population;
- produces environmental benefits;
- responds to local features and needs;
- is relevant to the contemporary world;
- leaves open the possibility for continuing adaptation and change, and
- forges connections with the past.'

and further,

'Today, the most urgent design needs continue to be:

- public fora and events to foster informed and open civic discourse and a sense of communal purpose;
- the strengthening of central cores as mixed-use domains to serve regional, national even global roles in economic vitality and cultural performance;
- the strengthening of inner-city vitality through good mass transit and well-managed car access;
- a democratic and open, yet visionary development guidance system that is supported by clear and certain development frameworks;
- firm and collaborative management of private and public urban capital investment, particularly in times of high economic expectations;
- unequivocal support for public space that affords generous levels of pedestrian comfort and amenity;
- meaningful preservation and reuse of symbolic and historical buildings and spaces;
- imaginative articulation of the mutual relations that provide the parts of the city with symbolic meaning and delight, giving a sense of time and place, and securing relations to water bodies and natural areas;
- creative management of the quality of signage, general building materials and articulation of facades, and

- nurturing of strong civic design and development institutions that are capable of innovating design and development control instruments.' (pp. 13-14)

The report contains relevant and well considered insights into the nature of urban design, of which the preceding are a selection only.

In Section 1.3 Methodology - Approaches, Resources and Methods above, **Method M1** sets out the Nature and Role of Urban Design - the 'enduring strands' and their comparison with the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force criteria. The analysis of the comparison is contained in Appendix B.

More detailed consideration can now be given to the concept of the 'enduring strands'.

2.4 The Enduring Strands

In Chapter One the concept of the enduring strands was introduced in **Method M3**: the strands are those constants, found in varying associations, throughout the history of urban development. An extensive literature review consolidated and confirmed this position and the composition of the strands. Whilst the extended definitions of urban design, and particularly those of the Prime Minister's Task Force, were accepted, they were individually and collectively unable to provide focused criteria for the evaluation of the Program's 26 Area Strategies. Accordingly, the strands were developed to fulfil this purpose. However, the strands also served other purposes, in that they provided a logical approach to the literature review, which otherwise would have been a very extended list without direct links to the research (refer References), and further assisted in isolating and grouping contemporary theory literature influential in the field of urban design.

The enduring strands are the distillation of many years of, and involvement in, the practice of urban design. They are considered the most comprehensive and therefore the most meaningful group. This justification is returned to again in Section 2.5 Application of The enduring Strands. They provide a structure for the analysis, execution and critique of urban design projects. They are grounded in the Empirical approach of urban design practice and are not to be found, as a described collective, in either theoretical or descriptive works on urban design. They received unanimous support in all instances from the respondents of the Questionnaire, Q23, such a response deemed to carry the weight of expert opinion. They were also tested at length with the supervisors and those who participated in the testing of the prototype Questionnaire. Minor adjustments were made to Q23 in that Housing was expanded to Activities, Health expanded to Social, and Management processes was added.

The strands, however, are found individually in abundance. There are countless Empirical and theoretical works on individual strands such as landscape, conservation and heritage, environmental design, ecology and the built environment - including concepts of embodied energy, public art and public domains and so on through all the individual strands. Many monographs focusing on individual strands were studied during the research, and whilst most provided valuable insights, their scope was confined to their chosen discipline. A selection of these individual discipline works is contained in the References.

There are other experts in the field who courageously tackle the task of bringing clarity to the field of urban design, and some of the most respected have already been mentioned, including: Barnett, Lang, Gosling and Maitland, Greed and Roberts and the Prime Minister's Task Force. Others have added their individual contributions to the field of urban design, and these are referred to in Section 2.1 The origins of urban design include: Geddes, Lynch, Cullen and Alexander. Whilst the collective contributions are excellent and valued, none provide a simple, strong and resilient structure for the analysis, execution and critique of urban design.

Hence, the development of the enduring strands, to provide a method for the analysis and evaluation of the BCP Area Strategies in urban design terms.

Whilst the individual strands attract their own theorists and practitioners, they collectively appear to have no champion other than the urban design practitioner who must assemble all or some of the individual strand professionals for the particular urban design project. On a major undertaking all strand professionals could be called upon and in the case of BCP Category 1 projects, and this was predominantly the case. However, smaller projects may only require practitioners for two or three strands depending on the nature of the project.

There is no precedence amongst the strands and no established hierarchy as to their individual contribution to the solution of an urban design problem. The extent of their individual contribution is dictated purely by the nature of the particular urban situation requiring solution.

Whilst analogy can only illustrate and not establish proof, it is worth reflecting upon the understanding of other complex fields other than urban design. For example, enormous comprehension and personal advancement can be made in the field of music by the understanding of the three enduring strands of melody, harmony and rhythm. As one qualified formally at tertiary level in both the practice and performance of music, it is the experience in and knowledge of these strands that provides skill in analysis, execution and the critique of music. Melody and rhythm emerge from the earliest of times with harmony appearing later on the scene, but no amount of theorising about their origins, if defensible, has anything to contribute to their value in terms of knowledge and experience in the practice, performance and critique of music.

Maitland in his commentary in the concluding sections of Gosling and Maitland (Gosling, D. & Maitland, B. 1984, p. 153) has this to say in the Section 5.2 Towards a Minimal Theory of Urban Structure.

Indeed, it could be argued that if the urban designer has any function, it is to provide the architect and town-planner with formal constructs which can guide their decisions. Many of the urban design theories we have considered can be regarded as attempts to set out such a framework which, it is worth noting, must, like any other formal system, provide two things to be effective: firstly, it must define the elements which are to be employed, and secondly the rules for their association. In the case of language, for example, the formal system must provide both a vocabulary and a grammar; in music both notes and the ways in which they may be harmonically, rhythmically and melodically combined; in mathematics both numbers and the rules for their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Unlike music and mathematics, but in common with architecture, however, a formal system valid for urban design must have one further formal quality, namely it must correspond with the functional organisations that inhabit it. This isomorphism between formal and functional structure must be maintained to a reasonably high degree of approximation, for although the two are constantly undergoing change at variable rates (new social patterns occupying old forms, for example) so that the former can be read as having an independent existence, it is nevertheless tied to its essential purposes as a means of organising the setting for everyday life.

Taking Maitland's three stages separately, it is evident that urban design practice and the basis of this research accord closely with the above statement.

Firstly: The required elements are the enduring strands.

Secondly: The rules for their association are established in each particular case by the urban design process that proceeds in practice as follows:

Stage 1 Site inspection and appraisal, data gathering and statement of principles.

At this stage site characteristics are examined, and include, such matters as: local context, slope, orientation, views, flora and fauna, site drainage, noise sources, traffic generation and road networks, public transport and landmark quality. Data gathering would include, but not be limited to, prevailing statutory and non-statutory requirements, heritage requirements to be met - if applicable, and the detailed data-gathering requirements of the specialist consultants. The enduring strands provide an overall check list to ensure the completeness of the site inspection and data gathering stages.

The statement of principles will in part be determined by the client or user group and by the characteristics of the site. Such principles might include, but again would not be limited to: maximising northern orientation, improving site ingress and egress, maintaining existing residential density, tying in with adjacent sites and all residential car parking to be concealed from view.

Client approval.

Stage 2 Examination of opportunities and constraints, development of alternative concepts, evaluation of concepts and selection of the preferred option.

Opportunities and constraints are very site-dependent and are generally resolved at this level, although some can be extended, as for example in public transport, contiguous waterways and green corridors. At this stage, a number of options begin to take shape and these are developed more fully to allow a considered and weighted evaluation to be made.

Client approval.

Stage 3 Development and testing of the preferred option.

Client approval.

Stage 4 Preparation of draft report and associated design guidelines.

Client approval.

Stage 5 Preparation and submission of final report and design guideline documents.

Client approval.

Thirdly The urban design must correspond with the functional organisations which inhabit it. Such correspondence is aimed at through the instruments of statutory and non-statutory requirements and design guidelines.

Hence, the enduring strands are the elements; the urban design process establishes the rules and the degree of correspondence is achieved through a number of statutory and non-statutory constraints. As time shifts the degree of correspondence, then adjustment can be implemented through rezoning, or in the case of heritage buildings, through adaptive reuse and the implementation of the Burra Charter and Conservation Management Plans.

Objects have properties (qualities), that can be described and their presence can be explained in everyday terms without recourse to complex theory to explain their existence. Many of the elements of urban design, and in turn the enduring strands, are objects or a series of objects, eg, buildings, roads, landscape material *et al.* and their placement and conjunctions, and the processes that guide such placement and conjunctions are empirically determined and based on knowledge wrought from experience. Experience guides the urban designer's hand, and such experience and knowledge of previously successful outcomes, are the paramount considerations in the processes.

Hence, the strands are introduced from an historical perspective to demonstrate their endurance over time and their self-evident, *prima facie* if one wishes, presence and their conformity with Locke's notion of *simple* ideas. It is granted that once observers, critics or professions take possession of a strand, as for example traffic engineers in regard to the strand of Circulation, and there are many other examples, then theories will develop and abound, but these have nothing to do with establishing the self-evident existence of the strands. Such entailed theorising may conform to Locke's idea of *complex* ideas. They may comprise *a priori* speculations, and in this research this approach was deemed not to be germane, or they may be Rationalist enquiries as manifest in the designed and built work of the historical figures of Boulee or some of the postmodernists.

An example of an essentially basic element of urban design is that of the public square (Public domain), an element whose simple community uses are self-evident, and not requiring a theoretical justification, but whose purpose has frequently been clouded by the obsfucations of spatial theorists. Equally, the research did not explore the theories of the modernists, postmodernists and deconstructivists for the reasons previously outlined.

Each strand, or even portions thereof, is clearly worthy of major research in individual studies. However, that is not the purpose of this research, and accordingly the following are outlines, to establish the continuity and relevance of each strand and to indicate, by issue or example, its importance to the Program's evaluation.

The enduring strands are:

- Buildings and their grouping
- Public domain
- Safety and security
- Activity
- Conservation and heritage
- Landscape
- Environment
- Ecological response
- Circulation
- Public art
- Social
- Management processes.

Buildings and their grouping

- individual buildings

Throughout urban history some individual buildings and structures, whilst serving their own particular purposes, have also acted as meeting places, rallying points or landmarks. Landmarks have particular significance as they are intrinsic to mental mapping. Temples, cathedrals, castles, towers and monuments bear sufficient testimony to this, and the writings of Lynch, Appleyard and Cullen reinforce these observations (Lynch, K. 1960a; Appleyard, D. 1970; Cullen, G. 1961). (4) Such buildings are, or become, icons and whilst created individually are conceived as integrated with the full built ensemble and not as isolated monuments. The possible exception to these circumstances are buildings such as the Taj Mahal. The situation today is no different, although the historically rich variety of iconic forms has diminished, having in some measure been supplanted by the ubiquitous clock tower, beloved of developers.

- building groups

Historically, and at a large scale, building groupings often reflected relationships of power, status and wealth with scant regard for other urban considerations. With the advance of democratic processes, and later, the ascendancy of the planning profession, separation of activities and their built form came about through zoning. Current urban design practice has contributed to the softening of the rigid separation of uses by zoning through its support of mixed use development, shared zones and a concern with appropriate land use and flexible conjunctions of activities in the interests of 'the possibility of continuing adaptation and change' (PM's Task Force p. 12).

At a smaller scale, that of discrete building groups, where the relationship of one building to another is encountered, there are issues of configuration, scale, detail, colour, texture and general compatibility to be attended to. Time-honoured configurations of the group cluster, the street-scape run and courtyard groupings have come down through the centuries and are equally valid today as in earlier periods.

It is a sad indictment that earlier periods, the Renaissance for example, with a limited range of materials and construction techniques but commonly understood architectural vocabulary, produced confident and harmonious results that often elude us today.

A wide range of construction approaches, a greatly increased palette of materials and a surfeit of architectural dialects have contributed to the many visually dismaying urban outcomes now encountered. Infill housing which should demand the highest design standards and sensitivity is a common offender.

Building grouping is the *sine qua non* of urban form, it is the 'character' of the area—be it the squares of London, the stepped runs of Paddington houses, Sperry's Port-Grimaud (Sperry, F. 1989) (5) or the detailed codes of the New Urbanists (Duany, A., Plater-Zyberk, E. 1991; Katz, P. 1994; Mohoney, D. & Easterling, K. (eds) 1991). Groups of buildings have the potential to contribute to the loss of amenity. Increasing demands are placed upon the urban designer to attend to the issues of overshadowing, wind funnelling, reflectance and overlooking thus increasing the design challenges. Satisfactory solutions to these concerns are frequently requirements in authorities' approvals (City of Sydney, Central Planning Controls 1996).

The physical arrangements of buildings in regard to their site, their boundaries, the particular area (zone) together with matters of bulk, colour and the visual contribution of landscape and other issues of form and aesthetics are generally covered by the requirements of DCPs and in some particular areas, by design guidelines.

In addition to the above controls, there are a number of authoritative manuals, particularly in regard to residential development. These include AMCORD and AMCORD URBAN being national resource documents for residential design. Other excellent guide documents produced by the NSW Urban Design Advisory Service (UDAS) include: *Neighbourhood Character, Residential Densities, Urban Form, Better Urban Living, Residential Subdivision, Mixed Use in Urban Centres*. As well, the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning produced specialist information on such issues as *Affordable Housing*.

Public domain

The public domain comprises roads, footpaths, parks and all lands not held in private ownership that are readily available for public use and enjoyment.

Over the centuries public space has come to include agoras, fora, market and civic squares, malls, parks and the spaces devoted to circulation such as streets, sidewalks and their various name guises of boulevards, avenues and the like. The public domain also includes such items as street furniture, tree planting, lighting, advertising, directories and rubbish receptacles.

Discussions on the public domain give rise to considerations of space and place. (Madanipour, A. 1996, p. 23)

Space is seen as an open, abstract expanse, place is part of space that is occupied by a person or thing and is endowed with meaning and value ... (The) meanings of the two concepts often merge, requiring each other for their definition, as 'we are attached to one long for the other' ... The reality of a place, therefore, is always open, making its determination an inherently social process.

'Public' presents less semantic difficulties than space and place, and has been defined as 'of or concerning people as a whole' (Oxford Dictionary p. 1613) and 'open or shared by all people' (Concise Oxford Dictionary, p. 832).

The intellectual debate continues to rage over the nature of space. Colquhoun (Madanipour, p. 10) sees urban space as both social space and built space, whilst Tschumi (Madanipour, pp. 12-13) sees a dilemma in mental space versus real space.

Tschumi is also the designer of the layered deconstructivist experiment with space at the Parc de La Villette. There are deliberations of space and time and 'public space' as in shopping malls, which is in fact private space (Sorkin, M. (ed) 1992). The intellects of Bachelard, Lefebvre, and Habermas have been brought to bear on the subject with outcomes as diverse as the poetic to the incisively analytical (Bachelard, G. 1958; Lefebvre, H. 1974; Habermas, J. 1989).

The nature of space and place clearly constitutes an extended study in its own right, but in terms of this research two cardinal guides were deemed sufficient to steer through the uncertain shoals of this debate. These were, firstly, 'urban design manifests itself in many ways, but is always centred on the public realm' (PM's Task Force, p. 5) and 'the public realm is therefore the most important part of our towns and cities' (Madanipour, pp. 146-147); and, secondly, it is, 'place that is part of space that is occupied by a person or thing and is endowed with meaning and value' (*ibid* p. 23). These two guides are the prime concerns in the context of this research. The strand also interacts with other strands including those of Buildings, Landscape, Safety and security and Public art.

The legislation as well as by-laws and standards that control the public domain, are those covered in the individual enduring strands such as Circulation, Safety and security and Landscape. The document *Urban Development Plan for Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct 1999 (update)* contains an excellent example of the establishing guidelines on the public domain.

Safety and security

Adequate provisions to respond to the primal needs for physical and psychological security have been concerns of urban societies for centuries. Whilst earlier responses were manifest in many varieties of fortification, they now take different forms, but are essentially directed to the same end, that of providing safeguards against real or perceived violence to persons or property.

The reflections, research and writings of Jacobs, Newman, Coleman, and Wekerle and Whitzman, among others, have contributed to an increased awareness the role urban design can play in improving safety and security (Jacobs, J. 1961; Newman, O. 1972, Coleman, A. 1985, Wekerle, G.R., & Whitzman, C. 1995). (6)

Improvement can be achieved by such means as buildings and their grouping arranged to increase overlooking and sightlines; a mix of activities to encourage street activity both day and night; improved lighting and signage; areas free from entrapment and management practices particularly adapted to public areas. Gated communities, privatised malls with their own security and introverted atria are not considered good urban design solutions to these concerns. Whilst critics may argue that 'causal links between defensible space modifications and reductions in crime had never been demonstrated' (Wekerle & Whitzman p. 13) research has shown that urban places have certain characteristics less safe than others. Urban designers can assist in the design process in reducing the perception of danger, particularly in public places. Perceptions alone are capable of influencing behavioural responses, which in turn influence the degree of security and safety provided.

Contemporary contributions to the ongoing debate of urban safety and security come from such diverse sources as Sarkissian, (Sarkissian, W. 2000) and Australian Standards, for example: Australian Standard : AS1158.1 - *Road Lighting / Amndt. 1 - 1998, Vehicular Lighting (Category V) Lighting - Performance & Installation Design Requirements*; Australian Standard AS 1158.4 1997 - *The Lighting of Urban Roads & Other Public Thoroughfares - Supplementary Lighting at Pedestrian Crossings* and Australian Standard AS 1428 1998 *Design for Access and Mobility* all of which assisted in the evaluation of the Program's outcomes in this area.

Activity

Urban activity takes several forms. There is the coming and going of people attending to their business, whether it be work, shopping, dining, education or any of the many urban pursuits. As the population density increases so too population activity tends to gather momentum, engendering what is perceived by many as the 'buzz', rhythm and vibrancy of the urban environment. A simple comparison is the slow pace of a country town main street when contrasted with the bustle of Fifth Avenue New York. Urban activity can also be people taking their recreation or ease in the public domain, be it in parks or in simply promenading. Promenading is a social ritual, seemingly lost to Australians after the Victorian period. However, its return could be surmised if one takes observations of people at their leisure in such public places as Darling Harbour and Southbank as being indicators. Urban activities require accommodation in appropriate buildings, such as offices, shops, schools and residences. They receive comment in the evaluation of the various Program Area Strategies. Housing together with its BCP concomitant of urban consolidation, is the most pervasive of the accommodated activities, and receives the most attention in the evaluations.

Housing is synonymous with cities, suburbs and settlements. Richard Sennett (Sennett, R. 1994, pp. 21-22) observed that when 'Lewis Mumford wrote *The City in History*, he recounted four thousand years of urban history by tracing the evolution of the wall, the house, the street, the central square - basic forms of which cities have been made'. These four criteria have concordance with this research in the strands of safety and security, housing, circulation and the public domain. As the world of housing, both built and written, is incalculably vast, the research was of necessity restrained to the following areas: medium density housing, affordable housing, adaptive reuse, urban consolidation, and private open space.

- medium density housing

Medium density housing was the most frequently encountered housing form in the Program's 26 Area Strategies. Whilst high-rise housing appeared sporadically as at Ultimo-Pyrmont and the traditional single storey house on its own land parcel also found expression, it was medium density housing that provided the most prevalent and rewarding research material. Rewards were in the variety of design solutions, the various design guidelines, responses to ESD and in a number

of demonstration projects. There were disappointments too, in overworked or clumsy elevational treatments, poor construction and detailing and in indifferent responses to context.

- AMCORD and AMCORD URBAN

The Australian Model Code for Residential Development; Guidelines for Urban Housing was produced in 1992 as a higher density housing code (AMCORD URBAN 1992, Vol. 2 p. 3). (7)

The code used to provide the administrative framework for the Green Street policy, is based on the premise that town houses, villa units, and apartments are urban and implies that other forms of housing in urban areas such as detached houses are not... urban housing is defined to be housing on lots less than 300 square metres with an expectation that the code would achieve densities in the range 25 to 100 dwellings per hectare.

Much of the Program's housing was reported to be in accordance with the principles of AMCORD, yet some of those interviewed provided evidence of having produced their own code, as in Newcastle (Honeysuckle), finding that either the Code's inconsistencies or its complexities were unhelpful to their individual housing objectives. (*Building Better Cities Newcastle Housing Design Manual - Prepared for Architects, Builders, Designers and the Community July 1995*).

Similar difficulties have also been experienced in housing design and siting outside the Program's Area Strategies (*ACT Code for Residential Development Appendix III of the Territory Plan February 2000 - Final Draft*).

- affordable housing

Affordable housing was a logical built extension of one of the Program's five objectives, that of 'improved social justice for the less advantaged' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 9). Interviews with those involved in the Program together with site inspections indicated mixed outcomes in both design and built quality of this housing type. Affordable housing was a predetermined percentage or quantity, frequently small, of the Area Strategies' anticipated housing potential. As such it could not help but inherit a high land component cost resulting from a general increase in value of the particular Area's regeneration. It was clear that quality of the built outcome could suffer proportionally.

At Ultimo-Pyrmont particular attention was given to the issue of not pricing lower income households out of the redevelopment, accomplished through inclusionary zoning requirements. (*Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 - City West, Part 4 - Affordable Housing in the Ultimo-Pyrmont Precinct*). The details of the process are pursued further in the Ultimo-Pyrmont Area Strategy Part 2.

- adaptive reuse

The Program has several excellent examples of adaptive reuse of early commercial and industrial buildings to other uses, particularly housing. Examples include Boan's Warehouse, East Perth, to housing and offices; the former industrial site of WA Newspapers Fremantle to housing for a range of socio-economic groups and the Dalgety Woolstores at Geelong to University purposes. There are further examples.

- urban consolidation

Support for urban consolidation by Government, particularly in inner city areas, coexisted with the life of the Program. Much of the Program's housing, particularly medium density housing,

was aligned with the objectives of consolidation, whose genesis lay essentially in metropolitan planning and the conservation of land, resources and travel times. Some of those involved in the program saw consolidation as a means of increasing housing diversity rather than as an objective in itself. There has been considerable debate about the development savings achieved and environmental benefits gained through the application of urban consolidation. Spiller in presentation paper (Spiller, M. 1992, *Federal Initiatives on Better Cities*) argues the case for substantial resource savings arising from more compact urban forms, whilst Troy (Troy, P.N. 1996, *The Perils of Urban Consolidation*) presents a strong case that any benefits are illusory and are in fact frequently disbenefits. It is not intended to debate the issues here, there are many, and there are pros and cons on each side. Inner city land values alone will maintain the momentum in favour of consolidation; however, the negative aspects, particularly those affecting the environment, will need sustained design attention to reduce their influence.

- private open space

Urban consolidation diminishes private open space. One way of 'recovering' such space is for some of the recreational functions of private space to be readily available and accessible in adjoining public open space.

Such activities as reading, rollerblading, skate boarding and family barbecues can be incorporated into generous circulation spines. Some of the Program's Area Strategies included such spines, East Perth being an exemplar.

Conservation and heritage

Conservation and heritage preservation particularly of the built environment, whilst certainly an enduring strand, is also a fragile one. Over time nature has exacted its toll of buildings and urban fabric worthy of preservation. Its ravages have been in the form of tempest, earthquake, flood, fire and common weathering. The depredations of man have added to those of nature resulting in ruin through conflict, short-sighted development policies, ignorance by officialdom and polluting industries contributing to erosion by such means as acid rain. Whilst many see conservation as wholly positive there are hazards to be recognised in its implementation. Lynch (Lynch, K. 1981b, p. 259) reminds us that it may displace people; that it can convey a false, 'purified, static view of history'; that its criteria are narrow and specialist with possibly class bias present, and if the undertaking is of a large scale it may neither fit well with the new functions nor permit flexibility in future adaptations.

Whilst prudent to heed Lynch's counsel, his observations should be seen as challenges rather than deterrents. Restoration or adaptive reuse can be emotionally satisfying, forge links with the past, make good economic sense and meet embodied energy expectations in terms of ESD (ecologically sustainable development).

Cultural heritage with its mapping and planning processes extends beyond the ambit of building conservation to embrace and make tangible human experience of that society, be it spiritual, material, intellectual or emotional (*Cultural Heritage, an Urban Age Special Issue* September 1999 p. 2).

The work of those involved in conservation and heritage can contribute substantially to improved urban design outcomes, both built and cultural.

Sensibilities of other cultures, previously neglected, can be acknowledged and respected, as for example in our indigenous people's campsites, trace routes and ceremonies. Australia's progress

in conservation and heritage has benefited greatly by both the initiative of the National Estate and The Australian Heritage Commission as well as the Burra Charter.

The NSW Government introduced the *Heritage Act 1977* (NSW) to identify and conserve heritage in the state. After two decades it was apparent that changes were needed to ensure that state and local governments could look after our heritage more effectively. On 2 April 1999 the *Heritage Amendment Act 1998* (NSW) came into the State Heritage Register. The legacy of Government heritage can be seen in: post offices, police stations, court houses, light houses, parks and infrastructure such as roads, railways and bridges. Much of NSW's significant heritage is owned or managed by State Government agencies. The Heritage Act requires them to compile a register of their heritage assets and to look after them on behalf of the community. The Government expects that its own agencies will lead by example in matters of heritage management.

The NSW Heritage Office produces a formidable number of publications to assist in heritage matters, including its *NSW Heritage Manual 2000*. Other publications cover a miscellany of subjects including: *Investigating Fabric*, *Altering Heritage Assets*, *Statements of Heritage Impacts*, and *Conservation Management Plans*.

Landscape

Landscape transcends both cultures and time, and has been a complementary fellow traveller with the urban realm since the keeping of records. Its best examples have graced Islamic, sub-continental, Oriental, Middle Eastern and European cultures. It has played a significant role in the planning movements of the Garden City, Radburn and parkways. In the past, significant practitioners would have included Capability Brown, Griffin and Olmstead (8) and in more recent time McHarg and Sporn and the latter's substantial contribution to environmental planning. Whilst critics such as Krog (Turner, T. 1996, *City as Landscape* p. 141) sees it as 'a discipline in intellectual disarray' and with a 'deficiency in theoretical discourse' it has become strongly aligned with the environmental movement and has frequently taken the lead in integrating the principles of ESD with design.

Landscape can make significant contributions to urban design at all scales. At large scale its strength in site analysis can lay the foundations for strong, sensitive and integrated outcomes. Through careful consideration of soil types, slope analyses, aspect, prospect, wind strength and direction, existing flora, site drainage and other macro issues, landscape can greatly assist in establishing a sound design foundation. At a medium scale, such as precincts, parks and streetscapes its engagement with ESD comes into sharper focus.

Its contribution at this scale includes the selection of deciduous trees for admitting winter sun, protection from prevailing winds, natural and created barriers to dampen unwanted noise and site water management. The expression and integration of cultural heritage and public art is frequently successful at this level. At the small scale, lighting and furniture can strengthen issues of safety and comfort whilst details and motifs can reinforce the established design themes. ESD considerations continue in matters of embodied energy in paving selections as well as in the choice of plant material and their water demands.

Landscape is an activity that occurs at many scales. Legislative controls range from the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 - amended 2001* (NSW) which deals with the reservation of parks, sites and State recreation areas and their care, control and management. The *Local Government Act 1993 No 30* (NSW) contains very specific and detailed requirements to be met in the establishment of community lands and their management. These requirements can certainly bear upon the requirements to be met in urban design projects.

Environment

The expansion of environmental awareness in the last few decades, particularly in the western world, has been nothing short of phenomenal. From the earlier writings of Paul and Anne Erlich, Rachel Carson and Mihajlo Mesarovic and Eduard Pestel we have moved from these sometimes cataclysmic views of the environment and resource depletion to a position where environmental custodianship and responsibility is increasingly part of education, legislation and regulation (Erlich, P.R. & Erlich, A.H. 1970, *Population, Resources, Environment*; Carson, R. 1962, *Silent Spring*; Mesarovic, M. & Pestel, E. 1975, *Mankind at the Turning Point*).

As the awareness and knowledge of the interrelationship of natural processes and man's intrusion upon them gathers pace, some of the earlier architectural and urban design criteria of responding to the sun, wind and rain, being matters intimately related to those of shelter, have been gathered into a wider collectivity called ecologically sustainable design (ESD). Two examples would be the movements of the sun and passive energy conservation measures whilst site water run-off and its management would be another. For the purposes of clarity in the evaluation of the Area Strategies, it is useful to maintain the above grouping whilst also responding separately to the more recent advances in ESD.

The environment in the context of urban development is contained to the issues of the built response to the elements of the sun (issues of orientation), wind (adequate protection) and rain (adequate shelter and covered connectivity). The urban form outcomes can be considerably different if these issues are appropriately attended to. Whilst the requirement to attend to these issues is generally more one of persuasion than edict, such requirements find their way into DCPs and design guidelines.

Ecological response

The Commonwealth of Australia in its National Strategy for ESD 1992 reported that the strategy's goal was 'development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends' (Bell, F.C. 1994, pp. 53-54). Environmental regimes increasingly press upon the built environment, in particular Local Agenda 21 (Bell, F.C. 1994, pp. 7-8). The Agenda is a long-term strategic program for achieving sustainability in the twenty-first century. It helps local communities deal with economic development and employment in the context of environmental protection and social change. Of those who engage in the design of the built environment, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) has promulgated five principles of environmental and social responsibility: (The Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1995. *Environment Design Guide*, RAIA, [Melbourne], p. 3)

- maintain and restore biodiversity;
- minimise the consumption of resources;
- minimise pollution of air, soil and water;
- maximise health, safety, and the comfort of building users, and
- increase awareness of environmental issues.

The Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force (p. 28) added their convictions on ecologically sustainable development by linking it to urban design:

Good urban design is essential to creating settlements that minimise environmental damage through good management of developing densities. Location decisions, mobility planning, area and site design, solar orientation and microclimate aspects, *surface water capture, filtration and recycling*, and the protection of building and *green networks: forests, grass lands, dunes, wetlands and rivers and lakes as supportive living places for flora and fauna.* (emphasis added)

The preceding extract from the Task Force gives an indication of the gamut of issues encompassed in the consideration of ESD issues and the design of the built environment.

Ecologically sustainable development whilst linked with many of the strands is most closely allied to those of buildings, landscape, conservation and heritage. The work of McHarg and Sporn is particularly relevant to ESD and landscape. Whilst ESD was one of the Program's five objectives, it presented mixed outcomes in the various Area Strategies. There are excellent examples of applications of ESD principles in site issues, particularly in water management, but limited evidence in building design.

The remediation of contaminated lands frequently encountered in urban redevelopment would, in NSW, come under the requirements of the *Contaminated Land Management Act 1997* (NSW). Substantial amounts can be expended in preparing sites for urban development, and needs to be built into estimates of the work. If the contamination is of a low order it can sometimes be formed into mounds and earth covered, presenting urban design opportunities in the re-shaping of the topography. Similarly, in urban redevelopment, waterways are required to be cleaned of their accumulated waste and the contamination of decades, and re-established as clean waterways with the regeneration of the underwater flora.

Circulation

Mumford's descriptions of the intolerable traffic congestion of Rome during Julius Caesar's reign (Mumford, L. 1966, *The City in History: its Origins, its Transformations, and its Prospects*, p. 254), Dickens's sketches of the disarray of nineteenth century London traffic (Dickens, C. 1874, *Sketches by Boz*, p. 62) and our own first-hand knowledge of traffic snarls in both Western and Asian cities, are evidence enough that circulation and attendant chaos is an enduring and burdensome strand. The essentially incompatible mix of transport modes frequently exacerbates the situation further. Despite both theoretical (Buchanan, C. 1963, *Traffic in Towns*) and practical initiatives to separate and/or integrate different modes as in public transport systems there still remains much to grapple with to improve upon the present situations.

Over the last two decades there has been a clearly discernible move towards more 'softly' engineered approaches to traffic management. Traffic in this sense means the coming and going of people, cyclists and vehicles. The evidence is clearly visible in 'shared' zones, traffic calming, more modest and sensitively landscaped parking areas and other initiatives. Perceptions have shifted, so that in some circumstances, people and traffic are seen as compatible, and similarly too, pedestrians and cyclists. Linear parks can simultaneously accommodate walkers, cyclists and the occasional rollerblader without any party being inconvenienced or endangered.

Areas for parking, which were once hard bitumen paving have been transformed by cobbles and bollard definition so that parking may still be allowed but only for restricted periods, the remaining time being for use by people. Parked cars now nudge under canopies of tree stands, with paving no longer meticulously benched in bitumen and edged with faultless kerbs and guttering. These softer solutions are now common and encountered more frequently in the suburban development than in the city. Traffic management in the city still bears the hallmarks of dedicated use, hard surfaces and rigid control systems being the work of the omnipresent traffic engineer. As medium density housing and its suburban context is a considerable part of the BCP, 'softer' traffic management is very much part of it, and therefore germane to this research.

Soft traffic management frequently co-opts the skills of both engineer and landscape architect, however, there were few examples in the Program of such 'softer engineered' solutions.

There are many modes of circulation: train, bus, light rail and ferry and that of the pedestrian. They collectively belong to the public domain. Whilst the prevailing legislation and regulatory controls covering all modes of travel would be an immense study in its own right, there are valuable guidelines to be found for suburban scale vehicular and pedestrian circulation in AMCORD and in UDAS documents such as *Neighbourhood Character*.

Public art

Throughout history public art has been manifest in many forms, including sculpture, fountains and murals, but generally of a static nature. Whilst the genesis of much great art has been religious or political it has also been hobbled at times to serve these institutions and at times architectural ends, the modernist period being such a case, with its Le Corbusier modular man murals and Henry Moore type sculptures. However, art's unquenchable spirit not only ensures its survival but passionate exploration of new frontiers. Some of these recent explorations include both the dynamic and the ephemeral.

Examples of the dynamic, which frequently combines several art forms, would include: the abstract animated figures in the pool at the base of the Pompidou Centre Paris; the 'pop up' pyrotechnic flares at Southbank Melbourne; the talking totems - *The Edge of the Trees* - by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley in the courtyard of The Museum of Sydney and *Tide to Tide* wave sculpture by Jennifer Turpin on the foreshore of the Ultimo-Pyrmont site. Ephemeral art is found in several cultures wherein lightly framed magnificent paper structures serve their ceremonial purpose and are then burnt as part of the celebration.

In an Australian context ephemeral art has taken the form of laser projections on the blank walls of city buildings; suspended dancers working through their routines on the same blank wall and cut out figures 'planted' across public spaces and many other imaginings. Public art can be participatory as in the superb children's slippery dip slide at Parc de La Villette or Halprin's Lovejoy Plaza and Cascade, Portland Oregon.

The 1970s saw the formalising of Government patronage in the arts area with the establishment of the Australia Council. The States (9) pursued the establishment of their own agendas in the matter of arts policies as follows:

Tasmania	'Art for Public Building Scheme'	1979
South Australia	'Art for Public Places Committee'	1984
Victoria	'Art and Public Spaces Program'	1988
Western Australia	'Public Art Task Force'	1989

Queensland and NSW have not as yet established such public art programs.

There are a number of publications on public art in Australia, and several councils have their own policies in this area.



Illustration 2.1 Children's slippery dip slide Parc de La Villette

We have moved a long way from when Australia's public art and monuments comprised statues of royalty, particularly Queen Victoria, the many Rolls of Honour, and the obligatory community statue of a soldier at attention. We have also progressed from the catalogue-selected cast iron encased drinking bubblers and park fountains and the intrepid explorers in bronze with shielded eyes scanning the now suburban hinterland. Australia is no longer a homogenous society it once believed itself to be with commonly held values. It is very diverse with many cultures and customs to acknowledge.

The strand of public art is a pervasive one, enriching other strands of the public domain, including buildings and landscape. Because of its pervasive nature public art's most successful outcomes are where its contributions are integrated at the design stages and not as individual and isolated pieces positioned at the completion of the works.

The challenge to artists is to respond to this cultural diversity, to evoke responses that may please, delight, bring joy to and even impart a sense of security. To meet this challenge will require the many artistic forms of static, dynamic, ephemeral and the participatory all richly imagined. If we extend public art and its venues to embrace street theatre, dance, music and live performance generally, then the odds in favour of success in responding to our cultural diversity are further increased. Such integration was found in at least one of the Program's Area Strategies, that of East Perth (refer Section 4.7.2). Whilst a few of the Program's Area Strategies ventured into the domain of public art - a small number with limited success - it was generally under-subscribed.

Social

Whilst all Area Strategies were required to meet the thrust of the Program's five objectives, which are predominantly socially oriented, there were also individual social objectives for specific Area Strategies.

The five Program objectives were:

- economic growth and microeconomic reform;
- improved social justice for the less advantaged;
- reform of inappropriate and outmoded institutional care for people with disabilities and the frail aged;
- ecologically sustainable development, and
- improved urban environments and more livable cities.

Accordingly, the social aspects of the individual Area Strategies were evaluated against the above general objectives and particular specific individual project objectives.

For some time during the research, other strands were entertained to describe social outcomes such as health or wellbeing; however, both criteria were of such multi-variate complexity that they need to await further refinement before they could effectively serve a research project such as this.

A review of the possibilities of health being an enduring strand produced the following considerations, and in turn its deletion as unsustainable for this study.

Health in the sense of physical, mental and spiritual wholeness is a multi-dimensional concept. Preoccupations with the fundamentals of clean air and water, the absence or reduction of disease, open space, cleanliness, sanitation and avoidance of overcrowding were generally the perceived basis of health in urban environments.

The observers have been many and range across: Pausanias, Howard, Geddes and a number of frequently paternalistic Utopian socialists (10) with expressed concerns for their workers health and 'moral' well being. Manifestations of these basic health provisions are to be found in Roman civilisation, the Garden Cities movement and most of today's western cities. There are however, many Asian and African communities that can barely lay claim to one of the preceding basics. There exists a fundamentalist view that the sanitary engineer has done more for community health than the medical profession. Whilst unproven it is an interesting contemplation and may contain a kernel of truth.

However, from these basic health concerns, the ground has shifted to an infinitely more complex international and environmental view of health. From the international arena there has been the Alma Ata conference endorsing the notion that health is linked to the living conditions of a population, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) with its Healthy Cities Program. (11)

A review of the possibilities of wellbeing as an enduring strand produced the following considerations, and in turn its deletion as being unsustainable for this study.

In the Australian context, the Commissioner for the Environment is charged with the production of Environmental Indicators for National State of the Environment Reporting which has seven major themes in its reporting, one of which is human settlements. The 'layers' or domain areas for human settlements include: *urban design*, energy, materials, water, transport and accessibility, population, housing, indoor air quality, environmental health, noise and waste.

Many of these domain areas are those of the enduring strands, and coincidentally supportive at Government level, of the approach of this research. The indicators as at February 2001, for Human Settlement Issue 1 Human well-being (including noise and heritage) included some 41 indicators, also making this far too inclusive to be used as a meaningful indicator as an enduring strand.

The addressing of social issues is very much part of urban development. Social concerns are many but often come back to such matters as equity and access. The provision of affordable housing is one way of addressing the inequalities between those that are established in their own homes and those that are not, but wish to if they could afford to. The provision of affordable housing is a step to addressing this inequality. The requirement to provide a proportion of affordable housing in some development can be written into legislation as in the *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 2 - City West* under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Also, guide docu-

ments such as the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning's *Affordable Housing* can assist urban designers.

The validation of affordable housing schemes is covered by the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Act 2000* (NSW).

The issue of access to work opportunities, health care and education is dependent on effective planning. Equal access, as in the appropriate provisions for people with disabilities, is another aspect of access and very much part of urban design.

Management processes

Historically there have existed rules for the establishment of built form, some mystical, some pragmatic—the Roman grid with its set out axes of *cardo* and *decumanus* and the ensuing grid being an example of the latter (Lynch, K. 1981b, p. 82).

In Chapter One the position adopted was that urban design overlaps both planning and architecture, and this is found to be particularly so in insertions into the existing built fabric. It inherits the principles and tools of both, in particular those of planning. The everyday discourse of planning in terms of SEPPs, REPs, LEPs and DCPs, plot ratios, site coverage, densities, zoning, precincts, design guidelines, set backs, public comment processes and a host of other requirements and regulations, become by adoption the tools of urban design in the development of built form.

However, urban design has extended the boundaries of some of these tools, especially in terms of design guidelines and public participation, including the charrette process.

Whilst Alexander (Alexander, C. et al. 1987, *A New Theory of Urban Design*) pursues a totally independent stance from what is the current body of knowledge in this field, it remains so far a provocative but incomplete theoretical exercise, which may in time come to prevail. It is, however, in terms of this research speculative and theoretical.

The theoretical advances in urban design are strongly focused on the people, or in everyday planning terminology, community participation. Earlier Australian examples took place at Glebe and Woolloomooloo. From the ordered and restrictive planning practices of limited periods for public comment through to advocacy planning (Goodman, R. 1972, *After the Planners*) and its generally acknowledged shortcomings, urban design theory and practice is advancing in ways of responding to the many voices and to acknowledge their presence in the built outcomes.

Influential contributors to this frontier include Ellin (Ellin, N. 1996, p. 261) and Sandercock (Sandercock, L. 1998, pp. 163-4). Both challenge the past and existing planning paradigms. Ellin reflects that:

... as the millennium approaches, both urban design theory and the study of society have been harking back to their premodern humanist traditions, with implications for the roles of the designer and the social scientist for their respective methods and goals.

This statement is interpreted as presenting more humane urban solutions, achieved by a sensitive awareness of the needs of all people, and duly interpreted into built form.

Sandercock takes up the cause on behalf of the marginalised, displaced, oppressed and dominated. She identifies:

... three dominant socio-cultural forces of our time: the age of migration, the rise of post colonial and indigenous peoples, and emergence of a range of so-called minorities (women, gays, etc). Hitherto invisible/ suppressed, as political actors ... these new forces are literally changing the faces of cities and regions, which are becoming much more culturally diverse.

These rapidly emerging socio-cultural forces are clearly visible in our own society and demanding of the urban designer's attention.

2.5 Application of the enduring strands

In Section 2.4 it was stated that enduring strands were the distillation of many years observation of, and involvement in, the practice of urban design, and that they were considered the most comprehensive, and therefore, the most meaningful group for both the understanding and execution of urban design projects.

In the practice of urban design, projects are reviewed for the individual enduring strand disciplines necessary to bring about their successful outcome. This is standard procedure regardless of the nature of the project.

Personal experience in the field established that urban design projects can deliver successful outcomes within the range of the enduring strands, or in many cases a limited number of strands. Matrix D1 in Appendix D is a diverse range of projects in which the author has been associated, and was able to explore and establish the enduring nature of the strands.

These projects were:

- The Royal Hospital for Women (NSW)
- Abercrombie Precinct, USYD (NSW)
- Circular Quay (NSW)
- Liverpool Gateway (NSW)
- Narellan Town Centre (NSW)
- Redfern Station (NSW)
- Parramatta Road (NSW)
- Paddington Reservoir (NSW)
- Macarthur Master Plan (NSW)
- Wallacia Housing (NSW)
- Salisbury Interchange (SA)
- SA Gas Co., Site (SA)
- Baldessin Square, ANU (ACT)
- Precinct Guidelines, ANU (ACT)

- Acton Housing, ANU (ACT)
- Manuka Housing (ACT)
- Section 65, Civic (ACT)
- Bandar Amanjaya Master Plan (Malaysia)
- Tanjung Tokong Master Plan (Malaysia)

All of the above initiatives were urban design studies, the bringing together of 'the bits', and all were contained to, and relied upon, the enduring strands. None of the studies required extensions beyond the strands for their design resolution.

The approach of the Matrix D1 to determine the comprehensiveness of the strands in the selection of the above twenty projects was then applied directly to the BCP Area Strategies through The Matrix D2 - refer Appendix D.

2.6 Summary

This Chapter establishes the origins and capacity of the enduring strands to be the essential elements in the urban design process. The strands were demonstrated to be derived from the practice of urban design, supported by the findings of the Prime Minister's Task Force and the management procedures for Ultimo-Pyrmont (refer Section 4.4.1 Ultimo-Pyrmont Conclusions).

The enduring strands are, therefore, the elements of urban design and the five stage process, as previously outlined are the rules for their association. (Maitland p. 153) The degree of correspondence is advanced through the statutory and non-statutory constraints.

The above position is adopted in the evaluating, or the interrogating, of the BCP Area Strategies in Part 2 Chapter Four. The interrogation is from three positions, namely the strands firmly established in Empiricism; reference to critical literature as acknowledged and referenced in the end notes and expert opinion through either literature sources or interview and discussion, but again acknowledged in the end notes, particularly in Chapter Four The Case Studies.

End Notes - Chapter Two

- (1) The contributors to the theory and practice of city design are legion and drawn from many backgrounds, both related and unrelated to physical planning. The following is but a sample:

Vitruvius (unknown - c. 1st century BC)

Vitruvius Pollio 1999, *De Architectura* (English): *Vitruvius: Ten Books on Architecture - Book 1 - First Principles & the Layout of Cities* / translated by Ingrid D. Rowland; commentary and illustrations by Thomas Noble Howe; with additional material by Ingrid D. Rowland and Michael J. Dewar, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Plato (c. 428 BC - 347 BC)

Plato, *The Republic*.

Plato's *Republic* is a view on how the citizens of a city should be constituted, which, if followed through, would find its reflection in urban form, as too would Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*.

Plato 1894, (reprint 1987), *Republic*, Campbell, L. & Jowett, B. (eds), Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Patrick Geddes (1854-1932)

Patrick Geddes - biologist, sociologist and town planner was an extraordinarily perceptive thinker and pioneer who might well wonder what the present preoccupation with environment and ESD was about. From his perspective how else would one plan and develop a city, without taking account of the interaction of nature and man-imposed interventions?

Le Corbusier (1887-1965)

Le Corbusier was a visionary promoter of high-rise city blocks set in parks for working and living. His work included proposals for this approach to be applied to Paris.

Le Corbusier 1913. New edition 1967, *Ville Radieuse* (English title: *The Radiant City: Elements of Doctrine of Urbanism to be Used as a Basis of Our Machine-Age Civilization*), Orion Press, New York.

Rossi, A. 1982, *The Architecture of the City*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

The New Urbanists

The new urbanists set out to capture some of the intimate and neighbourly characteristics found in American towns of an earlier period but planned in a more formal and geometric manner with design adherence achieved through detailed, and not infrequently prescriptive design guidelines. The proponents include Duany & Plater-Zyberk, Katz, Mohoney and Easterling.

Duany, A. & Plater-Zyberk, E. 1991, *Towns and Town-Making Principles*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Katz, P. 1994, *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York.

Mohoney, D. & Easterling, K. (eds). 1991, *Seaside. Making A Town In America*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York.

Jane Jacobs (1916-)

Although some forty years have passed since Jane Jacobs' penetrating observations of New York were first published, nonetheless remain as fresh and as valuable a resource as when they were first advanced.

Jacobs, J. 1993, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Modern Library, New York.

The Feminists

The feminists view on city planning is covered in a series of essays in Margaret Eichler's *Change of Plans. Towards a Non-Sexist Sustainable City*.

Eichler, M. (ed) 1995, *Change of Plans. Towards a Non-Sexist Sustainable City*, Garamond, Toronto.

The Marxists

Marxists hold that planning processes can be viewed as part of class domination through what is and what is not permitted. Refer Eichler (p. 28) on the Marxian critic Manuel Castells, who contends 'that planning serves to further the interests of the capitalist class and perpetuate class inequality'.

The Processes

Feng Shui

The principles of Feng Shui are increasingly finding their way into western domestic and commercial architecture. The adoption of these principles can influence the design and built outcomes of individual buildings, and in turn urban form.

ESD, LEPs, DCPs

The implementation of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles, local environment plans (LEPs) and development control plans (DCPs) all influence the outcomes of individual building development and urban form. Such processes are part of development approval. Excellent examples of such policies and procedures can be found in the City of Sydney LEP and DCP controls.

Central Sydney Planning Controls (1996) as amended.

- (2) Boardman, Philip 1978, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-Educator, Peace-Warrior*, Routledge & Keegan Paul, London.

Lynch, K. 1960, *The Image of the City*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Lynch, K. 1981, *Good City Form*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Bentley *et al.* 1985, *Responsive Environments. A Manual for Designers*, Butterworth-Architecture, Oxford.

Jacobs, J. 1993, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Modern Library, New York.

Alexander, C. 1977, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Rossi, A. 1982, *The Architecture of the City*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

Cullen, G. 1961, *Townscape*, Architectural Press, London.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) & Dept. of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) 2001, *The Value of Urban Design. A Research Project Commissioned by CABE & DETR to Examine the Value Added by Good Urban Design*, Thomas Telford Ltd, Kent, UK.

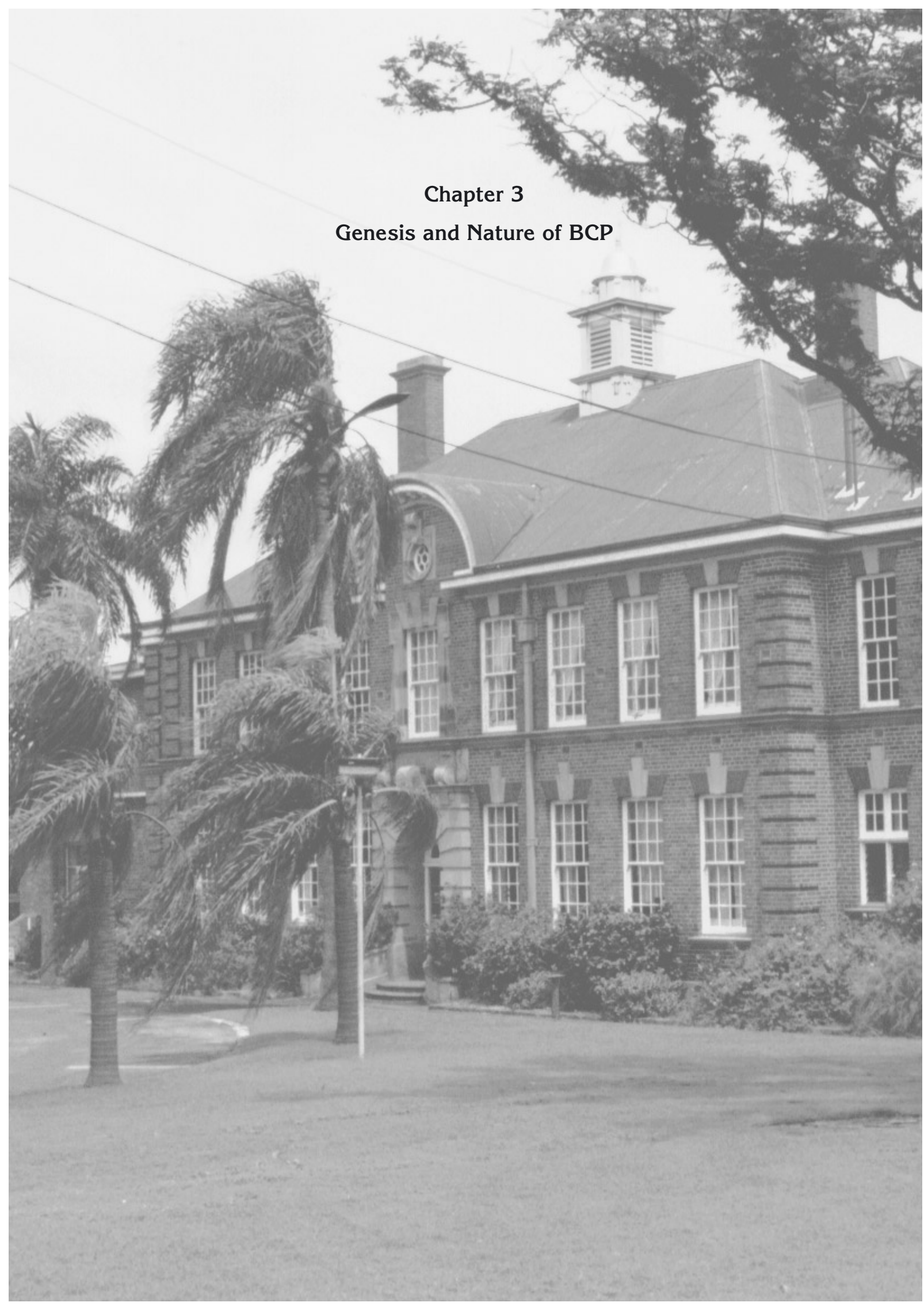
- (3) Given the importance of urban design, the degree of sustained enquiry into the field in an Australia context is considered limited.
- (4) Urban design would benefit greatly if there existed an authoritative text on city configurations and peoples' processes of mental mapping. Personal experience indicates that the pure grid of Manhattan is a delight to negotiate whilst the labyrinth of Venice is dismaying, confusing, and hence it serves well as a set for films preoccupied with themes of intrigue, lost ways, confusion and mystery.
- (5) Spoerry's Port-Grimaud drew a great deal on the antecedents of historical towns both in layout and detail.

Spoerry, F. 1991, *A Gentle Architecture : from Port-Grimaud to Port-Liberté*, Phaon Books [Chichester, UK].
- (6) Issues of safety and security are increasingly becoming one of the essential processes in the planning of new towns, suburbs and cities. Recently, and as a member of the consultant team, the author analysed the proposed plan for its effective response to issues of safety and security for a new suburb Thornton Park, North Penrith, NSW.
- (7) Australia. Dept. of Health, Housing and Community Services 1992, *AMCORD URBAN: Guidelines for Urban Housing*, 3 vols., Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- (8) Three markedly different practitioners, Capability Brown known for his reworking of land forms for the extensive grounds of the estates of England's ruling classes; Walter Burley Griffin for his Beaux Arts reference axes at Canberra and Olmstead for a wide range of work, but particularly for the immensity and complexity of New York's Central Park.
- (9) Google web site under 'Public Art - Australia Council'.
- (10) The well illustrated built works of the Utopian socialists in Great Britain is contained in Colin and Rose Bell's *City Fathers: Town Planning in Britain from Roman Times to 1900*.

Bell, C. & Bell, R. 1969, *City Fathers: Town Planning in Britain from Roman Times to 1900*, Frederick A Praeger, New York.

- (11) Goldstein, Greg 1994, *Healthy Cities - the Global Programme*. A paper presented to the 6th Conference of African Ministers of Health (VI CANH), Cairo, 11-15 May.

Chapter 3
Genesis and Nature of BCP



Chapter 3

Genesis and Nature of BCP

- 3.1 The Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD)
- 3.2 The Better Cities Program (BCP)
- 3.3 The Better Cities Program and Processes
- 3.4 Summary

3.1 The Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD)

3.1.1 Introduction

The Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) was a singular case of a major Commonwealth department founded *de novo* for the express purpose of addressing a wide range of urban issues. It was established and advanced under the Whitlam Government (1972 - 1975) and was conceived to have status, virtually equal to that of Treasury. Previously, in October 1972, two months prior to the Federal election, the coalition government under McMahon introduced into Parliament a bill, 'to create a National Urban and Regional Development Authority (NURDA). Its main function was to report to the Prime Minister on matters related to urban and regional development' (Lloyd, C.J. & Troy, P.N., 1981, p. 20). Labor's opposition to the proposed NURDA was the program's commitment to the establishment of a department of state for urban affairs and not a statutory authority. At the time, 'Uren told Parliament that under a Labor government, NURDA would "wither on the vine"' (p. 210). This fledgling initiative had little bearing on Uren's goals and was soon to be overtaken by the incoming Labor government and DURD.

Whilst it is reasonable to assume that without DURD the BCP program could not have occurred, the matter cannot be dismissed so readily. What can be demonstrated however, is that there are sufficient parallels in both programs to say that either intentionally, or unintentionally, BCP must have benefited by the pioneering work of DURD. The parallels occurred in several ways.

Political

Both programs had their origins in the left wing of the Australian Labor Party and were driven by Ministers of this political persuasion: Tom Uren in the case of DURD and Brian Howe in the case of BCP. However, the following selection from Labor Party documents shows a sustained and continuous concern with urban issues:

'Australian Labor Party Platform, Resolutions and Rules as approved by the 37th National Conference, Hobart 1986' Part 25 A - URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Principles, Growth and Adjustment Strategies, Other Measures for Equity and Access. B - HOUSING - Principles, Housing and Policy Development, Public Housing ... D - CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT.

Australian Labor Party Platform, Resolutions and Rules as approved by the 40th National Conference Hobart, 1994 - Item p. 129 item (i) Urban Planning:

Australia must build *ecologically sustainable cities* which incorporate a *sound understanding of environment principles* in their planning. *Integrated urban planning and design, the character and quality of the public domain, maintenance of heritage assets and the management of traffic and urban noise* are all significant environmental issues which need to be addressed. (*emphasis added*)

Similarly, the '*One Nation*' Statement by The Prime Minister The Honourable P.J. Keating, MP - 26 February 1992, p. 104 *et seq* addressed the following 'Building Better Cities, Restoration of Heritage Buildings, Social Justice, Assistance to Families and Assistance to the Unemployed.'

It should come as no surprise that the urban and social concerns of the Labor Party find their way into the language and terms of reference of both DURD and the BCP, with such terms as equity and social justice, affordable housing, access, demonstration projects, concerns with the public domain. There are continuous connections between policy and outcomes, even if imperfectly achieved.

Objectives

In Section 1.3 Methodology - Approaches, Resources and Methods, M6, it was demonstrated that there was a considerable number of shared and recurring key words and themes in both the programs. These were: demonstration projects and innovative processes, infrastructure, integration, equity and social justice, economic efficiency, affordable housing, access to services, creation of employment and rehabilitation projects. As many of the above concerns arise from the political ethos of the Labor Party, it is not surprising that they occur in the objectives of both programs, but what is perhaps unusual is that they were both so closely akin, over a wide range of concerns, particularly when no documentary evidence was found that one was derived from the other.

Duration

Whilst both programs achieved some of their goals they both existed for relatively short durations, and were eventually brought to their ends by incoming governments whose priorities were different. The DURD period extended from December 1972 to November 1975, and the BCP program from December 1991 until March 1996 when its decline began. One of the first administrative orders of the coalition Fraser Government was to abolish DURD. It was replaced with the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development.

Continuity

There were some senior personnel who participated in both programs, so it is not unreasonable to expect that some DURD experience found its way into the BCP. Also, the initiatives of the Government that gave birth to DURD also included the National Estate Register, Heritage Commission and the Environmental (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974, whose requirements are now well entrenched in development initiatives and their processes.

Although there are essential differences in the two programs particularly in scale and administrative processes, there remain as outlined, a substantial number of shared objectives, intentional or otherwise. The greatest difference might well be that DURD belongs to an era when planning the built environment was a considerably different mind-set compared to today, particularly so with the more recent focus on urban design considerations. Urban design in the BCP was not an identifiable process with defined outcome expectations capable of ordered and comparative evaluation, which is the concern of this research. Whilst urban design has occasional references in the Program, and received particular attention in some Area Strategies, its essential contribution and acknowledgment in both policy and process was a case of too little acknowledgment too late. Its carriage was left to, but often capably carried forward by, the practitioners involved in the various Area Strategies.

Although urban design was not current parlance at the time of DURD, there have always been theorists and practitioners sensitive to the need for comprehensive design of the built environment. It is this awareness and capability to carry it through, even if not defined as urban design, that provided a further linkage and continuity between the two programs.

This research then advances on the premise that whilst it is not explicitly demonstrable that the origins of the BCP are implicit in DURD, the following brief overviews of DURD and BCP serve to reinforce the parallels. Further, that whilst urban design was not part of architectural and planning discourse at the time of DURD, that program nonetheless contained examples of urban design that provided links and continuity between the two programs. Two examples that demonstrate well the linkages and continuity are the Woolloomooloo and Glebe housing projects. These two examples are reviewed in Part 2 of this thesis (Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).

3.1.2 The reasons for DURD

The DURD initiative was certainly, in part, a response to election promises: the sewerage program and the Albury-Wodonga Growth Centre being two examples. Nonetheless, DURD had a much wider vision beyond these political obligations.

After the 1972 election the victorious Whitlam government created a new federal Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD). The new department immediately set up a program to reduce the growth of the capital cities by syphoning-off population to designated new cities. At the same time it sought to reduce inequality within the existing cities by providing funding direct to local councils in low-income areas. (Forster, C. 1999, p. 30)

3.1.3 The objectives of DURD

The goals of the program were:

- to increase the efficiency of our cities; and
- to increase the equity of its citizens. (*Whitlam, Wran and the Labor Tradition: Labor History Essays*, Vol. 2, Uren, T. *Labor and Urban and Regional Policies*, p. 71). Tom Uren expanded these points to:

All the programs put up by DURD during those years were based on two premises: they had to be anti-inflationary and they had to create employment. Our programs were based also on equity and efficiency in our cities and regions. (Uren, T. p. 235)

In essence the functions of DURD were 'matters related to city and regional planning and development, including assistance to, and cooperation with the States and local governing bodies' (Lloyd, C. & Troy, P., p. 33).

After a series of definitional refinements, the detailed purposes of DURD were distilled down to some ten recommended functions (Lloyd & Troy pp. 71-72), which because of their bureaucratic prolixity have been assigned here to Appendix E. The spirit and objectives of the program have been much better captured by Harry Stein in his book, *A Glance Over an Old Left Shoulder* (Chapter 18) as:

- 'growth centres;
- rehabilitation projects;
- finance for the establishment of State land commissions;
- area improvement programs (AIPs);
- the setting up of the National Estate Register and the Australian Heritage Commission;
- roads (assessing and acting on demands for transport services), and
- infrastructure.'

Specific programs directed towards remedying urban and regional problems included:

- 'housing rehabilitation programs (such as in Glebe, Woolloomooloo and Emerald Hill);
- area improvement programs to provide services and amenities in neglected areas;
- assessing and acting on demands for transport services;
- increased advances to the States for provision of public housing;
- introduced untied grants to local government through the Grants Commission;
- a national sewerage backlog program, making finance available to the States and Local government to extend sewerage without excessive cost;
- the development of new growth centres such as Macarthur Regional and Albury-Wodonga, and

- the RED scheme of short term job creation'. (*Whitlam, Wran and the Labor Tradition. Labor History Essays, Vol. 2, Chapter 6, Uren, T. Labor and Urban and Regional Policies, p. 72*).

In Uren's book *Straight Left* in the chapter titled *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Whitlam was quoted as saying that DURD 'was to be a major department of state, virtually co-equal with the Treasury, dealing with the urban budget and coordinating departments with urban responsibilities' (Uren, T. p. 258).

3.1.4 The range of DURD activities (Area Strategies in BCP)

Growth centres

The DURD program had five basic aims:

- 'to reduce growth pressures on the major cities, particularly Sydney and Melbourne;
- to provide opportunities for alternative urban life styles (choice);
- to provide country people with better access to services (as for BCP) available in urban areas;
- to ensure that urban centres developed more in balance with the environmental capacity (BCP and ESD) of their regions, and
- to ensure efficient development by public acquisition of the sites.' (Lloyd, C. & Troy, P., p. 160)

In its report entitled *A Recommended New Cities Program 1973-78* the Cities Commission identified 13 areas to be nominated as growth centres. These were: the Holsworthy-Campbelltown area, Bathurst-Orange and Gosford-Wyong in New South Wales; Geelong in Victoria; Albury-Wodonga on the border of Victoria and New South Wales; Townsville, the Fitzroy region (including Rockhampton and Gladstone) and the Moreton region (the area between Brisbane and the Gold Coast later picked up by the BCP) in Queensland; Monarto, in South Australia; Salvado, the Pilbara and Albany-Bunbury-Geraldton in Western Australia; and Tamar in Tasmania (Uren, T. pp. 263-266).

Growth centres were to have a degree of self-sufficiency with employment for the community and a range of facilities. In the beginning the centres were to be progressed by a statutory development corporation facilitating the resolution of development decisions. For a variety of reasons, not the least being the frustrations caused by the Queensland government, the ambitions for thirteen centres dwindled eventually to four regions: Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst-Orange, Monarto and Macarthur, with the last named being the only successful outcome.

Rehabilitation projects

The Glebe and Woolloomooloo rehabilitation projects in Sydney, and Emerald Hill in Melbourne were examples of the rejuvenation of down-at-heel housing, and how, contrary to conventional high-rise wisdom, people could be housed in low density housing without being subjected to displacement and isolation from familiar surroundings. The programs were costly but their social importance was paramount. As much as the BCP equivalent of a demonstration project can be found in the DURD portfolio of outcomes, the Glebe Estate is certainly one such example. Both the Glebe and Woolloomooloo projects are examined further in Part 2 as early urban design antecedents to the BCP, Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 (*Whitlam, Wran and the Labor Tradition. Labor History Essays, Vol. 2, Uren, T. Labor and Urban and Regional Policies, p. 71*).

The establishment of State Land Commissions

The State Land Commissions had no parallel in the BCP, and hence they have not been pursued in this research. However, the aims were:

- 'improved coordination of urban development;
 - more equitable development;
 - lower priced land and, therefore, housing;
 - retention of some of the unearned increment in land value;
 - better information about the cost of urban development;
 - more open debate about urban development, and
 - more cooperative approaches by governments to urban development issues'.
- (Lloyd, C. & Troy, P., p. 164).

Area Improvement Programs (AIP)

Whilst the Area Improvement Program (AIP) does not have an immediate equivalent strand in the BCP it has parallels in that some of the latter's Area Strategies have a similar scale and immediacy of purpose with the community. Rosewood in the City of Elizabeth, South Australia is a rehabilitated and landscaped example of a vastly improved local suburban area. In a purely landscape sense the Bayswater linear waterfront park, being a part of the Perth Urban Area Strategy, is another.

The AIP programs were directed at improving the life of people who lived in the western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne, the Illawarra, the Hunter Valley, and the south-east region of New South Wales. Funds provided by the program went to areas needing improvements in community services, reserves, recreation areas, foreshores, waste disposal, drainage, community centres and libraries (Stein, H., p. 189).

Urban parks were established along Melbourne's previously polluted Maribyrnong River. A clean-up of the Parramatta and Duck Rivers in Western Sydney was commenced and funds were provided for a number of regional parks, including the West Auburn Botanic Gardens, the Central Merrylands Gardens, and for developing the Mirambeena Regional Park adjacent to Henry Lawson Drive in Bankstown (Uren, T., pp. 269-270).

The setting up of the National Estate Register and the Australian Heritage Commission

An urgent task at the time for Uren and DURD, was the establishment of the National Estate Register and the Australian Heritage Commission. There can be little doubt that the initiation of these programs has contributed to a long overdue consciousness-raising of Australians toward both their environment and heritage.

The BCP Area Strategies, many of which contain heritage strands, are the direct beneficiaries of the above programs.

Although the National Estate program was under two government departments - DURD and the Department of the Environment - favourable working relationships between the two allowed the program to move forward in the saving of 'things created by people and nature that were unique and beautiful for future generations' (Uren, T., p. 271).

Initially the program drew upon the work of The Hope Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate whose unenviable assignment was 'to evaluate most of Australia's natural environment, Aboriginal sites, buildings, sites of historic and archaeological interest (Uren, T., p. 271).

The DURD National Estate program distributed more than \$7 million to 346 projects. Most of the money went into buying and restoring buildings, then came open space acquisition, studies and Aboriginal sites.

Roads - assessing and acting on demands for transport services.

Arguably, the boldest roads initiative, was the purchase of the Glebe Estate from the Church of England by the Whitlam Government. The purchase prevented the New South Wales Government from carving the 120-year-old estate into two with the proposed Western Freeway. The initiative was responsible in environmental and heritage terms and compassionate in preventing the displacement of the long-term occupants of the area. Uren attributes this manoeuvre to saving the suburbs of Glebe, Annandale, Leichhardt, Haberfield, Five Dock and Burwood from a wide swathe being cut through them (Uren, T., p. 281).

Services infrastructure

The program did much to improve existing sewerage systems, an issue on which Whitlam had long campaigned. It also contributed substantially to the filtering plants to clean up the Adelaide water supply long known for its malodorous hardness.

3.1.5 Role of DURD

For Stein, DURD was essentially a department for resource allocation (Stein, H., p. 188). Commonwealth money was to be expended in a planned way on urban concerns, and through coordinating the three tiers of government: Federal, State and Local, although the opposition to the scheme was raised by the State Governments. Moreover, Lloyd and Troy (p. 260) say DURD saw itself:

...as a welfare department because of its involvement with the indirect income transfers produced by the maldistribution of employment opportunities and by the location aspects of social and economic activities. It wanted to identify inequalities which derived from lack of community facilities.

3.1.6 DURD demonstration projects

Even if demonstration projects in DURD did not appear to have the formalised status they did in the BCP, there were nonetheless at the time projects perceived as such. In particular, the Glebe Estate was seen as a demonstration scheme to show Government authorities how to carry out large city rehabilitation and restoration projects. Also DURD,

...broke new ground in Woolloomooloo assisting residents to express their views on what they needed from the Redevelopment Scheme. The Department employed Colin James, to be the residents' advocate. (Stein, H., p. 192)

Woolloomooloo in particular is a strong precursor to some of the best BCP urban design outcomes, as it is a successful amalgam of social planning, conservation and heritage concerns and creative architectural and landscape design. For these reasons and for issues of urban design, both the above rehabilitation projects are examined further in this research as early urban design antecedents to the BCP.

3.1.7 Evaluations

There was no evidence found to suggest that formal evaluation and auditing procedures existed for DURD as they did for the BCP. In the absence of such procedures it is necessary to revert to assembling various critiques of the program. DURD was beset with a series of setbacks, a considerable number being administrative. The following is extracted from Stein, Johnson, Lloyd and Troy. These setbacks included:

- a reluctance of the Public Service Board to consent to an administrative structure and the senior staffing pattern that DURD considered necessary to carry out its work;
- a constant conflict with Treasury which saw DURD as a rival in both long-term budgeting and resource planning. Also, other Federal departments involved in the cities did not want their urban programs coordinated by DURD;
- the harbouring of suspicions by State governments of DURD's interference in their areas, ameliorated to some extent by patient negotiation of terms and a budget to distribute for urban programs on attractive terms;
- the making of a rod for its own back in that DURD had a sense of superiority in its mission of urban renewal. In subsequent interviews and discussions, superiority was less generously interpreted as arrogance, and
- difficulties compounded by a lack of experienced Australian administrators in the urban and regional field at a Federal level.

However, the creation of DURD was one of the rare occasions in the post-war period when a major department was started *de novo* (Lloyd, C. & Troy, P., p. 257).

DURD wanted to offer a more diverse choice of locations of jobs to people living in the big cities. Admittedly it could relocate government offices and employment centres. But the private sector still provides most of the jobs, and DURD never had any control over the investment patterns and location decisions of private capital. It had no way of controlling the speculative boom in central-city-office space that was occurring under its nose, and which would determine future job locations for some time to come. Without control over these kinds of private sector decisions, DURD had no control of the big issues like city size, growth centre strategy, and journey to work in the 1972 election promises. (Johnson, C. *The Labor Legacy*, quoting Leonie Sandercock)

3.1.8 Government reports

The DURD-related journal articles and government reports that assisted the research for this section are contained in the References.

3.2 The Better Cities Program (BCP)

3.2.1 Introduction

This section reviews the BCP using exactly the same criteria applied to DURD (as referred to in Section 1.3):

- 1 The reasons for BCP
- 2 The objectives of the BCP
- 3 Area Strategies
- 4 Role of the BCP
- 5 Demonstration projects
- 6 Evaluations
- 7 Government reports

The Section also seeks out those links in the aims and objectives of the Program - described in its processes - to the enduring strands. These links are identified by the symbol (+) and occur where identified in the following sections. The links are limited, since a little more than half of the enduring strands have found their way into the Program's processes.

3.2.2 The reasons for BCP

Not by any criterion can it be said that the BCP was positively received by all. There were a number of critics with trenchant criticisms of the Program, some of which are encapsulated below. A cynic's point of view would be that the Program was a case of being seen to do something rather than the Commonwealth making a genuine effort in infrastructure funding and urban reform.

Marcus Spiller is a constructive critic of the Program (Spiller, M. 1994b, p. 41):

It has also been argued that the program focused on readily solvable problems rather than structural reforms, and that the Building Better Cities initiatives are insignificant compared with other Commonwealth policies which impact on cities, for example, the location of government employment, the differential tax treatment of housing tenures and the setting of environmental standards....Howe opted for a program which concentrated on relatively few areas, aspiring to change the structure of urban growth in these particular areas and emphasise demonstration as well as localised benefits.

[The] 'program involved the use of demonstration strategies to accelerate the removal of the "institutional" and "technological" barriers which were holding back more widespread adjustments towards consolidated, efficient and productive urban forms' (p. 41).

Blair Badcock in *The Urban Programme as an Instrument of Crisis Management in Australia*, mounts a particularly virulent attack upon the Program (Badcock, B. 1993a, pp. 72-80).

'Ultimately the purpose and content of Building Better Cities seemed to have as much to do as an instrument for crisis-management as with any of the normative tasks that rekindled the Federal interest in the cities' (p. 72).

'Better Cities was delivered prematurely in a moment of political opportunism. Shortly thereafter in order to survive into infancy, the program underwent a strategic "refocussing" to bring it into line with the *One Nation Statement*' (p. 73).

'Taking care to distance himself from Whitlam's unfinished urban program, Howe called for a more integrated approach to urban labour markets, affordable housing, and energy-efficient

transport policies to help overcome some of the more glaring disparities in suburban living conditions . . . the Left's orientation was staunchly "needs based" ' (p. 73).

'Better Cities' proposal was hurriedly assembled and pushed through Cabinet in time for the August Budget . . . this somewhat makeshift urban program had all the hallmarks of a "payoff" for the Left's support at the time of the first leadership challenge' (p. 75).

Andrew Beer in *Never Mind the Content, Let's Understand the Process* adds his voice to the general criticism (Beer, A. 1995, pp. 107-112):

'BCP was only possible because earlier activities such as the National Housing Strategy and the Patterns of Urban Settlement Working Group elevated the profile of housing and urban issues' (p. 110).

'BCP was shaped by the political crises facing the Keating Government and that the concern for social justice, spatial equity, and environmental sustainability played a secondary role' (p. 110).

Geoff Campbell provides a more leavened view of the Program in *Spirited Cities* 1983, Chapter 19: *The Better Cities Program: a Catalyst for Urban Reform* :

'Australian governments have had specific policies on housing, transport, infrastructure, environment and other elements of the urban mosaic, but rarely policies which manifest an integrated approach to urban issues' (p. 267).

'The achievement of social justice objectives for our cities, and in particular those relating to access, can either be assisted or obstructed by decisions at the strategic level and at the local level.' ... 'Access is the essence of Better Cities. Access broadly defined must be recognised as basic to the development of individuals and communities' (p. 272).

The Better Cities Program was a catalyst, not a solution for all urban problems' (p. 276).

One of the most serious critical divides in the Program was generated by its alliance with urban consolidation. Troy in his *The Perils of Urban Consolidation* mounts well structured and reasoned arguments as to why the supposed benefits of pursuing such a policy are essentially illusory. Not only are the hoped for gains unachievable but they reduce further access opportunities for those on lower incomes to participate in the residential amenity available to many others (Troy, P. 1996).

Whatever criticisms, the Program generated both favourable and unfavourable, it did at least reintroduce urban issues into public discussion at a national policy level. However, criticism lingers that whilst there were undoubted benefits at a localised level it was essentially a demonstration program which needed further development to have an enduring influence.

3.2.3 Objectives of the BCP

The Hon. Brian Howe MP outlined in the *Opening Address RAPI Biennial Convention* Wrest Point Hotel, Hobart, March 7 1994 the comprehensive nature of the reform agenda. Apart from the BCP, other major initiatives at the time included the Australian Urban and Regional Development Review, the National Urban Development Program, the Integrated Local Area Planning Program and the Prime Minister's Urban Design Task Force.

This urban reform agenda considered the following important issues:

- the essential marriage of urban planning with the achievement of social justice objectives;
- the fundamental links between urban development and economic issues - this encompassed both the efficiency of urban development itself and the contribution that our cities make to the economy, and
- the need to ensure that urban development is environmentally sustainable.

The interrelationships between land use and planning, transport and the environment, were at the core of the BCP, but also generated its greatest challenges because they cut across traditional bureaucratic and political boundaries. The idea of Area Strategies was at the heart of the Program's basis of integrated planning. Through increasing access to health, affordable housing, education facilities, community and institutional services, transport, shops and recreational facilities the Program was in turn addressing issues of social justice.

3.2.4 Range of BCP activities

The Program's focus was on the Area Strategy and not individual project funding. The aim was urban redevelopment in neighbourhoods and at times sub-regions through infrastructure investments together with better planning and coordination of agencies.

Area Strategies were considered as three- to five-year investment programs, and required to be sufficiently large to be compatible with the Program's city view, but not so extended as to counter potential demonstration value. It was hoped that lessons learnt might be transferable to other sites and increase their potential for medium term wealth creation. It was a further anticipation that Area Strategies would meet the demonstration criteria.

The States proposed their Area Strategies, and whilst not all received approval and hence funding, they essentially set the scene. This led at times to conceptual difficulties such as whether the Brisbane - Gold Coast rail corridor fell within the objectives of the Program as a city related Area Strategy. (1)

Given these considerations the range of the Program's activities was exceedingly diverse, and involved those of infrastructure, housing, waterfront redevelopment, heritage and conservation, ecologically sustainable development, massive clean-ups of polluted and contaminated sites and creation of public spaces to name a few. This diversity of initiatives is explored in Part 2.

3.2.5 Role of the BCP

The role of the Program can be summarised in three essential ways. It was a catalyst for innovative change and further development; it was a demonstration Program of how redevelopment could be carried out; and it sought to achieve its objectives in an integrated and socially responsible manner.

3.2.6 BCP demonstration projects

The subject of Demonstration projects is pursued in detail in Section 3.3.5 The Demonstration Projects, Assessment Process but is referred to here to maintain a parallel review of both DURD and the BCP.

The essence of a demonstration Area Strategy was one in which its particular attributes could be transferred to other projects. Demonstration projects were required to exhibit any or all of the following (Hassell, 1994b p. 4):

- 'innovative and creative process and practices;
- enhanced outcomes generated by the synergy between program elements (integration);
- catalytic effects on other activities, processes and investments;
- outcome achievement where a lesser or no outcome would otherwise have been possible by virtue of the Better Cities Program, and
- systemic change.'

Program demonstrations were required to exhibit advanced processes or practices. They needed to establish an influence beyond their immediate circumstances, with applications to other locations, and the capability of changing the manner in which activities were carried out.

3.2.7 Evaluation of BCP

Evaluation is pursued in detail in Section 3.3.11 The Evaluation Process, but is referred to here to maintain the parallel review of both DURD and the BCP.

Program evaluations sought progress and success in the 'multiplier' effect on economic, social and environmental outcomes; in demonstration effects and their influence in a wider marketing context; and in economic efficiency and for some increase in employment. As well, discernible headway was sought in social justice initiatives and developments as catalysts for investment in public transport improvements. Various reports found that Better Cities I had made a very positive contribution to the Australian economy and that the long-term economic effects could be expected to be significant. Such positive evaluations were based on a number of economic indicators, including: person/years of employment, private sector consumption, and national gross domestic production.

3.2.8 Government reports

A remarkable number of Federal Government reports were born at this time, and from 1990 and the following three years over one hundred government reports (2) relevant to urban and regional policy were published. The difficulties facing any researcher of this rebirth of Federal interest in the cities and regions is that this extraordinary output had its origins in no less than twelve national organisations. Nevertheless, an over-riding consideration of the time was the Commonwealth Government's Social Justice Strategy, 1988, which found expression in issues of social justice and access, particularly those of availability of services and accommodation in the various Area Strategies. (3)

As this research commenced with the documented intentions of the Program and the designed and built outcomes, exploration of this voluminous background material was considered more diversionary than research focused and was therefore, put aside.

3.3 The Better Cities Program and Processes

3.3.1 BCP origins

The genesis of the Program lies in various policy papers, minutes of special Premiers', Housing and Planning Ministers' conferences and other documents (*The Report*, Vol. 1, Chapter 1). The occasion that precipitated the program has been identified as the Planning Minister's Conference held in Cairns in June 1990 (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 3) with the Hon. Brian Howe representing the Commonwealth. At that time Howe was Minister for Community Services and Health and also Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Social Justice. At the conference there was a renewed interest in urban programs including the role of infrastructure and its influence on issues such as urban form, economic efficiency, social justice and sustainability. The die was cast at that occasion, and in the ensuing months Minister Howe tested the idea of a potential national urban program at various public fora. Endorsement of the principles and objectives of such a program followed in March 1991 at a Housing and Planning Ministers Conference (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 5) with further confirmation of the three comprehensive strategies for urban reform at a Special Premiers' Conference in July 1991 (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 6).

In August 1991 the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet approved a five-year program, which was announced in 1991-92 Federal Budget. The Commonwealth provided \$814 million over five years with distribution of funding between State and Territories on a per capita basis. Other contributions, it was stated at the time, would bring the total public sector investment to an estimated \$2.3 billion.

At that time Minister Howe (media statement 20 August 1991) described the Better Cities Program as: 'the first step in building a new partnership between the three levels of government to reshape our cities'

When Better Cities was formally announced the objectives of the program were defined as...through such things as integrated urban planning, development and management, the purpose of the program is to promote improvements in efficiency, equity and sustainability of Australian cities, and to increase their capacity to meet the following objectives:

- 'economic growth and microeconomic reform;
- improved social justice for the less advantaged;
- reform of inappropriate and outmoded institutional care for people with disabilities and the frail aged;
- ecologically sustainable development, and
- improved urban environments and more livable cities.' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 9)

The Commonwealth's concern with social justice reform included issues of access, quality of life and equity, particularly for residents in large institutions. Hence, there existed a strong imperative for Better Cities to take a comprehensive approach to institutional reform.

The symbol (+) here and in the following Sections, indicates where links can be found between the aims and objectives of the Program - described in its processes - to the enduring strands.

Generic outcomes, i.e. objectives, sought by the program were:

- better urban management through improved integration of urban planning and development (+ for management processes);
- improved use of urban land and existing infrastructure (+ for management processes);
- increased housing choice and affordability;

- improved linkages between public transport, employment centres, and health, community and education services, with particular reference to disadvantaged groups (+ for circulation);
- reduced traffic congestion and pollution costs (+ for circulation and ecological response);
- improved labour market outcomes;
- reduced dependence on inappropriate institutional service provisions;
- reduced environmental problems in urban areas and reduced impact of urban areas on the environment (+ for environment and ecological response)
- improved efficiency of funds allocated to urban development and infrastructure provisions, and
- reform of pricing and the financing of infrastructure. (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 10)

Here four of the strands identified are: management processes, circulation, environment and ecological response.

The Better Cities Program was innovative in its funding arrangements.

At the 1994 Premiers Conference it was decided to abolish the Loan Council capital grants [program] from 1 July 1994. Between 1994-95 and 1996-97 Commonwealth general purpose capital assistance consisted only of grants under the Better Cities [Program]. (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 12)

Payment of continuing funds was tied to the meeting of agreed performance outcomes. Outcomes, together with inputs and outputs, were a way of measuring and monitoring an individual Area Strategy. Outcomes were identified in the Area Strategy Agreements with defined outcome measures and relevant milestones for each Program year.

In May 1995 Better Cities II was announced, with a provision of \$247 million over six years, and whilst a continuation of Better Cities I (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 8) it evolved from the first program in three main areas.

Firstly, it shifted from per capita allocation of funds towards a needs-based priority approach;

Secondly, it was to target three categories of national priority areas:

- economic gateways;
- growth management, and
- urban renewal.

Within those categories emphasis was also given to the promotion of urban and coastal environment management, and *urban design* (Program Guidelines 1995). (*emphasis added*)

Thirdly, there was to be a change of emphasis in that funding was primarily to be for comprehensive planning studies before any commitment would be made to capital funding of Area Strategies or projects within Area Strategies. (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 9)

In March 1996, following the change of Federal Government, the Howard Government announced that the Better Cities Program would come to an end. Although all commitments to Better Cities I would continue to be met, any fulfilling of obligations to Better Cities II were to be limited to commitments already made at that stage.

3.3.2 BCP processes and outcomes

The BCP had a substantial number of processes, which are reviewed in this section. The processes are examined in some detail for two reasons. Firstly, to do justice to the BCP in terms of its processes and outcomes and secondly, to seek points of contact and relevance with the research. The

connections and relevance were found to be limited and these are summarised at the conclusion of each section. The limited relevance need not be, and indeed is not, a concern, since in many ways it freed up the research. The reason for the limited relevance is that this research is concerned with passing the Program's Area Strategies through an outcomes focused urban design critique. Urban design was not a plank in the Program's platform until much later in the second phase of Better Cities II, and then, in a limited context.

The other important consideration is that there are already several, indeed many, evaluations of the Program in terms of its objectives, but this research is not intended to add to this resource. To follow in the path of the others does nothing to see the Program through different eyes or through different ways of evaluating its outcomes. Such a pursuit would also be disadvantaged by being reliant on desk research and also historically out of phase with the immediacy of the activity and with the personnel concerned.

It is worthwhile to reflect on the various evaluations of the BCP, ie, those that evaluate it on its own terms. They would include:

- *A Report on the Commonwealth Better Cities Program 1991-1997 Vols. 1 & 2 (unpublished);*
- *The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) Report No. 9 1996-1997 Performance Audit;*
- *Victoria. Department of Infrastructure 1997, Better Cities Program Victoria 1996-1997 Program Outcomes. Report to the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Development;*
- *Better Cities Program Evaluation Volume I Report of the Evaluation Team October 1995 (The Collins Report);*
- *Better Cities Evaluation Volume II Background Working Papers October 1995, and*
- *Various State reports responding to the process requirements of BCP.*

The core BCP administrative processes were (*The Report*, Vol. 1):

- 1 The Better Cities Proposals Selection Process
- 2 The Measuring and Monitoring of Outcomes Process
- 3 The Demonstration Projects Assessment Process
- 4 The Audit Process
- 5 The Head Agreement Process
- 6 The Monitoring and Accountability Process
- 7 The Funding Process
- 8 The Program Management Process
- 9 The Evaluation Process

3.3.3 The BCP selection process

The selection criteria developed by the then National Capital Planning Authority (NCPA) were :

- economic efficiency;
- a catalytic role;
- appropriateness of the proposed location, and
- infrastructure focus (+ for circulation). (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 7)

The content and criteria to be met for favourable selection of Area Strategies were:

- required both Commonwealth and State support;
- had the potential to demonstrate innovative processes (+ for ecological response);
- had the potential for better planning and development processes (+ for management);
- allowed the integration of the three tiers of government and cross sectorial action;
- were economically and financially viable;
- allowed for private sector participation;
- were ready to proceed in the short to medium term, and
- contributed to the protection of heritage places (+ for conservation and heritage).
(*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 70)

Here four of the strands identified are: circulation, ecological response, management processes and conservation and heritage.

This research

Whilst the preceding is interesting and instructive it is not especially relevant to this research, other than those matters identified by + which are indicated above.

3.3.4 The measuring and monitoring of outcomes process

Outcomes of Area Strategies were established in the Area Strategy Agreements:

- **inputs** being Commonwealth funding and State and Territory funds and resources;
- **outputs** being capital items, e.g. transport, infrastructure and housing identified as milestones, and
- **outcomes** being improvements in urban, social or environmental factors, such as reduced transport times, more intensive use of urban infrastructure and improved urban environment and affordable housing (Australian National Audit Office 1998) (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 12).

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) defined the following:

- **inputs** as the resources used in a program, and including staff, funding, physical assets, materials and equipment, the measuring and managing of inputs, controls and program costs;
- **outputs** are the goods or services that a program produces by applying inputs. Measuring outputs (called milestones, or outcome measures in some instances, in the Agreements) is a means of assessing progress in implementing a program, and
- **outcomes** are the results that the program achieves. They reflect the impact of program outputs on those elements in the economy or the community at which the program is directed. Measuring outcomes provides indications of the changes that a program has brought about, and hence its effectiveness. (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 83)

This research

This research is outcomes focused, but in terms of urban design. The relevance of the preceding to the research is in terms of improvements in urban, social and environmental factors, and these concerns are covered in the research.

3.3.5 The demonstration projects assessment process

An essential consideration of Better Cities Area Strategies was the demonstration of new and innovative approaches to urban management and change (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 14).

There were two key demonstration aspects identified in the Area Strategy Agreements:

- demonstration impacts or outcomes (such as in the Brisbane Inner North Eastern Suburbs Area Strategy, where there was to be a demonstration of the advantages that can be achieved through clear and effective urban consolidation policies, including demonstration of the benefits of using existing urban fabric and infrastructure in providing additional housing), and
- demonstration effects or demonstration of different approaches or processes (such as methods of providing affordable housing, improved area management).
(*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 14)

Demonstrations ranged across innovative technologies such as stormwater management and waste treatment to enhanced planning and design outcomes, and became a critical consideration in the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments agreements (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 14).

This research

Demonstration projects have a place in this research. Although there were program demonstration criteria established, it was found in talking to those involved some felt different aspects of their BCP Area Strategies were definitely of a demonstration nature. They sometimes seemed not aware of, or indifferent to, the formal criteria for assessing demonstration projects. The word demonstration therefore, had meanings in both a formal and informal sense. In this research the word 'demonstration' will be used to describe exemplars in urban design and will therefore be used in a particular sense, although at times it will coincide with some of the BCP outcomes.

3.3.6 The audit process

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) carried out a Performance Audit of the BCP - *Audit Report No. 9, 1996-97*. The ANAO was critical of the measurement of outcomes. 'Many of the outcomes cited in BCP agreements and Area Strategies can be measured. However, the agreements did not, in most cases, define ways of measuring them ... Building Better Cities was an outcome oriented program (and) ANAO noted that there were gaps in the way its achievements were measured.' (ANAO, pp. 23, 28) 'There were no national performance indicators to provide an effective central focus on program ... In relation to BCP projects that were reviewed during the audit, some of the outcomes could be measured by changes in:

- waste water treatment and associated river and harbour water quality (+ for ecological response);
- occupation and population demographics in areas or precincts in which 'an appropriate social mix' was the intended outcome (+ for social);
- air quality in areas where lower rates of usage of private vehicles were intended (+ for ecological response);
- public attitudes to, and public acceptance of, different housing types, densities and modes (+ for activity - housing and social);
- the number of different housing types available (+ for activity - housing);
- time taken to obtain planning approvals for housing development (+ for management);
- employment levels and job creation in BCP target areas (+ for social);
- rail and public transport times (+ for circulation);
- levels of public transport usage (+ for circulation);
- the cost of home construction in BCP areas and other new comparable housing areas (+ for activity - housing), and
- the level of impact of new BCP housing on public infrastructure and the cost of its provision (+ for activity - housing). (ANAO, pp. 28, 23).

The report continues 'There was little reporting along these lines in respect of those activities that were reviewed by the audit' (ANAO, p. 23).

Here five of the strands are identified: ecological response, social, activity, management processes and circulation.

This research

It is ironic that the above issues that the ANAO isolated at the time of the audit as receiving indifferent reporting, are those in both a general and particular sense closest to this research. Even if it is assumed the passage of time would have seen some of these deficiencies made good, the shortfall is well noted by the ANAO.

3.3.7 The Head Agreements Process

The Commonwealth and State Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) covered the following:

- the division of responsibilities between the Commonwealth and States and Territories;
- the maximum financial assistance to be received by each State or Territory from the Commonwealth;
- content of, and criteria for, selection of Area Strategies;
- meeting the five objectives;
- strategic urban changes that can be achieved, but which would not occur, or not occur as soon, without joint Commonwealth / State support;
- potential for demonstration of innovative processes (+ for ecological response);
- potential to promote better planning and development processes (+ for management processes);
- opportunity for integration of Commonwealth / State and local government programs and for cross sectorial action;
- economic and financial viability;
- opportunity for private sector participation;
- readiness to proceed in the short to medium term;
- contribution to the protection of heritage places (+ for conservation and heritage);
- outcomes being sought by the Better Cities Program;
- better urban management through improved integration of urban planning and development (+ for management processes);
- arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of Area Strategies, with requirements for a joint annual report, an end-of-program report and reporting on key matters throughout the year, such as timing issues and milestones (+ for management processes), and
- arrangements for varying and terminating the Agreement. (*The Report*, Vol. 1 Chapter 3)

The schedule for each Area Strategy identified the following:

- the area covered by the Area Strategy - location, size and activities;
- the issues and the strategic response to those issues;
- program elements and contributions;
- the demonstration aspects of that particular area strategy, e.g. increased accessibility for local residents to community and educational services and labour markets through light rail improvements (+ for social and circulation), and
- area outcomes and outcome measures (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 71).

Here five of the strands are identified: ecological response, management processes, conservation and heritage, social and circulation.

The list of outcomes measured was often extensive. The Western Shores Hobart Area Strategy had five outcomes and 44 outcome measures, and doubtless it was requirements such as these that led to tensions and criticism of the reporting requirements (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 71).

This research

The preceding is instructive, only to the extent of those matters identified by (+).

3.3.8 The monitoring and accountability process

The long-term realisation of many of the Area Strategy outcomes demonstrated that it was an unrealistic expectation that outcomes achievement could be the basis of progress reports, especially in the early stages. However, reporting against *outputs* and 'achievement of milestones was however successfully accomplished and provided a reasonable guide to overall strategy achievement' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 72).

The outcomes-based approach was beset by limited experience in this form of accountability and further aggravated by the lack of relevant benchmarks and baseline information for outcomes measures.

This research

It can be appreciated, particularly with hindsight, that even with the best intentions, the input, output and outcomes model was destined to have difficulties, particularly with outcomes measurement. The ANAO certainly drew attention to this. The fundamental difference between the BCP and this research is that the BCP was attempting to establish an innovative process of monitoring and accountability starting at the project's initiation, continuing throughout its realisation and following through to its post-completion stage. By contrast, this research starts with the projects completed, or nearing completion, and evaluates them by a quite different set of criteria, that of the enduring strands.

3.3.9 The funding process

The Better Cities I funding model contained the following elements:

- funds were provided to the States and Territories as general purpose capital assistance with the maximum amount paid to each State and Territory over the life of the program on a per capita basis;
- funds were appropriated annually by the Commonwealth Parliament with payments to each State and Territory being dependent upon performance against agreed milestones and outcomes;
- there was no formal acquittal process whereby the States and Territories were required to provide certification that funds were spent for particular purposes, and
- Commonwealth and State financial contributions to the program were administered by the States and Territories as part of a general pool for each Area Strategy as Commonwealth funds were not allocated to specific projects within those strategies.

'The decision to provide funds as general purpose capital grants but with ongoing payment linked to annual performance was seen as breaking new ground. It provided a way of untying funds whilst also ensuring accountability' (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 72).

This research

The funding process has no immediate relevance to this research.

3.3.10 The program management process

The following Commonwealth management arrangements were in place:

Ministerial responsibility resided with the Hon. Brian Howe MP and his Department. The Department changed its name three times, beginning with Health, Housing and Community Services, then changing to Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services and finally to Housing and Regional Development.

At Commonwealth level there was a support structure initially involving a Better Cities Interdepartmental Task Force and an assessment working party. The Task Force had a major coordination role. The working party, chaired by the NCPA, was responsible for the coordinated assessment of State/Territory proposals and in turn reported back to the Task Force, which in turn advised the Minister.

The NCPA gave professional and technical advice to the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, assisting the Task Force in its assessments and liaising with the States/Territories. From late 1996 the National Capital Authority (NCA), as it was renamed, took carriage of the Program's management on behalf of the Department of Transport and Regional Development. Within this organisation a Better Cities team was formed, comprising both NCA staff and consultants. Certainly at the Commonwealth level it acquired an extended understanding of the Program's requirements, for inputs, outputs and intended outcomes.

At the central/regional level States and Territories committees were charged with the responsibility of overseeing their Area Strategies. Committees included key State departments such as Treasury, Housing and Planning.

Key aspects of the Regional Offices included:

- general liaison with State and Local governments, industry, community groups and other stakeholders on the program;
- providing secretariat services for high-level Commonwealth-State/Territory meetings and negotiations;
- monitoring progress and assisting with the evaluation and documentation of outcomes achieved in Area Strategies;
- administrative functions such as preparing briefings, speeches and response to ministerial correspondence, and
- undertaking local assistance with consultation and promotional activities. (*The Report*, Vol, 1, p. 74)

This research

Whilst the program management process is of interest it does not impinge on this research.

3.3.11 The evaluation process

In 1995 an evaluation was commissioned by the Commonwealth in order to assess the Program's performance, and in particular:

- assess the likely success of BCP I in achieving Commonwealth objectives;
- review the appropriateness of the Program's focus on Area Strategies as a basis for the agreements;
- at the Area Strategy level assess the likelihood of achieving the agreed objectives and outcomes;
- identify those aspects of the Program, e.g. planning, management and monitoring and evaluation, most effective in advancing the program;
- consider the appropriateness of the funding arrangements, and
- assess the appropriateness of the management and accountability arrangements both at the overall program and Area Strategy level. (*The Report* Vol. 1, p. 79)

Some of the key findings from the evaluation included (*Better Cities Program Evaluation 1995, Volume I, Report of the Evaluation Team, (the Collins Report)*):

- State, Territory and local government, business and community assessments of the program were generally positive;
- the Program was likely to give rise to an increase in GDP and have a moderate but significant effect on employment growth;
- there was an open, transparent, accountable process for the selection of Area Strategies that were funded;
- Area Strategies had been generally successful in achieving the milestones and key outputs detailed in the Area Strategy Agreements;
- the Program had acted as a catalyst for investment in such areas as public transport improvements and in reorienting urban development to make better use of public transport facilities, and
- State officials involved in the Program were able to point to many examples of wider application of lessons learnt through the program. (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 80)

This research

Whilst the evaluation process is of interest and instructive, its relevance to this research is marginal.

3.4 Summary

The links identified by the symbol (+) in the preceding Sections comprise little more than half of the enduring strands and include only: management processes, circulation, ecological response, environment, conservation and heritage, social and activity. Those not covered include: buildings and their groupings, public domain, safety and security, landscape and public art.

The Program processes in Section 3.3.5 The Demonstration Projects Assessment Process and 3.3.6 The Audit Process are the only two of any significant relevance to the aim of the research.

This limited relevance - and more by inference than direct reference - of the BCP processes to urban design, through the enduring strands, emphasises the limited discourse on the subject in the Program. The only other references found during the research are discussed below.

In the context of urban renewal in Better Cities II, and complementing housing reforms under the Commonwealth/State housing agreement, the reform agenda was to address:

- housing needs, infrastructure and land use changes needed to achieve improved housing stock;
- *better urban design; (emphasis added)*
- increased local economic activity and employment opportunities;
- improved facilities;
- better access to transport and other services, and
- improvements to the general living environment (*The Report*, Vol. 1, p. 91).

This reference to urban design appears, at worst, as a 'throw-away line' included in a set of criteria and, at best, a serious intent, but without further developments in the *Report*. Either way, it does not emerge in any convincing sense as a matter that will receive sustained attention.

The Report contains a chart entitled *Outcomes in Relation to Achieving Improved Urban Environments*, a hybrid matrix that includes some urban design criteria in a comparative evaluation of the 26 Area Strategies. Again, this is a reference of limited value (*The Report*, Vol. 2, p. 178).

During the life of the Program there were a number of Better Cities seminars on a variety of subjects which culminated in an Occasional Paper Series, some 12 in number. Two of these seminars dealt with urban design, but not in any rigorous and comprehensive way as a major Commonwealth initiative in urban redevelopment deserved. The two papers were: *Urban Form, Urban Design and Energy Use*, Occasional Paper Series 2, Paper 2, and *Achieving Quality Urban Design*, Occasional Paper Series 2, Paper 4.

The above references are extremely limited in their contribution to urban design and the Program. In addition, the comments received from some of the interviews regarding urban design and the Program, tended to be dismissive, as in '*urban design was always there in the background.*' (4)

Hence, in Part 2, the aim of the thesis, *Urban design and The Better Cities Program: The influence of urban design on the outcomes of the Program* will in the main return to what was seen 'on the ground', supported by the interviews, the Questionnaire and relevant Area Strategy documents.

End Notes - Chapter Three

- (1) Discussion 25 May 1998 with Geoff Campbell (refer Acknowledgments).
- (2) Discussion 17 March 2000 with Marcus Spiller (refer Acknowledgments). No audit of Government reports was done in the shaping of the Program.
- (3) Alexander, I. 1994, 'DURD Revisited? Federal Policy Initiatives for Urban and Regional Planning 1991-94' in *Urban Policy & Research*, Vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 6-25.
- (4) Discussion 8 August 2000 with Gabrielle Kibble (refer Acknowledgments).