

## The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

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2008 A.V. Jennings Churchill Fellowship  
*to study contemporary design developments in social housing*  
report by Paul Johnston

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signed Paul S.L. Johnston

dated 08.01.2010

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## introduction

This Fellowship Study has been sponsored by A.V. Jennings whose support I am extremely thankful.

The Fellowship enabled me to travel the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia visiting London, Manchester, Glasgow, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki.

The fellowship highlighted the cultural aspects of housing in general and the differing attitudes to state supported housing or social housing.

Design and architecture is also culturally determined so each country provided a different relationship between design and housing provision. Societies have developed social policy differently and subsequently an appreciation of the history of cities enabled placing the contemporary developments in housing in social context.

Common to all approaches is the problems of planning cities to accommodate increasing and diverse populations. The need to increase the density of dwellings in inner city areas is common and the requirements for good design to retain residential amenity is a major design issue.

Sustainability is seen as a key determinate in good design and while this is usually related to environmental issues and energy consumption, increasingly a wider aspect of sustainability is appreciated that incorporates social and economic concerns. Importantly this relates to the design of community facilities and an awareness of the importance of public spaces in social cohesion.

The need to provide social housing as integral components and undistinguishable of new housing developments is a common issue that requires design to achieve affordability within cost constraints without a discernable visual impact. Tenure mixes need to be 'blind' and social housing integration 'seamless'.



*London housing in transition*

Southwark estate 'decanted' awaiting demolition while Arnold circus supporting a vibrant community since 1900.

## executive summary

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The fellowship involved the study of contemporary developments in social housing.

Travel was undertaken between August 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 and October 8<sup>th</sup> 2009 to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia visiting the cities of London, Manchester, Glasgow, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki. Contacts were initially made through the Housing and Community Research Unit of the University of Tasmania, and resulted in having meetings and site visits with a broad range of housing administrators, researchers, developers and architects.

*London:* I was guided by Tim Williams, a senior government consultant who facilitated meetings with prominent developers and architects, visiting many estates but most significantly the multi award winning Adelaide Wharf.

*Manchester:* I met with prominent urban developer Urban Splash and toured their landmark regeneration development New Islington.

*Glasgow:* I toured with architect and University of Glasgow researcher Steve Tiesdall a series of new housing projects culminating in the redevelopment of the New Gorbals estate.

*Amsterdam:* I toured the East Harbour District and met in Rotterdam Rian Peeters who showed me the work of the Woonstad Housing Association.

*Copenhagen:* I visited housing estates under regeneration at Avedøre Stationsby and Vejleåparken and the new town of Orestad. Both facilitated by Danish building researcher Lars Engberg and City Planner Jesper Dahl.

*Stockholm:* I visited the housing estates of Tensta and Skarhomen and the new inner city district of Hammerby Sjostad, where social and environmental sustainability is leading design thinking in Europe.

*Helsinki:* I toured Arabianranta at the recommendation of architect Pentti Kareoja.

The issues of increasing populations and limited resources are common to most Western countries, however cultural influences provide different approaches. Sustainability in social, environmental and economic terms are major considerations common to new housing developments. Common amongst new social housing was the need to increase densities in urban housing and the role of design to maintain residential amenity and foster community. This resulting in an increased interest in the design of the public realm and the ability of design to integrate mixed forms of tenure.

These issues are relevant to an Australian context where a renewed interest in urban infrastructure and planning is now evident. Through my own architectural practice I shall be able to implement specific design outcomes that may provide examples for other projects and my advocacy through the Australian Institute of Architects and Shelter will enable design to be considered vital in better sustainable outcomes for new housing and communities.

## programme

The Fellowship program was determined through initial email contacts assisted by Dr. Keith Jacobs and Dr. Rowland Atkinson of the Housing and Community Research Unit, Department of Sociology, University of Tasmania. Contacts were made with relevant persons associated with the European Housing Network. While not all connections produced positive responses, all contacts would assist in relaying my request for assistance to those they felt would be able. Online research also enabled connections to be made. The outcome was that in every city, I was able to meet with people actively engaged with the provision of social housing in differing areas of the research, administration, design and provision of housing.

This report highlights one or two examples visited in each city that were indicative of the approach to housing however many more incidental visits occurred that were beyond the scope of this report to document.

### UNITED KINGDOM

The historic relationship between Australia and England is prevalent today in the attitudes of government and the responsibility of the state in providing housing. Our common traditions mean that we follow similar attitudes in the provision of housing.

The social structures of both countries are similar and as such a relevant comparison can be made despite the vastly differing city structures.

Currently Britain is proceeding with the largest social housing program since the Second World War however the severity of the Global Financial Crisis has placed a significant hold on the development of projects.

#### *August 16 – 24*

*London* is the main centre of the current discussions regarding the development of social housing and its integration within the city.

My initial meeting in London was with urban regeneration consultant Tim Williams, Director of Urban Regeneration with Navigant Consulting.

Tim was author of the recent 'the Williams Commission on the Design of Affordable Housing' commissioned by the Housing Corporation, the UK's largest government funder of housing, as an investigation into social housing procurement that will produce the appropriate type, quality and cost of new housing. Tim provided the tour and introductions to my meetings.

On a tour of Spitafields and Hackney in the borough of Tower Hamlets where social housing has had a strong presence since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the opportunity to appreciate the historical link between housing and the development of the city was exemplified.

The second meeting was with Ben Denton, Director of First Base, a development company that specialized in developing partnerships with the social sector to deliver new integrated housing projects. Ben met with me to tour Adelaide Wharf, their award winning housing project.

I also met with architecture director for PRP Architects Andy von Bradsky. PRP architects are among the foremost housing designers of housing who have been working in Britain on social housing since the 1960's. PRP have been involved with the development of policy positions on urban growth and social housing.

The study also allowed visits to the degraded housing estates in Southwark and Islington as well as landmark exemplary high density housing from the post war period in Barbican, Spa Green and Brunswick.

*August 24 -28*

*Manchester* provided the opportunity to meet with Urban Splash, a housing development company that work closely in partnership with social housing managers to provide an integrated housing approach to the redevelopment of degraded areas of the city. With high levels of investment in the public realm and intimate public consultation, they are able to engage and empower people to consider the importance and distinctiveness of their local environment and willing be involved in the development process.

I met with Tom Fenton and Chris Stalker and toured the Ancoates district and their development New Islington.

*August 28 – September 1*

*Glasgow* as an industrial centre has a long history of social programs that included the largest social housing estate in Britain , 'the Gorbals' which became synonymous with the social problems of the post war period, however instead of redevelopment that erases the old areas and its associated stigma, Glasgow is building on its traditions in a distinctively Scottish manner.

Steve Tiesdall an architect with the Department of Urban Studies at Glasgow University provided a tour of the east end of Glasgow.

## THE NETHERLANDS

*September 2-10*

Dutch design has long been considered influential in architecture. Housing in particular has achieved a status that is considered the leading exemplar for urban design and architecture. In *Rotterdam* I was introduced to a wide variety of social housing projects by Rian Peeters, Strategic Project Leader, Woonstad Housing Association and developed an appreciation of the inclusive approach the Dutch have for all people in society.

In *Amsterdam* I toured the new housing development Borneo Sporenburg created from the disused harbour peninsulars, however throughout Amsterdam, housing was integrated into the fabric of the 'compact' city in interesting, diverse and innovative ways.

The Netherlands have appreciated the benefits of higher densities for much of the twentieth century. This has allowed their agricultural landscapes to be preserved free from urban sprawl.

The study also allowed visits to the housing estates of Eigen Haard and De Dageraad, constructed in the 1920's and still operating as successful communities of social housing and now heritage sites.

## DENMARK

*September 10-17*

*Copenhagen* has planned its growth since the mid twentieth century. The development of housing and public transport are intimately linked with the finger plan that enables communities to be in easy reach of both transport and open space.

Lars Engberg of the Danish Building Research Institute provided an itinerary with visits to the social housing estates of Avedøre Stationsby and Vejleåparken, and facilitated a meeting with Jesper Dahl, Head of the Urban Design, City of Copenhagen. At Jesper's recommendation I visited the new area of Orestad,

developed as a university town and in discussion with the council's architects developed an appreciation of the process of Integrating social housing into new developments.

## SWEDEN

*September 17-24*

The Swedes proudly proclaim that they do not have any social housing. The social development programme of the post war period saw housing as a key element in the new social state and the provision of housing today is developed by municipal companies operating in the commercial market.

In Stockholm I met with associate professor of architecture and urban planning Inga Britt-Werner from the Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm and was provided with a suggested itinerary to the housing estates of Tensta and Skarhomlen as well as the new environmental housing at Hammerby sjostad. I also met with Johanna Ode of SABA, the peak organization of the municipal housing associations and learnt about the development of housing in Sweden.

## FINLAND

*September 25 – October 5*

In Helsinki I was assisted by Esa Laaksonen, Director of the Alva Aalto Foundation, who enabled a meeting with Director of ARK-house architects Pentti Kareoja. Helsinki has many familiar aspects of its setting and scale to Hobart. Visits to the City of Helsinki 'Towards Tomorrow's Helsinki' Exhibition enabled an introduction to a sophisticated planning system that has housing leading in the development of the city as a whole as well as the redevelopment of the obsolete industrial and waterfront districts.



Swedish housing of the 1980's and the present showing the emphasis on landscape and the public spaces.

## London *FIRST BASE and ADELAIDE WHARF*



For several recent years London has been considering the problems associated with its projected growth, while reconsidering the past directions in social housing. With many published reports and studies, major redevelopment of inner city areas and new fringes sites, are in planning for new housing. The intervention of the Global Financial Crisis however has stalled the new housing programme in many parts of the city.

Central to the current discussion is the role of design and in particular design to enable sustainable (environmental, social and economic) outcomes. Recent housing has been largely market driven and resulting in poor qualities of design that is reflected in poor maintenance and environmental performance however small floor plans, lack of diversity and public facilities do not support families or allow communities to develop. Much research has recognized the need to increase housing density while maintaining the quality of living. Differing high density models are promoted that do not necessarily mean high rise and the renewed estates of The Barbican and The Brunswick, suggest that good models exist for higher densities while other places are inflexible and difficult to upgrade.

Affordability is an increasing issue with increasing proportions of housing cost to income. 'Keyworker' housing is a new strategy to provide housing for city essential services workers that are now priced out of the market. New public/private models are promoted that have a 70/30 split between social rented and intermediate housing. Intermediate housing provides opportunities

for shared equity, subsidized purchase and community land trust models of tenure. These models are supported through the section 106 planning agreements that support private investment in social housing. Regulation for space standards is also introduced to ensure flexibility of use over the entire life of the building. The importance of social spaces is recognized by regulatory requirement for 10 square metres for each anticipated child resident.

All these strategies recognize the need for increased densities and the role of design to provide quality sustainable outcomes. In some respects, London is reverting to housing models developed many years ago but with new standards and construction techniques.

The collapse in the financial market has delayed the impact of these measures as reduced profit margins do not allow developers to take the necessary risks in providing social housing.

The rental market however operates over longer terms and potentially provides less financial risk in an uncertain market.

Adelaide Wharf is a multi-award winning housing development that may be the catalyst for the redevelopment of an entire housing district in Shoreditch.

Conceived as affordable housing, it was designed by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris architects for developers First Base as part of English Partnerships 'London Wide Initiative', a programme for the development of 'keyworker' housing. First Base developed the project as a study into time and resource efficient construction that would have cost efficiencies.

Prefabricated bathrooms and kitchens and a panelized cladding system were incorporated into the five storey development.

The design is essentially a perimeter block type composed of three wings of apartments surrounding an internal courtyard and play space. Two double height entries with lifts and stairs are concierge managed and carparking is predominantly underground.

The spatial organization is a typically rational and efficient double loaded corridor with glazed stair access. The long corridors are widened and glazed at ends to offset the enclosed sense of linear space.

Much consideration is given to the façade with a carefully articulated composition of timber boarding, zinc sheet cladding and double glazed aluminum windows sit over colored aluminum panels. External balconies of perforated metal balustrades are suspended from roof gantries that reflect the nineteenth century industrial canal character of the area. The overall effect is colourful and contemporary and no distinction between the social rented and the private owned apartments is evident.

A brown roof is planted with local flora and bird boxes promote bird habitat.

The development is distinctive due to the high level of fittings and fixtures throughout. Semi public areas are decorated in artworks built into the fabric of walls but within apartments the amenity is of high quality. The investment in a quality fitout is a direct result of the long term investment First Base have in the property. A 250 year lease promotes a social and environmental durability inherent in the design quality of the project.

The housing development of 147 homes of a mixture of 1 bed, (35%) 2 bed,(36%) 3 bed, (26% and 4 bed (3%) is part owned and part rented with half the

apartments in private ownership. The remaining homes are socially rented or shared ownership.

Located adjacent an established and soon to be redeveloped housing estate, the building is situated on Regent's Park canal and Queensbridge road leading into central London.

Significantly part of the ground floor is devoted to administration and lettable offices. It is anticipated that the offices will act as a small incubator in the local area and facilitate small business development.

#### *Lessons from Adelaide Wharf*

Adelaide Wharf is an exemplar of affordable housing. Building on a familiar high density housing typology, it is a refined example of efficiency in construction methodology that will allow variability and adaptation to other sites. The public/private financial and land delivery process is combined with a mixed tenure and long term investment that ensures a high level of social, economic and environmental sustainability. The significant role of design is spread amongst all facets of planning and construction but is most evident as a modern building with a residential character that sits comfortably within its historic environment and thus signifying a highly desirable place to live.

## Manchester *URBAN SPLASH and NEW ISLINGTON*



Manchester as the birthplace of the industrial revolution has a long heritage of housing that was required to support the massive industrialization of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The twentieth century however has experienced the decline in industrialisation and the areas that supported industry.

Urban Splash is a development organization that for the past fifteen years has been instrumental in redeveloping degraded districts of Manchester. Importantly they have achieved commercial success by taking advantage of devalued properties and reinvigorating them with distinctive design.

Working closely with architects and housing associations, the organization has redeveloped a wide variety of housing types. Currently they are developing a long term plan for the redevelopment of an inner city public housing district called 'the Cardroom Estate' as a Millennium Community project.

The 'Cardroom Estate' was characterized by anti social behavior that was resulting in a declining residents and an increasing transient population. While Urban Splash identified the commercial opportunity of redevelopment of the inner city they realized that with Government support they could begin turning around the decline through supporting the resident population to be a part of the proposed changes. An ambitious resident empowerment program that incorporated education through site visits to other areas of England as well as Holland, introduced the residents to the potential for a new community, informed them of the benefits of increased densities, and gained their confidence to proceed with a major development proposal.

The increase in density was key to generating the mix of uses that would stimulate economic activity.

Architecture and design was the key to delivering higher densities that supported a high quality environment that supported community.  
New Islington was designed by Urban Splash and the local community.

The design is characterized by a sweeping curve that unifies 'fingers' of housing, gardens and canals. Schools, sport clubs and a health clinic are connected in a landscape that includes a wetlands supporting wildlife, forest garden, orchard and village green. Strategic public spaces, identified with large street canopies called 'giant umbrellas' are activity nodes connect the New Islington with its neighbours as well as revitalizing the 'old mill street' as a renewed high street.

The rejuvenated district is supported by the East Manchester Plan with a local Metrolink tram station so that it is only twenty minutes from the centre of Manchester.

Central to the regeneration strategy is to create diversity.  
Differing housing types will attract different residents that support different activities. Choice is integral to developing the desirability of new residents.  
'Urban Barns' are high density apartment blocks often elevated off the ground and mixed with terraced houses and studio apartments described as 'loft living'.  
Differing tenure is promoted by different housing types and private rent, owner occupied, social renters and shared ownership are all provided but importantly, no distinction is made between tenure type.  
The important aspect of maintaining diversity in a community is to provide 'seamless' tenure where it is not readily identified by housing type or location.  
The visual quality of architecture is presented the same for all ownership and rental models of residency.  
The level of visual diversity is encouraged by the selection of different architects for different parts of the scheme. This relates to different buildings and house types but also in the overall land use.  
New Islington is a place for living, working, playing and learning.  
Scale and density are then critical to achieving the required economic drivers that promote commercial development though a broader understanding of development has resulted in a large investment into public spaces.  
While this initially supports the quality of community interaction, it also provides an attraction for visitors. At New Islington this is further enhanced by attention to landscape elements that are beautiful, define the identity of the place and add to the quality of daily life.

Urban Splash have proposed a company to manage New Islington into the future with residents included as shareholders so that they have an interest and investment in the future.

New Islington favors onsite services that enable control over the production, distribution and renewal processes.

A local water bore provides high quality drinking water at less cost than mains provision.

Stormwater is contained within the site and discharged into the local wetlands and canal network.

A local Combined Heat and Power gas fired plant distributes heat and electricity to all residents with only electrical usage metered.

The community reduces waste and separates refuse for local recycling that encourages business and allows less landfill.

An on site sewerage treatment facility treats waste with sludge retained as fertilizer gas diverted to the heat and power plant and water treated to allow its discharge into stormwater.

The provision of local infrastructure encourages local business and reduces council costs that result in rebates and tax credits.

The delivery process is long term. In development since 2001, New Islington has just begun its fifteen year plan. To date the construction has been limited to the Health Centre, an 142 apartment building called CHIPS, the Islington Square terraced housing and the Guest Street Housing. This has enabled the rehousing of all the original residents and has begun the introduction of new residents. Importantly the public spaces and landscape have been developed to a point that allows the commercial development to proceed however the intervention of the Global Financial Crisis has severely disrupted the plan and the ability to maintain the momentum created in the first phase.

### ***Islington square***

terraced housing by architects FAT (Fashion Architecture Taste) developed in close consultation with existing residents who wanted a traditional approach to architecture with elderly persons requiring ground floor access. The architects were chosen by the residents from a shortlist. Following individual consultations a contemporary approach to a traditional form was agreed with bold brickwork patterning and decorative balconies. The façade development is an approach to give an inflated presence to the smaller homes amongst the larger housing developments to come.

### ***Chips***

A 142 home apartment block over 6 stories designed by Alsop architects with slightly skewed floor planning has been called chips at the planning has resembled a series of chips laid out on the site.

Brightly coloured and aligned with the new main street it is the dominant element in the new landscape.

### ***Lessons from new Islington***

Best practice is the minimum acceptable standard. High ambitions are required to attain a measure of success that can only be appreciated many years into the project.

The role of Architecture in a new community is integral to turning around perceptions of the past. An architecture that is bold, bright and colourful promotes a confidence in the environment that underpins the vibrancy of a new community.

The architecture is the result of a process that is inclusive of the input of residents through a creative consultation process that is also a two way learning process. The architecture must make a positive contribution to the public realm to allow an urbanity to develop.

To undertake a long term project with high ambitions and an inclusive approach is a learning process that is truly innovative.

## Glasgow *THE NEW GORBALS*



Glasgow, the industrial city of Scotland, has the distinction of having the highest concentration of social housing in Britain. The New Gorbals is one of the largest housing rejuvenation projects in Britain. Around 100 Acres on the city fringe bounding the River Clyde, the area is divided into eight regeneration areas. Traditionally the Gorbals has been associated with the worst of social housing in general and the urban decay of Glasgow in particular.

Originally the industrial area for textiles in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it served as the residential district for factory workers as well as the nearby colliery and ironworks. The Gorbals were home to 90,000 persons in the 1930's largely derived from a rich mix of Highland Scots displaced by land confiscation, Irish fleeing the famine, and Jews and Lithuanians migrated due to persecution.

The housing that supported this population is characterized by repetitive row housing of four to six stories, provided by private landlords with minimum amenity. The housing was known as a 'tenement' and was a typical form in Scotland and Glasgow in particular. Laid out on a street grid, the neighbourhoods lacked open space and greenery and were distinctive for their monotony.

The working class model had changed little from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with a central stair accessed from an open close, providing shared entry to houses at each landing. Often with only two rooms per family, the tenement had shared wc's, and a common wash house, both located in the rear yard.

The tenement type of housing had wealthy equivalents in other districts with larger rooms and more internal facilities.

Through Acts of Parliaments in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, conditions improved with internal wc's, located on each landing and a shared wash basin, as well as statutory limits imposed on the number of allowed occupants.

However poor maintenance and the decline of industry were to result in continued overcrowding and poor sanitation. In the 1950's it was estimated that half of Glasgow's population required rehousing, and the economic logic of large scale redevelopment and high density housing was considered the only solution.

The famous twenty storey flats of Queen Elizabeth Square formed the centre piece for the regeneration of the Gorbals. Approved for development in 1957 and housing 10,000 residents the project initiated a program of open spaces, schools and shopping centres. By the 1980's however, before the completion of the entire project, the district was in decline with a falling population characterized by anti social behaviour. Poor design and lack of investment in the public spaces contributed significantly to the lack of community however the poor quality of construction meant that in a Scottish climate the effects of water ingress and damp were severe to cause health concerns. Rent strikes and tenant campaigns forced rehousing to the worst affected buildings only twenty years after the project began. The demise of the high density ,high rise flats would create a stigma that could not be overcome and led to the demolition of Queen Elizabeth Square.

Since 1994, with a new local plan and substantial resident support and participation, the regeneration of the 'New Gorbals' has proceeded and continues to develop. Led by the "Crown Street Regeneration Project", and the New Gorbals Housing Association, the new design of the district emphasizes the traditional street patterns that evolved in the area, however with a greater residential amenity and investment in the public spaces.

This has been led by the return of the tenement model of housing as the predominant housing form however with a modernization of internal arrangement.

Designed by CZWG architects, the tenement provided ground and first floors of a four storey block comprising three bed maisonettes with their own front and back doors and a private rear garden. Above these were two floors of apartments accessed from a shared staircase. The tenements form three sides to a city block, fronted onto tree lined streets with central parking while defining a shared central landscaped courtyard behind. This block housing model clearly differentiates between the public street and the private gardens behind. Crown street was developed as a traditional shop fronted high street and incorporated two high rise buildings from the previous redevelopment. The higher density providing an economic driver for the high street.

The initial architecture has been conservative by adopting traditional references and patterns however as the redevelopment progresses, architecture is becoming more distinctive and alleviating the monotony of similar facades. Community facilities support the resident population and also provide architectural landmarks. Buildings for sport and leisure, Schools, Health and Community development are integral to the new urban fabric.

#### *Lessons from the New Gorbals*

The regeneration of the Gorbals is an important milestone in British social housing. The recognition of the history of the district, from Industrial origins as a community for displaced persons seeking refugees, and despite the decline of the economy

and destruction of social cohesion that followed with the post war redevelopment, it was instrumental for the success of regeneration that a continuity with the past was maintained and the proud working class history celebrated. The designation of the New Gorbals was a significant contribution by the community that identified their heritage with the place. The return to a traditional housing type that typified the Glaswegian tradition was instrumental in understanding the relationship between architecture and urban design and the development of community. Significantly the traditional approach was the initial design direction which has allowed a more complex and diverse architecture to develop while still respecting the pattern of traditional development.

## **amsterdam** *EASTERN HARBOUR DISTRICT*



New housing in The Netherlands is characterized by the redevelopment of urban 'brownfield' sites. Generally the Dutch have recognized the limits to urban expansion and seek to contain the need for a growing population to areas within city regions. The compact city has been a Dutch planning guide for many years.

The reclamation of land has traditional origins and is most recently explored in the creation of islands in the inland sea adjacent Amsterdam.

Dutch design is directly evolved from the consensus culture that has been necessary to reclaim land for mutual benefit. Importantly, regional municipal government has control over land use planning and the provision of housing. New housing is the result of the coordination of land acquisition, site preparation,

infrastructure development, urban design as well as the selection of architects by municipal authority in conjunction with Housing Associations and government multi disciplinary teams of experts.

This integrated framework for the development of new housing allows design to achieve excellent standards and quality control.

Architecture in the Netherlands is widely promoted as a cultural activity having the world's first Architecture Policy and is encouraged to experiment. Young architects in particular are encouraged to develop their practices with social housing projects.

Government regulation requires new development to provide 70 % private and 30% social housing and one third of social housing is given to individual design commissions to promote diversity. Strategic policies are developed for high density housing that make use of existing and develop new infrastructure.

The Eastern Harbour District is located on the edge of Amsterdam city and is a housing development built on three connected peninsulas previously used for service industries for the ship yards.

The project required high density development of 100 dwellings per hectare with mixed functions and activities without industry or heavy traffic movements.

The retention of the peninsulars were considered important in heritage terms following community action to prevent filling in the waterways. The master plan developed by Jo Coenen provided for extensive low rise three storey dwellings interrupted by large scale high density housing that relate to the scale of the harbour basins and provide significant landmark qualities to each peninsular.

Landscape architects West 8 designed the layout and structure to Borneo/Sporenburg, the peninsular set further most into the sea. Long rows of terrace housing fronting the water, were designed to relate to the canal housing of Amsterdam with a specific height and width parameters determining each dwelling. A 30–50% void required in each home increases natural daylight levels and provide for private out door space. Over 100 architects designed individual dwellings of similar proportions with differing materials and configurations.

Typically, roof terraces and patios with integrated carports were common. The experiment in diversity has achieved a strong sense of unity in diversity that has characterized the sense of place. Other row housing predominates with larger developments breaking the monotony of the rows formed on a grid street layout, small public courtyard spaces are connected via bicycle paths internal to the housing blocks while car traffic restricted.

#### *Lessons from Amsterdam*

The development was initiated by municipal housing and then once the district was established, greater private development invited and encouraged by the successful community development. Schools, child care and aged housing is all integrated into the urban design and small business development encouraged around areas of activity.

The design direction has resulted in a mix of housing types that allows for a mix of residents. The architecture has responded to this enabling a diverse built environment that provides a vibrant built environment and a desirable place to live.

## copenhagen *ORESTAD*



Sustainability in Denmark is intrinsically understood as a social objective. The Danes have developed a society in the post war social democrat era that is forward thinking and inclusive and is perhaps the best western society example of sustainable community. Architecture has been an instrumental means of developing this position however its relationship to town planning has resulted in a city that preserves its character while embracing contemporary design. Public transport is the essential ingredient in both guiding development and sharing access to the city. This enables new centres to be constructed with forty year plans of development. Planning is considered a process that involves all in a negotiation of space. This involvement is facilitated by government and respecting of people regardless of their level of power or status. The engagement of the public in debate is crucial to the idea of sustainability.

The framework that underpins the development of Copenhagen has developed since its initial concept in 1947 as the 'finger plan'. The expansion of the city was managed according to the concentration of transport corridors, -'fingers'. This enabled adjacent land to be left for under developed uses such as recreation, agriculture and forestry.

The result is that housing developments have been created as centres, built up around metro stations. These centres have all the community facilities of a local neighbourhood but are both connected to the city by frequent rail services, and In the past, these towns were created and supported entirely by the government. Social housing today is integrated as a proportion of the overall development within these new towns and its design is coordinated by architects of the 'City of Copenhagen'.

**Avedore Stationby** is a housing estate created in the 1970's and connected to the city by the metro 'S line' rail system. Located to the south of the city, it is situated adjacent a redundant military barracks that provides extensive open areas. Typically the town has changed little since its construction despite the apparent blandness of its architecture. The town was conceived by its designers like a medieval city resulting in a plan form composed of a perimeter of four storey buildings with 'gateway' apertures to open spaces and playing fields beyond. Immediately adjacent the station is the high rise apartment building at the base of which is the shopping street, library and community centre. Central to the town is a pedestrian street, that connects one side to the other where a second shopping area is joined by the local church and administration building. The pedestrian street is bordered by the school and special housing as well as a swimming and recreation facility. A grid of two storey housing is distributed throughout forming courtyards and pedestrian and bicycle paths. The public areas are well designed and utilized with public art playgrounds and well established trees typical of the quality spaces.

The town was part of the housing program that demanded large numbers in an economic manner. The blandness of the architecture tends to reflect the economic imperative however the construction has been robust and well detailed. The town has committed support to enable good relationships to be fostered in a diverse and culturally mixed community.

**Ishoj** is a similar housing estate to Stationby however in plan is designed around long avenues enclosing squares of common facilities. All on one level it is currently in refurbishment with an architectural upgrade that has developed in close consultation with residents.

All the four storey buildings have been reclad with a masonry skin and new glazing including enclosed balcony areas. This has given a new visual if conservative appearance to the estate that reflects the desire of residents to 'fit in' rather than 'stand out'. The palette of materials is robust and the similar throughout so to not favour amongst neighbours. New storage facilities and landscaped forecourts including play spaces, provide semi private spaces and define areas within the once open public avenues. Strategically located, new community houses has been designed for collective and individual use. Community facilitator offices are located here as well as multi purpose gathering places. In contrast to the enclosed masonry walls of the residences, the community houses are glazed 'lighthouses' that are beacons in the night.

**Orestad** is the newest housing area currently in development in Copenhagen. The extension of the Metro has enabled planning of the new town to proceed in three stages with the street layout of the first two stages complete.

As part of a 30 year plan for the area the new canal district was conceived following the construction of the bridge to Malmo in Sweden and is marketed as affordable housing in a highly distinctive and desirable area. The University of Copenhagen has created a large presence in the district as a communications, media and technology centre that has provided the economic driver for the initial stages. Student housing providing accommodation for twenty thousand students will be complimented by two thousand residents and ten thousand workers, as part of the northern city. The rapidly growing district is supported by large retail centres.

Architecture of the central area is highly distinctive in colour and form however follow similar apartment typologies. Social housing is woven into this mix however many buildings exhibit a diversity of use that sees elderly persons housing on lower levels overlooking kindergartens and play spaces.

### *lessons of Copenhagen*

The city's approach to planning is essential to appreciate the coordination of new housing districts that prevent the divisions in society that foster suspicion and alienation. The importance of planning to ensure equity is essential to democracy and thus sustainability. The role of design to both support a connection with society in the old estates and then to create difference in the new represents changing approaches to housing tenure.

The acceptance of consultation and negotiation in Danish planning suggests a responsive approach that will enable it to deliver high quality environments in the future and establish an exemplar for other societies to learn from.

## **stockholm** *TENSTA, SKARHOMLEN and HAMMERBY SJOSTAD*



Sweden is widely recognized as having the most comprehensive welfare system in the modern world. 'Folkhemmer', the peoples home, was the centerpiece policy of the social democracy movement throughout the mid twentieth century and was designed to eliminate difference in social standing as well as provide childcare, education and housing. The overall aim was to strengthen democracy. The immediate post war period saw the government address the shortage of homes with the creation of the Housing Associations operated by municipal government. These not for profit organizations would be charged with the responsibility of providing high standards of housing for all in their regional jurisdiction. In the 1960,s the impetus for new housing was increased with the

declaration of the 'Million Homes Programme' over the following twenty year period. The legacy of which today is proudly stated in that Sweden has no social housing.

The Housing Associations, combining commercial aims with social responsibilities provide a fifth of housing in Sweden including special needs, in a market where 42% is privately owned. This high level of public housing has a moderating impact within the market, stabilizing rents while delivering supply. SABO is the member body of public housing associations that provide development research, disseminate knowledge and representation.

The result of a large scale public housing program is the general acceptance of public housing within the community. The stigma associated with public housing does not exist. Estate housing is well connected with a well maintained rail system and supported by regional shopping centre. Despite the increasing demand for private housing in an increasingly affluent society, the history of the socialization of housing is considered with national pride that is celebrated with heritage listing and the initial residents acknowledged as pioneers.

*Tensta* is the result of the 'Million Homes Programme' where government regulations and building standards were combined with extensive industrial production to produce large repetitive blocks. The expansion of the city however was guided by the transport network. The typical concentric growth was challenged and supplanted by the concept of growth as 'a string of pearls'. Each station would become a centre for public and commercial activity around the railway system. Known as ABC (translated as work-housing-center) at *Skarholm*, the station was constructed beneath the civic plaza and shopping complex.

The high level of serviced public space has prevented much of the social problems that would typify isolated districts however they have produced concerns due to the bland environment of repetitive architecture. The generous floor plans however allow them to continue to provide good quality accommodation.

Recent housing developments are typically privately developed under the coordination of planning agencies. Significant attention is now given to the reuse of obsolete industrial land within the inner city with the planning strategy of 'building the city inwards'.

*Hammarby sjostad* is now considered an exemplar of environmental inner city development created within a high environmental standard. Anticipated for completion in 2012, the renewed waterfront district of over one million square metres will house 25,000 residents in 11,000 dwellings. Central to the idea of the new district is the environmental goals that have guided the development of water, sewerage and power infrastructure. The form of the new development resembles much of the traditional inner city residential blocks however the streets and laneways are replaced with pedestrian parkland and waterways. While heights vary according to topography, seven storey blocks are typical. Dense city buildings front main streets while smaller structures relate to natural shorelines and urban spaces. Openness between structures has engendered new view corridors and better sunlight penetration and buildings have typical large balconies, terraces and window areas. Building depth is restricted to make use of natural light and ventilation.

Public transport is an integral component with the central mall serviced by light rail, a ferry service linking with adjacent islands and car movements restricted. High quality investment into the public spaces is indicative of the pedestrianisation of the district.

The district is well supported by schools, libraries, and a theatre and culture centre all focused on the main activity areas.

Housing is mostly private however a mix of housing type and tenure is supports a variety of rental capacity which is a deliberate attempt to diversify the population Elderly person housing is also incorporated within the district. The creation of new infrastructure has allowed for a new environmental performance based on collective collaboration.

lessons from Stockholm

Sweden is distinctive for their ambition and investment into the city and housing its inhabitants. As a social program it has created the foundation of an equitable society that allows further investment into housing and urban renewal to be undertaken at an experimental level that will inform the future. The predominance of state initiated housing has produced housing suitable for all income groups to live in the same neighbourhoods. No social stigma can be developed in such a circumstance. The incorporation of environmental standards and the willingness to experiment in a broad range of design enables high quality housing to be maintained and improved.

## **helsinki** ARABIANRANTA

The closure of the porcelain factories of the Arabia company allowed the University of Industrial Art to establish a campus in this northern district of the city. The University's expansion has been reinforced by the City of Helsinki Planning Department creating a new residential precinct set in parkland adjacent the redeveloped industrial buildings. Student housing is a major component of the district however the tram connection to the city and its waterside location has meant it is desirable for a diverse housing development supporting around 7500 inhabitants in 3,500 homes.

The area is characterized by high density four to six storey dwellings constructed in two zones separated by a school, recreation area, day care centres and community and commercial buildings.

The series of apartment buildings are connected with an extensive network of pedestrian paths that link semi private common courtyards.

Art works characterize the open spaces with sculptures featuring in all courtyards.

Finnish housing is characterized by a desire to be close to natural areas. Despite the urban density of the development, the apartments are generally orientated to the landscape of the bay and each rooftop is given to shared access and a common sauna.

Lessons from Helsinki

High density living provides cost effective housing close to facilities. It also allows for an economic circumstance that supports a local economy. The role of the University to initiate the redevelopment of an area sets a planning scheme in

place that will support further development. Arabianranta is significant as a planned community that builds upon the character of the history of the place. New communities need to be distinctive to allow their inhabitants to define their place. The inclusion of artwork and the design of open spaces further reinforce this character.

## conclusions

Social Housing is an increasingly important area in the sustainable development of cities. Economic pressures of the market do not produce the diverse outcome that new communities require for sustainability. Social Housing is the means to create diverse communities and allow access to services to those most in need. Design plays an important role in providing housing that is both diverse and equitable while achieving a contemporary quality of living.

Adelaide Wharf represents a highly refined example of inner city development that integrates diverse residents in a cost effective, sustainable and desirable manner. Its success will be a catalyst for new development in its immediate neighbourhood.

New Islington illustrates the manner that design can bring confidence to degraded neighbourhoods. Bold forms and colour bring vitality and distinctive character to communities.

The ability to revitalize traditional forms of community living is demonstrated in Glasgow. All societies have distinctive forms of community and housing that have evolved culturally specific to place. The success of the New Gorbals has been in reviving an appreciation of Glasgow's heritage of tenement housing. The Dutch have maintained high standards of housing amenity in new developments however their willingness to build a compact city enables new housing to be found throughout in a variety of forms that provides diverse communities.

The Scandinavian integration of design in all aspects of urban life provide high quality and sustainable housing for all parts of their society. Housing that is well serviced by transport and shops and is organized around quality public spaces is highly desirable and the mix of social and child care facilities with elderly and disability housing make for long term sustainable communities.

## recommendations

My practice as an architect will enable me to further promote design in social housing through my own work which will provide examples for others to learn. Increasingly my work in planning and regeneration will also benefit from the lessons of others.

As a chapter councilor for the Australian Institute of Architects and as a member of Shelter I will be able to lobby government and raise the profile of design as a vital component to successful housing. My status as a Churchill Fellow will also contribute to the advocacy. It is planned that presentations of the study will be conducted to community and government groups including the AIA, UTAS and Shelter.

Government at all levels needs to appreciate the vital role that social housing provides to promote diversity in communities as well as equal access to the city and services. As we increasingly consider the sustainability of our environment, a recognition of social sustainability will become widespread.

Likewise as government better understand urban planning as they encounter depleting water resources and greater costs in energy, my experiences will be able to promote the role of housing in urban planning in general and the role of design in social housing in particular.

paul johnston architect 06.01.1