A bright new suburbia? G.J. Dusseldorp and the development of the Kingsdene Estate

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Abstract

While the ongoing development of suburbia in Australia has undoubtebdly seen many key moments, few have been as radical and iconic as that represented by the design and marketing of the Kingsdene Estate in Carlingford, NSW. Initiated by the Lend Lease Corporation under the impetus of founder and managing diretor G.J. Dusseldorp in 1960, and included in the RAIA 20th Century Register of Significant Buildings in September 2006, the Kingsdene Estate marks an important innovation in the history of speculative suburban development from three particular perspectives.

Firstly, and responding to the considerable migration rates of the late '50s and early'60s, and to the increased demand for home ownership at this time, Dusseldorp's intention, though still aimed at the consumer 'off-the-peg' market, was to go beyond the 'standard' spec-built house of the period to produce repeatable model houses of superior quality. To this end he employed as his designers a group of young and forward-thinking architects whose work here effectively launched the 'project home' into the commercial market. Secondly, and from a planning and sub-division perspective, Dusseldorp's strategy was based on a strict commitment to rational and testable criteria for the efficient use of land. Finally, and from a marketing perspective, the Kingsdene Estate adopted a campaign that has rarely, if ever, been equalled. Undertaken as a joint venture between the Lend Lease Corporation and Australian Consolidated Press Holdings Pty Ltd (ACP), the developers drew heavily on the resources of The Australian Women's Weekly, The Daily Telegraph and TCN Channel Nine to offer blanket publicity for the venture.

Drawing on a range of contemporary newspaper and magazine sources, and on unpublished interviews with key protagonists conducted by Mr Geoff Ferris-Smith in the early '90s, the paper explores the unique combination of these three key strategies in the making of a major Sydney suburban subdivision.

Introduction: Thoroughly Modern Marketing

In terms of what might be called the history of suburbia, May 1962 signals a landmark event in both the development and the marketing of speculative housing in Australia, and thus of the 'Great Australian Dream' itself. For six weeks over May and June of that year the Carlingford Homes Fair, located at the Kingsdene Estate in Sydney's north-west, attracted over 200,000 visitors, approximately 9% of Sydney's population at that time. What people were viewing at this exhibition, and the publicity machine

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and on-site facilities that made the exhibition such a success, can be regarded as unique in the annals of developer-led housing in Australia.

Undertaken as a joint venture between the Lend Lease Corporation and Australian Consolidated Press Holdings Pty Ltd, the developers drew heavily on the resources of *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *The Daily Telegraph*, TCN Channel Nine and a variety of Sydney radio stations to publicise the event. In April 1962, for example, and as just one of a series of ongoing advertisements and feature articles tracing the development of the estate and establishing this upcoming event in the public mind, *The Australian Women's Weekly* noted that:

> When Carlingford Homes Fair at Kingsdene Estate, Pennant Hills Road opens in May…it will be the climax of two years careful planning to produce a picturesque, well designed residential estate. Twenty-four homes set in landscaped gardens will be on view for six weeks'.[1]

A month earlier the magazine had suggested 'Whatever your ideal house – traditional, contemporary or designed with an eye to the future – you will find it at the Carlingford Homes Fair…'.[2]

Such publicity was not restricted to *The Australian Women's Weekly*. In the week of the exhibition's opening *The Daily Telegraph* produced a ten-page supplement that not only detailed the background to both the Kingsdene Estate and the Carlingford Homes Fair, but publicized the events to be held during the Fair's run, provided descriptions of all the houses included in the exhibition, and featured a number of interviews with the developers, planners, and architects. In terms of non-print media, advertising was featured on Sydney radio stations 2UE and 2GB; the exhibition's official opening was the subject of a prime-time live television broadcast on TCN Channel 9; while, as an early example of televisual cross-promotion between 'news and current affairs', 'entertainment', and 'sales', episodes of the popular 'Wheel of Fortune' programme were recorded live at the Homes Fair Service Centre.

Such 'advanced' advertising techniques were in evidence at the exhibition site itself. To get maximum exposure, and, one assumes, to facilitate visits from 'after work' viewers – those for whom new homes would be both desirable and, hopefully, affordable – the Fair was open seven days a week, until 10.00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays, and between 10.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. on Sundays. Given both its predicted (and, later its demonstrated) popularity parking was provided for 2000 cars. Even more user-friendly or, perhaps more astutely, 'young-family-friendly', the Fair provided a nursery, complete with trained nurse, where parents could leave their children when viewing their new and idealized future.

Such 'viewing', of course, was not restricted just to looking at the houses on offer. Demonstrations of gas and electric ranges informed visitors about service options; a Grace Brothers Home Advisory Service Centre offered advice on all manner of interior furnishings and fittings, and was able to provide and install them as the potential homebuyer required; and the Estate Service Centre itself offered immediate information on financing and purchasing, either of houses or of land within the Kingsdene Estate.

Expectations beyond the average

But what were the public 'getting' in terms both of housing and of suburban subdivision and planning? From the public's perspective, one might crudely answer 'the Great Australian Dream': home ownership – specifically a new home – on a block of sufficient size to allow for a back garden for the kids, a front garden for appropriate suburban appearances, and room to park the car, all within handy distance of shops and in a somewhat sylvan and picturesque setting on the then outskirts of the city. Indeed, to a large degree this was how it was 'sold'. As *The Australian Women's Weekly* noted:

> The Fair…illustrates the advantages of building houses in a well-planned, self-contained estate… [where]…everything harmonises, from the walls, roof and design of the houses to the trees and shrubs. When completed Kingsdene will have a rural atmosphere, but with all the advantages of modern planning, sewerage, gas, electricity and water supplies.[3]

But this recourse to stereotype is both too cynical, and demonstrably inaccurate from the developer's perspective and, ultimately, from the home-buyer's perspective. While Lend Lease unquestionably intended to make money out of their venture – the high-powered marketing campaign noted above was aimed at selling commercially-produced houses at prices in *excess* of the going rates of the time – Dusseldorp's intention, though still aimed at the consumer 'off-the-peg' market, was to go beyond the 'standard' spec-built house of the period to produce repeatable model houses of superior quality. To this end he employed as his designers a group of young and forward-thinking Sydney architects whose work here – twenty four distinct family houses, individually designed but with a view to repetition on different sites – effectively launched the 'project home' into the commercial market 'as a viable alternative to individual architect designed or builder housing'.[4]

Home ownership, postwar reconstruction and the suburban dream

The development of the Kingsdene Estate, which predates the expressly commercial focus of the Carlingford Homes Fair by approximately two years, has its beginnings in 1960 when Colin Booth, Manager in Charge of Subdivision Projects in the Lend Lease Corporation, provided the young architectural firm of Clarke Gazzard and Yeomans with a brief to develop a suburban land subdivision that would represent, as George Clarke recalled some thirty years later, 'up market Australian suburbia; the ultimate of its kind'.[5] This aim in turn can be set against the increasing demand for housing, and specifically the desire for home ownership, that had reached a high point in the late fifties, particularly in Sydney.

This in turn can be attributed to a combination of factors. Significantly, the end of World War II saw Australia facing what Spearritt and DeMarco describe as 'the worst housing crisis in its history'.[6] As the authors go on to report:

> A survey conducted by the Commonwealth government in 1944 showed a national housing shortage of almost 200 000 dwellings, with Sydney needing about 35 000 of these. This was before replacing the 19 000 inner-city 'slum' dwellings that were earmarked for demolition.[7]

Interestingly, the *Commonwealth Housing Commission Final Report: 25th August, 1944*, itself suggests a considerably higher number:

> Lacking reliable figures of even pre-war building it has been impossible to calculate at all accurately the amount of building required after the war. The statistical estimates, which have been made, suggest that by January, 1945, there will be a shortage of at least 300,000 dwellings (inclusive of replacement of substandard dwellings.[8]

Demand for housing was intensified both by the substantial post-war baby boom and by the increasing demands for postwar reconstruction that accompanied demobilisation, itself fuelled by the fact that 'Blueprints for better houses and better cities were an important part of armed services propaganda'.[9]

Housing need was further exacerbated by the Commonwealth Government's ongoing 'populate or perish' mantra and thus by the high immigration rates driven both by the perceived need for more people *per se* and the more acute need for the labour force that resulted from such immigration. On top of this it may be assumed that, then as now, the phenomenon of Sydney as an 'attractor' for a variety of 'incomers' heightened housing demand in Australia's biggest city.

This combination of factors, together with the general post-war economic upturn, saw significant development within the major cities with the percentage of the Australian population living in the metropolitan areas rising from 50.7% in 1947 to 56.3% in 1961.[10] In parallel with this Sydney's numbers increased from a post-war population of 1.484 million in 1947 to 2.137 million by 1961, a 44% increase in only 14 years.[11] Over the same period levels of home ownership – those already owned plus those in the process of being purchased – rose significantly across Australia, from 53% in 1947 to 70% in 1961[12], and even more dramatically in Sydney, from 43% in 1947 to 71% in 1961.[13] At the same time figures suggest that the percentage of Sydney's population living in rented accommodation as private tenants (i.e. excluding those accommodated by the housing authority) dropped from 56% in 1947 to 24% in 1961.[14] Both sets of figures are in part explained by the Government's deliberate control of interest rates and provision of tax incentives as 'part of a concerted program to raise the level of home ownership'.[15]

Yet, while images of and desire for the suburban dream might linger in the mind, provision of the 'typical' free-standing suburban house was being challenged by the increase in the development of multi-unit dwellings in Sydney. As Daly notes, 'The need for better access to the city's facilities allied to the opportunities given by the development of strata titles excited a rash of higher density developments which increased competition for sites and hence raised prices'.[16] In 1960 some 30% of residential construction commenced by the private sector took the form of multi-unit dwellings (a figure which rose throughout the '60s to 42% by 1966-67, peaking at 51% in 1969-70).[17]

At the same time a short-lived recession in 1961 fuelled by the Federal Government's imposition of a program of credit restriction in 1960 aimed at correcting 'a large inflow of foreign capital…and an unstable balance-of-payments'[18] had the effect of

"reduc[ing] the supply of building blocks for houses'.[19] Such short-term periods of mild recession, it should be noted, were not uncommon over this period.

Perhaps most significant, however, is McGregor's contention that in Sydney 'public services [were] so far behind the spreading bungalows and fibro cottages that in 1960 some 360,000 people in the outer suburbs and 124,000 elsewhere – in fact a quarter of the city's population – were without mains sewerage'.[20] And this despite the fact that the dream – and the benefits, both health and social, to be derived from it – had been extensively promoted in the immediate postwar years. Spearritt and DeMarco, for example, cite Sydney architect Walter Bunning's 1945 book *Homes in the Sun*, in which he advocated houses designed 'to admit sunshine and fresh air, to have healthy surroundings, peace and quiet, and to suit our climate and traditions'.[21] Perhaps more significantly they cite the comment made in the foreword to the book by H.C. Coombs, then director-general of postwar reconstruction, to the effect that the book, and thus presumably what it promoted, 'will be of direct and personal interest to every Australian man and woman who will in the coming years be setting up their own homes'.[22] By the late '50s 'Three main factors dictated the form of the suburban dream in Sydney: the desire for a freestanding house on a block of land, the desire for a car and the desire for home ownership'.[23]

It is against this background of desire and expectation, then, and in the first year of the new decade – a year that also saw the publication of Robin Boyd's anti-featurist polemic *The Australian Ugliness* [24] – that Dusseldorp's vision of a different and improved suburbia was launched.

Model Homes of Superior Quality

As noted earlier, George Clarke's recollection of the intention behind the brief presented by Dusseldorp was to produce 'up market Australian suburbia; the ultimate of its kind'.[25] In attempting to do this – and to launch what was effectively a new and improved kind of suburban development – Dusseldorp adopted two quite radical strategies: a highly mathematicized, tightly controlled and rigorously criteria-based set of planning requirements for the new land subdivision, and the allocation of the design of individual houses to not one but a range of young and talented Sydney architects.

While proving to be novel in itself, the Kingsdene Estate was not Lend Lease's first foray into the suburban housing market. Drawing on Dusseldorp's background as a director of the building company Civil and Civic; with Civil and Civic as a major 40% shareholder; and with the express intention of establishing a finance and investment company to underwrite projects to be constructed Civil and Civic, the Lend Lease Corporation was officially founded in early 1958. Aiming to design and develop new residential communities for the potentially booming Sydney market, and with the intention of consolidating financial, planning, architectural and construction services within a single overarching company so as to achieve both maximum efficiency and maximum control, the Lend Lease Corporation made its first tentative venture into the market with a small 'staged' housing development in Sydney's west. Sales were, however, low, and the project was effectively abandoned in its early stages.

Thinking within Lend Lease then appears to have shifted to the idea of presenting to the public a small number of housing options via a demonstration village, the marketing plan being that potential homeowners could experience at first hand, and then order, the home of their choice, arranging for it to be built on their own land or, it was proposed, building it as part of a Lend Lease developed house and land package.[26] While not unknown overseas, and having already been used by Contemporary Homes Pty Ltd in Melbourne in 1956, the demonstration village idea was nevertheless a relatively new concept in Australia. By 1959 it is reported that Lend Lease had developed five prototype house plans, each of which came with a series of 'standard' variations to allow for consumer choice.[27] They had not, however, acquired land for subdivision at this stage, and were awaiting a suitable development opportunity.

Such opportunity came about in early 1960 in response to what was known as *The Australian Women's Weekly* Home Plans Service, established in 1957. Such facilities were already in existence in South Australia in the form of *The Small Homes Service of South Australia*[28] and in Victoria as *The Small Homes Service*, 'an architectural advisory bureau set up by the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in conjunction with The Age in Melbourne on 7 July, 1947' under the directorship of Robin Boyd.[29] It is reported that:

> It had two principal aims: first, to bring architectural services to those who would not normally use the services of an architect and second, to raise the standard of house design in Victoria by making the work of Victoria's leading domestic architects available at low cost. Many of the plans were drawn up by Robin Boyd and Neil Clerehan. Plans and advice were also published in *The Age* every Wednesday.[30]

A similar facility, with the same aims, was instigated by the NSW Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects as *The Small Homes Service (NSW)* in conjunction with the popular magazine *Home Beautiful*. As the then President of the RAIA NSW Chapter suggested at the time of its launch in December 1953:

> Since the beginning of the post-war years of frustration to the home builder we have been attempting to find a way to assist the home buyer in getting a home…something to suit his [sic] individual needs, something within a cost range he van afford…But for years we could not find a way. Until *Home Beautiful* came along and very generously offered to co-operate with us in providing the services.[31]

The first six "low cost home plans" were contained in the December 1953 edition of the magazine[32] and by 1961 it is reported that approximately 400 individual plans were available for purchase via this means.

Seeing the potential of this facility, *The Australian Women's Weekly* – at that time Australia's largest selling magazine and certainly *Home Beautiful*'s biggest competitor – determined to offer a similar service. Thus, on September 4th 1957, and in conjunction with the Melbourne architects Borland and Trewenack (in partnership 1956-1958), *The Australian Women's Weekly Home Plan Service* was launched. Given its mass circulation the *Home Plan Service* quickly became the most utilised of all such services in Australia, a success that was enhanced by the establishment of a

Home Planning Centre in the Sydney department store Anthony Horderns where potential home buyers could consult plans and get face-to-face advice.

More significantly, in 1960, AWW moved beyond the paper world to develop a small housing exhibition at Cherrybrook, in the north-west of Sydney. Providing high-level publicity for both the magazine and for its plan sales the exhibition, recalled Colin Booth, 'attracted large number of people and was very successful'.[33] More significantly, however, Booth – noted earlier as Manager in Charge of Subdivision Projects for the Lend Lease Corporation at that time – suggested that it was the success of the Cherrybrook venture 'that provided *Australian Women's Weekly* with the desire to repeat the idea, on a larger and higher profile site, a few years later'.[34] Hence, this was effectively the initiation of the joint venture between the Lend Lease Corporation and Australian Consolidated Press Holdings Pty Ltd that resulted in the Kingsdene Estate development. Under the joint venture agreement – a new company, Cesec 16 Pty Ltd, was formed between ACP and Lend Lease to act as clients for the new development – ACP took on the responsibility for marketing and promotion with Lend Lease, controlling both land subdivision and design of the demonstration houses. Directing the operations were Keith Martin from ACP and Colin Booth from Lend Lease.

In establishing a variety of designs for the proposed houses the developers relied not on a single architect, nor solely on a group of 'in house' architects with an agreed 'house style', but approached a number of what might have been thought of in 1960 as Sydney's young and up-coming practitioners. Fifty years later certain names – notably Harry Seidler, Neville Gruzman, Ken Woolley, and perhaps Michael Dysart and Don Gazzard – stand out as having become well known in Sydney, and in the case of Seidler, international architectural circles. Yet if the claims in the opening statement of the Carlingford Homes Fair brochure are any indication, the architectural brief was not for the futuristic and/or esoteric – not for an architectural world that the public didn't understand – but for expectations and aspirations tempered with familiarity and family values, all combined in a shrewd marketing package:

> Lend Lease Homes and The Australian Women's Weekly have long nurtured the ideal of creating truly Australian homes. Homes that lend themselves to our climate…our way of life. Homes that make housework easier. Weekends more pleasurable. We are confident the Carlingford Homes Fair will herald a new era in Australian home building.[35]

Such appeal to the contemporary suburban dream manifest through 'modern' design continues in the brochure's next statements, worth quoting at length:

> The 24 new homes built for Carlingford Homes Fair are a triumph of design. Ranch homes. Traditional homes. Cantilever designs. Split levels. Homes full of easy-living ideas. Different homes. Exciting homes.
> Homes that bring you a whole new world of design. Homes with lots of windows. Lots of living. Brick homes. Timber homes. Concrete masonry homes. Aluminium-clad homes.
> Exteriors are magnificent. Interiors are designed with you and your family in mind. Chef-planned kitchens. Cowboy-sized family rooms. Television rooms. Beautiful bedrooms. Dining rooms. Patios. Courtyards. Rooms you'll love to entertain in, relax in.[36]

If the advertising prose might seem both breathless and, at times, unintelligible – what were 'Cowboy-sized family rooms'? – the popularity of the Homes Fair and the numbers it attracted suggest that such claims were appealing to the market of the day.

Of the 24 demonstration houses built on the Fair's site, Lend Lease Homes themselves offered five designs. Produced by in-house architect Nino Sydney, and officially identified in the Homes Fair brochure as homes numbers 6, 9, 10, 15 and 19, each model was also given what must be presumed to be a name that, at the time, was believed to be attractive to and resonate with the potential home-buyer: 'Cabana', 'Golden Key', 'Pan Pacific', 'Regal' and 'Beachcomber'.[37] 'These homes,' the brochure notes, 'can be built on your own land and finance arranged by Lend Lease Homes anywhere in the Sydney metropolitan area and in Canberra'.[38] Compared to the other houses in the exhibition, these were deliberately more conventional in nature, and offered a kind of balance to the less conventional 'outside' architect-designed ones that, Lend Lease acknowledged, might be less commercially viable in the market of the time.

The remaining 19 house designs were unnamed, but were identified by the architects involved, as shown in the table below, reproduced from the original brochure:

Table 1: Identification of architects and lot numbers

Home No.	Lot No.	Architect
1	107	Towell, Jansen & Rippon
2	55	Ken Woolley & Michael Dysart
3	59	Harry Seidler, A.R.A.I.A.
4	60	Harry Seidler, A.R.A.I.A.
5	62	Ken Woolley & Michael Dysart
7	64	Towell, Jansen & Rippon
8	65	Clarke Gazzard & Yeomans
11	69	Clarke Gazzard & Yeomans
12	70	Ross A. Lightfoot & Stanton
13	74	Towell, Jansen & Rippon
14	76	Ken Woolley & Michael Dysart
16	81	John P. Ley & Associates
17	93	John P. Ley & Associates
18	94	John P. Ley & Associates
20	98	Neville Gruzman, B.Arch., Dip.T. and C.P., A.R.A.I.A.
21	99	Neville Gruzman, B.Arch., Dip.T. and C.P., A.R.A.I.A.
22	100	Neville Gruzman, B.Arch., Dip.T. and C.P., A.R.A.I.A.
23	102	Harry Seidler, A.R.A.I.A.
24	105	Ross A. Lightfoot & Stanton

Source: *Carlingford Homes Fair* sales brochure, 1962.

'Plans for these homes,' the brochure explains, 'may be purchased through The Australian Women's Weekly Home Plans Service, C/o Anthony Horderns'…'.[39]

Each individual house was then allocated one page of the brochure, information provided comprising a brief written description, a (large) external perspective sketch, a (small) interior perspective, a (small) ground plan – of the house only; no site works were shown since this would presumably vary with the actual location of the house if the potential purchaser wished to 'replicate' this house on his/her own land – and a short list of 'Architect-specified materials and appointments…'[40] House number 5, designed by Woolley & Dysart is described thus:

> This is a split-level home of 12 squares [108 square metres], with an extra four squares for carport and sheltered play area. The lower area has the laundry, toilet and lobby. Four steps higher are the living/dining rooms and kitchen. A steel-framed staircase then leads to the three bedrooms and bathroom. Over the stairs a roof light is set . . . lighting the bedroom balcony and lending extra interest to the living room.[41]

while number 11, by Clarke Gazzard & Yeomans is described as being:

> similar in basic design to Home No.8 [also designed by CGY]. Again the trend is *inward*. All rooms look on to the central courtyard. A more compact home (12.25 squares), this style features a return to simplicity of design. The roof slopes on all sides towards the courtyard, and is of dressed timber left in its natural colour to form a sloping ceiling giving a cool loftiness to the rooms. Rooms are big and there are three bedrooms.[42]

With the exception of Home No. 19, by Lend Lease Homes, which was marked as 'not for sale' – it was the 1st prize in the Polio Art Union No. 3 raffle – a price list for each of the homes in the Homes Fair exhibition village was available. 'Complete,' as the price list announced, 'with land, floor coverings, light fittings, curtaining, fencing, landscaping . . . ready to move in', prices ranged from £6,950 for No. 17 (John P. Ley & Associates) and £7.800 for No. 9 (Lend Lease Homes' 'Golden Key') to £11,950 for No. 20 (Neville Gruzman) and £12,850 for No. 7 (Towell, Jansen & Rippon). The two homes described above, by Woolley & Dysart, and Clarke Gazzard Yeomans were £8,800 and £8,500 respectively.

In commissioning these designs, and in committing to the publicity and marketing campaigns that the demonstration village and Homes Fair represented, Dusseldorp clearly had a vision, or, at the very least, an ambition. While we cannot say in Dusseldorp's own words exactly what this was, Clarke's recollection of upmarket suburbia suggests one direction of speculation: provision for the dream, but a bright new dream; a dream enhanced by sound design principles; a dream, perhaps, that was at pains to avoid the suburban banalities and stereotypes portrayed by Boyd at this precise time. Writing of the western spread of suburbia in Sydney in the late '50s Boyd notes that:

> It is a fairly typical Australian working class development, repeating the dreary, ill-considered housing growth on the outskirts of every Australian town: the same cold comfort conservatism of villa design with the regular sprinkling of primary-tinted features. The Housing Commission of New South Wales, speculative builders and private owners compete with one another to reduce the bush to a desert of terra-cotta roofs relieved only by electric wires and wooden poles.[43]

Given the Kingsdene Estate's inclusion in the (then Royal) Australian Institute of Architect's *20th Century Register of Significant Buildings* in September 2006, the vision might be judged a long-term success. Yet a number of factors associated with the developer-driven aims of the time might suggest otherwise. The land itself – on Pennant Hills Road at Carlingford, and one of the first areas released from the short-lived green belt provisions made under the Cumberland Plan of 1959 – proved

expensive, given that extensive negotiations with a range of owners, who had clear ideas about the value of their properties, were requred before the estate could be consolidated. Accordingly, while the ultimate subdivision was extremely efficient, the houses were nevertheless priced above the 'going rate' for the time. This, together with the minor recession that coincided with the development and opening of the Kingsdene Estate '1962 Demonstration Village' – the official opening was on October 13th 1961, preceding the launch of the Homes Fair by some seven months[44] – meant that sales, of houses and land, were not as brisk as had been hoped. Lend Lease, it should be pointed out, were looking to house and land sales for *their* profits, while ACP saw the value of the joint venture and the idea of the Homes Fair as a means both of publicizing *The Australian Women's Weekly* and getting readers to use the Home Plans Service.

Both the positive aspects of the quality and 'beyond typical suburban' designs of the houses, and the negative aspects of the low sales figures, might, of course, be examined further, particularly in respect of such overarching issues as designing for a suburban market and/or the nature of popular taste and expectations at this time. Yet what is perhaps most surprising is a 1991 comment made by George Clarke, to the effect that 'the real innovation was with the land development and estate development. The private houses were commissioned as a marketing gimmick'.[45] Whether or not the latter is true cannot be explored here, but it is undeniable that the method of determining land subdivision was indeed an unusual and a rigorous process.

Planning and testing

Decision-making procedures were certainly not based, as might be thought to be the general practice of the time, 'just' on the advice of selling agents, etc, nor were they 'simply' aesthetically-based, nor driven by an extant urban design theory, á la Radburn, nor left to the expertise, and thus effectively the choice, of the planners involved. Rather, Dusseldorp wanted testability. He specifically wanted not merely to be able to appreciate and approve what his urban designers and planners and traffic engineers suggested, but to be able accurately to measure and thus assess the efficiency of the sub-division proposals in respect of total development costs versus potential selling prices. Dusseldorp was not only an astute businessman, but an innovator, and he had in mind notions of efficiency and feasibility in terms of the number of blocks that could be 'extracted' from the total land area, the total length of road that would need to be provided to access the blocks (including decisions about the average road width and the number of road intersections to be incorporated), the most appropriate amount of street frontage per block, the total length of sewer pipes needed to service the houses, and so on. His subdivision manager, Colin Booth, was experienced in this area and, in June 1962, immediately after the launch of the Homes Fair, was to publish an article entitled 'Planning Subdivisions for Effective Land Use and Highest Return' which explained these land-efficiency standards.[46] While the specific formulae, graphs and efficiency curves used to generate and test the Kingsdene proposals are now lost, they were based upon the 'equivalents' included in Booth's article. Given their complexities these cannot be addressed here and will be the subject of a separate paper, but it is important to point out that Dusseldorp's intention was that alternative subdivision proposals could very quickly be tested in terms not just of theoretical efficiency but of *actual* efficiency re projected costs,

project time, anticipated profits, amount of material usage, and so forth, while taking into account the Baulkham Hills Shire Council's requirement that 10% of the total site area should be dedicated to recreation /open space.

The task of planning the subdivision fell to the firm of Clarke Gazzard Yeomans, specifically to George Clarke. Clarke had graduated in architecture from the University of Sydney in 1954, had worked overseas both in England and the US, and had completed a Master of City and Regional Planning degree at MIT in 1959. Returning to Sydney that same year he met with Dusseldorp, and was approached by Colin Booth in 1960 with the idea of developing a land subdivision at Carlingford. As Booth was to confirm in an interview with Ferris-Smith in January 1992, Lend Lease Homes 'were aware of George Clarke as someone who had come back from overseas with some interesting ideas about things, that fitted in with the types of things we wanted to do'.[47]

Conclusion

The history and analysis of Clarke's various proposals for the Kingsdene Estate, their testing against the stringent requirements developed by Booth, and their ultimate acceptance must go unexplored here. Suffice it to say that, in Dusseldorp, Clarke Gazzard & Yeomans found an ideal client, and in Clarke Gazzard & Yeomans, Dusseldorp found outstanding professional collaborators with a philosophy not dissimilar to his own. As Clarke himself noted in relation to the firm's aspirations in 1960:

> We didn't want to be totally romantic, impractical designers. We wanted to satisfy clients with efficiency and profitability, but even if they didn't ask for it we were going to give them beauty and social purpose…So Lend Lease was very much an ideal client because they were very intelligent and they were prepared to tolerate and indulge some of this, and they would not hold you back if you could show that you had an idea that would give class or quality to something. They had the intellectual and business sophistication to see that there would be something to it and give you your head…[but] under control…they never let you get out of control.[48]

Such control was clearly connected to Dusseldorp's well-formulated aims for his new development. While he wanted innovation, it was innovation within the strict compass of his vision for a popular housing future. Again as Clarke recalled, Lend Lease's encouragement of innovation was always accompanied by admonitions that 'we don't want any fancy tricks here, no medium density housing, no perfect Radburn vehicular separation: this is upmarket Australian suburbia idealised'.[49] Lend Lease and Dusseldorp were thus ambitious, optimistic, perhaps somewhat idealistic, but ultimately pragmatic. They were, says Clarke, 'sensible enough to say we wanted absolutely perfect design, the ultimate of its kind, but we don't want anything too revolutionary that the market will resist'.[50]

From a community and council perspective the result was both far-sighted and suitably acceptable, improvement within the confines of a well-understood suburban mentality. As reported in *The Daily Telegraph's* Carlingford Homes Fair Supplement

of 11 May 1962, Mr A.H Whaling, President of the Baulkham Hills Shire Council, commended the development on the basis that:

> The whole project of this magnificent subdivision will be of great benefit to the community, the shire and to metropolitan home life. It is the kind of development which this council is pleased to have in its area. It could well be used as a criterion for the development of the released areas [from the Cumberland Plan green belt] [51].

That it did not become so is a matter of history. But so too is that fact that it remains an outstanding contribution to suburban development in Australia, duly recognised by its inclusion on the *20th Century Register of Significant Buildings*.

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[1] *The Australian Women's Weekly*, April 18, 1962, p.14.
[2] *The Australian Women's Weekly*, March 28, 1962, p.23.
[3] *The Australian Women's Weekly*, April 18, 1962, pp.14-15.
[4] J. Taylor, *Australian Architecture since 1960*, Sydney: Law Book Company, 1986, p.143.
[5] G. Clarke, interview with G. Ferris-Smith, 06 December 1991. The authors wish to acknowledge the generosity of Mr Ferris-Smith in making his unpublished interviews available to us.
[6] P. Spearritt & C. DeMarco, *Planning Sydney's Future*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988, p.14.
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[9] P. Spearritt & C. DeMarco, *op cit*, p.14.
[10] M.T. Daly, *Sydney Boom Sydney Bust: The city and its property market 1850-1981*, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin,1982, p.169.
[11] *ibid*, p.169.
[12] *ibid*, p.172.
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[14] *ibid*, p.43.
[15] M.T. Daly, *op cit*, p.172.
[16] *ibid*, p.3.
[17] *ibid*, p.3.
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[20] C. McGregor, *Profile of Australia*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968, p.126, cited in A.L. Davies & S. Encel, *Australian Society*, Melbourne, 1965.
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[22] H.C. Coombs, in Bunning, quoted in Spearritt & DeMarco, p.14.
[23] P. Spearritt & C. DeMarco, *op cit*, p.16.
[24] R. Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1960; Penguin, Ringwood, 1963.
[25] G. Clarke, interview with G Ferris-Smith, December 1991.
[26] It is interesting to note at this time the activity of the NSW Chapter of the RAIA in opposing the idea of "package deal building". An article in the Sydney Morning Herald of 27 February 1962 headed 'Architects Plan Moves Against Package Deals' reported that "The council of the N.S.W. chapter for some months has been considering what action it could take to counter the extensive publicity of some of the big package deal companies." A fortnight later, on 13 March 1962, and under the heading 'System Dangerous And Open To Abuse' a further article, by Sydney architect Basil Beirman, appeared. Declaring that "I consider it is the duty of every architect to make clear to the community the dangers of accepting a package deal contract" Beirman claimed that "the package deal system…leaves the building owner without an independent architect to protect his [sic] interests". On the same page, and under the header 'Best Argument Is Performance: A Package Dealer Replies', Dusseldorp offered a spirited counter-argument! Reproduced in J. O'Callaghan ' "Your House and Mine": The Australian

architectural profession and housing in the 1940s and 1950s', pdf, nd. www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/cf/apnhr/presentations/pdf/W6_OCall...
[27] Discussion with G. Ferris-Smith, March 2009.
[28] J. Collins, 'Raising the architectural standard of small homes: the Small Homes Service of South Australia', *Fabrications: the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, vol.16, no.2, 2006, pp.6-27.
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[30] 'RVIA and The Small Homes Service', http://www.flickr.com/photos/canberrahouse/2317660749/
[31] J. O'Callaghan ' "Your House and Mine": The Australian architectural profession and housing in the 1940s and 1950s', pdf, nd. www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/cf/apnhr/presentations/pdf/W6_OCall...
[32] *ibid*
[33] C. Booth, interview with G Ferris-Smith, January 1992.
[34] C. Booth, interview with G Ferris-Smith, January 1992.
[35] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962.
[36] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962.
[37] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962 – 'Index to the Homes'.
[38] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962 – 'Index to the Homes'.
[39] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962 – 'Index to the Homes'.
[40] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962.
[41] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962, p.9.
[42] *Carlingford Homes Fair*, brochure, 1962, p.19.
[43] R. Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1960; Penguin, Ringwood, 1963, p.96.
[44] 'Lend Lease Homes. 1962 Demonstration Village opens 10.00 a.m. today', *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 October, 1961.
[45] G. Clarke, interview with Ferris-Smith, December 1991.
[46] C. Booth, 'Planning Subdivisions for Effective Land Use and Highest Return', *Australian Planning Institute Journal*, Vol.2, No.2, June 1962, pp.53-57.
[47] C. Booth, interview with Ferris-Smith, January 1992.
[48] G. Clarke, interview with Ferris-Smith, December 1991.
[49] G. Clarke, interview with Ferris-Smith, December 1991.
[50] G. Clarke, interview with Ferris-Smith, December 1991.
[51] *The Daily Telegraph*, Carlingford Homes Fair Supplement, 11 May 1962, p.46.

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING AND PLANNING,
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, 2010

Green Fields, Brown Fields, New Fields

Proceedings of the 10th Australasian Urban History, Planning History Conference

Conference held at the University of Melbourne, 7–10 February, 2010.

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The conference logo was designed by Mia Schoen

About the Conference

The Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne has the honour of hosting the 10th biennial ***Australasian Urban History Planning History (UHPH) Conference*** in February 2010. The conference series began in 1993 and has operated as an Australasian forum for historians of urban and regional planning and the built, social and natural environment. The conference series has been driven by committed academics at various universities over the last 17 years. The venues have been Sydney (1993; 1998), Canberra (1995), Melbourne (1996), Adelaide (2000), Auckland (2002), Geelong (2004), Wellington (2006) and Caloundra (2008). Participants have included scholars at the forefront of planning and urban history in Australia and New Zealand, and the attendance and participation of early career researchers, postgraduate students and practising professionals from the private and public sectors has always been strongly encouraged. Since 2000, papers have been peer-reviewed and published according to Australian Government research excellence standards.

The theme for this 10th UHPH conference is ***Green Fields, Brown Fields, New Fields***. The conference explores past and future approaches to managing and designing for growth, development and decline. This goes beyond debates over density, frontier development and renewal. It includes new fields of historical, policy and social research which inform discussion of heritage, growth, environmental, economic and other issues of urban life and urban form. The papers in the conference proceedings consist of a wide range of papers from a diverse range of disciplines and explore the conference themes across divergent places, different scales, and varied contexts.

This year's conference will be launched at **ACMI** (Australian Centre for the Moving Image), Federation Square. At the launch we will be screening five rarely-seen Australian short films which critique and/or celebrate planning, development and the changing urban landscape, to be followed by a lively panel discussion. We have provided conference attendees with a DVD copy of the films, for their use in research and education endeavours. We have organised three guest speakers: **Dr Gary Presland** who will be talking about the history of Melbourne; **Mrs Josephine Johnson** who will be talking about her career in planning including work at the MMBW (Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works), on the plan for Ballarat in the 1950s and her current interest in gated communities and planning for the active aged; and **Dr Jeff Turnbull** who will be speaking at the conference dinner (to be held at Newman College) on the Griffins, Newman and Canberra.

Thanks go to the many individuals and organizations who have supported the conference. This includes: the Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne for their financial and in-kind support; the Planning Institute of Australia for support with event promotion, the Expert Review Committee for diligently reviewing papers; the authors of the papers for their intellectual contributions; and to Stephen Pascoe for research, administrative and academic assistance in organising the conference.

Drs. David Nichols, Anna Hurlimann, and Clare Mouat
UPHP 2010 Convenors

Peer review of papers

Refereed papers in this volume have undergone a formal and rigorous process of acceptance and peer review by the UHPH 2010 Expert Review Committee. Refereed papers are indicated in the footnote of the title page for each paper. Each paper was double-blind refereed by academics and peers appointed by the editors. Papers not accepted by one of the referees were reviewed by a third referee. Papers were matched, where possible, to referees in a related field and with similar research interests to the authors.

Members of the Expert Review Committee

The members of the international expert review committee included (listed in alphabetical order by surname):

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