



Windows Upon Planning History - Canberra

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Abstract

The conference theme ‘Looking at the world history of planning’ is echoed in a statement by U.S. urban designer Edmund Bacon on the 1911 Plan for Canberra, which he eulogized as ‘a Statement of World Culture’.¹ Bacon was referring to the way in which the Griffins’ plan incorporated elements of space design derived from cultural realms as wide-ranging as those of Europe, the Americas, and Asia. However, the plan and its transformation in modern and post-modern times have also been objects of fundamental cultural controversies.² Enthusiasts and opponents have dug in their heels and fought battles of uncertain outcomes. The core **research question** here is how to deal with the complex and controversial nature of these perspectives.

In this situation, the paper applies the famous ‘Windows’ metaphor from the preface of Henry James’ novel ‘Portrait of a Lady’ as a **narrative device** to the context of planning history.³ It **concludes** that the windows opened upon ideas and realities, myths and models surrounding the Canberra Plan and its transformations may help negotiate between opposing views, different paradigms and conflicting cultural positions as potentially complementary and at least enlightening.

Introduction – Canberra and ‘the World History of Planning’

As one of the great planned capitals created in the twentieth century, Canberra has a recognized place in ‘the world history of planning’ quasi by default, just as it does in countless textbooks in our field. Locally torn between advocates of the capital and Canberra ‘bashers’⁴ the city has won great international acclaim as an exemplary model of planning history. Founded in 1913 on the basis of the plan submitted at the international competition for the capital by Chicago architects Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahoney Griffin Canberra is a city of today 400,000 (2018).



Fig 1 Plan View of City and Environs and View from Summit of Mount Ainslie, 1911.
The ‘Griffin Plan’: the prize winning scheme conceived by Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin⁵

Already the original ‘Griffin Plan’ plan met with very different reactions between utmost admiration in the international realm and a surprising mix of responses in Australia. Local assessments have been ranging from perspicacious appreciation and complex interpretative approaches via crude exploitation as a branding tool to outright contempt. While the US urban designer Edmund Bacon eulogised it as ‘a statement of world culture’⁶, the (then) local Minister for Planning more recently (2010) derided the plan as a scheme reminiscent of the small town of Springfield in the Simpsons’ comedy series.⁷

TALE OF TWO CITY ELDERS	
 <p>JEBEDIAH SPRINGFIELD (BORN HANS SPRUNGFELD), UNKNOWN -1795 Famous for: Leading a band of wagons westward from Maryland to found the fictional town of Springfield, wrestling a bear with his bare hands, running across six states to avoid creditors. Most quoted: ♣ A noble spirit embiggens the smallest man. ♣</p>	 <p>WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN, 1876 - 1937 Famous for: Designing Canberra, Australia's capital city, credited with the development of the L-shaped floor plan, the carport and the first use of reinforced concrete. Most quoted: ♣ I have planned an ideal city – a city that meets my ideal of the city of the future. ♣</p>
 <p>SIR WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN</p> <p>STOCKLANDS PRESENTS THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS ADDRESS EVER TO GRACE CANBERRA'S LANDSCAPE. CASTING A GRAND REFLECTION ON THE WATERS THAT LAP AT ITS DOOR, THIS BREATHTAKING MASTERPIECE SHINES AS THE ONLY WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT ON LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN. IT IS A STUNNING EXPRESSION OF SIR WALTER BURLEY GRIFFIN'S VISION. EXPERIENCE THE INFINITE INDULGENCE...</p>	

Ways of seeing: Fig. 2

Griffin as the ‘Jebediah Springfield’ of Canberra.

Fig. 3

‘Sir’ Walter Burley Griffin as crude advertising gimmick



Beyond the Griffin Plan, judgments on the actual development of Canberra as a 'regional city' of New Towns⁸ over the last 105 years have been similarly divided. While Canberra shared the image of being soulless and sterile with many new towns and post-war developments internationally, the city was identified by Peter Hall as having 'achieved the difficult feat of being one of the last Cities Beautiful, and also the world's biggest Garden City'.⁹

Also from the angle of our conference theme, we can justifiably choose between opposite views. As a kind of government company town that remained without self-government until 1989, Canberra might be seen as a 'white elephant' with limited relevance for planning elsewhere. The view from a different perspective, however, reveals that due to precisely the exceptionally favourable planning conditions which Canberra enjoyed during much of its history, the city developed as a 'perfectionist manifestation of ideal concepts in planning' and can be seen as a 'laboratory' and testing ground of planning models,¹⁰ which is of considerable interest for planning and 'the world history of planning'.¹¹

In order to deal with conflicting positions such as those addressed above, this paper deploys the metaphor of 'windows' through which we are looking at cities and at the processes that shape them. It looks at a selection of situations and planning conflicts that have been objects of controversial discussions since the founding days of Canberra.

The 'Windows' Metaphor

The metaphor is taken from a famous key passage of modern literature. In the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James suggested that '[t]he house of fiction has ... not one window, but a million... At each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes ... He and his neighbours are watching the same show, but one seeing more where the other sees less, one seeing black where the other sees white, one seeing big where the other sees small, one seeing coarse where the other sees fine. And so on...'.¹²

While for the author of fiction, the important message is that there is no limit to the number of windows upon 'reality' that can be opened, this is different for planners, architects and other activists. They have to be able to develop strategies and contribute to making the city. When they open new windows, they are guided by a pragmatic interest. Each newly opened window may lead to a better understanding of the whole enabling them to hopefully act more efficiently, or to act in a more just, a more sustainable way, depending on the cognitive interest, the *Erkenntnis-Interesse*. Nietzsche described it in a similar way:

'The more eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity', be.'¹³

The hope is that the new insight will allow us to act more efficiently, or to act in a more just, a more sustainable way. The metaphor can be extended. If 'the house of fiction' were part of a perimeter block with a 'rear window'¹⁴ providing views into an imaginary inner courtyard, this could allow us to see the rear of objects that were otherwise invisible.

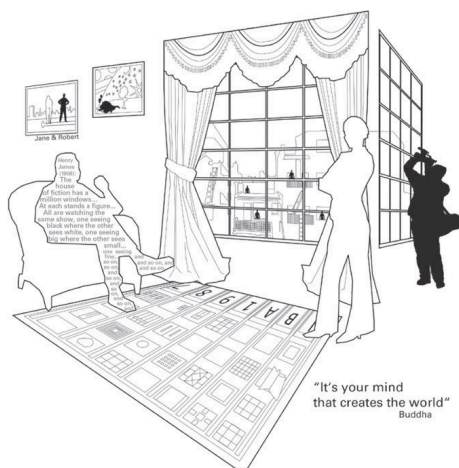


Fig. 4 'The House of Fiction' – Flyer for Conference 'Windows Upon Planning History', Kassel University 2013

It could also help us discover what may be hiding 'behind the bush', as a German idiom puts it. In this sense, the house metaphor is more versatile than the metaphor of putting on different spectacles. Glasses could not achieve this. It is even more obvious that the newly gained perspectives are much more than whims, curiosities or personal views. The 'stereoscopic' or multi-faceted view from two or more windows is by no means an



expression of postmodern arbitrariness¹⁵ of a tendency towards 'alternative facts'. On the contrary, its purpose is to achieve a more detailed view that allows us to take decisions from a better substantiated position. That has also been the intention of turns as different as the communicative turn,¹⁶ the linguistic turn¹⁷ and the transnational turn in urban history.¹⁸ Opening new windows may reveal blind spots, blinkers and 'tunnel vision'; the new windows may reveal what has been consciously hidden by particular interests; they may reveal myths as lies; they may expose the selective 'histories of the winners' and open the path to writing 'insurgent planning histories', 'making the invisible visible'.¹⁹



Figure 5. Myth and reality. Capitalist profiteering in the cloak of the non-profit housing association Neue Heimat (1986)

The radically different views can be as clear-cut as in the Copernican case. But they can also be almost as complementary yet difficult to reconcile as the interpretation of light as either waves or particles. Often, they are associated with the formation of factions and with professional controversies, for instance between modern and traditional positions or the roles of architecture, planning and other disciplines. Sometimes such conflicts stand in the way of interdisciplinary cooperation between architects and planners. The windows metaphor opens up the possibility of dealing with the struggle between paradigms in different ways – not necessarily in a linear sense, 'victorious' paradigms replacing those based on the preceding 'wrong' interpretation of 'reality', but as potentially complementary. The purpose of the metaphor does not, however, lie in blurring the differences between different positions or to avoid judgment. On the contrary, it may serve to accentuate the differences and to demonstrate that we have a choice of deciding to which view we want to subscribe and to point out the consequences of that choice.

Windows on Canberra – contrasting perspectives on an exceptional city

In the case of Canberra, this is particularly relevant, because – more than many other cities – its fate and sometimes the question of the very necessity of its existence have been dependent on the way cultural controversies have been fought out – especially when the windows opened by dominant agents of the discourse have been deployed with a strategic interest. Thus the interest behind the local planning minister's denigration of the Griffin Plan as a 'Simpsons Family' small town plan lay in pushing a high-rise agenda²⁰ and in counteracting the theme of a low to medium-rise 'city in the landscape' supported by parts of the local community.

But let us look at a selection of such discourses and the contrasting windows in detail. Following a broad survey of major cultural controversies that have been influencing debate and practice of Canberra's development the paper addresses a different window in a particularly important area - the Griffin Plan - and what has been discovered and understood, forgotten and remembered.

Planning History and Cultural Controversies

While no city can really be understood without a grasp of its history and the cultural controversies that shape it, this is valid in a particular way for Canberra as an internationally renowned model city – 'one of the treasures not only of Australia, but of the entire urban world' as the eminent US planning historian John Reps classified it.²¹ Over the years, Canberra has been described by planning historians from different viewpoints including its symbolic role²² and its role as a capital²³ in comparison with other planned capitals.²⁴ A number of overlapping cultural local discourses have emphasized specific aspects contributing to the identity of Canberra as a garden city;²⁵ as the 'bush capital';²⁶ 'a city in the landscape';²⁷ and a city of 'democratic symbolism'.²⁸ At the height of the decentralization debate in Australia in the 1970s, it was also seen as 'an exemplar for many decentralised Australian cities'.²⁹ Windows opened by the author of this paper have included Canberra as an 'open air museum



of planning³⁰ as the ‘perfectionist garden city metropolis’³¹ and as a ‘sensitive barometer of the political climate in Australia’.³²

None of these windows exclude the other, although there may be tensions between the views. Some require more explanation (e.g. ‘a statement of World Culture’) than others. Even the conflicting positions between whether Canberra might be ‘the most un-Australian city’³³ – whatever the merit of such a debate may be – or whether it is utterly Australian can be reconciled quite easily. Features such as the clear delineation of the borders between urban and rural lands and in particular the uniform, strict application of standards of design, infrastructure and hierarchical planning in Canberra’s suburban landscape established during much of the 20th century distinguish Canberra from most other Australian cities; and more than that, the principles of axial planning in the centre have motivated the use of the label ‘un-Australian’;³⁴ but the faithful translation of Australian middle-class values centred around the ideal concepts³⁵ of bungalow, quarter-acre block and motor car make it an outstanding manifestation of the Australian suburban dream. Both views can co-exist peacefully next to each other and with little consequence for development on the ground.

We are, however, confronted with quite a different situation when we look at the conflicting views and patterns of appreciation for Canberra as a federal capital, be it at the time of its conception or in the 21st century. On the one hand, Canberra was to become the prestigious symbol of a young federation, ‘the finest capital city in the world – the pride of time’, as the Minister for Home Affairs, King O’Malley, postulated in 1910.³⁶ On the other hand, its very creation was influenced by the ‘haggling of provincialisms’³⁷, and its physical construction was hampered right from the start by ‘the hostility by certain officers... to Mr. Griffin and his design’. Even the Chief Architect proclaimed that he would like to see [the Federal Capital] strangled for a hundred years’.³⁸ These windows are difficult to reconcile.

Nevertheless, this existential dialectic has been a characteristic phenomenon persisting over long periods. During the 21st century, affirmations of the national commitment to the capital culminating in the centennial celebrations in 2013 have contrasted with crippling budget cuts, political statements and gestures of disdain and eventually with plans for the transfer of national agency staff to provincial cities located in the electoral seats of the relevant minister.³⁹

1988 and 1989 were the crucial years of the turnaround for Canberra. In 1988, an enquiry⁴⁰ into the future of the planning arrangements in Canberra argued that the planning authority, the NCDC had ‘virtually completed its task of building the city’ and with ‘the completion of the new Parliament House’ the ‘national building program was now almost complete’.⁴¹ The belated introduction of self-government in the following year was not only conforming to long-established global standards of planning culture. In fact self-government had been opposed in two referenda by the citizens of Canberra, who knew that their share of contributing to the cost of Canberra would rise.

The windows of neo-liberalism and ‘normalization’

The major drivers were the desire of the Federal (Commonwealth) Government to divest itself of financial responsibility for the city beyond core national capital functions; and this was embedded within the rising tide of neoliberal ideology and practice that had begun in the preceding decades.⁴² The change was seen as accelerating a process of ‘normalization’ of urban development for city and territory.⁴³

Seen through one window, these developments put an end to that phase which was shaped by ‘a continuous series of planning models, for the most part realised with uncompromising perfection; new models supplanting the old ones as time went by’ (Fischer 1989:156). Through another window, and with a certain ironic slant, we might also come to the opposite conclusion. We might say that Canberra’s basic approach of following the mainstream trends in urban policy and development did not end but in fact continued – in the sense that it was taking the city into the phase where the neo-liberal application of ‘rigorous private sector principles’ demanded ‘a severe pruning of its ... planning functions’.⁴⁴ And once more, Canberra was hard to beat in its rigour.

The abolition of the Commission (NCDC) that had guided the city’s growth by integrated planning and development between 1957 and 1988 meant that architects, planners and urban designers were successively replaced by economists, lawyers and administrative staff.⁴⁵ Seen from a normative window of the planning discipline, we might address this as the phenomenon of de-professionalisation as experienced world-wide, or in more neutral terms, as a shift in the professional profile in the interest of lean government.

Closing windows - Loss of corporate memory with lethal consequences

This development was associated with a loss of corporate memory and knowledge that accelerated after 1988, but had already begun earlier. Already this author’s first publication on Canberra had pointed to the problematic



of ‘a lack of an interest in corporate memory..’, which had led the authorities ‘to throw away books and reports’ and to the fact that ‘my lucky presence helped me’ to preserve copies ‘that were otherwise unobtainable on the market’.⁴⁶ Locally this was interpreted as the sarcasm of ‘the acerbic Karl Fischer ☺’.⁴⁷ The question was also raised whether quoting from the material discarded – but also provided by the NCDC – wasn’t tantamount to ‘biting the hand that fed’.⁴⁸ Clearly, opening windows of knowledge is not always appreciated.

The dissipation of the NCDC’s library continued after its transfer to the NCA – much to the shock and despair of some and to the delight of collectors of rare documents. Again, as with the phenomenon of deprofessionalization, the dissipation of libraries or parts thereof is widespread between Sydney and Kassel, Germany, where I just discovered that much of the university’s planning library I had built up over 20 years has been shredded, including first editions by Raymond Unwin and other classics!

In Canberra, the loss of corporate knowledge – equivalent to the closing of windows – has had various palpable consequences. The strategies of ‘small government’ and the associated problematic practices of outsourcing without adequate control, in combination with the dissipation of planning knowledge and corporate memory, led to a demonstrable loss in the quality of buildings and urban design.⁴⁹ An extreme case can be seen in the failed implosion of Canberra Hospital in 1997 with lethal consequences due to failed practices of outsourcing. As the coroner’s enquiry confirmed ‘none of those persons possessed any knowledge or experience in the implosion technique and [they] were unqualified to prepare a true risk assessment of the demolition. The so-called risk assessment plan was a failure.’⁵⁰ In the aftermath of the catastrophe, the view from a window that focused on the search for individual scapegoats directed attention away from recognizing the failure as being systemic, in fact as constitutive features of neoliberalism.

The loss of professionalism in planning, uncontrolled outsourcing and loss of corporate, public and professional memory through myopic market-orientation resulting in catastrophic consequences, are problematic features to be observed all around the world and could be written up through the window of a rather sad ‘world history of planning’. The loss of knowledge has, however, also infiltrated the local planning debate. A characteristic case is the widespread confusion of Lord Holford’s proposals for the central area of Canberra in 1958⁵¹ with the ‘Y-Plan’⁵², the metropolitan development plan elaborated from 1967 on. ‘Lord Holford’s Y-Plan’ is a reference found in the press⁵³ and even among architects who once worked in the planning agencies.⁵⁴

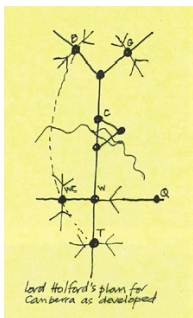


Fig. 6. 2010 Drawing by local architect confusing the Y-Plan (1970) with Lord Holford’s Recommendations (1958)

Confronted with the misnomer nature of ‘Lord Holford’s Y-Plan’, University colleagues talking about it at conferences – not planning historians, though – have sometimes raised an astonished eyebrow while others dismissed the observation as pusillanimous pedantry. The loss of historic memory however, and the resulting impoverished and cock-eyed view of the potential of the plans and projects that have shaped Canberra has been of considerable consequence for the city. The following paragraphs open some windows on the history of forgetting and remembering the Griffin Plan.

The Griffin Plan – windows shut and opened

Just what a treasure the Griffin Plan was had escaped general attention up to the mid-1950s. The windows on the qualities of the plan dropped shut with World War I, just as those on the entire capital city project. Canberra fell into a big sleep, from which it was shaken up decades later by the Second World War. That War opened a number of new windows. It changed the nation’s whole outlook from that of a collection of colonies to a consciousness of national identity, for which the capital could serve as a nucleus⁵⁵; but it was the military-political crises of the mid-1950s that motivated Conservative Prime Minister Menzies to bring what had thus far



been an aborted capital city project to completion. As has often been described, Menzies established the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), an exceptionally powerful and well-resourced organization which was in charge of the planning and development of Canberra between 1957 and 1989.

In this context, new windows were opened from the mid-1950s on by Peter Harrison, the NCDC's Chief Planner from 1957 to 1972. Harrison re-discovered the importance of Canberra's landscape setting, but also confirmed the shift of the balance away from City Beautiful concepts to a modernist and overall suburban interpretation of a city of bungalows and automobiles. Almost logically, the window opened by Lord Holford's recommendations in 1957 was that of the automobile windscreen looking out to a city of highways in the landscape. Peter Harrison and later US historian Mark Peisch⁵⁶ were the first to elaborate on the synthesis of Garden City and City Beautiful elements in the Griffin Plan; a discovery that Peter Hall extended to his statement that Canberra had 'achieved the difficult feat of being one of the last Cities Beautiful, and also the world's biggest Garden City'.⁵⁷ While this statement is by nature a classification rather than a clear praise, one of Griffin's biographers emphasized how amazingly advanced Griffin's concepts were in terms of professional planning. In 1963, James Birrell pointed out: 'No major concept in town planning has been put forward in the (then) 40 years since the city was designed that is not incorporated in the original scheme'.⁵⁸

Far ahead of the conventional planning of the early 20th century, the plan incorporates a whole catalogue of ideal concepts of planning⁵⁹ that are up-to-date even a hundred years later – right through to what has to be classified as sustainable planning.⁶⁰ Features of the plan included: neighbourhood units (explicitly named as such in 1911) and diversified urban sub-centres connected by a tramway system 'borne at public expense'; principles of water recycling, decentralised sewerage treatment and urban gardening; reduction of pollution through hydro power; principles of functional and social mix and ideas on the public goods function of residential land.

The plan also adopted a long-term perspective. The competition conditions had suggested an initial population size of 25,000 with a potential to grow up to 75,000 within a foreseeable time span.⁶¹ But the plan was looking further ahead. 'Any arrangement looking forward one hundred years has to be elastic,' Griffin said, and yet had to define an urban design structure and a functional disposition of districts 'in their right relationship to the city in its later development... 'We must not plan for a village... This is done where town planning is not practiced.'

To this end, Griffin anchored the design principles of his concept on the ground in such a way that they would provide long-term guidance for the city's development right from the start, using the existing landscape features as cornerstones of his design. Set within the frame of hills, ridges and lake, only a few points of architectural accentuation, maybe even a mere stone pyramid or pennant on a hill, are needed to establish a spatial design interpretation of the natural landscape. Axes or other lines in space can thus be made visible 'almost without the assistance of man's handiwork' to delineate a spatial setting for the future city.⁶² It was the parallels between his kind of space design and those found in Asian cultures and other references to 'the longest-lived civilizations' that support Edmund Bacon's judgment on Canberra as 'a statement of world culture'.

At the same time, the whole city and in particular 'the great triangle, inscribed across the central basin was conceived as a living expression of democratic governance, its axial geometries generated from the salient points in the landscape and its disposition of city functions generated from an inspired reading of the Constitutional provisions for Australian parliamentary democracy.'⁶³ This is how in the 1980s Professor of Landscape Planning James Weirick elaborated on the qualities of the Canberra Plan as a manifestation of 'democratic symbolism'.

The reasons why so few of the design principles in the central area have materialized are complex. They have been described in 'Myths and Models' through the window of semantic impoverishment and also with reference to one of the big cultural controversies of our time, the verdict and the legacy of Modernism. Seen through one window, we are confronted with the "spiritless modernism of contemporary Canberra and the official culture that has produced it"⁶⁴ – a shallow Modernism that would best be transcended if possible. The view from another window admonishes us to consider the manifestations of post-war modernism as an important layer, in particular since the "Modernist parklands encircling the lake, for instance, are not without heritage value."⁶⁵

The Windows approach suggests discussing both perspectives. The same goes for other controversial contexts such as e.g. the position on the new and permanent Parliament House, attacked in one of the best critical pieces ever written on the subject as the source of almost all evil in the capital⁶⁶, which Myths and Models praised as a most interesting and successful building, albeit expressive of the contradictory characteristics of the society in which it is embedded.

Concluding remark

The paper has used the windows metaphor as a vehicle to explain basic conflicts in the development of Canberra. In some of the cases, alternative views can be reconciled easily, in others, the windows perspective could prove



fruitful to facilitate a dialogue that might go beyond mere confrontation. The work on the development of a ‘windows theory continues’.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Karl Friedhelm Fischer studied urban design and worked at the universities of Aachen, Berkeley and Canberra. He also has as a degree in English/American Literature (Aachen). At the HafenCity University, Hamburg, he was a professor for ‘History and Culture of the Metropolis’, and at the University of Kassel, he taught planning history and urban regeneration. In 2013, he took up a position as professor and acting director of the MUDD program (Master of Urban Development and Design) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, where he is now a visiting professor. Professional affiliations include Progress in Planning (editorial board), AESOP (Council of Representatives while in Europe) and elected member of German Werkbund. Following the publication of his PhD thesis ‘Canberra – Myths & Models’ the majority of his publications have been in the field of planning history.

¹ Bacon 1968

² Fischer and Weirick 2017: 111

³ Fischer and Altröck 2018

⁴ The term was even added to the Oxford Australian National Dictionary in 2013

⁵ the superb set of presentation drawings by Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961) were inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World register in 2003. It took a long time before the window upon Marion Mahony Griffin’s importance for the Canberra plan was recognized. While emphasising her significance in this context, this paper uses the term Griffin Plan rather than the Griffins’ Plan.

⁶ Bacon 1968:625

⁷ Barr 2010, Towell 2010

⁸ Fischer 2013

⁹ Hall, 1988:196

¹⁰ Fischer 1984, 1989

¹¹ While this assessment has been supported and refined with a view to the *quality* of planning – ‘an outstanding national outdoor museum of the world’s best practice in planning from the 1910s’ (Freestone 2010: 274) – it is questionable whether the ‘best practice seal of approval’ can be granted in a similarly broad way to the developments since the 1989.

¹² James 1908: xi

¹³ Nietzsche 1887: 119

¹⁴ Hitchcock 1954; Belton 1988

¹⁵ Harvey 1989

¹⁶ Healey 1992

¹⁷ Collins 2000

¹⁸ Sandoval-Strausz and Kwak 2018

¹⁹ Sandercock 1998

²⁰ ‘Even a 20 storey building is not high rise’ argued Chief Minister Barr in February 2018. ‘You [can] go anywhere else in the world and they would laugh at you if you said a 12 storey building was high rise.’ We are stuck here in this sort of small-town, backwards, 1940s mindset and we need to move beyond that.’ Quoted by Burdon 2018.

²¹ Reys 1997:267

²² Headon 2003

²³ Gordon 2006

²⁴ Vernon 2012

²⁵ ACTPLA 2008

²⁶ Pegrum 1983

²⁷ Taylor 2006

²⁸ Weirick 1988:7–11; 1998:62–68

²⁹ Lansdown 1971

³⁰ 1984, 1987:31

³¹ Fischer 2013:ix

³² Fischer 1989:191

³³ Vernon 2010:79

³⁴ Senate 1955: 97

³⁵ Fischer 1984, 1989

³⁶ Harrison, 1995: 6

³⁷ Hancock, 1930: 278

³⁸ RCFCA 1917: 11804

³⁹ Fischer and Weirick 2017

⁴⁰ This was the ‘Block Review’ (1988) conducted by the head of the Commonwealth Government’s Efficiency Scrutiny Unit, David Block

⁴¹ Canberra Times 25.06.1999.

⁴² Fischer and Weirick 2017



⁴³ Freestone, 2009; Brown, 2014

⁴⁴ Canberra Times 1988: 2; Block 1988

⁴⁵ The complex new arrangements are discussed in Fischer and Weirick 2017

⁴⁶ Fischer 1984, acknowledgements

⁴⁷ Headon 2003

⁴⁸ Birtles 1987

⁴⁹ Fischer 2009. Features such as spot development responding to market opportunities rather than long-term planning principles, the introduction of unsolicited bids as a new instrument, and the development of a 'free enterprise zone' with 'potentially unfettered commercial development opportunity' (JSCNET, 2008: 98–103) with offices, large-scale retailing and Factory Outlet Centres at the airport (Freestone and Wiesel, 2015) are signs of a trend towards the 'normalization' of urban development for city and territory (Freestone, 2009; Brown, 2014; Fischer and Weirick 2017). Large tracts of the recent suburban development including the low-standard housing at the edges of town in north, south and west, with McMansions on small lots trying to save space by replacing traditional eaves and 'verandahs' by more air conditioning certainly do not earn the 'best practice seal of approval'. The shonky quality of craftsmanship in Canberra's building industry has recently reached the point at which it became the object of a government enquiry.

⁵⁰ Sherman 2000

⁵¹ Holford 1958

⁵² Voorhees 1967

⁵³ Swain 2013

⁵⁴ Wheeler 2010: 50

⁵⁵ Fischer 1984: ch. 2.4

⁵⁶ Peisch 1964

⁵⁷ Hall, 1988:196

⁵⁸ Birrell 1963: 92.

⁵⁹ Fischer 1984

⁶⁰ Fischer and Weirick 2014a, 2014b

⁶¹ The figures were based on the growth model of Washington

⁶² We are reminded of Daniel Burnham words in his famous quote 'Make no little plans', in which he asserted 'that a noble diagram, once recorded, will never die but long after we are gone will be a living thing asserting itself with evergrowing insistency.'

⁶³ Weirick 1988:7–11; 1998:62–68

⁶⁴ Griffin Society Website

⁶⁵ Vernon 2010: 79

⁶⁵ Doherty, 2010; Raggatt, 2016

⁶⁶ Weirick 1989

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Fig 1 National Archives of Australia (A710,38)

Fig. 2 Canberra Times 04.11.2010

Fig. 3 Stockland Corporation (2005) *Advertisement flyer for The Waterfront at Kingston Foreshore, Lake Burley Griffin*. Sydney: Stockland Corporation Ltd.

Fig. 4 Flyer for Conference 'Windows Upon Planning History', University of Kassel 2013

Fig. 5 Fischer, Karl Friedhelm and Altröck, Uwe, 2018.

Fig. 6 Wheeler, Tone, 2010.