

Artarmon plan an experiment in rehousing

Suddenly, everybody is talking about environment. For years people put up with appalling streets, inconvenient neighbourhoods, noise, congestion, pollution, but now they have had enough.

SMH 30.4.70

All over the country there are groups and movements aiming to improve our environment.

One of the specific problems in many urban and suburban areas is the changeover from individual homes to flat buildings which generally seems to occur without any plan at all.

Willoughby Council is one of the few authorities which are doing more than talking about environmental problems.

Apart from investigating the future needs of the municipality generally, the council has made a specific plan for an area of 105 acres in Artarmon.

The area is contained by the railway, a future expressway, and the existing Mowbray Road. At present it houses about 1,500 people, mostly in cottages, but with some three-storey blocks. Eventually 4,500 people are to live there.

The plan was prepared by Clarke, Gazzard Planners Pty. Ltd. One of its aims was to involve people

in planning their own environment and to this end a questionnaire was sent to every household in the area.

People were asked their preference for house types, their reason for living in the area, and a number of statistical questions. As a result there was enormous interest in the planning scheme and people crowded a public meeting in which the needs for planned development were explained and accepted.

The planners then drew up a plan showing existing buildings, roads and parks, and presented it to a number of local groups for discussion. Each group was asked to express its own ideas about the planning of the area and the type of development preferred.

Several possible alternatives were sketched by the planners so that residents could actually see various proposals. The planners could thus test the public's reaction to their preliminary ideas before drawing up the final scheme.

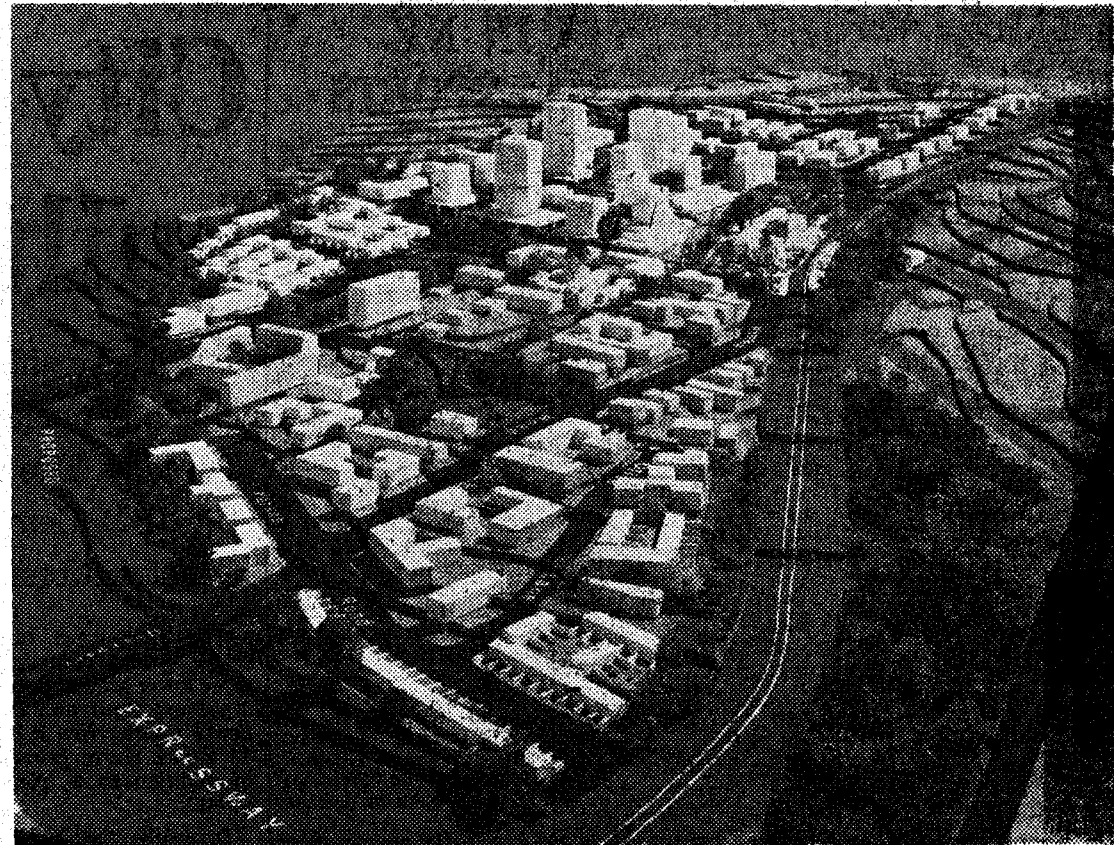
The plan provides for tower blocks on the highest point, three-storey walk-ups, town houses, and housing for the old. It includes recreation areas in the form of sports grounds and parks.

The road pattern is being rationalised by closing some streets to cars, making others no-through roads, and introducing a system of pedestrian walkways with the railway station at its focus.

Off-street parking is provided near the railway, mainly for the shopping centre which will be both extended in floor space and reduced in overall size.

All wiring will be taken underground; landscaping and tree planting by the council are important elements of the scheme.

One of the most interesting aspects of the plan is the co-operation between the council and the private developer. An amalgamation plan prescribes the number of existing homesites which must be amalgamated for each particular project. The plan



also prescribes the particular form of development for each site, high-rise tower, walk-up flats or town houses.

In addition, the council requires an unusually large amount of landscaped open space for each development.

But within this framework the scheme leaves a great deal of architectural freedom to the individual designer and developer.

The scheme was finally adopted in November last year. If, over the years, it is completed according to plan, it will be one of Sydney's first examples of a planned urban residential environment. Moreover, it will be one in which the people themselves will have had a say.

Willoughby Council's plan for the redevelopment of a large residential area of Artarmon—an experiment in town planning—is discussed by Eva Buhrich in this article.

The scheme provides for housing 4,500 people in tower blocks, three-storey walk-up apartments and town houses with some old people in single storey units. Today 1500 people live in the area, mostly in cottages.

A model of the Artarmon redevelopment scheme which has been approved by Willoughby Council.

a development central plan

Adopted by Willoughby Council of 26/10/50 Artarmon Plan — SMH 30.4.1970