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Att K McD PL + Regional Offices

Kings Cross Action Plan - Second Review Report

by Alec Simpson

23.3.73

I am almost stumped for words to describe my reaction to reading the "Kings Cross Action Plan - Second Review Report". If it is distributed in its present form to 15,000 people in the precinct I estimate that it will win us not one single new vote and will lose a lot of our present votes.

It is JARGON - it is VERBOSE - it tells the reader almost NOTHING. Kings Cross is not a very intellectual area, and I believe that many people will not get beyond reading the words on the front cover beginning "Planning is a vital part of the democratic process".

I could go through this report by chapter and verse to criticise it, but my criticism would run to almost the same length as the report. Let me only highlight the following words and phrases, which I believe are meaningless to the man in the street (i.e. JARGON):

- Page 1, para. 3: "to govern the exercise of power".
- Page 1, para. 2: "Desired future arrangement and character of services, spaces and structures".
- Page 1, para. 5: "not as a finite and ultimately a static inflexible finite end-product".
- Page 1, final para: "a centre used by residents" (what's wrong with "a residential area"?).
- Page 2, para. 5: "Nodal point" ("centre"?).
- Page 2, para. 9: "establish the degree of consensus or dissensus from the 'planned-for' as to what the aims," (The whole paragraph is appalling!)
- Page 3, para. 3: "Foci" ("points"?)
- Page 3, para. 5: "Tissue" ("parts"?)
- Page 4, para. 7: "cruising mobile visitor" ("motorist"?)
- "ephemeral decorations" (!!)
- Page 6, para. 2: Here we run into real JARGON:
 - "super-blocks"
 - "single building form"
 - "activity mix"
 - "over and underpasses"
 - "people-moving devices"
 - "vehicular circulation".
- Page 6, final para: "awning-level mini-train" (what's this?)

Political Points:

- Page 1, final para.,
final sentence: Let's put the residents first - they are our voters.
- Page 2, para. 2: Why highlight divisiveness by mentioning influential/ affluent and poorer people - better left unsaid.
- Page 3, para. 10: Elizabeth Bay House - only as a civic reception centre? Is not ground floor to be restored and opened to public?

- Page 3, final para: "only public park in the precinct"
"the only amusement for small children".
Strictly correct but gives false impression -
there are numerous parks and amusement places for
kids in adjoining precinct, only a few yards away.
- Page 4, para. 4: This para. will not endear the residents to us.
- Page 6, para. 5: "Neon and illuminated signs .." I don't think
the residents will like this.
- Page 6, para. 6: Nor this.
- Page 7, para. 5: Why mention and go into reasons for only a 10%
response. Don't admit that public participation
doesn't really work.
- Page 7, para. 6: Undesirable to mention that older residents
predominated in the survey.
I do not understand how tensions can be an
attraction.
- Page 7, para. 10: In the light of the about-to-be-formed FITZROY
Branch of Civic Reform, can this para. be re-worded
thus:
"It is not easy to reach the residents of a
mobile area like Kings Cross and so stimulate
their participation in planning. The recent
survey identified some of the interested and
articulate residents; these, and others, should be
encouraged to participate in group discussions on
the Action Plan. It is understood that the Civic
Reform Association is about to form (or re-form)
a group, partly with this purpose in mind. This
group (and others) would be welcomed as a means of
securing genuine public participation."

Conclusions:

The report in its present form will not be comprehended by the majority,
will disappoint our articulate supporters and will provide excellent
material for the leader of the Opposition. It must be re-written in
brief, clear English and made comprehensible to all but the illiterate.
Please, Andrew, don't let it go forward in its present form.

Alec Simpson,
23rd March, 1973.