

## CASE STUDY

### Raleigh Park, Sydney, Australia: a market-oriented suburban design (1982–2000)

The creation of total urban designs is not straightforward in democratic countries even when there is considerable financial and/or political clout behind their design and development. Raleigh Park is a 30-acre (12.34-hectare) development on a triangular site in south-central Sydney. It is a total urban design – a suburban precinct based on Garden City principles at a neighbourhood scale. It was a brown-field site. The W.D. & H.O. Wills' cigarette factory and workers' recreational facilities occupied it previously. Like Pruitt-Igoe, Raleigh Park received a planning award (from the Royal Australian Institute of Planners) in 1996 and a design award in 1998 (from the Urban Development Institute of Australia), but only after it had been largely completed and occupied. Raleigh Park is a very different place to Pruitt-Igoe for people in very different financial circumstances.

The development was a joint venture of two property development companies: Mirvac Ltd and Westfield Holdings Pty Ltd, designed in-house by Mirvac's HPA Associates (Henry Pollack Architects). It was named after Sir Walter Raleigh who introduced tobacco to Europe from North America. It consists of six residential towers of between eight and thirteen stories in height, three-storey walk-up housing units and 150 houses (well below the legally permitted number of units). The administrative buildings of the cigarette company were preserved as communal facilities and commercial rental space. The history of the development is chequered and the site went

through the hands of a number of potential developers and design firms before the implemented plan was created.

The impetus for the project came from the Labor government in power in New South Wales in 1982, catching the local government, the City of Randwick, by surprise. It announced that the site of the cigarette factory would be converted into a housing development as part of a larger packet of redevelopment aimed at securing its majority in Labor-held seats at the next state election. Local residents and merchants, however, took the proposal to the State Land and Environment Court challenging it on procedural grounds. The case became moot when the government passed a bill validating any invalidity in the planning process! Consequently an approach was made to the Randwick City Council in 1984 by Westfield Holdings (in joint venture with Amatil, the parent company of W.D. & H.O. Wills) to develop the site. The architects were Jackson, Teece, Chesterman & Partners. The scheme, which seems to have no central idea behind it (see Figure 7.22) did not proceed.

In 1986 Westfield obtained an extension of the development approval deadline and also bought out Amatil's share of the project. Shortly before the new date expired, and after considerable negotiation, the State Government bought the land from Westfield for \$A30 million and sought tenders for the development of 1200 to 1400 town house units on the site (excluding a portion where Westfield had