



1978 “An empty, useless city centre”

“Effective city planning has been almost unknown in Melbourne for at least 30 or 40 years. For the ordinary Melburnian that means our city has been progressively destroyed. It no longer contains the attraction and charm it once had.

“To the city retailer – ever ready to adapt to new circumstances – it means expensive expansion into the suburbs to chase the customers who no longer visit the city.

“Our planners lack the courage to bring the city back to life.

“Our planners should be reaffirming the notion of Melbourne as an arcaded city instead of allowing architects to allocate useless, wind-swept forecourts ‘for the public use’.”

Quote from “*The Age*”, June 1978

Article by Prof Norman Day

Background

By 1980 Melbourne’s city centre was generally thought to be unplanned and inhospitable, with the Melbourne City Council having a ‘laissez-faire’ approach to new development. This forms the backdrop for evaluating the improvement programs carried out over the twenty years from 1985 to 2005.



1985: City of Melbourne Strategy Plan

The 1985 Strategy Plan formed the foundation for the subsequent two decades of the city’s urban renewal. Culminating in publications such as *Grids and Greenery* (1987), which represented the first documented strategic direction for urban design, the 1985 plan presented a development framework and implementation priorities for land use, movement, built form, community services, city structure and the physical environment.



1994: Places for People

In 1993 Professor Jan Gehl was invited to Melbourne by the City of Melbourne to conduct a survey of Public Spaces and Public Life in Melbourne. The study examined the issues and opportunities regarding public space and collected data on public life. The data was presented in *Places for People: Melbourne City 1994*, which incorporated both analysis and a set of overall recommendations. The publication served as a foundation for further development and improvement of Melbourne’s public spaces, as new projects could be measured against the 1994 benchmark.



Places for People 2004

In 2004 Professor Gehl and GEHL Architects were invited to return to Melbourne to update the previous study in association with the Design and Culture division of Melbourne City Council.

The findings and recommendations of the 2004 study are presented in this report.

The purpose and the methods for the 1994 and 2004 studies have been kept identical in order to create an opportunity for direct comparisons. However, the area for the 2004 study has been extended to include the major new public spaces which have been established during the intervening ten years.