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A CULTURAL LEGACY?

The Golden Grove Development is a 'fully planned community' situated on the fringes of metropolitan Adelaide (see Figure 1). The new suburban development (1985-2003) was developed as a joint venture, ratified by indenture, between the South Australian Government and the Delfin Property Group (now Delfin Lend Lease). The development is home to about 30,000 people, whom are accommodated within approximately 10,000 houses. The planning techniques and practices that constitute the Golden Grove Development were significant in the development being awarded the titles of 'The World's Best Address' and 'Australia's Best Development'. By the 1990s the development had become a 'benchmark' for the supply of residential housing both within South Australia and Australia wide. The planning techniques and practices taken up by the developers of the Golden Grove project corresponded to local and national trends of the day, which impacted upon and reflected changes in suburban lifestyles. The Golden Grove Development is, I argue, a South Australian legacy that could potentially become a State Heritage Precinct and recognised as a place of cultural significance as defined by the Burra Charter:

Places of cultural significance ... are historical records that are important as tangible expressions of Australian identity and experience. Places of cultural significance reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about who we are and the past that has formed us and the Australian landscape.1

Figure 1a&b: The Golden Grove Development. Source: publicity brochures, images courtesy of Delfin Lend Lease

The significance of the Golden Grove Development, I argue, is not only, nor necessarily, premised on physical form: architecture, landscaping, street pattern. Rather, the significance of the development can be demonstrated by analysing the techniques and practices that informed the built landscape. That is, the significance of the Golden Grove Development is embedded in knowledges that depict how ideals of community and suburban identities were constituted in the late 20th century. This approach draws upon Michel Foucault's analysis of Bentham's panopticon.2 For Foucault, the panopticon represented a shift in governmental rationalities, through which new kinds of social relationships emerged. The panopticon was a technical
mechanism which facilitated different modes of government. While the physical form of the Golden Grove Development is perhaps not quite as revolutionary as the panopticon, the development does, nonetheless, represent a period of change; a shift in governmental rationalities. The Golden Grove Development, I argue, is a mechanism through which different kinds of relationships become possible, in particular those concerning ideals of community.

The arguments I construct in this paper do not re-present more-or-less 'truthful', generalised, historical 'facts'. Drawing on Nikolas Rose, my studies ‘do not seek to describe a field of institutions, of structures, of functional patterns or whatever. They try to diagnose an array of lines of thought, of will, of invention, of programmes and failures, of acts and counter-acts’. I do not seek to redefine and legitimise ideals of community. Rather, my aim is to disclose the techniques and practices by which specific ideas of community were and are produced in the discourses of the Golden Grove Development. As such, my research is contextualised and is specific to trends, circumstances and events relating to the planning and development timeframe of the Golden Grove project. My emphasis is on the disparate paths of production, rather than on continuum (cause and effect) outcomes. Although the histories I construct in this paper cannot be generalised, the ideas of community that informed the planning of the Golden Grove Development have a significant national and international (in particular the United States of America and the United Kingdom) genealogy.

A number of questions arise in considering the Golden Grove Development as culturally significant. Firstly, is it a tangible expression of South Australian identities and experiences? If these identities and experiences are analysed within neo-liberal, colonial frameworks, then I believe the Golden Grove Development does have a significant role in the histories of South Australia. Secondly, given the unsustainable nature of the planned and built form (in relation to car reliance, energy usage, stormwater and sewage disposal, allotment orientation, landscaping, building materials and development practices), how will the Golden Grove Development be assessed and evaluated and in what terms? Given the recent completion of the project this question has yet to be addressed and may afford opportunities for further research. And finally, what histories will emerge over the next 25-50 years that may offer glimpses into late 20th century suburban living?

TANGIBLE EXPRESSIONS

Both the social (ideals of community) and the physical landscapes of the Golden Grove Development were produced in a political environment that was characterised by a gradual mutation from a welfarist to a neo-liberal governmental framework. Welfarism implies the subordination of, in this instance, the residential subject to the government or to those expert agencies appointed to act on behalf of and for the government. The inception of the Golden Grove project took place in the early 1970s and was framed, in part, by welfarist rationalities. The South Australian Dunstan Labor Government substantially influenced the shape and form of urban landscapes in South Australia throughout the 1970s. During this time the first planning document for the Golden Grove project was produced, the ‘Comprehensive Development Plan: Modbury - Golden Grove’. This document stated five initial (welfarist) social and physical planning objectives: flexibility, efficiency, freedom of choice, social equity and likely acceptability. The rationales that informed these objectives reinforced an historical legitimacy of deals of the 'good community' that established the precedent.
for subsequent written, physical and social discourses in the design and development of the Golden Grove site.

Dunstan's reign ended with the election of a Liberal Government in the late 1970s. By the time a South Australian Labor Government was re-elected (1982/83 under the leadership of John Bannon) the techniques of government advocated by the Labor Government had undergone a significant — albeit gradual — shift. While many of the welfarist strategies and objectives of Dunstan's reiga remained, they underwent metamorphosis and came to represent neo-liberal modes of government. Within neoliberalism, the individual is cast as a consumer or autonomous subject who is at liberty to exercise freedom in the choices offered by a capitalist market. For example, the potential new Golden Grove Development resident was 'free' to choose from a range of housing products, a range of villages and a range of associated identities. This freedom, however, was limited by the joint venturers' marketing strategies and a host of planning techniques and practices that were intended to produce particular allegories of home ownership and ideals of the 'good community'; allegories and ideals which have manifest as tangible expressions of late 20th century suburban life.

Values relating to the five initial welfarist inspired Development Plan objectives — flexibility, efficiency, freedom of choice, social equity and likely acceptability — were re-inscribed and reinforced throughout the early planning phases (1976-1983) of the Golden Grove site. These five objectives were then re-iterated, re-interpreted and finalised as the ten Paramount Objectives legislated in the 1984 indenture.5 The indenture was structured to ratify the joint venture partnership model and method of development for the Golden Grove project. The re-production of the initial objectives effectively legitimised specific planning techniques and practices and ideals of the 'good community' as being ones that were 'natural', obvious and 'true'. The legislation of the Paramount Objectives represented a neo-liberal guarantee for the planning and development of a more-or-less 'authentic' (in contrast to post World War II suburban planning practices) suburban environment. That is, the Paramount Objectives embraced concepts of flexibility, efficiency, freedom of choice, social equity and likely acceptability — concepts tied into the production of particular ideals of the 'normal', 'true' or 'real' community — primarily through offering the autonomous individual the 'freedom' of choice within a capitalist market.

The images of 'community' inherent in the Paramount Objectives were linked to historical depictions of an English village landscape (as imagined in some unspecified time in history) that was home to people of all ages and from all backgrounds, all living together in mutual harmony. Partly as a consequence, the residential population of the Golden Grove Development does represent a limited degree of residential diversity: home owners, tenants — both private and South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT), retirees, first home buyers, singles, professional couples and families, all residing within a range of villages, housing products and allotment types. This diversity, however, was largely the outcome of market forces and economic rationalities, which disproportionately favoured middle and upper income groups. This outcome is not surprising, given the legislative commitment of the joint venturers to ensure economic viability and profitability.

The Paramount Objectives, I argue, were instrumental strategies for securing both the social (ideals of the 'good community') and financial successes of the Golden Grove Development. On the one hand, the Paramount Objectives obliged the joint venturers to implement planning techniques and practices that would manifest both social and
physical residential environments that were diverse, pleasant and 'safe'. On the other hand, they required the joint venturers to develop suburban landscapes that would foster and reflect risk minimisation techniques; in particular where the risks were attached to difference, deviance and investment values.

RISK LEGACIES

In the discourses of the Golden Grove Development, ideals of the 'good community', home ownership in the suburbs and promulgations of the village idyll were all linked to rationalities of risk. The planning techniques and practices, and the marketing strategies that were put in place by the joint venturers were primarily to secure the health, wealth and well-being of residents (ideals of the 'good community') and the financial profitability of the development project. Linked to this was the health, wealth and well-being of the population and the South Australian economy. To secure these micro and macro level outcomes, I argue that the joint venturers targeted four principal sites of risk minimisation: the district centre, social mix, village planning and housing typologies.

From the outset, the economic (temporal, financial and spatial) and social (ideals of the 'good community') security of the Golden Grove Development were tied into the planning techniques and practices of a district centre site. The district centre was an apparatus for learning, which linked (physically and pedagogically) education, commercial, retail, leisure and performing arts activities. Following Ian Hunter, I argue that the district centre was a 'purpose-built pedagogical environment assembled from a mix of physical and moral elements: special architectures; devices for organising space and time; body techniques; practices of surveillance and supervision; pedagogical relationships; procedures of administration and examination'.

The aim underpinning the creation of the district centre site, I argue, was the economic government of both students and local residents in accordance with specific ideals of the 'educated/good community'. These ideals of community had been produced by the joint venturers as ones that were 'normal' desirable and 'truthful' and which would, therefore, minimise the risks attached to the realisation of the joint venturers' financial and social objectives.

Partly to minimise the risks attached to the social and financial successes of the Golden Grove Development, the joint venturers implemented planning practices that reflected economically driven, hierarchical ranking and zoning of identifiable residential 'villages'. Each Golden Grove Development village was conferred with a specific identity that was reflected in the encumbrances, village and street names, entrance statements and the extent and type of landscaping and street furniture. The establishment of 'village standards' was based upon these pre-selected and selective identities. Any variation or deviation from the normative village identity would constitute a possible risk to investment values, market perception and confidence in the joint venturers as a developer of both social and financial merit. Deviation from the 'norm' also potentially put at risk the creation of ideals of the 'good community' as advocated by the joint venturers. The creation of village identities was thus a means to regulate conduct and a way to expose those subjects who resisted or digressed from the normative codes and imaginings. As my research demonstrates, the resultant Golden Grove Development landscapes are inscribed by socio-economic divisions as each village reflects specific identities and income groups (see Figures 2 & 3).
The ratification of the Golden Grove indenture and the inclusion of the Paramount Objectives obliged the joint venturers to create a 'unique' suburban development that provided for a range of housing types to accommodate a variety of people from across the full spectrum of the population. Paramount Objective three specifically obliged that the joint venturers to enable the SAHT to obtain sufficient suitable land and for residential dwellings to satisfy the requirement:

(a) that between twenty five (25) and thirty (30) per cent of the total dwelling units in the Development Area shall be for public housing purposes; and

(b) that public housing be integrated with private housing in living areas such that no section or area of the Development Area can be readily identified simply as public housing area or estate.
As a consequence, in the first three years of the Golden Grove Development the number of SAHI dwellings was significant, albeit well below the stipulated percentage. Little effort was made however, to change the pattern of housing provision and the joint venturers largely re-produced the surrounding suburban landscapes: a freestanding house on a quarter acre block targeted at middle to upper income groups. It was not until late 1987 that the joint venturers introduced the courtyard product, the first of three alternative housing typologies. By 1987 the financial standing of the joint venturers was relatively secure and the risk posed by the introduction of the courtyard product could be easily managed. The courtyard product was followed by the villa product in 1990 and the town cottage product was introduced into the development five years later.

The emergence of the three Golden Grove Development housing products was in response to, and in keeping with, a number of political and social changes both locally and nationally. The courtyard product emerged (1987) in response to Government publications by the Joint Venture For More Affordable Housing. The joint venturers were also obliged to develop at higher densities in order to achieve stipulated housing and population targets. In the early 1990s the South Australian economy, along with the rest of Australia, was in depression. South Australia was one of the worst affected areas, suffering the effects of the State Bank collapse, low income growth, employment insecurity, a decline in the housing industry, low population growth, uncertainty with housing loans and reduced activity in investor markets. In order to maintain sales and profit margins within this climate, the joint venturers introduced the smaller villa housing product. The villa was designed to be developed at much higher densities than the existing suburban pattern. Also at this time, demographic changes informed the shift in the joint venturers' targeted residential market profile. During the first five to seven years of the development the joint venturers largely targeted young, first home owners with small children. From about 1992 the joint venturers changed this focus to reflect an older, wealthier clientele who did not necessarily have children.

By the mid 1990s the joint venturers had approximately ten years experience in small lot housing and the financial success of the development was well established. In a bid to increase productivity and profit margins, the joint venturers sought to focus new releases on smaller allotments and higher densities. To achieve this goal they increased the price and number of villa allotments and introduced the town cottage product. Also, in the late 1990s a lot of literature suggested that many home owners were becoming less tolerant of others not of the same income level or social standing and the trend towards 'gated community' developments escalated. The gap between those who could afford to own a house and those who could not had also widened.

In South Australia during the late 1980s and 1990s, the gap between those who could afford to purchase a house and those who could not was heightened by the progressively changing role of the SAHI. The role of the SAHI changed from that of a residential developer and property owner, housing working class South Australians, to an agency that was concerned with finding accommodation for those reliant on social welfare. This shift in housing focus undermined the ability of the SAHI to fulfil its legalised social mix quota, thus, jeopardising one of the fundamental objectives of the Golden Grove Development: the creation of a suburban environment — a 'community' — that was home to people from the full spectrum of the population. In line with increasingly neo-liberal trends, in the latter years of the
development the joint venturers marketed and developed secluded and exclusive pockets within premium villages.

The ideals of community that had informed the Paramount Objectives and that the joint venturers had marketed to minimise risks attached to financial investments had undergone a significant re-evaluation. In the early years of the Golden Grove Development the financial contribution made by the SAHT, by the purchase of allotments as required by the Paramount Objectives, was crucial to secure the economic and social successes of the project. It is ironic that in the latter years of the development the social mix created by the inclusion of SAHT residents was constituted as a 'risk', in particular in relation to investment values and deviant behaviour.

Between May 1985 and June 2000 over 9,500 Golden Grove Development allotments had been sold with approximately 750 allotments remaining. The continued demand for houses and the substantial rise in property values within the development during this time point to the popularity of the project and indicate the economic and social successes of the joint venturers. In addition, the International Real Estate Federation Award recognised the Golden Grove Development as a suburban project illustrative of late 20th century urban planning, architectural, social, economic and political trends.

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Many planning discourses have sought to produce ideals of community. Within these discourses 'community' is often constructed as a phenomenon that is producible through and by the built landscape. However, I argue that 'community' is not a physical or tangible 'thing' that can be planned for and known in more-or-less 'truthful' terms. Ideals of community are complex and involve deeper structures than casual encounters in a public place or concepts of mutual pride and a shared identity. They may have little relevance to a bounded locality, a particular type of architecture or spatial expression and they may not involve verbal or visual interaction. The values and meanings attributed to ideals of community are not fixed in time nor are they universally 'true'. Ideals of community, I argue, are conceived, influenced and produced by many and various contemporary and localised forces which continually fluctuate and are subject to change. This argument is supported by many 'building community' histories that record the failed attempts by many planners and architects to create 'good community' subjects through the implementation of particular planning techniques and practices.

Planning for particular ideals of community, I argue, constitutes techniques to regulate the conduct of located residential subjects — individually and in associated groups — and the population, in accordance with pre-determined codes. Ideals of community often become a means to regulate behavioural patterns according to codes of conduct considered to be 'normal', 'moral', 'respectable' and 'desirable'. The development of suburbia in Australia was and is, in part, informed and shaped by these 'community' codes. Codes which, I argue, are produced by the Government to control and enforce, standards of behaviour deemed — by the Government — to be acceptable and 'normal'. The aim of the Government being to secure the health, wealth and well being of the family, the population and the economy. The ideals of the 'good community' that inform this aim are largely drawn from historically legitimised, colonial ideas about social relationships. These relationships link 'fresh air, cleanliness, order, privacy and social exclusiveness' and exclude 'as undesirable
renting, economic exchange, social anonymity, ... disorder, dirt ..., poverty, industry, the radically or ethnically different and the lower social orders".12

The control of residential environments, in an attempt to regulate conduct and thereby minimise the risks attached to the health and well-being of the family, the population and the economy can be traced in part to the Poor Laws. These Laws (which emerged in the United Kingdom in 1834) stipulated the floor area and living conditions that poor families and individuals required in an attempt to reform and regulate housing subjects, and thereby, secure the aims of the government. The 1834 spatial determinants, together with their rationales and goals, re-emerged as Ebenezer Howard's point of departure for his urban (economic) / rural (healthy) sociable/garden city model.13

Ideals of community as produced by the discourses of the Golden Grove Development are not dissimilar to their historical forbears. They remain associated with aspirations to 'the good life', a more caring and sharing world, a more connected and united world. Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, 'fully planned communities' in Australia were (and still are) marketed as offering a new world of old-time values and the realisation of particular concepts of 'the Australian Dream': home ownership in suburbia, a 'safe' and pleasant environment, a secure investment and ideals of community; an imagined gemeinschaft village life is still often portrayed as a popular contemporary image of 'community'. Such an image privileges face-to-face relationships and depicst small scale, place-based, self-contained and self-referential residential collectives. This ideal is not far from that espoused by Ebenezer Howard at the beginning of the 20th century.

The values that many planners, architects and developers ascribed to historically legitimised ideals of community — a return to some imagined colonial village life — often ignore power relations. All relationships — be they between people or between people and place — are constructed and mediated by strategies of regulation, domination and control of others' conduct. In ignoring power relations, planners, architects and developers potentially build exclusive and exclusionary suburban landscapes. This is evident in the landscapes of the Golden Grove Development which largely serve to alienate particular types of people and regulate the conduct of those who are included. I argue that social divisions and heterosexuality are re-inscribed into the suburban landscape by planning techniques and practices that seek to re-produce historically legitimised ideals of community, allegories of home ownership, a country atmosphere and village lifestyle.

The values and the mechanisms of government intrinsic to the production of ideals of community, as produced by the discourses of the Golden Grove Development, differed from the historical 'village community' rhetoric. In this case, ideals of the 'good community' become marketable commodities associated with securing economic gains and, at the same time, minimising the risks attached to deviance, resistance, difference and diversity. Importantly, the marketing of ideals of the 'good community' was a mechanism to produce disciplined and docile subjects; a mode of government that was not imposed by right, law or the threat of punishment from a single seat of authority — the joint venturers. Instead, Golden Grove Development subjects were positioned as being self-regulating in accordance with specified, rational and calculable codes of conduct; codes that would produce 'normal', economic, educated and 'good' subjects, collectives and populations. The role of the joint venturers was thus ethical, in regard to its concern with the conduct of
individuals and groups and with the ways in which these bodies conducted themselves.

**A TIMELY PRODUCT**

Ideals of the 'good community' were integral to the planning and development of the Golden Grove site, from its inception through to completion. The investment the joint venturers made in planning for ideals of community in the Golden Grove Development was substantial and potentially risky, given the 20 year development timeframe for the project. It was perhaps because of the risks attached to the joint venturers' financial investments that they promulgated particular ideals of community. Six months prior to the official closure of the joint venture partnership, the Chief Executive Officer of Delfin Lend Lease (previously Delfin Limited) stated that 'Our [Delfin Lend Lease] overall profitability is enhanced by a long-term commitment to building a sense of community'.

In the Golden Grove Development this profitability was secured by giving consumers what they, presumably, wanted which thereby created the joint venturers desired 'sense of community'. For example in the 1990/91 Golden Grove Development business plan the joint venturers stated that 'Golden Grove must be packaged and marketed strongly to heighten this market's [families who are looking to purchase their second home] 'need' to move to a "better place to live"'.

In order to produce the desired ideals of community, the joint venturers had agency over extended power relations in the planning and development of the Golden Grove parcel of land. The Delfin equity partner, in particular, was conferred with a degree of sovereignty by the ratification of the indenture. This awarded Delfin Management Services the licence to collect, assimilate and re-produce knowledges of new residents. These knowledges were produced in accordance with specific objectives with the result that particular ideals of community and techniques of government were re-confirmed and re-produced.

The joint venturers largely attributed the popularity and economic successes of the Golden Grove Development to those planning practices which had been put in place specifically to facilitate ideals of community. In the early years of the development the joint venturers attributed the creation of a 'healthy, viable community' to a number of policies and planning practices. These included the ratification of the indenture which legally bound all parties to specified cost sharing arrangements, the staging of development to ensure all areas were equally serviced and the fact that all planning objectives had been agreed to by the private enterprise partner, the State Government and the Local Council. I argue however, that the 'successes' of the Golden Grove Development cannot be attributed to any of these factors alone, rather to a convergence of many influences. The suburban environment is an overlapping and integrated fabric that cannot be pulled apart and analysed in isolated bits to give an indication of the ways in which it works. Rather, the suburban landscape, in particular (in this instance) the Golden Grove Development, is a 'polysemous web of signifieds and signifiers'. The Golden Grove Development is a product of its time and represents the crossings of many threads: political, economic, environmental and social. Although some threads are stronger and more influential than others, the suburban landscape, as the end product, lays testimony to the intersection of all.

In the discourses of the Golden Grove Development the regulation of resident conduct was achieved, in part, through the construction of physical constraints (boundaries, paths, roads, buildings, landscaping), the stipulation of allotment and building
encumbrances, and also through practices of self and collective regulation in accordance with prescribed Golden Grove Development identities and subject positions. These identities and subject positions related to a country lifestyle in the suburbs, home ownership and ideals of the 'good community'. The underlying assumption was that Golden Grove Development residents would conform because the values and subjectivities written into the plans and built into the landscapes were historically legitimised and therefore more-or-less 'truthful'. This planning practice often had homogenising effects and is frequently the cause of social polarisation and the denial of difference. These were the very negativities that the legislated Golden Grove Development planning and development objectives — the Paramount Objectives — were intended to circumvent.

The authority of the joint venture in the production of a desirable and 'true' Golden Grove Development 'community', is, in some ways, legitimised and reinforced by the current extent of apparent resident conformity and self-regulation (see Figures 4 & 5). This self-government was (and remains) in accordance with the joint venture's pre-determined codes of conduct — relating to ideals of the 'normal', 'good community' — which were inscribed into the suburban landscape. As such, the planning techniques and practices of the joint venture and the ideals of community that are implicit in them have been conferred with a certain 'truthfulness'; a 'truthfulness' which disproportionately supports economic rationales and potentially re-inscribes into the suburban landscape risk minimisation strategies that foster segregation, polarisation and the denial of difference. The landscapes of the Golden Grove Development do privilege particular lifestyles and socio-economic sectors of the population and, in doing so, alienate, deny or erase others. It is perhaps because of the polarisation of different lifestyles that the Golden Grove Development represents an excellent example of South Australia's, and perhaps Australia's, recent cultural legacy.

Figure 4: Representing 'normal', conforming landscapes? c.1990s Golden Grove Development. Source: author
ENDNOTES


5 The Paramount Objectives read:

1. To develop the land at Golden Grove in a manner that is complementary to the broader regional planning objectives, proposals and principles as set out in the Development Plan under the Planning Act, 1982 and to ensure the efficient and comprehensive integration of the Development Area with the City of Tea Tree Gully and Metropolitan Adelaide generally

2 To facilitate the provision of a comprehensive range of accommodation for those members of the general public wishing to purchase or rent residential accommodation having due regard for the requirements of those persons with special needs and to ensure that the serviced allotments necessary to this regard are available to purchasers of land at fair and reasonable prices

3 To enable SAHII to obtain sufficient suitable land and/or residential dwellings to satisfy the requirement: (a) that between twenty five (25) and thirty (30) per cent of the total dwelling units in the Development Area shall be for public housing purposes; and (b) that public housing be integrated with private housing in living areas such that no section or area of the Development Area can be readily identified simply as public housing area or estate

4 To provide and effect the systematic development and release of land in a manner conducive to economic staging of public works and services

5 To adopt practices which minimise land and housing costs to prospective residents within the bounds of prudent commercial and land development practice

6 To provide for and effect a safe pleasant and convenient environment for people living or working in the Development Area and in particular to provide ready access to those community facilities and services required to satisfy their needs

7 Consistent with the accomplishment of objective (6) to include an effective Community Development Programme in planning for the Development Area

8 To establish an efficient and effective form of planning and development control administration in consultation with the Council and other appropriate authorities and agencies responsible for the provision of public services
1. To establish an efficient and effective form of planning and development control administration in consultation with the Council and other appropriate authorities and agencies responsible for the provision of public services.

2. To give ample scope for a comprehensive range of builders to be engaged within the Development Area.


