

# The Architect's Role in the Community

We are  
all aware of  
the world's

1. Everything to do with arch. is getting bigger. See skyscrapers. The population explosion which we as archts must have some hand in housing... Architects' offices themselves: co-ops. A tendency for people - esp. archts - to anticipate the future; so it's fashionable now to talk as if the megastructure is here - and as if all archts' offices were co-ops with planners, ecologists, sociologists - all in one big happy family. In fact, hardly one such office in all hels. By the time you are in practice - 10-15 yrs from now - maybe...

2. The drift of this giantism in archt thinking is to take the emphasis in arch. away from the individual building and to place it on the city or the community. (V. convenient if you're not much good at designing individual buildings, which is still, despite everything, the basic craft of the architect, just as drilling teeth is the basic craft of the dentist even if he should & does spend time on preventing decay...) So today the architect sees his role as being much more involved with the community than in the past. Yet he is again anticipating a bit. The brave schemes one sees illustrated, "Strategic Plan for Sydney", "Park the length of Swanston Street" etc. <sup>not to mention Japan</sup> are still largely dreams, done by architects & planners for private groups or pressure groups without any real promise that they will be put into effect. Perhaps in 10-15 yrs. there will be real clients too - councillors & politicians prepared to encourage or promote such schemes. Then you'll have to form those big co-op practices with other experts to put them into effect. But even then there will still be plenty of small, individual, non-giant bldgs...

3. While the Megastructures clearly need the archt to the social needs of the community, in fact there is nothing new about the marriage. The archt has <sup>historically</sup> always had a role in the community, second only to the military man. For centuries the archt has built an environment in towns & cities, giving that other professional man something worthwhile to destroy. "We shape our bldgs, & our bldgs shape us" - W. Churchill, military man & bricklayer. Of course the built environment shapes, or effects, us. According to Buckminster Fuller... half of all our personality-forming influences were impinged on each one of us by age 4. Fuller, religious believer in technology, argues that half the world's ills - hate, jealousy, violence, possessiveness - would vanish if every child was born into a home of good design, good plumbing, and a full refrigerator. // From the physical to the cultural: consider the importance of the look of the built environment. Clearly it affects our lives if we live in ugliness, or in attractive surroundings. In Australia: ugliness. Not by any means wholly fault of archts (only 10% (?) of bldgs. individually <sup>controlled</sup> designed by archts) but the archt responsible nonetheless, as moral and artistic leader of the built environment.

[N.B. Used word 'artistic'. Please... don't use aesthetic. Means "study, crit of beauty" & if you must use it don't pronounce "ass...". Diphthongs Æ, pron È]