

3 DEVELOPMENT

as the prime agent of change

by Danny O'Hare

The term "development" is much used in descriptions of Queensland throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The background to this chapter is primarily drawn from Ross Fitzgerald's two-volume history of Queensland (Fitzgerald 1982, 1984). Development is the activity that accounts for the transformation of the Queensland landscape between Fitzgerald's (1982:3) opening chapter, "the land as it was", and his closing chapter, "the land as it is" (1984).

In Australia, and perhaps more so in Queensland, "development" is commonly understood to have two meanings; the first is that of development as "progress", with chiefly (but not only) an economic emphasis. The second meaning is a more physical one, involving the construction of infrastructure and of cities, towns, suburbs and the parts of them. In this second familiar meaning, the scope of "development" is understood to include whole towns (developed in a single burst or incrementally) and "property development" and redevelopment – ie construction on individual privately owned or leased parcels of land. The second type of development has usually taken place within the motivations of the first meaning of the term. The second definition of development is equivalent to that used in the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 and the Integrated Planning Act 1997.

This paper sets the context of development as *progress* and then moves into detail on the development of infrastructure, property and Queensland's settlement pattern. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate how a Queensland cultural landscape has been created and transformed by the pursuit of development at the State, regional and local levels.

Development as progress

In the Prologue to each of his two volumes of Queensland history, Ross Fitzgerald clearly articulates "one key theme: the effect of a particularly European idea of progress upon the land, the flora and fauna, the institutions, and the peoples of Queensland" (1982:xv). Although not using the term, "cultural landscape", Fitzgerald's approach is consistent with the idea that the land is reshaped by cultural forces, over time.

Although the extraordinarily optimistic ideals of Turgot, Condorcet, Comte and Saint-Simon, for example, focussed on the progress of the human mind (and also on cultural development), in Queensland, as in the rest of Australia, it was the intoxicating vision of economic progress and dominance over the material universe that especially took hold. The notion of progress and the attitude to the land and

living things that it entailed – nature in all its forms was to be conquered and subdued – which had characterized 19th century Queensland, carried over unchanged in most essential aspects into the 20th century... With the partial exception of T.J. Ryan's allegedly 'socialistic' 1915-19 government, in Queensland an overriding commitment to 'progress' and material development manifested itself in policy and political action... (Fitzgerald 1984:xv)

In his first volume, subtitled From the dreaming to 1915, Fitzgerald (1982) details how the progress ethic of material economic development motivated Cook's voyage, Commandant Logan's management of the Brisbane penal settlement, the early squatters, the private sponsorship of Leichhardt's explorations, first Governor Bowen's overseeing of "the moving frontier", the goldrush diggers, and those who established agriculture. In its first century, Queensland became a contested terrain: settlers versus aborigines; squatters versus farmers; squatters versus the administration; European versus Chinese gold diggers; separation versus control from "the south"; and, within Queensland, the north versus the south. These and other contests were driven by the pursuit of progress and development. This first major wave of development involved the establishment of pastoral runs, farming areas, mines, ports, cities, towns, railways, roads, administrative and social infrastructure.

Establishing Queensland as a cultural landscape of progress

Penal Port – Pastoral Nexus (1820s-1850s)

The establishment of a penal settlement at Moreton Bay in 1824 was as much for economic development purposes as for convict control (Fitzgerald 1982:65). The initial choice of Redcliffe was quickly found to be unsuitable for settlement due to shallow anchorage, poor agricultural prospects and vulnerability to native attack.

In 1825, the settlement relocated to the banks of the Brisbane River, establishing a framework for what has become the centre of government and business. In 1827, Dunwich, on Stradbroke Island, was established as a depot for transfer of goods and people from ships to smaller vessels more suited to the Brisbane River.

From 1827, the pastoral settlement of the Darling Downs ensured an economic base for the future colony. The economic development of Brisbane was assisted by Cunningham's finding of a trafficable gap in the Great Dividing Range in 1828. This route, like many others in Australia's early development, was one that had been used by Aborigines. By 1842, squatters had taken up most of the Darling Downs, as well as inland areas adjacent to Port Curtis (Gladstone). The spread of pastoralism involved a "guerrilla war" with the Aborigines (Horne, in Fitzgerald 1982:95).

Moving Frontier – Primary Production the Key to Wealth (1860s)

By the time Queensland separated from NSW in 1859, "the idea of progress [was] inseparably attached to the 'moving frontier': first Governor Bowen observing that "At the close of every year, ... the margin of Christianity and civilization has been pushed forward by some 200 miles" (Fitzgerald 1982:113, citing Bolton). As the pastoralists pushed northward, Bowen was established in 1859 as the first north Queensland town. Fitzgerald argues that the notions of progress/development then current, persist into the Queensland of today (1982:114-5).

Governor Bowen and first Premier Herbert regarded Queensland as "a great property to be developed along sound business lines for the benefit of the colonists and prosperity" (Farnfield 1974, cited in Fitzgerald 1982:125). Both believed primary production was the key to all wealth. In the early 1860s, cotton plantations were established in South-East Queensland, helped by the American Civil War and the

Coolie Act enabling the importation of Kanaka labour.

In the 1860s, the colony's population grew dramatically, as a response to a concerted immigration campaign in London. In addition, Catholic Bishop Quinn's Immigration Society attracted 4000 Irish settlers in 1862-65 (Fitzgerald 1982:127). At this time, railway development commenced in South-East Queensland, providing infrastructure for further development and settlement.

Pastoral Expansion – Agricultural Infrastructure and Aboriginal Resistance (1860s-1880s)

The importance of rural development in the Queensland ethos has its roots in the fact that pastoralism was the new colony's only productive industry when Queensland came into existence in 1859. The 1860 Land Act hastened pastoral settlement, stocking and production. Land legislation has continued to be of significance. The importance of land to Queensland is reflected in the prominence of the Land Administration building among the public buildings of Brisbane and the regional centres (as in other states). The "overlanding epic" of the early 1860s continues to be celebrated in poetry, prose and folk songs. "The rapid spread of pastoral settlement in Queensland was a remarkable achievement comparable to the great movement west in North America" (1982:133). The Aborigines, whose land ownership was denied on the basis that they were not seen to *use* the land, staged fierce resistance. This conflict was a conflict over development. The pastoral occupation of the Queensland frontier was completed by the mid-1880s (1982:146), assisted by the opening of northern ports, including Townsville in 1864. Railways were extended in the 1880s to provide the infrastructure to consolidate the development of the rural economy. Government also led the way in exploiting artesian water for development, sinking the Cunnamulla bore in 1882 and others during the 1884-86 drought. By the end of the century 800 private bores had been sunk

(1982:148-50), boosting the colony's pastoral development capacity.

Gold Boom – Development of Ports and Towns (1860s-1870s)

The European model of economic development rides on a continual sequence of boom and recession. The 1866 collapse of the British banks brought Queensland close to bankruptcy, due to the reliance of both the colony and its main industry on British development capital. The Mt Morgan goldrush in 1866 inspired the government to offer rewards for gold finds as an alternative source of wealth. The Gympie goldrush followed in 1867 and saved the colony from bankruptcy (1984:155). Other rushes followed with boomtowns developing at Ravenswood (1868), Charters Towers (1871), Palmer River and Cooktown (1873). Cairns was founded in 1876 as a port to serve the Hodgkinson goldfields, and the construction of a railway to the goldfields secured its role against competition from Cooktown and Port Douglas (1982:165). Rockhampton and Townsville were also developed as ports for mining areas. The fine commercial and public buildings of Charters Towers display its wealth and optimism of the time, and the area's economy is still partly based on mining. Gympie survives as a rural service centre following the end of the gold rush. Other boom towns such as Ravenswood and Cooktown became ghost towns, providing a basis for some revival in the late 20th century for tourism development.

"Gold did more to bring Europeans to Queensland and to establish white settlement in Queensland's tropics than any pastoral or agricultural product ever did... The placing of towns, ports, and railways is a legacy of the early history of mining..." (1982:179). The mining provided a stimulus to broader development, attracting the development of infrastructure for other ventures including agriculture.

Sugar Plantations, Sugar Towns and Marginalised Groups (1880s-1890s)

During the remaining decades of the 19th century, the sugar industry stimulated the development of the towns of Innisfail, Mackay, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Ingham, Cardwell, Mossman and Proserpine. The distribution of the wealth was assisted by the effect of closer settlement legislation, so that the large plantation system had passed by the 1880s (threatened also by the loss of Kanaka labour). In 1887, the government established a Department of Agriculture "to promote a more scientific approach to cultivation" (1982:186).

In agriculture, trees, like the Aborigines, were seen as "rural pests" and obstacles to development (1982:191). Demand for timber in the 1880s made logging a boom industry, but much timber was wasted in the frenzy of clearing for agricultural development.

Aborigines, Chinese and Kanakas played an important role in developing Queensland, yet this was unrecognised and denied. For example, Chinese market gardens not only fed the goldfields populations in the north, but also demonstrated the economic potential for Cairns' – and Queensland's – rice and banana industries. As well, they provided the labour to clear large areas for agriculture. The title of Fitzgerald's (1982) fifth chapter identifies the three groups as "outsiders" and "victims of progress".

Urban Consolidation

The Queensland development pattern established by the early 20th century confirmed that the state capital would never be able to dominate the state to the extent seen in the other states. Fitzgerald (1984:291) notes the development of several important provincial centres in Queensland, all of which have their own clusters of significant population and industries; "[T]his in turn is related to a railway system which fans out into the state's interior from a number of ports dotted along the vast coast." Consequently, the development theme has been better able to dominate other political issues in Queensland. The materialistic and practical orientation of Queensland electorates towards the development and

physical transformation of the land took precedence over higher ideals such as philosophy and the nature of government (1982:305-8).

Despite the rivalry of the northern ports and their regions, development in Brisbane after 1859 – and particularly in the 1880s boom – transformed it from a minor outpost to a capital city. After the boom-and-bust 1860s, new government buildings imparted an air of permanence and importance in the 1870s. The impressive National Bank in Queen Street (1885) demonstrated business confidence. The Treasury Building, the Exhibition Building, Bellevue Hotel and other impressive public and private buildings demonstrated a prestige and stability to protect confidence during the devastation of the 1893 floods and economic Depression.

Moves for separate states in the north were stimulated by, and ultimately defeated by, the Queensland themes of development and progress. London investors had lent the government its development funds on the basis of the growth potential of the whole of Queensland; separation into smaller units would threaten the security of these bonds by reducing future taxing potential (1982:285).

Development versus Democracy

The McIlwraith Conservative government era (three terms between 1879 and 1893) established a close rapport between business and government to pursue this Premier's "grandiose dreams of development" (1982:311): "Underlying all ... was the Biblical concept of 'Queensland as a *tabula rasa* upon which the real progenitor of progress, the entrepreneur, could and should be allowed to write as he willed' " (Waterson, cited in Fitzgerald 1982:312). The same attitude was aligned with similar business-government links during the Bjelke-Petersen era (1970s-1980s).

Fitzgerald (1982:335) links late 19th and early 20th century "breaches of democracy" – draconian suppressions of industrial unrest

through the suppression of civil liberties – with Queensland's intense development ethos.

[G]iven their optimistic faith in material 'progress', white Queenslanders – either owning or aspiring to own property – nurtured a deep-seated concern for social and political stability. The stress on the struggle to 'develop' – at whatever cost – and the consequent neglect of intellectual and moral issues, coupled with the high incidence of environmental and climatic hazards, especially in tropical Queensland, reinforced the concern with stability in the Sunshine State. (Fitzgerald 1982:335)

Closer Settlement

In the Labor years from 1915-1929, closer settlement of rural areas was regarded as essential to both moral and economic progress (1984:26). These governments had strong support from the Catholic Church and its leader, Archbishop Duhig. Rural development was supported by government provision of roads, bridges, railways, and State advances to agricultural producers and development of export produce schemes (1984:55-6). During WWI, sugar and wheat growers' pools and voluntary cooperatives were established as a means of protection against potential monopolies such as CSR.

Closer settlement had little success outside the south-east of the state, particularly as little consideration was given to "a whole host of human, ecological and biological factors" (1984:57). Similarly, the 1917 Soldier Settlers' scheme (Innisfail – sugar; Beerburum – pineapples; and Stanthorpe – orchards) had little success (1984:57). Fitzgerald (1984:59) notes the important role played by the QCWA in supporting rural women and communities after its establishment in 1922.

Developing Infrastructure in country and city (1920s-1930s)

Irrigation schemes were established on the Burdekin and Dawson Rivers in the 1920s, while others failed to eventuate due to lack of federal funding (1984:63). The Dawson River scheme, only partially completed,

included the new town of Theodore and promised a "healthier and happier [life] than in the crowded cities of the coast" (QIWSC, cited in Fitzgerald 1984:64).

Given the isolation of most of inland Queensland, it is not surprising that Qantas airlines and two early Royal Flying Doctor Service bases were established there. The coastal rail link from Brisbane to Cairns was completed in 1924 (1984:62), providing an alternative to coastal shipping. The railways reinforced the regional settlement pattern of dominance by coastal cities and towns. The role of several of these ports was enhanced by the expansion of rail links to their rural hinterlands in the 19th century and to inland mining areas in the 20th century.

The success of the sugar industry in the 1920s attracted government and private development. Tully was gazetted as a town in 1925, and a large government operated sugar mill opened in 1926 (1984:65). Pre-existing towns show evidence of significant development in this period, for example Innisfail with its rich art deco building heritage. Italian immigrants played a large role in the expansion of the sugar industry.

Significant public works were carried out in the 1930s in response to the economic Depression (Fitzgerald 1984:169-171). These development projects favoured Brisbane because its industrial base was more adversely affected than regional areas, which had some resilience due to the dominance of rural industries in the State economy. Major works included the Story Bridge and Hornibrook Highway. These two projects helped to secure the future presence of two Brisbane based construction firms – Evans Deakin and Hornibrook Ltd – in infrastructure projects in Queensland in subsequent decades. The Somerset Dam was commissioned, to supply water to Ipswich and Brisbane. Construction of the St Lucia campus of the University of Queensland was another depression era public project, announced in 1936. Smaller projects included a new long-distance rail station at

Roma Street, and other rail and drainage projects in Brisbane.

State public works in Brisbane led to conflicts between the State Government and Brisbane City Council (Fitzgerald 1984:171-3). The Council also instituted extensive public works in the 1930s, including improving sewerage and suburban roads. Conflicts with rural councils and private electricity companies occurred when the State Government established a state electricity board in 1937 (1984:172-3). State intervention sought to appease the complaints of farmers that "city parasites" could flick on the power switch at will", while lack of farm electricity prevented the introduction of milking machines and other capital equipment.

Development *versus* *Natural Environment*

Development had costs for Queensland's natural environment. As in the other eastern states, the rabbit plague in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had a disastrous effect on the land, vegetation and native fauna. Over 34,000 kilometres of rabbit proof fence were erected by 1920 (1984:73). Various native species, including the koala, were severely impacted upon by trapping for their furs around this time. Also by the 1920s, prickly pear was threatening pastoral and agricultural production, having been introduced as a form of hedging to contain stock on the Darling Downs around 1850 (1984:77). The 1938 naming of Cactoblastis Hall at Boonara, near Chinchilla commemorates its control by an introduced insect (1984:79).

By the 1920s, large-scale forest clearing, as much to make way for agriculture as for the value of the timber, had spread from the earlier concentration in the upper Logan and Maryborough areas to the tropical north around Cardwell and Cairns (1984:79-83). Criticism of the loss of conservation and economic values had little effect against the strength of the development ethic, which remained focused on closer settlement. Despite the overall failure to consider long

term forestry development, non-native pine plantations were established on the failed soldier settlement land around Beerburrum and between Gympie and Maryborough (1984:82).

"The Country Party's national park program ... was confined predominantly to land considered useless for other purposes" (Fitzgerald 1984:388). This specific wording appears in Hansard in 1906 as the main argument for designating Queensland's first National Park at Witches Falls, Tamborine Mountain (O'Hare 1996).

Rural Industrial Development (1930s-)

The rural orientation of the Queensland economy meant that rural-related industries were an important part of the state's industrial development. The development of a large meatworks at Rockhampton by Vestey's in 1934, was notable. Sugar Mills were established by CSR and producers' cooperatives. The cooperatives enabled more of the economic benefits of the industry to be retained in the regions. On a smaller scale, butter factories were developed in almost every town in dairying districts. Larger dairy factories were established in regional centres and in Brisbane at West End. Large woolstores and wharves such as those in Teneriffe on the Brisbane River served the wool industry, Queensland's largest export earner in the 1930s (1984:173).

Queensland's rural development has been supported by numerous government initiatives, including the development of the state's rail network and port facilities, the establishment of a Department of Agriculture, the running of rural scientific and technical courses at Queensland University and Gatton College. In addition, there have been the several legislative and land development projects aimed at fostering "closer settlement" in the rural areas (1984:181-2).

Development, War and Austerity (1940s)

Fitzgerald (1984) notes that World War II had a significant impact on Queensland's

development. Earlier efforts at decentralisation were retarded as northern citizens evacuated to the south of the state. Secondary industry was boosted in Brisbane, with a munitions factory at Rocklea (later used as an aircraft repair factory) and shipbuilding by Evans Deakin. Shipbuilding was also boosted at Maryborough. Roads and aerodromes were upgraded elsewhere in the state.

The postwar soldier settlement scheme had some long-term impact on closer settlement, but little economic impact (1984:186). The state emphasis on rural industry and rural settlement meant that Queensland's share of postwar immigration was very low: 7.8% of the national total (1984:186).

The development of the north was an issue of the national interest for many Australians after WWII. The strength of the "populate or perish" belief led to support for a cooperative venture between the postwar Queensland and British governments to develop Peak Downs for national security and supply of food for Britain. The Peak Downs venture was a spectacular failure (1984:188).

Several water management schemes have been built in the interests of Queensland rural and urban development, including the Barron Falls and Tully Falls hydroelectric schemes and the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation project (Fitzgerald 1984:189). Such projects depended on Commonwealth funding, and several grandiose proposals failed to gain support. The most dramatic proposal to remain a development dream was JJC Bradfield's scheme to transfer the waters of the coastal rivers to the inland river system.

Another Mining Boom (1940s-1960s)

In the World War II copper boom, Mt Isa became Australia's largest copper mine (1984:192). After the war, a boom in lead prices attracted a large cosmopolitan workforce and led to the population doubling to 6000 in less than a decade. By

1953, Mt Isa was Queensland's leading mine. The upgrading of the rail link to Townsville ensured its continued regional dominance. Further development of the mines brought the population to 26,000 by the 1980s, by which time new housing estates, government buildings, and community, sporting and cultural facilities had been developed (1984:320).

Until WWII, coal mining was concentrated in small fields in the West Moreton region. After the War, the state government recognised the potential for mining to assist its decentralisation aims, and promoted large-scale open cut mining of the state's central and northern coal fields. Development of the Blair Athol field assisted the Brisbane Thiess Bros to become Australia's biggest civil engineering construction company (1984:195). In 1954, Gladstone Harbour Board built a major new coal loading facility, securing Gladstone's future when coal exports to Japan boomed in the 1960s.

Regional development was boosted due to its political sensitivity in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with strong movements for separate states in north and central Queensland. The potential for the northern regions to attract state support for development projects related to Brisbane's lack of economic and political primacy compared to the other state capitals in their respective states. This is due partly to Queensland's primary industry based political economy (Fitzgerald 1984:291) and partly to Brisbane's eccentric location in the south-east corner of a vast state.

The election of a Country Liberal Party government in the late 1950s shifted the regional development agenda from farming and pastoral enterprises to manufacturing (1984:293). Mechanisation of the meat and sugar industries had created serious unemployment in central Queensland, and this was only partially offset in Townsville by new industrial development (a copper refinery and cement works) and new infrastructure such as the Mt Isa railway link. Gladstone, however, attracted massive

investment, including port expansion, the Moura railway link (for coal export), and a massive alumina plant to refine Weipa bauxite (1984:294). Gladstone's population jumped from 7000 to 16,000 in the 1960s, and to 27,000 by 1982 (1984:309,310).

Meanwhile, in Brisbane, the Wacol industrial estate was established, with state support. Due to transport costs and limited markets, the decentralisation push did not dislodge Brisbane-Ipswich as the favoured location for new manufacturing (1984:294).

Mining Expansion (1960s-1980s)

From the late 1960s til the early 1980s, Queensland's development boom was based on mining expansion by mainly transnational companies (1984:304). Comalco's bauxite mining at Weipa reduced the Weipa Aboriginal Reserve from over 600,000 hectares to just 134 hectares, with very little compensation to the inhabitants (1984:306). In 1963, with the complicity of the Presbyterian Church, Queensland police evicted the Mapoon Aboriginal community, burnt the reserve township and moved the people to New Mapoon. Subsequently in 1965, Alcan was granted a 105 year lease over the reserve land (1984:307-8).

"By 1976, coal had surpassed wool as Queensland's leading export..." (1984:323). The expansion of the coal industry diversified the rural economy in the Emerald, Springsure and Biloela areas of central Queensland. A new rail link from Moura to Gladstone boosted the role of the port. Another new line linked the Peak Downs area to the new port of Hays Point, near Gladstone. New towns were established to service the open cut mines, including Moura, Moranbah, and Dysart, and rural villages such as Blackwater became bustling towns housing thousands of mine workers. Utah and the Queensland Housing Commission constructed 800 houses in Moranbah. The long-term contribution to the development of the region and the state is questioned, given the 90 per cent foreign ownership of the mines and the low royalties charged by Queensland (1984:326-7).

Reflecting the boom-bust pattern of many of the 19th century gold mining towns, Mary Kathleen was established as Australia's first uranium mining town in 1958, became a ghost town in 1963, reopened in 1974 and had a chequered history due to fluctuating markets, union bans and health concerns (1984:141-4). Mary Kathleen is now closed.

Tourism Development

Much of Queensland's development has been for the purpose of play as well as for work. The development of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts for tourism provided new outlets for the progress ethic. Noosa in the 1920s provides a case study of collaboration between the state and local government and private development companies in extending the reach of infrastructure and urban development. Originally a port to serve the Gympie goldfields and timber getting, Noosa-Tewantin established its tourist role of "the Brighton of Gympie" by the 1880s (Ivimey 1889, in O'Hare 1997). Road access to the coastal area was provided in 1929, in a deal between the Noosa Shire Council and Melbourne-based developer, TM Burke and Company. Subdividable land owned by the Council was swapped in return for the construction of roads and bridges to open up the coastal area.

By the 1970s, Queensland's reputation for 'sun, sand and surf' was well established. The Gold Coast had become Australia's best known destination for beach holidays. The development of resorts on the northern tropical islands within the Great Barrier Reef was boosted by the gradual reduction of the cost of flying from the southern capitals.

A cultural landscape of development and conflict

During the 20th century, the initial settlement pattern has been consolidated and extended to incorporate new forms of development including further mining booms, inner city redevelopment and the growth of coastal tourism and interstate

retirement migration. These new developments have been the focus of further contests, particularly as environmental and heritage concerns have increased. The Queensland cultural landscape narrative has been polarised around development conflicts, particularly since the 1970s. National media attention has been drawn to high-rise coastal development on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, the destruction of Noosa beach, the relocation of the mouth of the Noosa River, the bombing of the large-scale Iwasaki Capricorn Resort at Yeppoon, the demolition of Brisbane's Bellevue Hotel and Cloudland Ballroom, resort development on Magnetic Island and near Cardwell, and the building of the Bloomfield road in the Daintree area. There have been scandals over the sale of waterlogged "residential" land on Russell Island in the 1970s, and interstate sales of allegedly overpriced investment properties on the Gold Coast in the 1990s. In non-urban settings, there have been conflicts over land clearing, logging, forestry and the impact of cotton growing on existing agricultural and pastoral industries. In 1999, rural land clearing reportedly increased dramatically in anticipation of the imposition of government restrictions.

Mineral sand mining on the southern Queensland coast and islands, together with the NSW north coast, produced over 80 per cent of the world's rutile and zircon by the 1970s (1984:346). Its proximity to the most densely populated areas of Queensland led to conflicts with the recreational and conservation values of the sands (1984:347). The Cooloola conflict drew attention to the deficiencies of Queensland's development ethos, even from an economic viewpoint (1984:348), and hastened consideration of the area for listing on the Register of the National Estate and its nomination as a World Heritage site. This conflict, together with that over logging on Fraser Island, became a focus for an increase in the profile and status of conservation groups including the Noosa Parks Association, FIDO, and the Cooloola Committee. Subsequent tourism development in the Cooloola region and

Fraser Island has been motivated by a new conception of environmental resources.

Thea Astley's (1994) "big developer" is a late 20th century caricature of long-held conceptions of Queensland as "the epitome of progress" (Queensland Government 1921, cited in Fitzgerald 1982:115).

Astley's 'Big Developer', a figure 9m-high moulded out of fibreglass and concrete, in a semi-gloss acrylic safari suit and white shoes, is something more than a brother to the Big Banana and Big Pineapple: 'the tanned rubbery features and neurotic eyes moved on their swivel skull to the smallest breeze, gazing appetantly up and down the coastline, seeking new empires'.

(Ivor Indyk 26-27 Feb 1994 "The lonely shores of Queensland", Weekend Australian – review of Astley 1994 Coda)

Fitzgerald (1984:390) claims that in the 1960s influential Liberal MPs Kenneth Morris and Gordon Chalk "envisaged the Queensland coast as one long urban strip from the Gold Coast to Cooktown." Agitation by the Noosa Parks Association and other groups for the extension of both Noosa and Cooloola National Parks has highlighted an argument of preventing continuous strip development from the NSW border to Hervey Bay (O'Hare 1997).

Fitzgerald (1984:398-9) notes the 1970s loss of productive agricultural land and sugar mill viability as a result of sub/urban encroachment in the sugar growing regions around Cairns, Mackay, and the Gold Coast. This conflict between urban and rural development has intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, for example in the rich Redlands Shire near Brisbane. Urban expansion has also caused conflicts with conservation values. A proposed arterial road through a koala habitat is widely argued to have contributed to the demise of the Goss Labor Government in 1996. Other urban expansion areas causing conservation conflicts in the 1990s include Cairns' hillsides and the Coomera area between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Brisbane
(1950s-1990s)

Development

Brisbane's Labor Lord Mayor from 1961-1975, Clem Jones, brought to his office a strong development ethic, from his former background as principal of Brisbane's largest firm of surveyors and as a land dealer (1984:439). One of his first achievements was to sewer Brisbane, so that the city was the most sewered of Australia's state capitals by the time the Whitlam federal government took its national urban initiative in the early 1970s. The first Brisbane Town Plan became law in 1965. Public transport had a low priority, and the plan incorporated the Wilbur Smith proposal for a freeway system combined with major off-street parking development. In 1967, the Council decided to replace the tram system with buses "on the grounds that the trams were slowing down cars" (1984:441). The decision was controversial, but quickly resolved with the burning of many trams in an overnight fire that destroyed the Paddington tram terminus in 1969.

A controversial 1965 BCC decision to convert Musgrave Park into the Queensland Rugby Union Headquarters was reversed by the State Government following lobbying from the Brisbane Development Association (BDA), "a middle-class Liberal group" (1984:441). This group, operating as a community organisation, continues to play an influential role in development issues. Other controversial conversions of parkland to exclusive sporting use in the 1970s attracted widespread criticism (1984:444).

In attempting to have subdivision developers provide sealed roads, parkland, water, sewerage, lighting and other urban services, BCC met opposition from developers, the BDA, and the coalition State Government – on grounds of discouraging development and encouraging council malpractice and corruption. From 1966-68, the Council's three most senior planners resigned, allegedly over conflict with Lord Mayor Jones' "heavy-handed style" and emphasis on basic engineering rather than strategic planning (1984:443). The revised 1969 town plan was criticised for being a zoning plan

based purely on the profit motive (1984:444).

From 1966-71 Brisbane experienced a building boom, a trebling of urban investment and a population increase of 35 per cent (1984:445). During this boom period, "the climatically-adapted weatherboard on stilts [building style] was discarded for southern-oriented 'brick and brick veneer' by people who could afford it" (1984:445). During the boom, the Sydney-based LJ Hooker handled the sale of up to 65 per cent of Brisbane's residential development.

Brisbane's prestige as the state capital was enhanced with the state government's mid-1970s decision to construct the Queensland Cultural Centre on the south bank of the Brisbane River. The complex, comprising a performing arts centre, Queensland Art Gallery, Museum, State Library and associated facilities was designed by Robin Gibson and opened progressively in the early 1980s. As well as 'keeping up with' similar moves in the other state capitals, the Cultural Centre signalled a change in the declining fortunes of South Brisbane (see case study).

The State Government's staging of Expo88 overrode contests over the transformation of South Brisbane's low cost housing stock, obsolete wharves and industrial area into a "city of spectacle" (Hannigan 1998). World Expos are primarily a way of attracting international attention as a basis for subsequent trade and economic development. In Brisbane's case, Expo88 was also significant in making interstate Australians, and even Brisbanites, aware of the potential of the city as a pleasant place to live. This greater awareness of Brisbane undoubtedly influenced the growth in interstate migration to South-East Queensland in the early 1990s during the nationwide recession and accompanying deindustrialisation in Melbourne and other southern cities.

In the last fifteen years of the 20th century, Brisbane has again experienced leadership by strong Lord Mayors – Sallyanne Atkinson and Jim Soorley. The actions of both have been related to forceful ideas of the importance of the quality of development to the city and state economies. In the 1990s, the City Council has adopted a new view of pursuing the city's competitiveness in a global market, with attendant notions such as "the 24 hour city" and claims of being "Australia's most livable city".

Conclusion

In Queensland, development has consistently been understood as meaning economic and material progress. The history of the state's evolving infrastructure, industry, property and settlement pattern demonstrates how a Queensland cultural landscape has been created and transformed by the pursuit of development at the State, regional and local levels.



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