

Chapter 6

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

No factor has such a far-reaching influence on the pattern of city development as has the choice of home sites. Not only does housing occupy by far the greatest area of land within a city's boundaries, but to most people the home and the family are the focal points of all endeavour. To many the home itself, its environment, the amenities of the neighbourhood and the relation of the home to the place of employment assume an importance which overshadows everything else the city has to offer. On the quality of home life depends, in no small measure, the social conditions within the city. To the planner, therefore, how and where and under what conditions people desire to live become questions of the first importance. It is essential to know not only where people live now, in what types of homes, and under what conditions, but also to learn where they would like to live and whether there is any trend towards a change in the home itself or in the conditions of living.

The scope of the planning scheme to which these studies relate is primarily concerned with the broader metropolitan aspects of housing. These studies have hence been limited to questions of location, density, the type of residence and the conditions under which it is occupied, the general age and condition of housing, the household structure, future housing requirements and the relation between the home and places of work.

LOCATION

Under this heading we are concerned with where people now live and where they want to live.

Where people live

The existing conditions plan (map 8) gives a generalised picture of the extent and location of the present residential areas. Map 19 shows the general distribution of population between the five statistical districts, from which it will be seen that at the date of the 1947 census only about 20% of the population lived in the central district within three miles of the city centre, 21% lived in the northern district, 18% in the eastern, 33% in the southern and only 8% in the west. The density diagram of map 23 shows the intensity of use of the residential areas.

Where people want to live

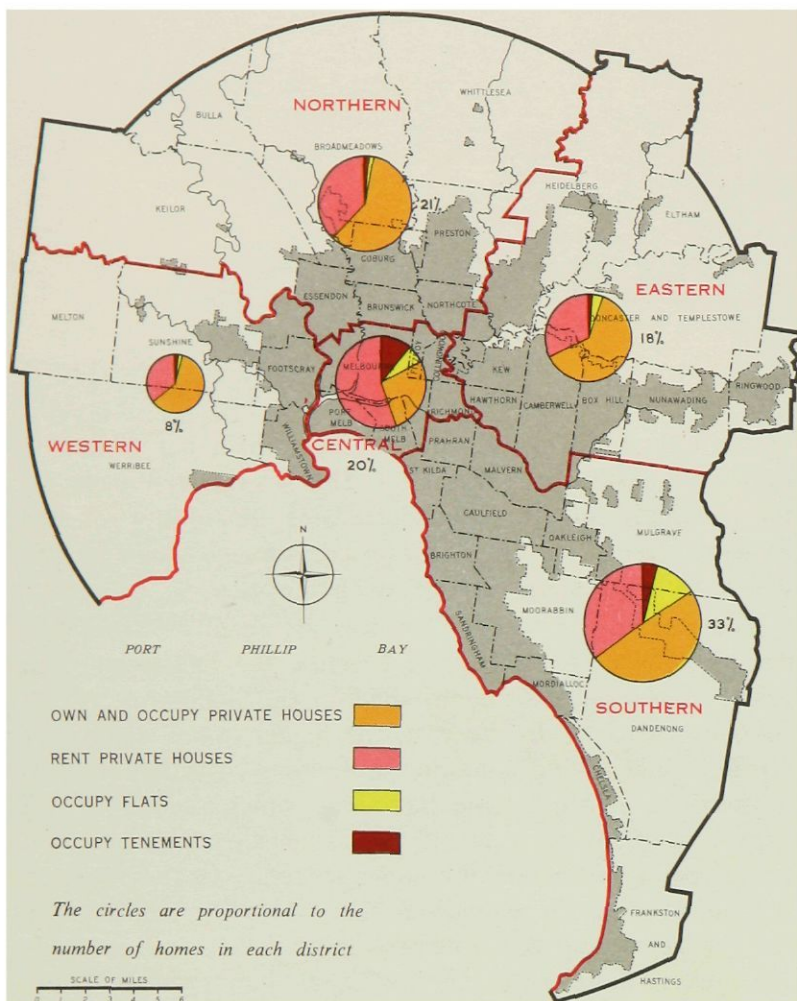
The general preference in the choice of home sites is illustrated in map 20 which shows for the stated periods the

proportion of the population increase which has settled in each of the statistical districts. The strong preference for the southern suburbs, the increasing popularity of the eastern suburbs, and the small proportions who have chosen to live in the western suburbs are noteworthy.

The reasons for these differences are readily discernable. The proximity of the bayside beaches, the lighter soil and gentle slopes have all contributed to the popularity of the southern district. In the east, the higher, more undulating terrain, while adding somewhat to building costs, has resulted in many delightful residential areas which, added to the proximity of the pleasant hill country further out, have had an increasing attraction for home seekers. In the west, on the other hand, the country is flat, windswept and barren, the soil heavy and tenacious, the rainfall low, and generally the area is more suited for industrial than residential use. The north, while more attractive than the west, has not the appeal of the east and south. It is not surprising, therefore, that over a period of 50 years two-thirds of the population increase has settled in the eastern and southern districts. This trend expresses a strong desire which cannot be ignored.

The question of where people really want to live and the factors that make them move from one area to another are important, but answers to such questions are unreal unless considered in relation to people's ability to move if they wish to do so. This depends on many factors such as the availability of housing, an individual family's means, and the nature of a man's work which may necessitate his living in a specific area although he and his family may prefer to live in another district.

Nevertheless, it is desirable to measure in some way the basic inclinations and desires of people with regard to location of residence, as in the long run these will undoubtedly affect the general trend of development. As most jobs are located in the inner suburbs, it is also very important to assess how far out from the city people may be prepared to live. To ascertain people's general desires, a sample survey was conducted throughout all municipalities in the course of which a representative of each household was interviewed and asked: "If it were easy to obtain a house in any suburb would you move or remain in your present home?" Those who replied that they would move were then asked which suburb they would go to and their reason for moving. Maps



19 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION
SHOWING TYPE OF HOME OCCUPANCY

21 and 22 summarise the results obtained, showing both the percentage of households wishing to move and the percentage of all such households who wanted to move to particular municipalities.

It will be seen that the highest proportion of households desiring to move was in the older inner suburbs and, to a lesser degree, in some of the more distant suburbs. The reasons, however, were entirely different. People in the inner suburbs gave as the chief reasons the poor standard housing and lack of space, but those in the outer suburbs quoted distance from the city centre and from work, and in some instances, inadequate services. Only a small proportion wanted to move to the poorer inner suburbs or to the more distant suburbs. The great bulk of all households wanting to move preferred to live in suburbs intermediate in distance from the city centre and within a radius of about 10 miles from it.

It is apparent, therefore, that most people do not want to live in the sub-standard inner suburbs nor do they want to live too far out. The majority want to live just sufficiently far out to enable them to obtain good housing conditions within reasonable distance of the city centre and their work.

Most people would seem to be quite prepared to live within up to 30 minutes' travelling time of their work in order to live in the area they like most. There seems little doubt that distance from the city centre becomes a limiting factor to most people when the travelling time exceeds 30 minutes. This is even so in the more attractive eastern and southern districts, as shown by the decreasing proportion of householders who want to live further out than Box Hill, Oakleigh and Sandringham. These figures once again show the basic preference of people to live in the north, east and south rather than in the west. The greatest proportion of satisfied households are found in those suburbs where most people want to live.

The various reasons given by people in support of their desire to move are significant and these are summarised in Table 16.

Several of these reasons are closely related. For example, "require more space and fresh air" may also have implied "buying own home," or "buying a better or larger house," and vice versa. They merely indicate the dominant thought in the person's mind at the time of the interview in expressing the reason for wanting to move. However, in general, the answers tend to average out and the pattern as shown is indicative of their relative importance.

It was found that most of those who gave their reason as "requiring more space and fresh air," "forced to move," or "want a better home" were located in the inner suburbs, while the majority of those who answered "wanted to be nearer their work," or "handier to the city" were located in the outer suburbs, especially the more distant ones to the east and south, such as Ringwood, Dandenong, Mordialloc, Chelsea and Frankston. Those that "wanted to buy their own home" or "to be nearer to friends" were fairly generally distributed among all suburbs. The majority of people whose first thought was of moving nearer to the beach were located

Table 16
REASONS FOR DESIRE TO CHANGE PLACE
OF RESIDENCE

Reason	Percentage of families
Require more space and fresh air	25
Want to buy own home	17
Forced to move	11
Want to be nearer work	10
Want a better house	8
Want to be nearer beach	8
Want to be handier to city	7
Want to be nearer friends	6
Want to be nearer better shopping facilities	4
Want a larger house	4
	100%

