

The Catalyst



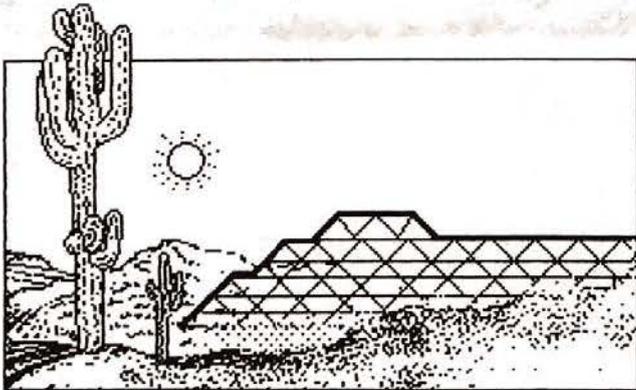
* The Halifax Project



A Piece of Eco-city

by Matt Fisher

The proponents of *The Halifax Project* know it will be the start of something big, they call it "A piece of eco-city" because it will be a real start along the road to using our cities to solve a whole range of problems. The time has come for us to experiment with some different approaches to 'development'. Clearly the standard methods have not served us well, a city of energy hungry, half empty glass towers surrounded on all sides by an endless sprawl of standardised suburbs and freeways, choked with fumes, struggling with human isolation from real community, services and employment..... is this how we want to continue? New ideas are available, they make sense for people, the environment and the economy. It is time they were tried. (Cont page 2)



Letter From America

Phil Hawes was the Chief Architect of *Biosphere 2* for seven years and is now working on designing and promoting ecologically sustainable townships.

Phil is part of Urban Ecology's extensive international network and we have just received a copy of the long and informative letter he has written to all Adelaide City Councillors in support of *The Halifax Project*. His perception of eco-city activity is one of the best-informed of anyone on the planet and his comments carry corresponding weight.

Here is an extract:

"You may not be aware that the project which is proposed for Adelaide on the Halifax Street depot site has probably progressed FARTHER towards its actual realization of an ecological townlet, than any of the similar concepts around the world which are known to me.

"I cannot too strongly urge you to lend all possible support to the effort to create the Halifax Project. It may well be the first realized well integrated urban sustainable project to reach fruition anywhere in the world. It is a time of great ferment in these areas and practical demonstration projects are as yet woefully lacking.

"It is fairly easy to develop the list of tasks necessary to be done, but it is proving more difficult to develop the will to squarely face these problems and devote the necessary energy to their solutions in an 'ecological, environmentally sound, and sustainable way'.

"If you rise to this challenge, I am confident that Adelaide...can be a world leader in this search. The cost will be so small and the possible benefits to all of us so great that it would be extremely foolish to pass up such an opportunity.

"Please, do your best to convince both your colleagues and your constituents that such a project is worthwhile to undertake, and may indeed lead to a better understanding of both ecology (which is often defined as 'rules-of-the-house'), and true economics (which can be defined as 'management of the house'). These words, therefore, refer to the stewardship of our global household.

"This is a serious business, and requires boldness on your part as elected representatives of the community.

Good luck, Phil Hawes"

What is The Halifax Project?

In 1992 the Adelaide City Council moved its Halifax Street depot to another site, freeing up 2.4 hectares of community owned land for redevelopment.

The land is bordered by Halifax Street, Gilles Street, Hallett Street and Symonds Place. The name 'The Halifax Project' refers to a specific proposal to build on this land a residential and small business development that is truly different; designed according to ecological principals and involving the community from the first proposal to the finished product. The proposal was initiated by Ecopolis Pty Ltd. and Urban Ecology Australia Inc.

Where did the Project Proposal come from?

Towards the end of 1991, in response to interest in his 'Ecopolis Now' exhibition and articles, Paul Downton was working on designs for a dozen families to build a small eco-city development in the heart of Adelaide. In researching a likely site Paul discovered that the Halifax St Council Depot site was due to be vacated for redevelopment in 1992. It was the perfect opportunity for creating a real 'piece of eco-city' and so Paul developed a design for this whole city block. A perspective drawing of this proposal was one of three commissioned from Paul by the SA Planning Review to show 'ecologically sustainable development' in the Adelaide metropolitan region and it was used as the illustration on the poster for EcoCity 2 - the second international EcoCity conference, held in April 1992. The first public declaration of the project proposal took place at the conference and interest has continued to increase ever since.

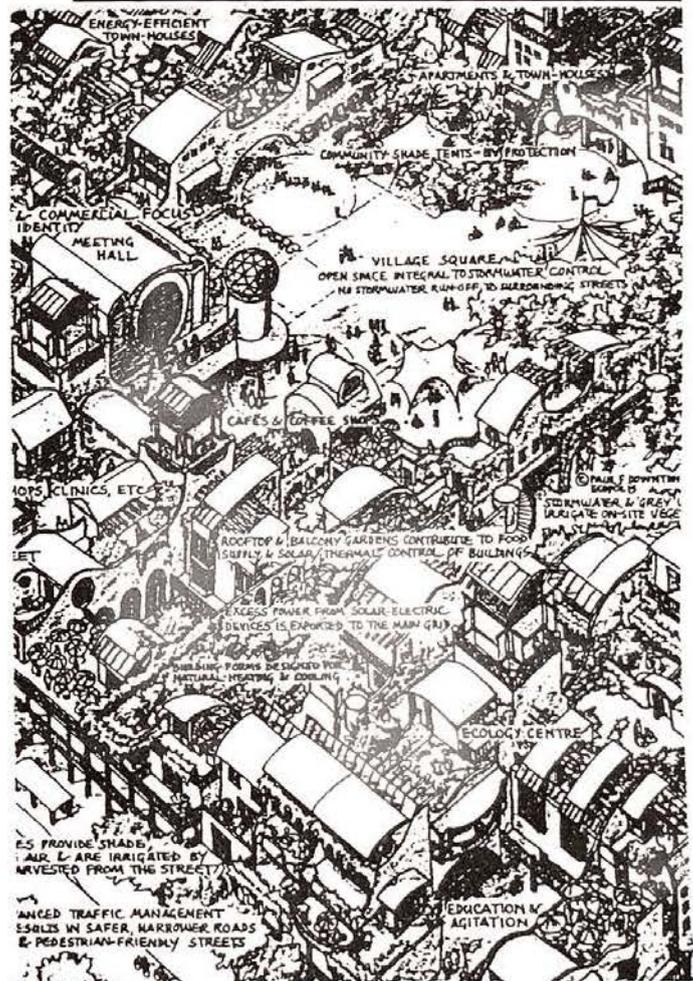
The initial plans and drawings brought together Paul's knowledge and long experience derived from working with many people with a shared ethic, seeking clear, practical ideas about using the city to deal with a whole range of environmental and social problems. The city is where most of these problems are created, after all, the place where most Australians live; but what this also means is that by changing the ways we design and live in our cities we can find the solutions we need.



About The Halifax Project logo

Designed by Paul Downton from an idea by Roman Orszanski, the logo represents humanity learning to juggle the elements in an attempt to place human settlement (represented by the square) in a position of dynamic balance with the biosphere. (The same ancient Air, Earth, Water & Fire symbols are employed in the logo for Ecopolis Pty Ltd.)

'The Halifax Project' name is owned by Ecopolis Pty Ltd.



The above illustration is a detail from the original perspective drawing by Paul F Downton © Ecopolis Pty Ltd

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What is Special about this Proposal?

Twenty years ago people who talked about the environment were usually thought of as harmless eccentrics. Since that time, of course, a great deal has changed, the general awareness of environmental issues, the attitudes of politicians and business people and so on. What has also changed is the understanding of those people who actively work in the area of the environment. No longer can green ideas be seen as simplistic or confined to looking after 'nature', something 'out there' in a national park somewhere. An ecologically based way of thinking can be applied to every area of life; the ideas are highly evolved and ready to be used.

It is this sort of experience which has been brought together in the team of people who now manage the process which is leading to the development of *The Halifax Project*. They are members of the community with a range of skills developed over many years of

working with people, and tackling real problems. Such skills cannot be picked up by bureaucrats and wealthy development companies overnight.

It is time for the community to have more of a say about how, and what, we build. This project is about how to do that.

The Halifax Project is not intended to be just a 'one-off' development, but a pilot project, demonstrating what is possible in re-thinking our cities and providing a fund of ideas and experience to be used elsewhere. Having far more than just a residential focus, it is about creating human settlement in which buildings, social structure and natural processes are integrated, to fit the satisfaction of human needs into the dynamic ecological balance of living systems. The way it will do this is by following the *Ecopolis Development Principles* for ecologically sustaining development, which forms the basis of the forthcoming *Tandanya Protocol*, an initiative created at the end of the 1992 EcoCity conference. (see page 4)



Community Controlled Development, what does it mean?

By Matt Fisher

These days there is a lot of talk about the need for more community consultation and involvement in many aspects of our lives, and particularly in relation to planning and development. The recent South Australian State Planning Review recognised this need;

"Traditional urban planning, whereby public authorities direct the community from relative bureaucratic and professional isolation, will need to change, to be more interactive with ... diverse interest groups." (2020 Vision Ideas for Metropolitan Adelaide: 1991)

Because of the Planning Review and other community involvement in planning there is now a considerable body of information in this area. It is a

lot easier to make an informed assessment of what the prevalent community attitudes are. As one might expect, there are widespread concerns about such issues as social breakdown, unemployment and crime, health and environmental degradation. The destruction of heritage buildings and natural areas, the building of ugly, standardised and inappropriate architecture, urban sprawl; these are also areas in which people have spoken out against 'business as usual'. It is quite clear that urban planning is an important part of the solution to these problems.

In many, but not all, cases the actual process of planning and development is going to need the involvement of people with established expertise in particular areas. This can be the

point where the influence of community attitudes starts to be diluted, and the same old priorities, which are often the source of the problems in the first place, reassert themselves. (And because 'experts' and people in positions of leadership have so often failed to respond to the aspirations of ordinary people an atmosphere of distrust further complicates things.)

Expertise and leadership are going to be needed, but they must be of quite a different sort to what we are used to. When those who take these roles are responding to community attitudes as a part of everything they do, seeking out innovative and practical solutions to the real problems, and sharing their skills; then we can say that we have genuine community involvement and control. It is a matter of finding a balance; in this case the balance must be between the ideas which the community generates and the skills needed to put them into action.





Ecopolis Development Principles

•1 restore degraded land

by using appropriate building processes and non-toxic materials, by rebuilding a strong sense of local community, through education and co-operation it is possible for development to actually be good for the land where it is situated. Where the city in the past has destroyed the environment, ecological cities can, and must, make good the damage.

•2 fit the bioregion

to be truly ecological you must take account of the biological area, or bioregion, around you, with its own particular landscape, climate, indigenous species and local cultures.

•3 balance development

means balancing the intensity of development with the ecological carrying capacity of the land, and protecting areas of ecological importance.



•4 halt urban sprawl

when urban planning is based on multiple centres for economic and cultural activity, rather than just one or two as we have at the moment, it is possible to eliminate the problems of urban sprawl. Such centres have medium to high density housing, and allow for a network of green belts and the development of ecological corridors in between. They also make public transport and infrastructure planning more efficient.

•5 optimize energy performance

by operating at low levels of energy consumption, making efficient use of renewable and local energy resources, and using local energy production and techniques of resource reuse.

•6 contribute to the economy

supporting and promoting appropriate economic activity, creating and servicing new 'niche' markets, focusing more on local production, consumption and exchange, restoring the productive capacity of land, providing education; such measures can make a strong economic contribution.

•7 provide health and security

employing appropriate materials and careful planning to create safe and healthy places for people to live, work and play.

•8 encourage community

building community is a vital part of ecological development. In an atmosphere of mutual support and trust many things are made possible and many social problems reduced. (A lot of older people recognise that this is something we have lost sight of in more recent times.) Shared facilities for work, play, education and culture are a part of making this a reality, starting at the level of the local neighbourhood.

•9 promote social equity

by employing economic, ownership and decision making structures which follow principles of social equity and local democracy.

•10 respect history

all the valuable buildings and other artifacts of our unique heritage can be restored and thoughtfully incorporated in development which places cultural and social values on an equal footing with economic benefit.

•11 enrich the cultural landscape

by supporting and promoting cultural diversity and expression, encouraging people to discover their own creativity and incorporating ecological awareness into all aspects of human settlement.

•12 heal the biosphere

contributing to the restoration of the global ecosystem by paying attention to:

- air
- water
- soil
- energy
- biomass
- food
- biodiversity
- habitat
- ecolinks
- waste

The project is about people, their relationships with each other and with the ecology of which they are a part - evolving appropriate strategies for creating ecological development is an integral part of that process and involves all of us in one way or another. These principles summarise what *The Halifax Project* is about (as well as being applicable to any development); they reflect many years of thought and activity. Originally put together by Paul Downton, Chérie Hoyle and Emilis Prelgauskas, the version here has been adapted for *The Catalyst* by Matt Fisher.

The Process so far...

By Matt Fisher

Setting up a Development Structure

The first step taken in turning *The Halifax Project* from an idea to a reality has been the setting up of a Management Team. The Team is made up of members of Urban Ecology Australia (co-initiator of the project with Ecopolis Pty Ltd), representatives of a range of community organisations, and individuals with expertise in related areas. It is intended to have a limited life, with its role being to set up the bodies which will actually bring the project to life. Three working groups have formed to look at the crucial LAND, PEOPLE and DEVELOPMENT aspects of the project.

•An Ecological Development Company

This is the body which will undertake the actual development of the site. It was felt by the Management Team that a company was the best form of organisation to do this job for a variety of legal and practical reasons. *EcoCity Developments Pty Ltd* was registered on March 16 with its first shareholders' meeting on 19 April 1993.

•Land Trust

It is expected that a community land trust will own the land within the site and manage the on-going financial affairs of the project as a whole, including leases. It is likely to have a board of directors representing key community interests and have an on-going role in ensuring ecological integrity for the life of the project.

•Community Board

This will be a representative body of the residents, tenants and business people on and around the site. It will deal with decision making within the community, conflict resolution, and the development and use of shared facilities on the site. Both before and after the project is started the CB will also make education and wider community involvement a focus of its work.

At this stage the Management Team co-ordinates the three working groups and advises *EcoCity Developments Pty Ltd*. *Ecopolis Pty Ltd* has continued to negotiate on behalf of the Management Team with the Adelaide City Council, which owns the site.

The Adelaide City Council

Currently the ACC have instituted a community consultation process in relation to their interest in the site (which they call *The Halifax*), and have not made a commitment to any particular proposal, although it is highly likely that residential use of some sort will be opted for. Paul Downton was invited to contribute to this process and other members of *The Halifax Project* Management Team have been involved, pushing for genuine consultation and environmental commitment rather than just window dressing. A recent 'invitation only' workshop on Environmentally Sustainable Development showed strong support for an uncompromising approach to environmental issues, and for the *Ecopolis Development Principles* outlined in this newsletter.

A Public Process

The Halifax Project is about a genuinely different approach to development, and a key aspect of the difference is in attitudes to public participation. Unlike the traditional approach, mostly driven by the desire for maximum profits for the developer, *The Halifax Project* has built-in community involvement at every stage. The design itself is a synthesis based on many years of talking and listening to people about their dissatisfaction with how our cities have developed in the past few decades, and what they would like to see created (or re-created) instead.

•Public Meetings

Michael Lennon, CEO of the Department of Planning and Urban Development and ABC's Julia Lester willingly volunteered their services to chair two highly successful and informative public meetings in the Gas Company Auditorium. The degree of interest and support shown from the general public has been fantastic. More meetings are planned as the project progresses.

The next meeting is orientated towards young people, called *What Do You Want?!?* and will be held at 7.30 pm, Mon. 20 May in The Gas Co. Auditorium, 35 Waymouth St, Adelaide, or the New Jam Factory. Contact *Urban Ecology Australia* for details and to confirm the date.

Members of the Management Team are available to make presentations about the project on request - if your club, company, community centre, school or whatever is interested, please contact Chérie Hoyle on 08 379 1984.



•The Model and Display

In order to give people as much useful information as possible about *The Halifax Project* a fabulous 1:100 scale model and extensive display have been put together. These are both proving to be very popular and have already been on show at various locations including the universities of South Australia and Adelaide, the Lion Arts Centre, the foyer of the Festival Centre, and the North Adelaide School of Art.

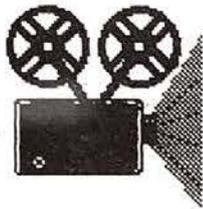
The process of making the model is a microcosm of the intended process for building the actual project and is an on-going event involving dozens of people, some of whom have never made a model before! Student architect Jeremy Hassan is co-ordinating work on the model and the exhibitions. The exhibition drawings include panels from the original *Ecopolis Now!* display.

•Business Survey

The Management Team are currently undertaking a survey of businesses in the area of the project in order to find out their ideas and concerns, to find out how *The Halifax Project* can best work in with and complement the services they already offer, and help to revitalise the whole area. Management Team member and *Village Enterprises* initiator Ed Wilby is heavily involved with relating and incorporating ethical 'green' business activity with the project.

•The Urban Ecology Workshop

Urban Ecology Australia, one of the initiating groups for the project, has been provided with space in Brompton by the SA Gas Company. The project will be based there in a studio/workshop environment, providing even better public access to the model, with a permanent exhibition including video and other displays. A 'Workshop Warming' will be held on Monday, 14 June. Visits by appointment with UEA preferred for the moment.



Ecovideo

Walter Holt and Gianni Zandel (08 352 3031) are working on a promotional video for *The Halifax Project*.

We look forward to the video emulating the success of their earlier work - Gianni and Walter won a *South Australian Wilderness Society 1992 Young Film Makers 'Best Environmental Film' Award* for their 'Ecopolis Now' video featuring Emilis Prelgauskas and Paul Downton discussing the problems of our cities and the eco-city solution.

Walter and Gianni (who is a regular *Ecopolis* model maker) are also heavily involved in *Student Community Action Television*. A SCAT news feature on *The Halifax Project* and urban issues is in the pipeline.



Support has been coming in from the local, national and international community - if the amount of support the project has received from all sorts of people and organisations is anything to go by then *The Halifax Project* is definitely an idea whose time has come! Letters have been received from:

the Greens in the European Parliament, the Australian Conservation Foundation, Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, Aurora Heritage Action, The SA Gas Company, Building Trades Federation, Trees for Life SA, Kaurna Heritage Committee, the Conservation Council of South Australia, Friends of the Earth Australia, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Left Connection, Greenhouse Association of SA, and many more - see the cover of this newsletter, for instance.

Many of these organisations have also written directly to the Adelaide City Council and councillors in support of the Ecopolis Adelaide proposal. The project is attracting attention around the world and across the country. The European Green Parliamentarians were so rapt by Sam Knottenbelt's presentation of the project to them in Brussels earlier this year that they sent individual letters to every councillor. Every letter adds weight to the gathering momentum behind *The Halifax Project* - yours can help too! Contact Chérie Hoyle (08 379 1984) for more information on lobbying.



Jason Hoberg & The Boiling Frogs

Yes, there is an Ecopolis song too!

Jason Hoberg has single-handedly recorded the *Ecopolis Now!* song which will feature on *The Halifax Project* video (see above).

Jason will be joined by fellow frog Josh Devitt to sing the acoustic version of this and other eco-city ditties at the Workshop Warming.

The Halifax Project has featured in various publications (including the *Permaculture International Journal*, the *US Urban Ecology Newsletter* and as the frontispiece to the *Los Angeles Eco-city Conference Proceedings*) and media interest is beginning to increase as realisation begins to dawn that this is not just another real estate scam and, most importantly and amazingly, it really does stand a better than even chance of happening!

It is not often that a heritage conservation organization expresses support for a new building development but the following commendation was received from Aurora Heritage Action Inc.:

"(We) wholeheartedly support a project which emphasises energy efficiency, good design and the involvement of the community in the development of an inner city residential and commercial project."

How you can get involved...

Making an ecologically viable future is an adventure in which everyone can take part. Ecological cities involve everyone. There is no room for 'big-brother' or for 'top-down' authoritarianism. There is no place for expediency, ethical compromise, grandstanding or aloof expertise and because of this there are innumerable ways in which to make really useful contributions.

So get involved! There are a range of ways in which you can take an active part in The Halifax Project. Here are some suggestions - can you think of others?

1. Register your interest

The enclosed 'Registration of Interest' form can be used to indicate your level of personal interest in the project itself, whether you simply would like to be sent more detailed information, or if you would like to invest, live in or operate a business within *The Halifax Project*. Please refer to this form for more details.

2. Join Urban Ecology Australia

If your interest in these ideas goes beyond this particular project then you might want to consider joining *Urban Ecology Australia Inc* who are one of the groups who got *The Halifax Project* proposal up and running. Their contact details are also on the 'Registration of Interest' form.

3. Donate!

There are numerous day-to-day expenses involved with making this project happen. Donations are welcomed via the non-profit *Urban Ecology Australia Inc*.

4. Subscribe!

Subscribe to *The Catalyst*, keep in touch and help to cover our costs. We plan to publish on an 'as-needed' basis and expect to produce 4 - 6

issues a year. We also expect *The Catalyst* will evolve into the local newspaper for *The Halifax Project*. Send \$10 to *Urban Ecology Australia Inc* for a year's subscription.

5. Invest!

Pssst! Wanna buy a piece of eco-city?! - Vin Pearce is presently working on a 'Buy a Brick' campaign to be launched very very soon. Watch this Space!

6. Display!

The travelling display and/or the model of the project may be available for use by your organisation or to be put on show in your local area, library, workplace or whatever. They are a great way for people to really get a feel for what the project is about and how it will look. Members of the Management Team are also available to talk about the project and answer your questions. You can get in touch with the Team through *Urban Ecology Australia*.

7. Write!

Letters to members of the Adelaide City Council indicating support for *The Halifax Project* are a very important part of the 'lobbying' process. This is your chance to put 'people power' into practice! A complete list of all councillors is available on request from the Town Hall. Contact Chérie Hoyle for more information on 08 379 1984.

The following commendation for the project was received from the South Australian Civic Trust:

CONTRIBUTION TO CIVIC AWARENESS

"This project challenges most of the traditional concepts of urban development. Although visually exciting, the ideas embodied within the project are what the Jury commended. Paul Downton has addressed pertinent issues with respect to the development of the City of Adelaide such as housing for diverse community groups, community services, employment, education, security and the City's unique heritage and visual townscape.

"These are important ingredients in any development for Adelaide, but the Halifax Street Project also introduces concepts of sustainable living, energy conservation and waste recycling. It strives to achieve an ecological balance.

"The importance of this project is that it introduces principles of ecologically sustainable development to the inner city. It predicts that such communities can exist, and encourages us to achieve more sustainable and satisfying environments."

The Never-ending Story

To empower others to go down the same path we are attempting to document the entire process of creating The Halifax Project so that the adventure we are on can be shared by other people in other cities, here and around the world.

The Ecology Centre

An 'Ecology Centre' is planned as part of the first bite-size chunk of the project, and from day one, the project will become an educational and 'eco-tourism' destination as people visit the site to see ecological city-making taking place.

What's your question?

In taking *The Halifax Project* into the public arena we have found a lot of questions about particular aspects or issues coming up again and again. So, rather than trying to find new ways to give the same answer we are putting together Fact Sheets on a variety of topics. These are listed below. If one of these areas is of particular interest to you just send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and we will be only too happy to send you the relevant sheet.

The Halifax Project: Fact Sheets

- Aged
- Animals
- Art
- Barefoot Architects
- Biodiversity
- Bioregion
- The Buildings
- Business
- Children (incl. design, facilities safety)
- Community Board
- Community Facilities
- Desertification
- Development Company
- Density
- Disadvantaged people
- Ecological Corridor

- Ecology Centre
- Education
- Electricity
- Emergencies
- Employment
- Engineering
- Entertainment
- Ethical Investments
- Food
- Furniture
- Gardens
- Gas
- Greenhouse Effect
- Health
- Heating & Cooling
- Indigenous plants
- Heritage Archaeology

- Kaurna
- Land Trust
- Maintenance
- Model
- Ozone Layer
- Permaculture
- Pets
- Privacy
- Rainforests
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Recycling (and waste disposal)
- Residency (incl. Buying, rent, lease, moving etc)
- Rooftops
- Rural Links

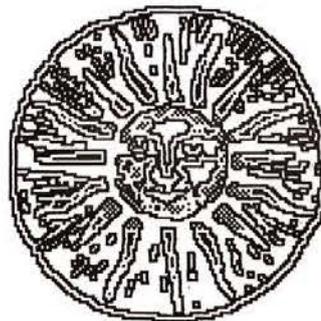
- Security
- Self-build, Sweat equity
- Site De-toxification
- Solar Power
- Technology
- Telecommunications
- Tourism
- Transport
- Treaty
- UV Protection
- Walls
- Water
- Wildlife
- Youth

Living & learning

Extracted from *'The Halifax Project - part of 'Ecopolis Adelaide''* by Paul F Downton

The design proposes a community of 1,000 people with pedestrian streets, squares and courtyards, and energy efficient buildings of 3 to 5 stories with belvederes rising above them. The buildings use mud bricks, stabilised rammed earth, lightweight concrete and timber frame construction to create a variety of spaces and places which respond directly to the needs and creativity of the inhabitants as well as the imperatives of healthy environmental performance and ecological responsibility. There is no mindless repetition as the plan and detail design of every dwelling will be worked out through a 'barefoot architect' program which

involves architects and urban ecologists in a direct consulting and educational role with all incoming members of the new community.



The educational process will go both ways - architects have a lot to learn about community! And both have a lot to learn about ecology!!

The passive solar cooling and heating of the architecture is designed to work with the project's extensive vegetation which includes permaculture and an ecological

corridor of native species. This urban development will demonstrate its responsibility for the city's impact on the wider environment in a direct and practical way - there will be at least 1 hectare (approx. 2.4 acres) of rural land being revegetated and restored to productivity for each and every person living on the site. The roof gardens provide places to relax, grow food and nourish neighbourliness. Solar power heats the water and generates most of the electricity whilst gas is used for cooking and back-up heating and power. Stormwater is collected and used on-site, grey water is filtered and re-used. There are some composting toilets to ensure that not all the nutrient value of human effluent goes down the drain and it is proposed that, sooner rather than later, a local bio-gas plant be located on the edge of the nearby parklands to close the ecological loop, capturing the nutrient value of sewage and putting the energy value of methane into the gas pipes for the whole city.

Contributions are welcome - There are no one-way streets in an eco-city. *The Halifax Project* is about people of diverse views and backgrounds working together to create a model for an ecologically and socially responsible and viable future. Write, scrawl or draw your input to *The Catalyst* and join in!

A House Is Not a Machine

by Paul F Downton

Nature abhors straight lines, goes the old saying, nowadays we might say she does things in fractals instead. Nature also abhors exact repetition. Nothing is ever the same twice. Symmetry abounds in nature, but even in symmetry things are not identical. Look at the symmetry of a face, or a leaf. Both sides similar, but different; developed according to the same pattern, but with individual realisation.

I believe that if architecture reflects this natural order then it will begin to possess the same kind of depth of difference that is in nature. If simple rules and patterns can be realised with individuality the result will be 'organic' and more likely to be aesthetically satisfying than perfect machine repetition. In many ways craft pieces have exhibited this characteristic and accompanying appeal to our senses since humans became makers of artifice. Hand-made items are never identical in the way that machine produced objects are.

Historically, even the best architects and designers have resorted to simple repetition when confronted with the task of creating a lot of housing or multiple office accomodation. Often, the authoritarian impulse begins to take over, as with Mies Van Der Rohe and his insistence that the blinds on the Seagram office tower could only be open, shut or precisely half-closed! Central authority prefers such certainty and it makes maintenance easier if everything is the same. But as soon as people are able they try to break the tyranny of such monocular vision. When municipal housing was sold to its tenants in England the new owners did things like put their own windows in, add blinds and balconies and use different coloured paintwork to emphasise the fact they were not the clone of their neighbour. When there is no possibility of changing the environment in a positive way, people react, sometimes, with violence. Modern history is replete with examples of the failure of mindless mass housing 'experiments' which have failed. Pruitt Igoe, in St Louis, had to be blown up.

Even though the Halifax Project is a proposal for what planners call 'mass housing' and provides a lot of similar accomodation for a lot of people in a highly regular structure, it eschews repetition. No two dwellings are ever the same because each one is finally designed in association with its intended occupants. No two elevations are identical because the window and door openings of each dwelling are set out in consultation with the occupants and then the pattern of the doors and window frames are entirely the responsibility of the dwelling occupants. Apart from some clearly defined elements in the design, doors and windows to every dwelling can be painted according to the taste of their occupants. There is, in fact, more real choice and control over the final plan and appearance of each dwelling in the development than can be found in conventional suburban tract housing.

Barefoot Architects

All of this requires extensive consultation and learning on the part of the occupants and the 'barefoot architects' who work with them. Without co-ordination, the buildings would not stand up, and as a climate-responsive building must have openings, walls, floor and roofs working together holistically, so an understanding of the constraints on the position of any window or door, or the tilt of a roof, etc., has to be painlessly, even joyfully, obtained by the occupant. The role of the 'barefoot architect' is crucial. This goes part of the way to explaining why conventional developments favour simple machine-like repetition - the alternative requires that more resources be dedicated to the consultants' and particularly the architects' role. All of which is good news for architects, but only if they enjoy working with people, can understand the need for two-way communication and learning between architect and client, and can happily accept that there may be more work, but less profit and no room for hungry egos.

The Builder

From the builder's point of view there is also more consideration and work required to produce a given floor area of housing, but there is potential for much greater job satisfaction. There is less of the stress associated with doing endlessly repeated construction operations with identical components. A construction site is often something of a battlefield, with the needs of construction workers set against the needs of capital-intensive industry and where the only antidote to the pressure of that industry, and maybe the only way to ensure a fair slice of the cake, is to go slow. The proposition behind the Halifax Project approach is that the time spent on site may be the same as with currently normal approaches to building, but the time will be spent in more varied and creative tasks. Rather than be merely the extension of a machine fulfilling the plans for maximising the investment of distant capital, the building worker is put back into the picture as an integral part of the creative process, liaising with occupants, clients, architects and others as part of a team. Every member of that team has something to gain from co-operating and communicating with the others and all should be gaining financial security from the process. With the whole project also set up to create a healthy environment, the building process itself becomes closer to life-enhancing exercise with the elimination of toxins and pollution contributing directly to the physical health of all concerned.

LETS & Sweat

Ethical investment programs are integral to the Ecopolis concept and we are looking at the possibility of incorporating the LETS (local economy/green dollars) system and sweat equity to help make properties affordable. Contact Ed Wilby for more information on (08) 331 9143 ah

Beyond City Limits

The Halifax Project is not only an unusual urban development, it is not **ONLY** an urban development. Integral to the whole project is a massive ecological restoration program in which at least 1 hectare of degraded rural land will be restored to ecological health for every inhabitant of the urban site. That means at least 1,000 hectares of land will be brought back to health and vitality as a direct result of *The Halifax Project* proceeding - we hope it will be even more.

The concept that the city should be the driving force behind ecological activity of this kind is one of the central tenets of the Ecopolis philosophy. It differentiates it from the run-of-the-mill 'sustainable city' ideas with which the mainstream planning profession is now becoming familiar.

At the core of the planning proposition for Ecopolis is the simple idea that the city has to work as part of the ecology of its host bioregion. *The Halifax Project* will be the first new inner-city development anywhere to really bring these ideas to fruition.



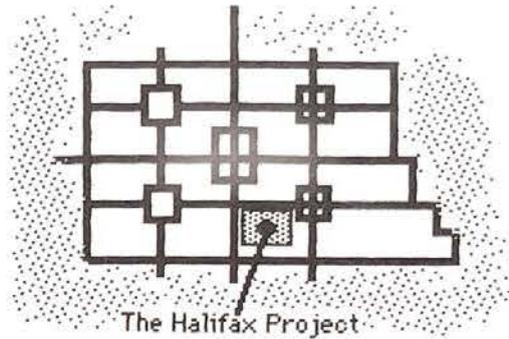
What is Ecopolis Adelaide?

Ecopolis Adelaide is a proposal by Paul Downton to progressively and rapidly turn the City of Adelaide into an ecological city. It is not just a physical plan - it integrates social, economic, technological and cultural goals in a program designed to assist the evolution towards an ecologically sustaining civilisation. *The Halifax Project* is the first fully developed example of what that proposal implies for the immediate future of the city.

The Ecopolis Halifax Project is connected to the life and infrastructure of the existing city. The project is not designed to be an enclave. It is not a stand-alone 'village' but is intended to be a 'piece of eco-city' - the first piece of the future Ecopolis of Adelaide.

What is 'The Halifax'?

'The Halifax' (without 'The Project') is what the Adelaide City Council call their program for dealing with the redevelopment of the Halifax Street Depot site. The City Council own the site and Project Officer for 'The Halifax' is Dennis Emery.



Location of the site in relation to the City of Adelaide 'Square Mile'
(not to scale)

What are our hidden agendas?

We don't have any.

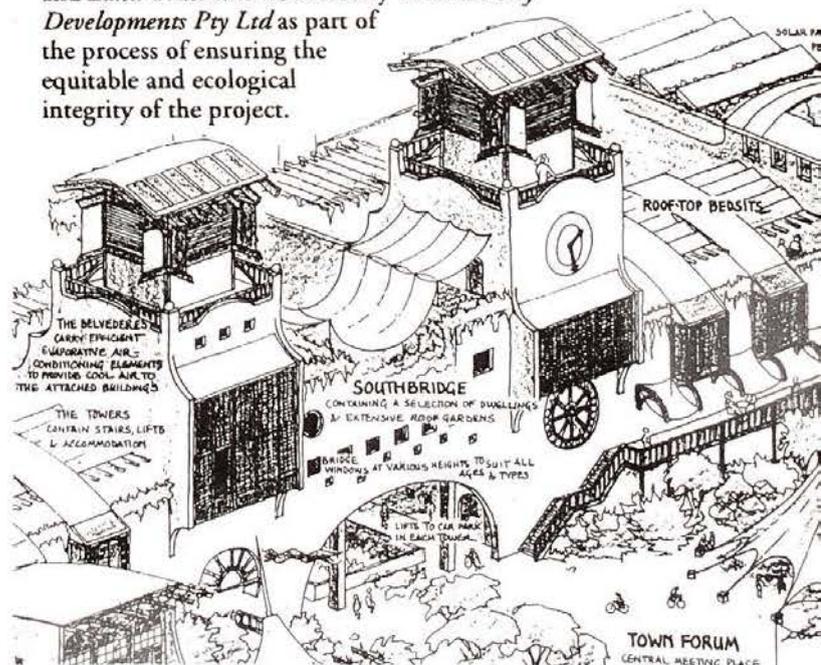
Our philosophy is summed up by the quotation:
"Tell the truth, and so puzzle and confound your adversaries".

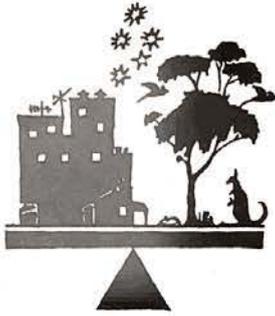
EcoCity Developments Pty Ltd

The first progeny of the Team has been a company - *EcoCity Developments Pty Ltd* - which is now registered with nearly 50 shareholders ranging from single professionals to students, retirees and young families. At this stage one goal is to become a public company to enable the shareholder base to widen still further and give meaning to the concept of community ownership of the project and its process.

EcoCity Developments is constrained by its articles to behave ethically, and with complete environmental responsibility. Its goal is to create developments which conform to the highly demanding '*Ecopolis Development Principles*'.

When they are duly constituted, the *Community Board* and *Land Trust* will work closely with *EcoCity Developments Pty Ltd* as part of the process of ensuring the equitable and ecological integrity of the project.





What is Urban Ecology Australia?

Urban Ecology Australia Inc is an Australia-wide, community-based, non-profit, UN-accredited NGO with extensive international contacts. It provides an independent, community-based focus for co-ordinating and advocating action, education and research for transforming existing and evolving new human settlements in the direction of ecological integration, health, and social vitality and equity.

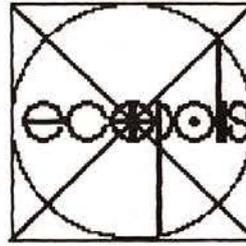
UEA is based in Adelaide where the city and its associated land clearance provides a remarkably stark picture of a process quite typical of human settlement since the co-invention of cities and agriculture. By studying such examples we can learn about the dynamics of the process and work towards the evolution of ecologically sustaining cities and land use practices. The city and country are, in effect, functionally one thing.

A city is also made up of a whole range of people, all of whom contribute in some way or other to the life and health of our cities, all of whom have a right to take part in the shaping of the human habitat. *Urban Ecology Australia* is therefore not a 'professionals only' organisation.

UEA organised *EcoCity 2 - The Second International Ecological City Conference* (Proceedings available on disk, with the 'Book of Visions' from the conference due to be published mid-1993). It is producing a series of publications on *The Halifax Project* and an annotated bibliography on Urban Ecology in association with the proposed Masters program in the University of South Australia.

There are branches of UEA interstate and monthly meetings on all aspects of the urban ecology are held in Adelaide. Members receive a regular newsletter.

For more information contact:
Urban Ecology Australia Inc
 PO Box 3040, Grenfell Street
 Adelaide, Tandanya Bioregion
 SA 5000, Australia
 Phone/Fax: 61-8 379 1984



What is it?

Ecopolis is both a concept and a company.

Ecopolis the concept is best expressed through *The Halifax Project* itself - an idea about how to make ecological human settlement which goes beyond issues of style and physical form to incorporate social and economic equity in every aspect of the city-making process.

The Ecopolis concept is focused on the city 'where the action is'. It proposes a series of 'bite-sized', regionally based projects which altogether add up to an economically important, massive redevelopment program for remaking existing cities and for creating new ones according to '*Ecopolis Development Principles*'.

Ecopolis design and development programs are intended to create the conditions and constructions, the visible and the invisible structures needed to fulfill the goal of consciously fitting human settlement patterns to the patterns of life, to create ecological, self-governing cities as the core activity in a process of bioregionally specific ecological restoration.

Ecopolis Pty Ltd is an independent, private company consisting of the two directors, Chérie Hoyle, urban ecologist and land management consultant, and Paul F Downton, Architect and urban ecologist.

Chérie and Paul have been active in community and environmental issues and campaigns for a combined total of over over 60 years and have been partners in life since 1977. They have three children, Dafydd 22, Seren Mari 21, and Rhiannon Gaea 13.

Ecopolis Pty Ltd was formed in 1991 to undertake ecological architecture, eco-city and ecological restoration projects. Chérie and Paul's decision to use their family business as a vehicle for doing this was inspired by the perception that ethical, committed business practice was a vital part of changing the direction of economic activity from growth-at-all-costs to ecologically sustaining development.

The name '*Ecopolis*' was used to completely identify the company with the concept of Ecopolis promulgated by Paul F Downton and to offer some measure of protection against abuse or co-option of the name and concept in Australia.

Ecopolis, the concept, represents extremely valuable intellectual property. That property is devalued if the concept is inappropriately applied. The concept itself contains a requirement for community participation and equity in its development and practical realisation. It is therefore not possible for Ecopolis to advance as a company or as an idea unless that participation and equity is embedded in practical development programs. The concept of community-driven development put forward by Ecopolis, the company, is intended to ensure the fullest realisation of Ecopolis, the concept.

The Halifax Project is the intellectual property of *Ecopolis Pty Ltd*.

Where is the money coming from?

What money?!!

Just like any other conventional upstart developer we do not have any vast sums of money. A conventional developer raises money from bank loans - the sorry condition of the State Bank testifies to the phenomenal level of risk to which this exposes the community and demonstrates clearly how the conventional development process exports money from the local economy to dim and distant coffers at the average citizen's expense.

The Halifax Project is not just a physical design - it is also a design for a process which involves the community in ownership and control of the entire development process. Money is not exported, it is kept in the community. Funding does not come from big banks but from ethical investment sources, credit unions, co-operatives and personal direct investment. The 'bite-size chunk' approach to the design of the project means that it can proceed in stages of a size and at a time to suit available finances, reducing the overall risk of the development to tiny proportions.

Innovative approaches to money make it a servant rather than master and schemes like *LETS* reduce the demand for cash and reliance on the faltering mainstream economy.

The Halifax Project is designed to proceed without massive government spending. It does not require new bureaucracies or new demands on the taxpayer. It works by bringing together the existing skills and resources of the community by focussing on a positive and practical project.

Money doesn't do things - people do things!

The process we are going through now models the 'full-size' project - there are over a hundred people now involved in getting *The Halifax Project* to happen (see the list in this issue), they are contributing huge numbers of hours and energy and our progress has been phenomenal because of it. Our total cash expenditure of conventional money to date has been tiny yet we already have a first-class, professional project with global impact and huge inspirational value. Money doesn't do things - people do things!

We already have pre-commitment for properties on the site and have established a number of financial strategies to progressively fund the development.

Emilis Prelgauskas has been developing
The Halifax Project

HOME OWNER'S OPERATING MANUAL

The following is an extract from the Introduction:

The Halifax Project has been designed using the Best Available Technologies to achieve comfort in all dwellings in the project; comfort achievable at low operating costs and with minimum dependance on and use of services.

To achieve the design goals in practise, home owners will need to understand the building features at their disposal, and how to use them to best effect.

The results will be comfortable living at low recurrent costs.

This manual provides the necessary on-going reference source for the home owner in the Halifax Project.



Research

The Halifax Project is the focus of John Haddow's research project as a student in the University of South Australia's Electronic Engineering department. John is taking a typical piece of the project and doing an in-depth investigation of electric power provision, comparing AC with DC reticulation, identifying appropriate technologies, designing solar installations and comparing notes with the project's key technical adviser, Emilis Prelgauskas.

There are an endless number of opportunities for useful applied research in the *Ecopolis Adelaide* concept. A variety of other research-related proposals are currently being evaluated from photovoltaics to vegetation involving a wide range of expertise from people with 'hands-on' low-tech skills to people who are dedicated to making appropriate hi-tech accessible and understandable.

PEOPLE WHO GET THINGS DONE....

The following is a list of the people who have contributed directly to the Halifax project to date:
(MT) indicates a member of the Management Team

Margaret Bolster (MT)
Tom Bolster
Stepahnie Britten (MT)
Johann Brunnbauer (MT)
Dr. Peter Clements (MT)
Nick Branson (MT)
Michael Chalmers (MT)
Ollie Clark
Michael Croshaw
Jack McKean
Paul F Downton (MT)
Matt Fisher (MT)
Pauline Frost (MT)
David Hilton (MT)
Chérie Hoyle (MT)
Sam Knottenbelt (MT)
Helen Makris (MT)
Frances Mowling (ex MT)
David Munn (MT)
Garth Dodd (MT)
Tricia O'Donovan (ex MT)
Roman Orszanski (MT)
Mark Parnell (MT)
Emilis Prelgauskas (MT)
Adrian Shackley (MT)
Ed Wilby (MT)
John Wishart (MT)
Jeremy Hassan (MT)
Mark Meldrum (MT proxy for CCSA)
Kerry Ferrari
David Lasscock
Daniel Lasscock
Rhiannon Downton-Hoyle
Seren Downton-Hoyle
Dafydd Downton-Hoyle
Jonathon Wilby
Alex Clements

Jessica Clements
Natasha Wilby
Kerry-Ann Bird
Jason Hoberg
Josh Devitt
Gianni Zandel
Marcelo Canelos
Pene Mitchell
John Adam
Garth Dutton
Merelyn Pederick
Gregory Stock (South Africa)
Vin Pearce
David Hensel (deceased)
Keith Hensel
Richard Hensel
Jenny Paterson
Richard Stevens
David Coe
Hazel Coe
Cathryn Maggi
Phil Maggi
Margaret Lynch
Bryn Troath
Lois Arkin(USA)
Johnny Consalvo
Andrew Griffiths
Chris Warren
Bob Gormley
Richard Register (USA)
Janine Haines
Charles Davison
Colin Endean
Anthea Kreig
Angelica Alexiou
Miriam Tonkin
Robert Brady Peeks (USA)

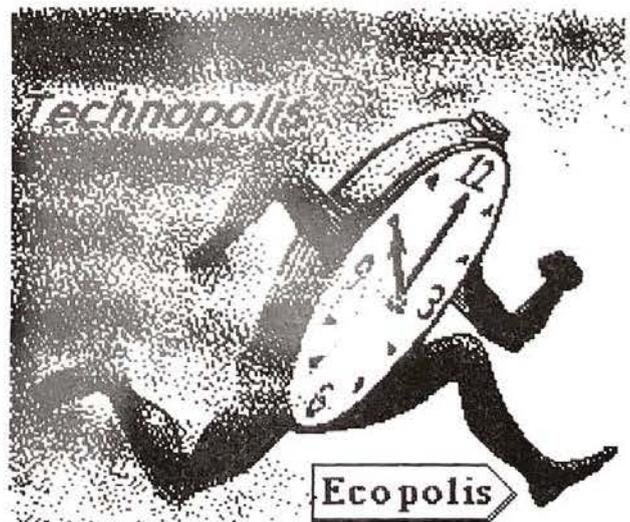
Santosh Ghosh (India)
Gary Bull
Joanne Weber
Rosie Hilton
Barbara Pocock
Chris Radbone
Jim Allen
Andre Stuyt
John Haddow
Val Maslin
Keith Smith
Paul Groom
Alex Haynes
Jacqui Pike
Carole Whitelock
Penny Wright
Walter Holt
Michelle de la Force
Anita Hobson
Greta Needle
Nigel Croser
Jo Croser
Margaret Ewins
Sue Meeuwissen
Judith Barr
Jo Da Silva
Christina O'Brien
Kym Davy
Jacqui Gillen
Julia Lester
Michael Lennon
Gabrielle DeMay
Owen Perrin
Alan Jones
Sidonie Henbest

In the next issue

More details, including projected costs, of the accommodation planned for the project and you get to meet the people behind The Halifax Project. PLUS more about the research and technology and how that all relates to the idea of ecological community development.

Keep informed - subscribe to The Catalyst.

This newsletter has been written in Garamond and Helvetica on a Macintosh Powerbook & Classic using Microsoft Word 4 and modified Hypercard graphics. Original output via a Macintosh Classic courtesy of Ecopolis Pty Ltd on a Canon Bubble Jet BJ10e printer courtesy of the Greenhouse Association. Design and layout by Ecopolis Pty Ltd. Printed on recycled paper by the SA Gas Company.



Get moving - time is running out!

If undelivered please return to:
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 PO Box 3040 • Grenfell Street • Adelaide
 Tandanya Bioregion • SA5000 • Australia
 Phone/fax 61-8-379-1984

A Piece of EcoCity • Letter From America •
 What is The Halifax Project? • Community
 Controlled Development • Ecopolis Development
 Principles • Boiling Frogs & Videos • How you
 can get involved • Fact Sheets • A House Is Not a
 Machine • Hidden Agendas? • Careless Whispers
 • Ecopolis Adelaide



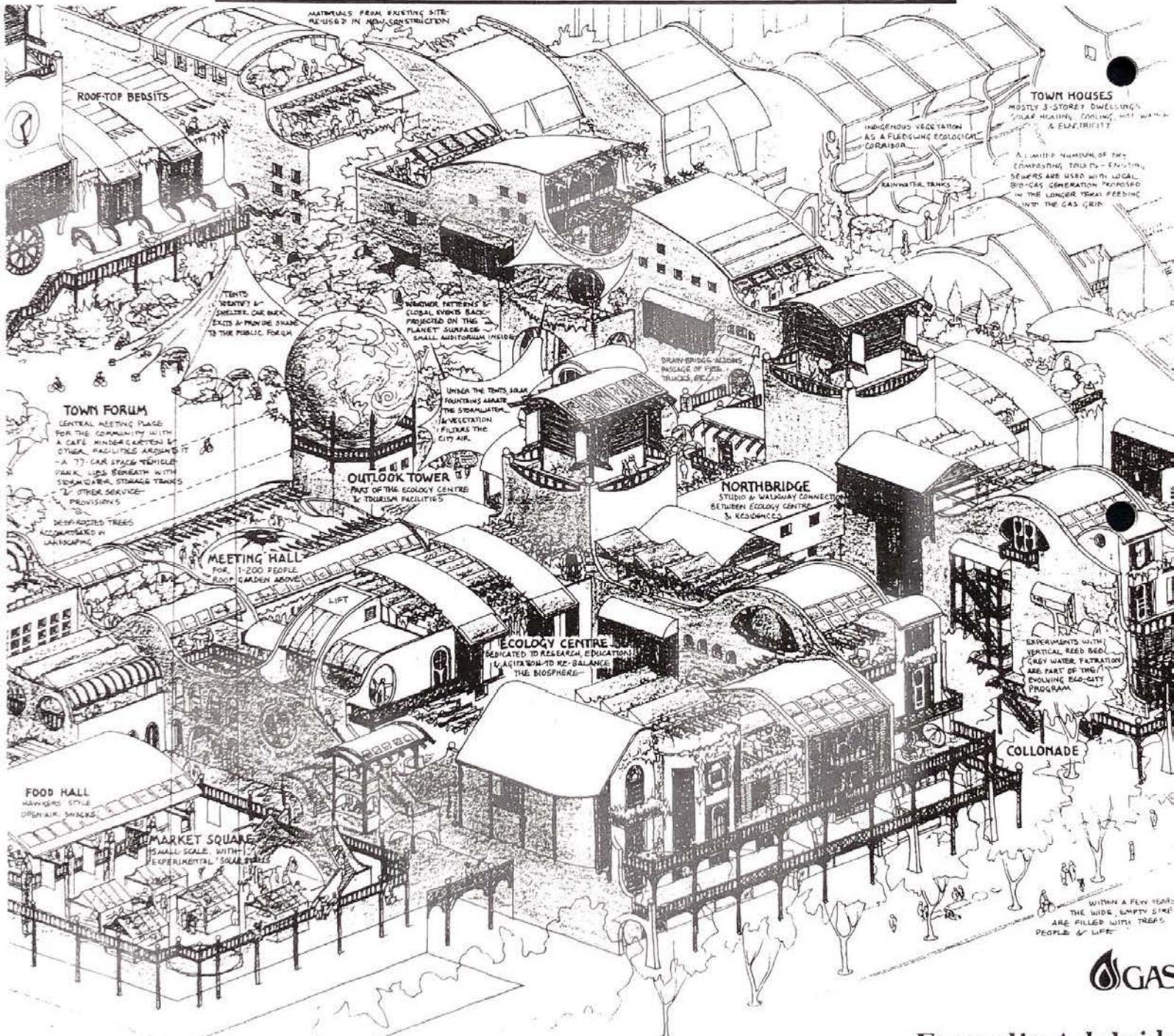
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Street _____

City _____

State/code _____

Country _____



Ecopolis Adelaide
The Halifax Project