

A FRAMEWORK FOR URBAN RENEWAL

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Die heraktivering van vervalde en bouvallige stadsgedeeltes het in die jongste tyd belangrike beplanningsonderwerpe geword. In Skotland soos ook in die res van Brittanje word daar baie aandag gegee aan die probleme van stedelike verval en hernuwing in die sen-

trale stadsgedeeltes. Die Israeliese eksperiment in woonbuurt hernuwing en die verskillende organisasies wat daarby betrokke is, word ook bespreek. 'n Verdere voorbeeld in hierdie verband wat aangebied word is die probleme wat ondervind en pogings

wat aangewend word deur 'n groot plaaslike owerheid soos Amsterdam Munisipaliteit. In die laaste deel van die artikel word die belangrikste aspekte van die organisering van stedelike hernuwing opgesom en vergelyk met die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years rehabilitation and revitalization of deteriorated and run-down city areas have become important planning matters. A deteriorated area is a territorial concentration of social, economic and physical problems and the features most commonly associated with such areas are: neglect, disrepair and abuse of the physical environment. The less immediately discernable features are those related to the deprived social and economic circumstances of their residents. Since these inferior conditions frequently disturb the functioning of individuals and communities remedial programmes are often initiated by governments and other controlling authorities to solve the problems of the deteriorated areas.

In this paper firstly the organizational approach to urban renewal as it exists in Scotland is discussed. Special emphasis is placed on the problems of urban deprivation in the inner city areas as well as the role of the different government bodies — central and local — and other, specially created agencies which plan and implement renewal measures. Secondly the Israeli efforts which concentrate more on neighbourhood rehabilitation are discussed. In the third place the Amsterdam Municipal authority's tackling of the problem of urban renewal is placed under scrutiny as an example of the efforts of, and problems experienced by, a big city government. In the last section the most important aspects of the organizing of urban renewal are summarized and compared with the South African situation.

2. URBAN RENEWAL IN SCOTLAND

2.1 Organizational framework for planning

2.1.1 National level

The Scottish Office, a full ministry of the British Government, administers nearly all aspects of Scottish life. The Scottish Office consists of five departments, namely, The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, the Scottish Development Department, the Scottish Economic Planning Department, the Scottish Education Department and the Scottish Home and Health Department.

The Scottish Development Department controls inter alia, local government, town and country planning, housing, roads and transport, urban renewal, ancient monuments and historic buildings. An intermediate level of related public bodies and agencies were created to deal with more specific and inter-regional affairs such as the Scottish Special Housing Association, the Scottish Development Agency, New Town Development Corporations, the Scottish Tourist Board, the Countryside Commission for Scotland, Historic Buildings Council for Scotland.

2.1.2. Local level

The Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1973 introduced a two-tier structure of local government comprising 9 Regional and 53 District Councils. Basically the Regional Councils are responsible for strategic services such as strategic planning, transport, roads, education, social work, water and

sewerage. The districts administer such functions as local planning, building control, housing and environmental health. The 1973 Act also provided for certain functions, including recreation, museums and art galleries, nature conservation, industrial development and tourism, to be exercised jointly by both regional and district councils.

2.2 Planning for development

Under this system there are three levels of development planning which are aimed at separating general ideas and policies from particular detail. They are:

Regional reports — policies and priorities for the whole region

structure plans — main strategic issues of land-use and physical development for the whole or certain parts of the region and the policies and proposals for dealing with these issues, and

local plans — detailed local matters

The Government accepts that they have a greater part to play within this new system in providing advice and guidelines on topics which need to be looked at for Scotland as a whole. National planning guidelines have been issued on sites which include for example those for larger-scale industry, petrochemicals, agricultural land, urban renewal of inner city areas and nature conservation.

2.3 Urban renewal policy

A great deal of concentrated effort has gone into defining, identifying and tackling urban deprivation in

Scotland. A particular focus of policy interest has been the problems which local authorities face in what have come to be termed "areas of multiple deprivation".

Any area-based approach to urban deprivation operates within the broad framework of statute and central government advice. The Urban Renewal Unit was established in 1975 within the Scottish Office. It operates on an inter-departmental level to ensure that Scottish Office policies as a whole have regard to the needs of deprived areas and of those local authorities where there is a high incidence of social deprivation.

The regional reports contain a broad policy framework within which structure and local plans are taking shape, and reflect a corporate approach towards strategic planning, placing land-use and physical development proposals in the wider context of social and economic aims and problems. Although it is not the function of structure plans to formulate or seek approval for social policies, they should have regard to economic and social considerations. Structure plans may indicate "action areas" requiring extensive development, redevelopment or improvement and which are scheduled to commence within 5 years of the plan's submission to the Secretary of State. This facilitates the immediate preparation and bringing into effect of detailed local plans for priority areas such as areas of urban deprivation.

The kind of measures to alleviate conditions of multiple deprivation depend on local circumstances, but the underlying aims include:

- (a) strengthening the economic base of the inner areas and the prospects of their residents;
- (b) improving the physical fabric of the inner areas and making the environment more attractive;
- (c) alleviating social problems, and
- (d) securing a new balance between the inner areas and the rest of the city region in terms of population and jobs.

2.4 The implementation of urban renewal policies

District Council are the most logical authorities to implement the broad national and regional policies regarding the economic and social uplift-

ment of deprived areas.

(a) Inner Urban Areas

Under the Inner Urban Areas Act of 1978 the Secretary of State may declare designated districts. The designated district authority may make loans to any person or persons organized into a co-operative enterprise for the acquisition of or works on land in that district. The Secretary of State may also proclaim certain areas within a designated district as improvement areas or special areas.

Within improvement areas the designated district authority may make loans and grants available to firms and individuals for land purchases and for the erection or improvement of industrial and commercial buildings. In this way district authorities can be instrumental in creating new employment opportunities in, and in general improving the economic life of the inner city areas.

While inner area problems are a feature of many of the older towns they are at their most serious in the major cities. The inner areas of Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and London still have a heavy legacy of old housing, lacking modern amenities, and of outworn industrial, commercial and educational buildings in need of repair, renewal or improvement. The Central Government intends to offer special partnership arrangements to assist in the regeneration of these special inner urban areas. During the 1981 session of Parliament the local Government Act was accepted which makes provision for the creation of Urban Development Corporations (UDC) for partnership cities. Resulting from this the London Docklands Development Corporation for example, was subsequently established. The UDC's are modelled on the new town development corporation pattern and have powers of planning, land assembly and disposal for private sector development, industrial and commercial development and promotion, as well as the provision of housing and infrastructure.

In Glasgow, in view of the exceptional scale and severity of problems in that city, an extra effort was launched in 1976 to alleviate the position and a major exercise was mounted to undertake the comprehensive regeneration of the East End of the city. The GEAR (Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal) project involves the cooperative efforts of

the Glasgow District Council, Strathclyde Regional Council, the Scottish Special Housing Association (SSHS), the Scottish Development Agency (SDA), the Greater Glasgow Health Board and the Manpower Services Commission. The SDA, in addition to undertaking its normal functions of industrial generation and environmental rehabilitation in the area, also provides the coordinating management for the project which is overseen at a strategic level by a governing Committee on the pattern proposed for the partnership cities. The SDA also prepares and proposes integrated budgets, monitors implementation, ensures the proper phasing of development, coordinates local consultation, identifies gaps in programmes and makes proposals for dealing with them.

The project's six basic objectives are:

- (i) To increase resident's competitiveness in securing employment
- (ii) To arrest economic decline and realise the potential of GEAR as a major employment centre.
- (iii) To overcome the social disadvantages experienced by residents.
- (iv) To improve and maintain the environment.
- (v) To stem population decline and engender a better balanced age and social structure.
- (vi) To foster resident's commitment and confidence.

(b) Housing

Poor housing, often lacking amenities, and overcrowding are serious problems in the inner areas of most of the older cities. Under both the 1969 and 1974 Housing Acts, local authorities, specifically the District Councils, have a statutory duty to deal with, what is termed, Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) housing in their areas. A number of policy options are available to local authorities for dealing with BTS housing but in general a broad choice is available between demolition and new building on the one hand, and rehabilitation on the other. Since 1969 and particularly since 1974 the improvement of existing housing stock has become increasingly accepted as a preferable alternative.

It was estimated in March 1980 that more than 110 000 houses in Scotland

failed to meet the tolerable standard level set by the 1974 Housing Act. This amounts to about 5,7% of the total housing stock in Scotland. Just over half of the national total of BTS houses is concentrated in the four city District Council areas of Glasgow (28,2%), Edinburgh (13,0%), Aberdeen (4,8%) and Dundee (5,7%).

Approximately 66% of the total BTS stock is categorised as flats, 33% as houses and 1% as maisonettes. Within the cities, however, 95% are flats and only 5% houses, while in the mainly rural districts the relative proportions are reversed. Within the cities the majority of the BTS flats are tenements owned by the respective District Councils or housing associations. The majority of the BTS houses are privately owned.

During the late 1960's and up to 1974 two major models of improvement activity emerged involving on the one hand, individual house improvement through the private sector, by means of the house improvement grant system and, on the other hand, area-based rehabilitation by local authorities.

The private sector improvement activity did little to reduce the number of seriously deficient houses primarily because of the enormous costs involved. Since 1974 it has been recognised that an area-based approach to the rehabilitation and improvement of deprived city areas is necessary. The basis of the area approach to rehabilitation and improvement has been the Housing Action Areas (HAA). Housing Action Area procedures were set out in the 1974 Housing (Scotland) Act. The onus for declaring HAA lies with District Councils who have a statutory responsibility to eliminate housing which does not meet the tolerable standard.

Within action areas for improvement higher levels of grant and approved expenditure are available, and local authorities have compulsory purchase powers over owners who are unwilling or unable to improve their property. District Councils can appoint their own staff to promote and coordinate improvement or appoint agents to do so.

The 1974 Housing Act included provisions which extended the functions of the Housing Corporation which was set up by Act of Parliament in 1964.

The 1974 provisions provided a suitable administrative base for expansion of the Housing Association role in house improvement. The Housing Corporation's role is primarily to promote, fund and supervise Housing Association in their task of providing more houses for people still in need of them. Most local authorities who have declared substantial housing action areas consider Housing Associations as the most appropriate agencies for the rehabilitation of these areas.

Housing Associations now spend more than £30 million per year of public funds on rehabilitation. The vast bulk of this is capital expenditure on acquiring and improving houses.

Voluntary organizations such as Housing Associations are under the overall control of management committees, whose membership is wholly comprised of unpaid volunteers, and are responsible for all major policy decisions. The unique feature of the community-based movement is that membership of both the association and the management committee is restricted almost entirely to local residents, including association tenants. Furthermore as small locally-based housing agencies, associations are able, within limits of their resources, to respond quickly and sensitively to particular housing needs, and the movement as a whole is now by far the major agency handling the rehabilitation of seriously deficient housing in Scotland.

The locally-based Housing Association involve the community directly through having their management committees elected annually by the local resident membership. Both members and residents in houses affected by Housing Associations rehabilitation are kept in close touch with progress through newsletters, meetings and contact with local offices. Meetings are also held to discuss design proposals with residents.

(c) Environmental, service and infrastructural improvement

The comprehensive improvement programme for inner urban areas also covers other aspects such as the rehabilitation and improvement of vacant sites and derelict land, public open spaces, backcourts, street furniture and other environmental features, educational facilities, social services, health and transport.

3. URBAN RENEWAL IN ISRAEL

3.1. Neighbourhood Rehabilitation

Efforts to alleviate conditions of urban deterioration in Israel have since the late seventies been concentrated on a programme that has come to be termed neighbourhood rehabilitation. As the name implies, this programme relates to neighbourhoods and is based on the complete neighbourhood as a unit. This programme provides not only for the weak and unfortunate, but also for the stronger residents of the neighbourhood. With this action is hoped that the process of negative selection, which constitutes a major factor in the decline of neighbourhoods will be stopped. The programme is furthermore aimed at rehabilitation and not at evacuation and reconstruction.

3.2 The organizational framework

Figure 1 shows a graphic presentation of the organization of neighbourhood rehabilitation. The planning and implementation functions are shared between the different levels of government — the Central Government, the Local Government and the Neighbourhood Steering Committee. At each of the three levels a central body coordinates the decision-making: namely the special Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC) which was set up at central government level. The IMCC is jointly headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Jewish Agency — a body representing Jewish communities throughout the world. Some government ministries involved in neighbourhood rehabilitation are also represented on the coordinating committee. The Jewish Agency provides half the budget for the rehabilitation programme while the other half is provided by the Israeli government.

At the local level in the larger cities of Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa there is a committee which coordinates all rehabilitation projects in the city while special companies, jointly owned by the municipalities and the Ministry of Housing, oversee the implementation.

At the neighbourhood level a Steering Committee is responsible for preparing detailed social and physical plans with budgeting proposals. The Neighbourhood Steering Committee is headed by the mayor and it includes representatives of relevant municipal departments such as engineering, education

ORGANIZATION FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD REHABILITATION
IN ISRAEL

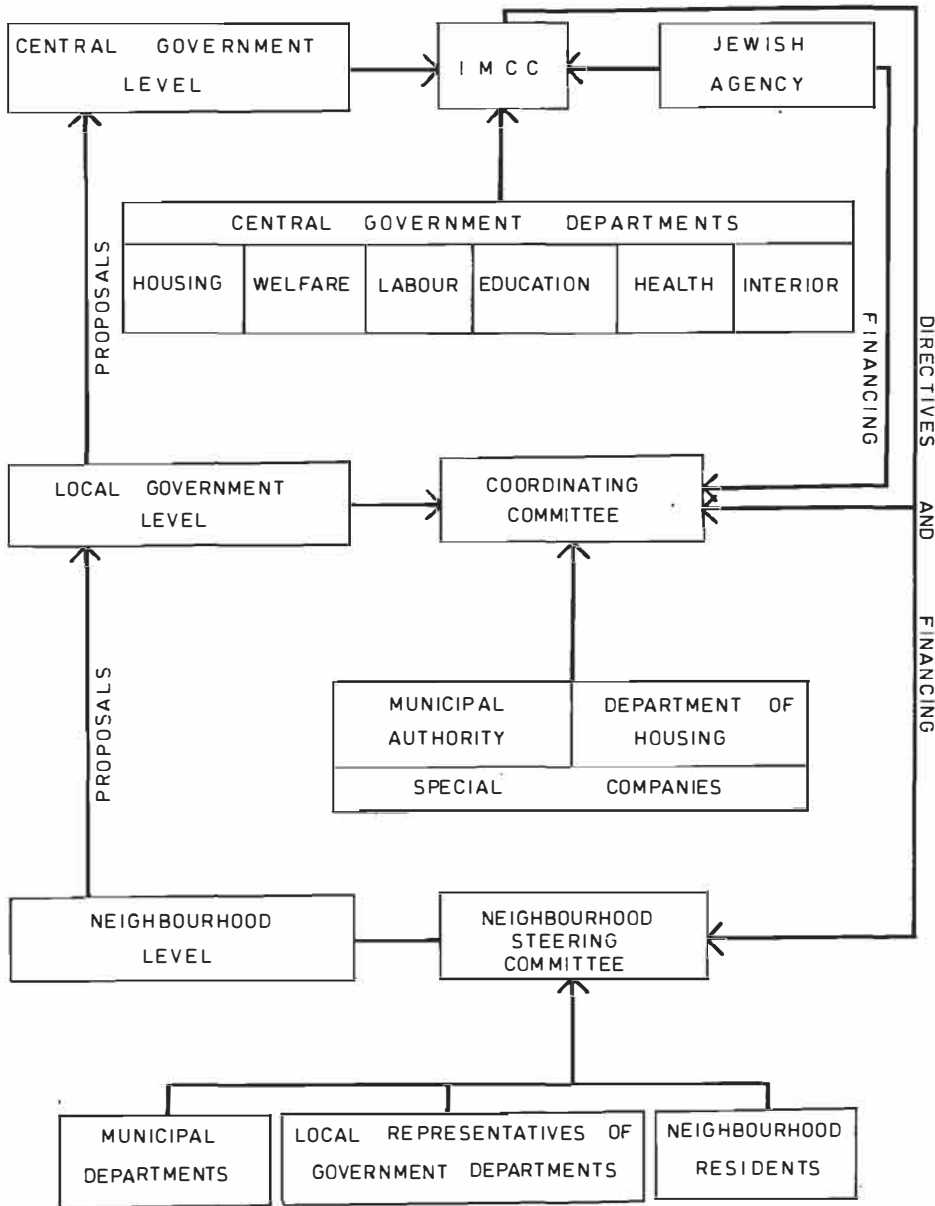


FIG 1

and welfare, local representatives of relevant ministries such as health, education, welfare, housing and representatives of the residents in the neighbourhoods.

All plans prepared by the Neighbourhood Steering Committee have to be confirmed by the IMCC. The IMCC decides which section of the proposed plans will be adopted and how they will be financed — by the Jewish Agency and/or by one or more of the government ministries. The ministries

usually responsible for providing facilities such as housing, education, welfare and health, implement the plan in accordance with directives from the IMCC and the coordinated efforts of the committees at the local and neighbourhood levels. In this way decision-making is shared by the different levels of government while coordination and accountability is assured. Allowance is also made for resident participation in the organization and the decision-making process.

4. URBAN RENEWAL IN AMSTERDAM

4.1 Policy

The city of Amsterdam can be divided into a few distinct areas which correspond with the city's historical growth pattern. The inner town or city centre, the 19th century belt of 'narrow houses', which was built between 1870 and 1906, the areas developed between 1906 and 1940, and the post war garden cities.

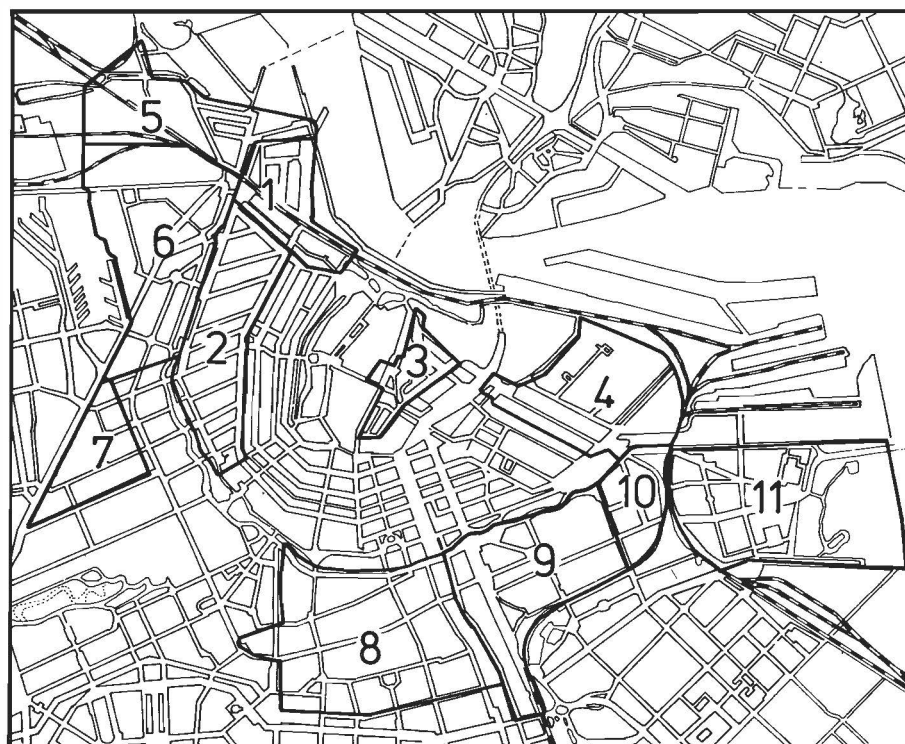
In 1969 a first report on urban renewal was published by the local authority of Amsterdam. Two types of urban renewal were distinguished, namely conservation/restoration and reconstruction. It was decided that the historic city centre, which has nearly 7 000 protected architectural monuments should be conserved and restored, while the old residential districts around the centre were earmarked for reconstruction.

Reconstruction entailed the total redevelopment of a whole district or town quarter: including the replacement of the physical infrastructure and other

structural changes in keeping with the needs of the town as a whole. The old districts were to be reconstructed systematically one by one, starting with the very worst. Because of the length of time necessary for the completion of the reconstruction programme (40 to 50 years) measures were also proposed to maintain those districts which were not eligible for immediate reconstruction, at a reasonable level of quality (or to bring them to that level) by rehabilitation.

In 1971 a second report on urban renewal was published indicating those districts which were to be reconstructed (called action areas), those for conservation and restoration and those for rehabilitation. This report also proposed a more varied approach to the previous systematic reconstruction programme. Depending on the circumstances within a district to be renewed, reconstruction and rehabilitation measures were to be applied together. The 1974 Structure Plan contained the general framework for the renewal actions and it also showed the eleven renewal areas — as shown on Figure 2.

The 11 urban renewal areas in Amsterdam



- 1 Westelijke Eilanden
- 2 Jordaan
- 3 Nieuwmarkt-buurt
- 4 Oostelijke Eilanden
- 5 Spaarndammerbuurt
- 6 Staatsliedenbuurt
- 7 Kinkerbuurt
- 8 De Pijp
- 9 Oosterpark buurt
- 10 Dapperbuurt
- 11 Indische buurt

Fig 2

4.2 The Municipal Organization for the Urban Renewal

Originally urban renewal was seen as the task of the different Municipal Departments and Subdepartments, each having a specific responsibility. However, it was soon realized that urban renewal demands close co-operation between the various parties and in order to achieve this Local Renewal Authorities for each renewal areas were formed. Three new sections were also established within the Municipal Department of Public Works, namely Public Works, Environmental Planning and the City Estates Office. This department together with the Local Renewal Authority were to oversee and coordinate the urban renewal programme for that specific area or district. A Local Renewal Authority consists of about 20 officials from the various Municipal Departments and sections such as Real Estate, Town Planning, Public Works, Housing, Building Inspectorate, Public Health, Social Services, Education, Sports and Recreation.

Principally the task of the Local Renewal Authority is to prepare action plans, in accordance to the overall Municipal Structure Plan, and to discuss the renewal proposals with the local population. Action Plans must be approved by the Municipal Council. Although financial and legal means have also been made available to the Local Renewal Authorities they have very little control over the development programme.

Financial means include state subsidies to Municipal Authorities to buy land and buildings as well as the improvement and replacement of houses. The Municipal Authorities may offer support to small companies and shops during renovation.

The Government also subsidizes the building or improvement of facilities like schools, homes for the old, small parks, and buildings or improvement of small bridges. In practice the application of subsidies is a tedious arrangement and not all facilities are covered by them. The Government can also subsidize home-owners directly in the improvement of their houses and neither the Municipal Authority nor the Local Renewal Authority have any say in the matter. All they can do is to stimulate house-owners to use these subsidies.

Another matter of concern is the manner in which the population, which is not represented in the Local Renewal Authority can be encouraged to participate in the process. Although a Local Renewal Authority is obliged to discuss the renewal proposal with the inhabitants of the area no firm and universal rules for this action were set out as part of the whole process. The rapid changing pattern in the social ranks of the community structure often makes discussion with the correct and 'leading' participants over the years very difficult.

5. RATIONALIZATION

This discussion of the different approaches to urban renewal has brought a few major points to the forefront, namely:

(a) An organizational framework for urban renewal

Such a framework must include all the different governmental levels involved in urban renewal. It is very important that the local authority, where the renewal project is to be implemented, be specially geared towards urban renewal action. It is also necessary that, as in the case of Scotland where the revitalization of some central city areas is of national importance, special efforts need to be made to coordinate all actions towards the renewal programme.

In South Africa, State Committees, under the auspices of the Department of Community Development and State Auxiliary Services, were created for the replanning of urban renewal areas. Central, provincial and local authorities as well as local interested bodies are represented on these committees and in this way the different needs of the specific area can be made known to the planning and implementing authorities. Coordination of all aspects of the renewal process is theoretically also assured because the planning and implementing bodies are represented on the Committee. It is however not quite clear to what extent the local residents, through their local representatives, are allowed to actually take part in the planning and implementation of the renewal schemes although the final development plans are usually published for comments.

(b) Planning and budgeting

This is a very important aspect be-

cause if there is no or very little co-ordination between the planning and budgeting for urban renewal none of the urban renewal schemes will be successful. In the case of major renewal projects like the GEAR or London Docklands projects, specially created agencies, to deal specifically, among other things, with the budgeting for the implementation of renewal proposals, were deemed necessary. On the other hand, where controlling authorities have no or very little say in the financing of urban renewal, as in the case of Amsterdam, problems are experienced in the implementation of urban renewal proposals.

In South Africa the Department of Community Development and State Auxiliary Services and the Community Development Board are authorized to provide financial aid through the acquisition of properties — in the case of complete redevelopment—replan and redevelop it and/or offer it to the private sector for development. The Community Development Board can also give financial assistance to local authorities to provide the necessary network of infrastructure and service networks in renewal areas. Where the renewal efforts are concentrated mostly on the rehabilitation of properties, loans are made available to property owners for external repairs and renovations.

(c) Government initiative

Although it is usually the policy, and specially so in capitilistic societies, to leave the development of renewal areas to the private sector, this sector is in most cases reluctant to make investments because of the stigma that clings to such areas. Because of this, as well as other factors, it is in most cases necessary for government authorities to take the initiative in the development of renewal areas. The actions of government agencies such as the Urban Development Corporation or the Scottish Development Agency are typical examples. Central, local and other government authorities can also do much in this regard: by creating the stimulus and in setting an example through building pilot schemes, providing the basic infrastructure and services, clearing the land, providing housing and creating job opportunities until private development takes over.

(d) Comprehensiveness

In the three case studies discussed special emphasis was placed on the fact that urban renewal measures should make provision for the complete socio-economic uplifting of the community. When one analyses the basic aims of the GEAR project in Glasgow and the neighbourhood rehabilitation programmes in Israel the comprehensiveness of the actions is soon realized. It is evident that there can be no real and lasting solution to renewal problems if only the physical fabric of the community receives attention while the not so readily recognizable social and economic shortcomings of the community are ignored.

In recent years urban renewal policies in South Africa, as in Great Britain, Israel and Amsterdam, have moved away from the clearing of land and reconstruction programmes to the more economical and integrated approach of rehabilitation and redevelopment. It was realized that, at the end of the day, it would be better to retain communities in their existing location and to alleviate or prevent urban decay by the adoption of measures which would rehabilitate and restore them to their previous state of usefulness. In some renewal cases a certain amount of reconstruction with respect to specific spots in the area or a new network of services and roads will have to be provided but greater emphasis will, and must, be placed on rehabilitation and conservation. To succeed the specific problems and shortcomings of the community will have to be recognized and understood and there is no better way to achieve this than to allow the local residents to participate in the decision-making process

(e) Public participation

In most cases the planning authorities have a statutory obligation to publish planning proposals for comments from the public and other interested bodies. This opportunity to comment is important in the process of participation, but it is not the whole story. There are, however, accepted limitations to public participation. One of

them is that the preparing of a plan for urban renewal (and for that matter all other kinds of urban plans) is, and must be, the responsibility of the planning authority. So is the completing of plans — i.e. the setting of proposals and decisions into statutory form — a task demanding the highest standards of professional skills — a function which can best be undertaken by the professional staff of the planning authority.

It is however of great importance that the planning proposals be discussed by the professional planning team and the public, either at public meetings or at group meetings, before the proposals are prepared in their final form. Once this late stage has been reached there is a strong disinclination to alter proposals which have been taken so far. The role of the public, at this stage is, as seen by them, more an opportunity to object than to comment.

Examples of the right procedures in this regard are to be found in the roles of the Housing Associations — paragraph 2.4(b) — and the Neighbourhood Steering Committees (3.2) In these it is evident that planning proposals are, from the beginning right up to the final stages, discussed by the officials and the public. Graphic representations of proposals as well as models are displayed at conveniently situated information offices within the renewal areas. Signboards displaying the name of the project are set up at different places in the area to facilitate a process of identification by the local inhabitants with the renewal scheme.

Another interesting aspect of public participation in urban renewal projects is the usage of local labour — unemployment is usually a distinctive feature of deteriorated and rundown city areas — to implement certain renewal measures such as improving the environment, land clearing, building, information services and the like. In this way jobs can be immediately provided for some of the unemployed and the uplifting process and development is thereby well on its way to success.

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