High Density *Subtropical* Urbanism

What can the Gold Coast teach us about high density urbanism?

In search of the **Golden (Coast) Mean?**
Visions of high-rise city
Taming taller buildings
the Gold Coast and Urbanism
Waves of Change: Cities at the Crossroads  
Gold Coast 2007  
Peter Richards
When nature expresses itself, we get the order and beauty of the golden mean
Gold Coast Urbanism?

When the Gold Coast expresses itself, we get ……?
In many ways the Gold Coast has been an urban design enigma, fuelled by opportunism and a great pace and density of development. It is a young city unlike almost every other city whose character changes rapidly. Rules which apply in most places are challenged by the hyper development patterns and bravado of the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast is a place unafraid of density and building height and the planning framework has struggled to keep up. More recent Planning Schemes have attempted to make sense of these developments, with careful analysis distilling patterns and creating policy to inform future actions. But the Gold Coast is not an amorphous sprawl of development that breaks all rules of sensible urbanism. On the contrary, the Gold Coast is now maturing as a place of many vibrant high density, high quality urban neighbourhoods. For many years, Surfers Paradise, Southport and Coolangatta have been higher density traditional urban centres. Each of these places as well as Broadbeach have grown considerably over the last few years and are now exemplary urban places with a number of recently completed remarkable high rise towers. Tedder Avenue has emerged as a strong community focus for the Main Beach area. While all these centres are within the high rise spine on the coastal strip that dominates the visual character of the Coast, a finer definition of urbanism is emerging with a number of centres emerging from the coastal plain.
Visions of the high-rise city

In search of the Golden (Coast) Mean?
Villa Radieuse LeCorbusier 1929

The automobile ought to stop right in front of any given door... which means that the houses open out onto the traffic lane. And that is what we can no longer tolerate: TO LIVE! To breathe — TO LIVE! Homes to inhabit. The present idea of the street must be abolished: DEATH OF THE STREET! DEATH OF THE STREET!

– *The Radiant City*, p. 124
Ludwig Hilberseimer
The New City: Principles of Planning, 1944
Ludwig Hilberseimer
The New City: Principles of Planning, 1944
Rows of slab buildings with good orientation, but set in a field
(One for the orientation and dirt nazis!!)
Is it urbanism??
Taming taller buildings
Analysis and examples from other places

In search of the Golden (Coast) Mean?
Rochedale Urban Community
Charlestown, Lake Macquarie
Newcastle City West
Redcliffe
Cairns and Maroochydore

Tall buildings gravitate to the amenity of the waters edge, but can ‘sterilise’ land behind
Cairns and Maroochydore
Maroochydore
The Gold Coast and Urbanism

In search of the Golden (Coast) Mean?
Gold Coast Urbanism?
No ‘idea of a town’, the settlement was conceived as a ....?

Isolated developments along the coastal strip where sites were available not always reinforcing the centres along the strip

‘City of Towers’ to ‘High Rise Spine’
Gold Coast Urbanism?

Isolated buildings within a landscape
Kinkabool responds as urbanism
‘City of Towers’ to ‘High Rise Spine’
Waves of Change: Cities at the Crossroads
Gold Coast 2007
Peter Richards
GCCC Planning Scheme Setbacks
High Rise Spine Envelopes
Waves of Change: Cities at the Crossroads  
Gold Coast 2007  
Peter Richards
Shadows June 21st

210 mins
100 mins
65 mins
45 mins
35 mins
Comparative Analysis of Towers

Paradise Towers (1965)
- 47m, 15 storeys
- 950m²

Australis Sovereign (1975)
- 14 storeys
- 1050m²

Focus (1976)
- 96m, 32 storeys
- 790m²
Comparative Analysis of Towers

Thorton Tower (1979)
50m, 17 storeys
1450m²

Atlantis West
110m, 37 storeys (1984)
920m²

Atlantis East (1982)
110m, 37 storeys
920m²

Marriott Resort (1992)
105m, 30 storeys
1250m²
Comparative Analysis of Towers

- **Crown Towers (1998)**
  - Height: 125m
  - Storeys: 41
  - Area: 2550m²

- **Outrigger Sun City (1999)**
  - Height: 130m
  - Storeys: 42
  - Area: 2220m²

- **Carmel by the Sea (1996)**
  - Height: 105m
  - Storeys: 33
  - Area: 1200m²
### Comparative Analysis of Towers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tower</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Storeys</th>
<th>Floor Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chevron Renaissance</strong></td>
<td>(2004)</td>
<td>127m</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1240m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline Central Tower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline North Tower</td>
<td></td>
<td>158m</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline Tower</td>
<td>(2002)</td>
<td>146m</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circle on Cavill</strong></td>
<td>(2007)</td>
<td>220m</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1450m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Building</td>
<td>(2006)</td>
<td>158m</td>
<td>50 Storeys</td>
<td>1250m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artique Apartments</strong></td>
<td>(2005)</td>
<td>95m</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>900m²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- *Artique Apartments* is from 2005 with dimensions 95m, 30 storeys, and 900m².
Comparative Analysis of Towers

Q1 (2005)
322m, 78 Storeys
1380m2

Jade on the Beach (2006)
55m, 15 storeys
800m2

Broadbeach on the Park (2004)
67m, 21 storeys
810m2
Comparative Analysis of Towers

Aria Tower (2002)
92m, 28 storeys
705m²

Air (2005)
131m, 37 storeys
800m²

111m, 34 Storeys
800m²
Comparative Analysis of Towers

Oracle (2010 Completion)

50 storeys
1100m2

West Tower
35 Storeys
Observations

The view determines building orientation before design for climate considerations.

Building footprints less than 1000m² seem best.

Elongated, rectilinear plan forms 40 to 60 metres long, but closer to 40,

Spacings between towers of less within same project, 20-60m.

Orientation to minimise western sun impact on beach.

Higher buildings have bigger footprints, but not always.

Do we really need buildings higher than 40-50 storeys??
Urban Density & Types Transect
Built Form Controls??
Lets investigate further the typology of high rise urban housing
Performance based planning informed by an ‘impact’ mindset does not present a clear vision of a place and the buildings within it
Can we be more specific (prescriptive)? Preferred footprint sizes and locations, setbacks for ground and first floor active frontage defines street and public, street wall 2-5, tower to 20, 20-50, above 50
How does the typology change with the transect change proximity to centres,
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