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The Development and Land Use Impacts of Local Mosques

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Abstract

Through globalisation, Western nations have in recent decades experienced high levels of immigration which have contributed to the development of new cultural landscapes previously unimaginable. Muslims have played a major role in this transformation. Their presence through the gradual use and characterization of space is manifest in the urban built environment.

The high growth rates of Muslims in Australia has been mirrored with a significant rise in the number of applications seeking approval for the development of mosques. However, on many occasions, mosque proponents have been met with strong opposition.

This thesis explores the land use impacts of this type of development in Sydney. Three Local Government Areas (LGA's) were selected as case studies, based on the number of Muslims residing in the LGA and the presence of an established mosque which already serves the people.

An analysis of the findings is then used to develop recommendations that accommodate this land use in a responsive manner while providing positive planning outcomes. Such outcomes can be implemented in the decision making process by local council's in dealing with the multitude of opposing factors which confront the town planning discipline.

Contents

Figures

List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFIC	The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils
DA	Development Application
DCP	Development Control Plan
IWWCV	Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LMA	Lebanese Moslem Association
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
PBUH	Peace be Upon Him

Chapter 1 - Introduction

"Imagine – and it is very difficult for those who have not experienced the world of the colonized – the effect that outside forces, over a relatively short period of time, can have on the transformation of the whole of the relations that make up urban space, including its sacred geography and unquestioned givens of the way things are in cities. Imagine, not only one building being constructed on an alien model, but an entire system of urban life in its economic, political, and symbolic-cultural forms being imposed upon already existing towns and cities that have been organized on quite different bases." (Gilsenan, 1982: 195)

This thesis explores the development of mosques and the subsequent impacts this land use has on the surrounding built environment. The mosque's wider role as a land use in its own right and the relationships that evolve in connection with the broader community need to be considered given the mosque in Islamic societies, as an entity fulfils a monumental role in all facets of life for Muslims.

Research Context

Prior to the formal abolition of the White Australia Policy by the Whitlam Government in 1972, Australia grew demographically through large-scale European immigration. With the immigration intake from traditional countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland and Northern Europe declining and the high demand for labour, Australia was prompted to review its immigration policies to allow for a broader range of migrants (Bouma, 1994). This policy shift saw migration take off resulting in the most significant migration and settlement of Muslims to Australia commencing in 1971 and thereafter. Since then, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2001) show that there has been a steady wave of immigration by Muslims to Australia.

Muslims as with all other religious groups comprise of individuals from different countries, ethnicities, traditions, customs, cultures and demographics. However, they all identify and share commonly held ideologies in terms of practices and beliefs which form the basis of their religious affiliation.

Australia as a progressive nation affirms itself as being a host to multiculturalism and 'fair-go' ideals. In theory these principles would be underpinning factors in creating a united and cohesive society. In the context, as Maussen suggests "a multicultural society the interpretation of moral principles and of social norms requires that one always takes into account the significance of broader socio-economic and power inequalities and the meaning of specific cultural practices for individuals or groups" (Maussen, 2004: 148).

From an urban planning perspective, the recognition of Muslims and their long-term presence and role in the Australian urban landscape lends itself to question how planning processes and regulations have in the past and are currently dealing with religious and spiritual institutions. Research undertaken by Dunn (2001) regarding mosque development in Sydney has revolved around multiculturalism, representations of Islam and the politics surrounding mosque development. The adoption of queer-theory concepts of citation, repetition, sedimentation and troubling (Dunn, 2005) are used to deconstruct stereotypes and positions of Anglo-Celtics as opposed to proponents of this type of land use. The significance placed on such places of worship for Muslims is fundamental in understanding the reasons behind Muslim communities as well as other faiths for that matter in securing space to cater for their spiritual and material needs.

Problem Statement

In recent times, the Islamic religion in Australia has doubled in each consecutive decade from the 1980's to the present. This significant increase in the number of people affirming themselves with Islam has and is further likely to see the number of places of worship to increase. Since the 1980's, mosques and Islamic Centres (30 in total), proposed within Sydney have come to face community unrest and opposition (Dunn,

2005). This has left councils with the difficult task of attempting to deal and resolve the issues raised by opponents to this land use. There currently exists a wide array of literature on places of worship relating to their proposed development and the issues that arise during the stages of the development assessment process. However, little weight is afforded to the functional capacity and land use impacts of local mosques in the context of Sydney's urban environment after initial planning approval is given.

Objectives

Muslims view mosques as crucial to their day to day activities. In recent times, we have seen an increase in the number of development applications seeking approval for places of worship, which adds weight for the need to explore the development and subsequent impacts of this land use on the surrounding built environment. Hence, the objectives central to this research are to:

- Undertake a historical review of places of worship relating to Islam in Australia and how this has changed over time.
- Analyse the land use impacts arising from this form of development in other Western nations.
- Examine the role of the planner and other stakeholders during the course of assessment of formal development applications (DA) and the difficulties and issues they come across.
- Discuss the various obstacles proponents seeking approval for places of public worship are confronted with and the reasons that give rise to such issues.
- Provide a detailed overview of the physical aspects of mosques.
- Provide an evaluation of the functions of this land use by looking at case studies involving places of worship that are currently operating and discuss how and who this land use affects.
- Examine council policies and regulations to determine the level of appropriateness of the requirements set out in Council's planning instruments.

- Develop recommendations to assist local government and the community that will ensure this land use operates in a responsive manner and is in the wider interest of the public.

Research Questions

Through globalisation, Western nations have experienced relatively high levels of new people from foreign nations contributing to new cultural landscapes previously unimaginable. This has resulted in a diverse range of ethnicities and religions contributing to produce pluralistic societies. Muslims have played a major role in this transformation. Their presence through the gradual use and characterisation of space is further represented and is most evident in the urban built environment. However, these changes that are now manifest in the urban landscape have and are still increasingly encountering opposition as noted by Dunn "debates about mosque building in Sydney have been among the most prominent of the political tensions surrounding cultural diversity and land-use change in Australia" (Dunn, 2005: 30). The focus here is not to solely examine the political issues that arise in such cases, but more so, examine the level of significance and impact this land use has on the community and its surroundings. Hence, the research raises questions that form the major component and shall assist in achieving the central objectives of this thesis.

From this, the main research questions to be answered are:

- What role does the planner and other stakeholders have during the course of assessment of such Development Applications (DA) and the difficulties and issues they come across?
- Why do individuals choose to reside in close proximity to places of worship?
- Do these places of worship impact on the surrounding environment? In what ways and who is affected?

- Do Environmental Planning Instruments, such as Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and Development Control Plans (DCPs) provide sufficient detail to the development of mosques?

Methodology

A total of six open-answer in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from local government focused and representatives from each mosque cited in the case studies. The interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone to enable further analysis of the information collected in relation to the research questions and objectives. Other data contributing to this thesis has been obtained directly from various government and non-government organisations. Text sources, including books, journal articles explaining theoretical ideas and concepts, international and national case studies, newspaper articles and field research/site visits have also been utilised in gaining a broader understanding of the research area. In addition, the media has also been both a factor and invaluable source of information on ideas and events that are of particular relevance to the thesis topic. My personal experiences have also been documented from my employment at Blacktown City Council (as well as being of the Muslim faith).

Note: Ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel at the Faculty of the Built Environment and is held in Appendix A.

Constraints

Babbie (1998, 228) explains that "the most carefully selected sample will never provide a perfect representation of the population from which it was selected". This question poses a constraint on the research being undertaken. Due to the nature of the topic, difficulties arise as to which local government areas (LGA) would provide an appropriate basis on which to conduct the research. Similarly, this constraint also applies to the respondents selected to participate in the in-depth interview process. In addition, the large number of mosques dispersed around the Sydney Metropolitan area have resulted in a narrowing down of a selection of sites assumed to be the most suitable in the context of providing an outcome to the research questions.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is presented in 6 chapters. Chapter One has introduced the topic area being the development and land use impacts of mosques in terms of the theoretical context, problem statement, research objectives and questions and a brief overview of the methodology.

Chapter Two looks at the history and development of Islam in Australia spanning from early contact up to the present time. In particular, this chapter explores and discusses the international and local literature on mosque developments and their role in shaping the urban landscape from both physical and social perspectives.

Chapter Three provides an overview of mosque design requirements and current mosque designs in Sydney. A comparison and evaluation of local council policies regarding places of worship is undertaken along with discussion on the concept of space and how it has been utilised to further expand the uses associated with mosques. Consideration is also given to the role of the planner in guiding such changes both in a strategic and development assessment sense.

Chapter Four outlines the key aspects of the study undertaken in relation to the three LGA's selected. This includes the in-depth interview process and the mosques nominated in the study.

Chapter Five compares and evaluates the findings of the three case studies involving the selected local councils and the places of worship. The research questions and the themes and concerns that arose from the in-depth interviews are also discussed.

Chapter Six concludes by summarising the thesis, establishes recommendations resulting from the research findings. Overall the chapter outlines, as planners, the areas that need to be given further consideration in light of the changing face of our cities and modern day society.

Chapter 2: History and development of Islam in Australia

Introduction

Firstly, this chapter examines the history of Islam in Australia with a focus on the gradual development of mosques up to the present time. Secondly, a review of international literature on mosque developments and their role in shaping the urban landscape from both physical and social perspectives is undertaken.

Initial Periods of Muslim Contact

Muslim contact in Australia is thought to have initially occurred between fisherman from Macassar in Southern Sulawesi and Aborigines along the coasts of the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia dating as far back as the 16th Century (ICNSW, 2006 & Cleland, 2001: 13). These Macassan expeditions primarily involved the fishing for and processing of 'trepang' also known as sea slugs to sell as delicacies to the Chinese market (ICNSW: 2006).

By 1907, the trepang trade had ceased to operate largely due to factors such as the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, restrictions and duties on entering Australian territorial waters and denied access to some northern ports (Saeed, 2003: 4).

In between the period of 1840 to 1880, European settlement began to expand from the south eastern lands across the continent (Cleland, 2001: 15). The conquest of the interior and the harsh conditions that came with this exploration of the central and western parts of the Australian outback revealed the limited value of horses. The conditions of the outback however were suitable for camels and at the suggestion of Governor Gawler of South Australia, the first camel arrived in Adelaide in 1840 from the Indian subcontinent (Saeed, 2003: 5).

As a consequence, this saw a different group of Muslims begin to immigrate to Australia as part of the importation of camels to provide transportation services for expeditions was on the increase. Over a relatively short period of time, both camels and camel drivers quickly proved to be an invaluable asset and more suited to the harsher conditions of the Australian outback. These Afghan cameleers participated in numerous expeditions playing a vital role in providing access to vast areas of Australia's interior. They also had a contributory part during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line in 1870-72. The Afghans undertook survey and construction work as well as transferring materials into otherwise difficult terrain (Cleland, 2001: 17). At their peak, approximately 3000 Afghans were working as camel drivers (Saeed, 2003: 6).

It was the settlement of these Afghan communities that produced the first known mosques in Australia. The first was formed outside Adelaide in 1890 by the Afghan Cameleers and in New South Wales, the first was formed in Broken Hill in 1891 (Bouma, 1994: 56). In relation to presence and operation of this land use, Cleland (2001) writes:

"By 1898, the Muslim community in Coolgardie numbered 300 members with 80, on average attending Friday prayer. The settlement was the main Muslim community in the colony at the time. It had two mosques, if that is what was meant by "Church Buildings", and five other buildings used for public worship. In Freemantle, two buildings were used for public worship but there was no main mosque and only one lonely 'Lay Reader' or prayer reader. In Perth, three buildings were used for public worship, but there was no mosque at this stage. It claimed one minister and three lay readers."(Cleland, 2001: 17)

The early Muslim presence, though small in number in comparison to other religious groups were able to form places of worship, albeit small in nature. The movement patterns of the Muslims in this period as well as the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901 soon after the establishment of the Commonwealth Government created an impermanent Muslim community. Added to this was the religious leaders who appear in the records to have visited Australia for short periods due to the Immigration

Restriction Act and the nature of the work Muslim men undertook saw them regularly on the move (Cleland 2001: 19).

It is evident that for these places of worship to be viable during these early periods, two major factors would need to be satisfied. One required, that sufficient numbers of the Muslim community were needed to support them. The second factor relied on government recognition of Muslims as a different group in terms of their needs from a religious perspective. For a mosque to function, an important element is that a mosque leader or imam be present to undertake the duties which serve the daily needs of worshipers and the Muslim community in general. This includes but is not limited to leading the prayers, delivering sermons, conducting marriages and funerals and counseling on family or marital problems.

Yet, the issue of providing a 'priest' to areas where Muslims were residing proved problematic for both Muslims and the government on two accounts. Cleland (2001) outlines this in the responses provided by the Queensland and New South Wales authorities to the Muslim communities upon their request for a 'priest':

- *"The Queensland office explained no official records were kept on such priests or mosques because these religious leaders 'are not recognised by the Registrar General's Department'."*

Also

- *The Collector of Customs in New South Wales ignored the substantial Muslim community in Broken Hill, replying that there was no mosque in the State. There were in fact, two mosques in Broken Hill"* (Cleland, 2001: 20).

This shows the reluctance and indifference of government authorities towards Muslim communities. This was further perpetuated by government policies and inaction to provide support to Muslims and their places of worship. This is despite the fact that Muslims had now been a part of the Australian landscape for several decades.

In contrast, the legislation of 1901 and 1903 had a stifling effect on the Muslim communities and their experiences based on the "false notions of the relationship between race and standard of living" (Cleland, 2001: 30), which these national policies primarily set out to enact.

The White Australia Policy

The ensuing decades prior to the Second World War reveal the successful nature of the White Australia Policy and the nation's objective of reaching racial homogeneity. The issue of racial classification created in some circumstances, a difficult situation for authorities. This was evident in the diplomatic enquiry concerning Turkish nationals and their right to settle and acquire property as were other European nationals (Cleland, 2001: 23). This was overcome simply by the Attorney General's Department concluding that 'Asiatic Turks' were not permitted to settle in Australia, while 'European Turks' were permitted subject to an application assessed on a case by case basis (Cleland, 2001: 24). In addition, the difficulty of Muslims to immigrate to Australia during this period was further complicated by the requirement that 40 pounds be provided as insurance or a letter from a sponsor (Cleland, 2001: 24). This was in deep contrast to British settlers who were expected to pay only three pounds (Cleland, 2001: 24).

In 1958, the Migration Act was passed, which in effect abolished the Dictation Test, however immigration officials still maintained discretionary powers and effective controls (Yarwood, 1988: 83).

This was followed by a further relaxation of entry regulations 6 years later in 1964 pertaining to persons of 'mixed descent'. Despite this shift in policy, the grouping of individuals as of 'mixed descent' suggests that racism was still inherent in the psyche of authorities. This is substantiated in the 1966 announcement which outlined that well-qualified people were to now be considered on the basis of their suitability as settlers. Also included in the statement was "…the changes of course are not intended to meet general labour shortages or to permit the large scale admission of workers from Asia" (Cleland, 2001: 26).

The years leading up to 1972 when the White Australia Policy was formally abolished, a number of factors had a mitigating part that resulted in a change of policy direction as noted by Bouma (1994: 9):

- "The slowing of immigration levels from traditional sources such as the UK, Ireland and Northern Europe.
- The demand for labour was still high and hence this could only be achieved through increased levels of immigration.
- Cold War produced a number of refugees reducing some of the antipathies which previous wars had engendered.
- Increased criticism of the propriety of and morality of the 'White Australia' policy within Australia as well as overseas.
- Increasingly became evident that immigrants did not pose the greatest challenges to post-war Australian way of life. This would be from the social and cultural changes occurring within Australian society itself, and from the changes within Western industrial nations.
- Criticism of assimilationist policies and their objectives".

The above factors and the growing appreciation of the contribution immigrants from a wide range of cultural backgrounds including Muslims could make to Australian society eventually saw the abolishment of the White Australia policy (Bouma, 1994: 10)

As a consequence, this shift in policy thinking saw migration take off resulting in the most significant migration and settlement of Muslims to Australia commencing in 1971 and thereafter. Since then, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2001) show that there has been a steady wave of immigration by Muslims to Australia.

Muslims and Mosque Development in Australia

The 1971 census was the first census which included Muslims as a minority group. The 1971 census showed there were 22 311 Muslims living in Australia comprising 0.2 per cent of the population (Bouma, 1994: 28).

Over the past three decades, a large proportion of Muslims have entered Australia under the Refugee/Humanitarian Program, fleeing state-based persecution or protracted forms of civil unrest and civil war. Many other Muslims have migrated to Australia through the Family Migration Stream. (Bedar and El Matra, 2005: 44)). More recently, contributing factors to this source of growth of the Muslim population in Australia is the relatively high marriage and fertility rates of Muslims (Bouma,1994: 28). A large proportion of Australian Muslims today are concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne. The ABS (2001) highlights this rapid rise of the Muslim population when comparing the 1996 and 2001 census data for religious affiliation in Australia as outlined in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Religious Affiliation in Australia 1996 and 2001.

RELIGION	1996 Census		2001 Census		Change
	'000 people	% Population	'000 people	% Population	%
Christian					
Anglican	3,903.3	22.0	3,881.2	20.7	-.06
Baptist	295.2	1.7	309.2	1.6	4.8
Catholic	4,799.0	27.0	5,001.6	26.6	4.2
Churches of Christ	75.0	0.4	61.3	0.3	-18.2
Jehovah's Witness	83.4	0.5	81.1	0.4	-2.8
Lutheran	250.0	1.4	250.4	1.3	0.2
Orthodox	497.0	2.8	529.4	2.8	6.5
Pentecostal	174.7	1.0	194.6	1.0	11.4
Presbyterian and Reformed	675.5	3.8	637.5	3.4	-5.6
Salvation Army	74.1	0.4	71.4	0.4	-3.7
Uniting Church	1,334.9	7.5	1,248.7	6.7	-6.5
Other Christian	420.6	2.4	497.9	2.7	18.4
Non-Christian					
Buddhism	199.8	1.1	357.8	1.9	79.1
Hinduism	67.3	0.4	95.5	0.5	41.9
Islam	200.9	1.1	281.6	1.5	40.2
Judaism	79.8	0.4	84.0	0.4	5.2
Other Religions	68.6	0.4	92.4	0.5	34.6
No religion	2,948.9	16.6	2,906.0	15.5	-1.5
Not Stated/Inadequately Described	1,604.7	9.0	2,187.7	11.7	36.3
Non-Christian	**17,752.8**	**100.0**	**18,769.2**	**100.0**	**5.7**

Source: CDATA, 2001

According to the 1996 census, there were 200,900 Muslims living in Australia comprising of 1.1 per cent of the population. The 2001 census presents a substantial increase in the percentage change of Muslims in the five years between the 1996 and

2001 census. A total of 281 600 people indicated they were of Muslim faith comprising of 1.5 per cent of the total population. This was a 40.2 per cent change making Muslims the third largest religious group in Australia behind Christians and Buddhists.

This expansion of the Islamic faith in Australia has had flow on effects in the area of a place to worship and the utilization of space by this religious group. The use of existing building[s] and or newly built buildings for the purpose of operating a mosque have also experienced a considerable rise. In 1994, Bouma (1994) notes there being fifty-seven mosques in Australia with the first mosque in Sydney formed in late 1966 using two terrace houses in Surry Hills on the site of the present King Faisal Mosque. To date, there are approximately 100 mosques (AFIC: 2006) around Australia which represents close to a hundred percent increase in the number of mosques over the past 12 years. This does not include prayer halls or other facilities or areas which may be used to conduct prayers as Islam permits prayers to be undertaken in any space as long as this space is clean.

This change of land use, whether it has been the conversion of an existing building or the development of a new building to accommodate Muslims, has in a majority of cases not resulted in a smooth process for proponents of this form of development. Since the 1980's the thirty mosques and Islamic centres proposed including major renovations within Sydney have encountered community opposition and difficulties from local councils (Dunn, 2005: 30).

The sectarian diversity of Islam combined with the diverse composition of Muslims within Australia has added to the rapid expansion of the number of mosques in Sydney. Also, given that the nine LGAs of the 45 in Sydney accommodate 72.34 per cent of all Sydney Muslims, the building of mosques and the associated impacts have been the most pressing (Dunn, 2005: 30). Hence, the role of mosques in the settlement process (during and after settlement) of Muslims in Australia can be viewed as being an important element.

Mosque Development in Sydney

An extensive amount of research has been undertaken in recent times on mosque developments and the contestations stemming from such proposals in Sydney. Issues revolving around multiculturalism, ethnic communities and representations of Islam have been raised and contested (Dunn, 2004: 2001 and 1999). Public participation in the decision-making process and the politics arising from mosque developments or conversions has also triggered debate on this form of development.

By the end of the 1990's, 25 mosques including some cultural centres containing prayer halls were operating within Sydney (Dunn, 2005). To date, this figure hovers approximately around 30 mosques within the Sydney region. As outlined earlier, significant increases in the Muslim population has added to the expansion of this particular place of public worship.

A number of issues that have been raised due to this proposed type of land use on selected sites have further reinforced the negative constructions of Muslims. As noted by Dunn (2001) "mosque opposition at the local level, for example, is (mis)informed by the stereotypes of Islam that are reproduced in the national media" (Dunn, 2001, 292). Through these negative stereotypes, the "…reinscriptions of social constructions (Muslims as fanatical, real Australians are white) can come to be widely accepted as unproblematic, and as a natural given" (Dunn, 2001: 292). This leads to the allocation of space as being either a safe space, which is assumed to be white space or different and unusual space, belonging to the 'other' (Dunn, 2001).

These constructions of Islam are usually passed over to proponents of mosque developments as illustrated in numerous cases whereby planning consent was refused based on planning grounds. The level of concern raised by objectors only adds weight for local authorities to refuse applications which again is discrimination coloured through the planning process. Auburn City Council's Chief Town Planner warned of the likelihood of change to the population structure should the development of Auburn mosque be approved:

"A 'Place of Worship' becomes a focal point and the larger its catchment the greater the effect will be in changes in the social and population structure of the locality. The mosque is nearly double in size to that erected in Lakemba and indications are that it would operate in a similar manner, i.e. a regional place of public worship… the most appropriate recommendation should be one of refusal" (Dunn, 2001: 299).

The above recommendation given by Auburn City Council's Chief Town Planner in 1985 highlights that social change was not something the Council nor the residents objecting to this development were ready to accept, that is, should such a change occur. Further, it is evident of the racist overtones in the above quote such as the 'greater the effect will be in changes in the social and population structure of the locality' (Dunn, 2001: 299). This would imply that the acceptance of a culturally diverse community was not something the Chief Town Planner nor the objectors were ready to accept.

Dunn (2005) adopts queer-theory concepts of citation, repetition, sedimentation and troubling to deconstruct stereotypes and positions of Anglo-Celtics as opposed to proponents of this type of land use. A focus by some objectors towards this land use has been based on pre-conceived ideas about Islam and the 'other' group.

The mosque's wider role as a land use and the importance of this in terms of the community it is intended to serve needs to be evaluated. In addition, the impacts of this place of public worship from both physical and social perspectives needs to be considered.

Development of Mosques in Western Nations

The development of mosques in other parts of the Western world are increasingly becoming important features of the built environment. In Britain, the number of officially registered places of worship (mosques) in 1964 were nine. By 1998, the number of operational mosques had increased to 614 (Gale, 2004: 30). This increase is consistent with the increases in the population numbers of Muslims as shown in the United

Kingdom 2001 census, which reveals Islam as being the second largest religion after Christianity with 1.6 million followers.

A similar situation has arisen with the development of mosques in the Greater Toronto Area. It was not until 1961 that saw the first mosque being established in a store warehouse (Qadeer, 2000: 17). This could largely be attributed to the relatively few Muslims residing in the Greater Toronto Area up until this period. By 1997, twenty-seven mosques had been established comprising of a mixture of newly built mosques and converted buildings (Qadeer, 2000). Once more, a major factor influencing this increase in the number of places of public worship for Muslims is the rapid expansion of immigration. A total of 105, 970 Muslims were living in the Greater Toronto Area in 1991, further increasing to a total Muslim presence by the year 2000 close to 200,000 (Qadeer, 2000: 17).

The above figures indicate that the Islamic faith in these countries is flourishing as are the associated spiritual institutions that are subsequently developed and operated by this religious group. This establishment of mosques in Western societies raises a number of recurring issues and themes pertaining both to the broader community and the minority-religious group. The impacts of this land use on the urban landscape on architectural, social and religious grounds needs to be evaluated. Sandercock (2000) makes the point that "….we have to come to terms with the complex ethnic and cultural diversity that is coming to characterise globalising cities, to develop a multicultural literacy more attuned to cultural diversity, and to redefine ourselves professionally according to these new understandings" (Sandercock, 2000: 2). These 'new understandings' referred to, apply to professionals being planners and those with the responsibility of deriving and implementing policy. However, at the opposite end of the spectrum is the subject group which needs to reflect on notions of shared interest and what this constitutes.

The British Experience

Labour shortages in the post-war period after 1945 has resulted in large-scale non-European immigration. As mentioned previously, the very large number of Muslims that have immigrated to the United Kingdom has been mirrored with the rise of mosque development (Naylor and Ryan, 2002). Cesari (2005) outlines mosque conflicts in Europe and the relationship these places hold with people of that faith. Further to this, is the exploration of Islam in Europe and its transference from the private to the public domain. Cesari (2005) notes that previously private prayer rooms were invisible to the public usually located in an apartment block or at the back of a shop.

The British zoning and town planning controls are universal and strictly applied in accordance with the Town and County Planning Act from 1947 to 1990 (Gale and Peach, 2003). Consent is required for any change in the use of an existing property or land as well as the construction of new buildings at the discretion of local planning authorities (Peach and Gale, 2003). The planning aims relating to the assessment of development applications share some common characteristics with the heads of consideration listed under Section 79C of the New South Wales legislation, the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979. This includes the amenity impacts of proposed development on the existing surrounding area/s.

Gale and Peach (2003) acknowledge the difficulty of generalising the interactions that occur between minority religious groups and the British Planning System. This is likely due to the different contexts of each case involving a place of worship. However, they provide a four-stage cycle explaining the interaction between these stakeholders. This summation provides an effective overview of the role of planning and mosque developments from a British perspective in shaping the urban landscape.

Stage One

Involves 'tacit change and planning denial', where dwellings are converted into prayer rooms without official permission from local authorities. This change of use usually results in opposition from planners and politicians. Issues such as car parking, acoustic

impacts, increased disturbance to neighbours and the muezzin's call to prayer provide planners with valid reasons to oppose such operations.

Stage Two

A search for a larger premises is undertaken. This option is common as shown in the survey conducted by Gale and Peach (2003) which revealed that 41 per cent of mosques were operating in converted buildings. This is termed 'large-scale conversion with minimalist change' (Gale and Peach, 2003: 475) as most of the modifications are cosmetic rather than architectural. The downside for worshipers, however, is usually the further distances that must be traveled to these converted mosques.

Stage Three

The development of purpose built mosques. This heralds the arrival of architectural styles that are different to the existing urban landscape in the form of domes and minarets. The third stage results in 'hiding and displacement'. This is interpreted to mean the acceptance of the different architectural styles proposed, however, the subject building is either hidden from the public view or limiting the scope and impact of the mosque's iconic features in reference to the dome or minaret/s. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2 in the Mehfil-e-Abbbas Shi'a Ithna Asheri Masjid in Balsall Heath, Birmingham.

**Figure 2.2 The Mehfil-e-Abbas Shi'a Ithna Asheri Masjid in Balsall Heath,
Birmingham (Source: Barfoot, 2000)**

The mosque is located behind shops with its dome and minaret cowering under the
adjoining properties. Further, landscaping has been utilised to further screen the
development from public view. Gale and Peach (2003) conclude by noting this type of
development and the approach taken by planners in this instance has *'minimised the
impact on the general public'*, which is further interpreted to mean that local white people
will not fully observe the impacts of the development. (Gale and Peach, 2003: 478).

Stage Four

In stark contrast to the approach taken by planners in 1982 regarding the above
development, this stage of the process places emphasis on 'embracing and celebration'.
In this case, the architectural features that differentiate mosques from other places of
worship such as the minaret and dome are permitted and encouraged as illustrated in
comments made by the City Council during the early planning stages of the Dur ul
Uloom Islamia Masjid in Balsall Heath, Birminham:

*"Because the site also fronts the roundabout junction of Golden Hillock Rock and Small
Heath By-pass, a prominent building is required."*

And

"The proposed building is of considerable scale and mass and has been deliberately sited at the corner of the site to form a landmark adjacent to the Small by-pass." (Gale, 2004: 41).

These approaches taken by planning authorities and proponents of mosque development exposes the differences planning can have in the outcome of such developments. This has both social and physical implications for the community where the mosque is intended to serve as well as on the broader community that may adversely be affected by this land use. In social terms, the needs and practices of these minority religious groups becomes set against preserving and maintaining a sufficient level of amenity that does not negatively alter the existing surrounding area/s. The physical outcome represents a symbol of identity for this community which is visible through the built environment.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced back the history of Muslims and Islam in Australia from the early periods of contact with the Macassar fishermen and up to the current Muslim presence in Australia. The largest influx of Muslim immigrants has occurred after the abolishment of the White Australia Policy in 1972. The diversity of the ethnic elements within Australian society was further recognised with the publication of "A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future" (Yarwood, 1988: 84). Several factors have contributed to the significant growth of this minority religious group within Australia making it the third largest behind Christianity and Buddhism. This has been mirrored by a substantial growth in the number of places of public worship in Australia, and in particular, in Sydney.

There is a resembling connection with the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia with respect to the growth of the Muslim population and the expansion of mosques. As shown in the British experience of mosque development, town planning is confronted with the task of reconciling differences within the community which is increasingly becoming

more diverse. This has seen the (re)shaping of the urban landscape in a manner that represents different meanings to different groups and individuals. In the Australian context, mosque developments have produced heated discussion on issues relating to social and identity constructions and the like.

The following chapter provides an overview on the architectural aspects of mosque design and that are now a feature of Sydney's urban landscape. Also, local council policies regarding public places of worship are examined and the implications this has on the use of space and the role of the planner in the assessment of such developments.

Chapter 3: Mosques and land use planning

Introduction:

The advent of the Muslim religion brought with it new practices and rituals that required the construction of special buildings to serve the needs of worshipers. The mosque is a unique place that accommodates the needs of Muslims while also creating a focal meeting point. This chapter looks at how the mosque has evolved to utilise space through new architectural forms that have produced innovations in the art of building. Mosques and the physical characteristics they display have resulted at times, to be contentious indicators of the cultural presence of ethnic elements within Western society.

In the Australian context, with particular reference to Sydney, the architectural design of mosques has in a majority of instances been replicated on foreign Islamic models rarely taking a form that is sympathetic with the streetscape. Local council policies for the provision of places of worship are examined in light of the increase in the number of mosques being proposed and built in recent times. Also, the role of the planner and planning on a broader level is discussed in terms of achieving outcomes that are responsive to all segments of the community.

Mosque Design

The structure created by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in his own home in Medina was the first prototype of the mosque. Arab authors describe the dwelling-mosque as comprising of a series of rooms facing onto a square courtyard covering approximately 2500 square metres. The courtyard was provided with a lean-to along the north wall and palm branches were used for shelter supported by two rows of palm trunks forming a primitive type of portico (Stierlin, 1996: 24). At that time, the direction for prayer was oriented towards Jerusalem, however was later replaced towards the Kabba in 630 which is in Mecca.

One of the most important rituals performed at the mosque is Salat (prayers). Prior to describing the functional elements that are associated with this ritual, a brief overview of the Muslim prayer is provided. Assuming that more than one individual is partaking, Salat are performed in parallel rows, following the movements of a leader, known as the Imam, all facing towards the Kabba in Mecca. Physically, the rows indicate the main spatial direction to which a mosque or prayer hall should correspond. Since worship is relatively simple, mosques require minimal furniture, for example, not necessitating the use of chairs, pews and the like.

Over time, however, functional elements that have since been incorporated into the internal design of mosques that are associated with prayer are as follows:

The Minbar - Defined as a raised platform is used for preaching or providing sermons before or after Salat. It takes the form of a miniature set of stairs rising away from the congregation whom the preacher faces.

The Mihrab - Is the niche which points in the direction of Mecca. This feature is important acoustically, as it permits the voice of the imam to resonate.

Lighting - The use of opulent lighting hanging from the ceiling is very common feature in the interior of mosques. According to the Holy Koran, Allah (God) himself is the light of the heavens and of the Earth.

Floor Covering - This usually comes in the form of a single large carpet. The three primary functions of the use of carpet are to limit the noise of footsteps preserving an atmosphere of quiet, enhancing the beauty of the building by the intricate patterns and colours used and ensuring the purity of worshippers who must perform the ritual ablution of the face, hands and feet prior to entering the mosque (Davies, 1982).

Ablution Facilities - Fountains and or rows of taps are usually located in the centre of a forecourt or in close proximity to the main door of the mosque. The use of water in expressing an atmosphere of serenity and calm is utilised in many mosque designs and in particular in countries where the majority of the population are of the Islamic faith.

The development of a rich repertory of designs enhance the simplistic nature of the interior and surrounding space. The geometry and recurrent patterns such as floral patterns that are evident in the design of paved floors, marble decoration and carved stucco especially in the decoration of the Mihrab (Stierlin, 1996: 228) distinguish the mosque from other places of worship. Infinite repetition of individual units such as bays, arches, columns, passages, doorways, cupolas and the mergence of space in no defined direction only add to the space-positive architectural design of mosques (Michell, 1978: 14).

Mosque Design in Sydney/Australia

The mosque in Muslim societies is undoubtedly the most important building in the community. In Western society, the mosque may symbolise the Muslim community's presence and hence its identity. Less significance may be yielded to the mosque by other sections of the community. The form and function of the mosque in Australia has gradually moved forward which has produced a number of impressively designed mosques, a large majority basing their designs on foreign models.

Many of the mosques that have been built into Sydney's landscape have been located in already built-up areas. The large scale and bulk of these developments in contrast to adjoining properties has resulted in what may be viewed as being, either a lack of uniformity with its surroundings or on the other hand, contributing to the diversity of the urban landscape. The most distinct features in the design and subsequent construction of these mosques are:

Rectangular/Square Structure - Provide an expanse of interior space in the form of an open plan layout. This has the benefit of accommodating a large number of individuals as well as emphasising a limitlessness of space which again is an embodiment of one of the characteristics of Allah (God).

Arches - Arches feature prominently in the external facades of mosques in Sydney. In many cases, the arch is multiplied to create an overall pattern.

Domes - These have been incorporated in the overall design. An arch that is turned 360 degrees translated into three dimensions becoming a dome (Davies, 1982: 136). The dome has been treated in many forms (see Figures 4.2 and 4.5 of Al Zahra Islamic College and Auburn Gallipoli Mosques respectively) including coated with faience or pierced with geometrical shapes.

Minarets - The primary intent of the minaret is its use for the calling of the adhan (call to prayer) by the muezzin. The minaret has been presented in a cylindrical form appearing as a tall column. In Australia, the minaret is a common feature of the mosque, however its function is not utilised in the sense that the calling to prayer is not permitted to be carried out. In spite of this, the presence of a minaret enables the distinction of the mosque from other surrounding buildings.

As earlier noted, the prayer area is always aligned to face Mecca. This orientation will not always be parallel to buildings lines (Qadeer, 2000). In the case of the Fatima Al-Zahra Mosque in Arncliffe (see Figure 4.1), this has not been an issue as the location of the mosque being at the end of a cul-de sac along with the required orientation to Mecca has worked in its favour maximising the use of space.

A look into the design aspects of mosques in Sydney shows similarities between the universal adopted styles, however the spread of Islam has resulted in the inclusion of

additional element to the mosques, which is largely dependent upon the denomination of the worshipers, although the function of the mosque remains the same.

Local Council Policies

The process involved in seeking development approval for a place of public worship in each of the local government areas examined is very similar. For example, a development application is lodged proposing the development of a specific type of building structure. The application is reviewed by staff, then placed on public exhibition, which is then followed by a recommendation for approval through the issue of a development consent. This process seems fairly streamlined however, issues may and are likely to arise during the assessment and public exhibition stages of the proposal.

Focusing on places of worship, the definition of this type of land use has changed to reflect the inclusion of the growing multi-faith communities', in particular local government areas. This has also been the case in other Western nations such as Canada. In 1988, Toronto City deleted the term "church" in favour of 'place of worship" (Qadeer, 2000: 18). The local government areas under examination in this instance, have all adopted the term 'place of public worship' in accordance with the definition given in the Model Provisions 1980 relating to the EP & A Act meaning 'a building or place used for the purpose of religious worship by a congregation or religious group, whether or not the building or place is also used for counselling, social events, instruction or religious training'. This aside, local council policies and guidelines provide the main criteria adopted in the assessment and hence determination of planning proposals.

Rockdale City Council

A review of Rockdale City Council's Environmental Planning Instruments such as Rockdale Local Environmental Plan 2000 (RLEP 2000) and Development Control Plans has revealed relatively little in terms of detail/s applicable to the development of mosques. RLEP 2000 permits the development of places of worship subject to Council consent in the residential, business, industrial and some zones pertaining to special uses.

The only Development Control Plan applicable and is used in the assessment of places of worship is the "Parking and Loading Code". The term 'place of public worship' is yet to be inserted in this policy document despite Council adopting the definition as per the Model Provisions. The Parking and Loading Code requires that "1 space per 10 seats or 1 space per 10 square metres nett floor area of hall, whichever is greater' in the assessment of Churches and Church Halls (and other halls not licensed under Theatres and Public Halls Act) (Rockdale City Council, 2006).

There are no specific policy documents stipulating development controls such as minimum lot areas, minimum lot frontage, maximum height limits and preferred location of such land uses. It is acknowledged that the RLEP does contain broad aims and objectives pertaining to each zone and the land uses permissible in that zone.

Canterbury City Council

The Environmental Planning Instruments applicable to the development of places of public worship within the local government area of Canterbury are namely, Canterbury Local Environmental Plan 178 and Development Control Plan (DCP) No. 20 Car Parking. DCP No. 20 in relation to places of worship states that "as a guide, 1 space per 5 people (accommodation capacity) for first 100, then 1 space per 3 people thereafter, and, for Bicycles Visitors: Minimum 1 space per 20 visitors or part thereof. Also a parking assessment with a survey of similar developments is required. Places of worship are permissible with development consent in the residential, business, industrial and some special use zones. Similar to the case of Rockdale City Council, no minimum site area requirements or other building related controls have been stipulated. The car parking ratio in comparison to that of Rockdale City Council does differ in that Rockdale City Council bases its calculations on seating (i.e. for pews in a church) or per square metre of floor area (in the case of mosques), whereas Canterbury derives its minimum car parking requirements by calculating the number of persons to visit the site. This presents the risk of underestimating or over-estimating the minimum car parking requirements.

Auburn Council

As with the previous two councils, Auburn Council through the Auburn Local Environmental Plan 2000 (ALEP2000) also permits places of public worship subject to development consent in the residential, business, industrial and special use zones. The only other planning instrument that is applicable is the Development Control Plan 'Car Parking and Loading' which requires a car parking ratio of 1 space per 10 seats or 1 space per 20m2 GFA where no seats are provided or seating is in the form of traditional pews' (Auburn Council, 2006).

From the above three Councils and the plans/policies in place suggests the following:

- Consideration of Development Applications is merit based with each individual application assessed in the context of its surroundings given the lack of development controls, besides the car parking ratios.
- Places of worship are permissible in all urban zones irrespective if they are low, moderate and high activity localities.
- In this particular instance, there is not so much of a wide variation in planning standards. This is consistent with little, if any, differences in the local conditions of each local government area.

Implications on the Use of Space

The transformation and use of urban space to accommodate mosques has increased the visibility of Islam while simultaneously creating tensions between opposing parties in the development of such buildings. The concepts of 'representation of space' and 'representational space' provide an intersection on the utilisation and meaning of space afforded by different groups (Gale, 2004: 31). Within policies relating to urban planning, representation of space may refer to the conception of space and what a particular space may or may not be used for. Whereas, representational space denotes physical spaces which may contain and express social meanings. (Gale, 2004: 31). This element of social meaning derived from the development of a building, in this case being a mosque has faced strong opposition and criticism from opponents to this form of development.

The impacts of planning related matters such as parking and traffic, extent of overshadowing and privacy concerns can be addressed and modified to meet local council requirements. However, objections deemed to be of a subjective nature have had implications on this land use. The nature of the objections received by council during exhibition periods are usually disguised as being related to planning and hence warrant consideration and/or are valid grounds for refusal.

The following example illustrates the point in question:

Annangrove Islamic Centre

A development application was lodged in 2002 with Baulkham Hills Shire Council by New Century Development Pty Ltd (applicant) proposing the construction of a single storey building to be used as a place of public worship (for Muslims) with parking for 62 cars in the semi-rural suburb of Annangrove (north-west of Sydney).

As a result of the public exhibition period, a total of 5181 submissions from 532 households were received, of which 5170 objections were objections and 11 were in support of the application (www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au). The application was recommend for approval by Council planners, however was subsequently refused by Council on a 11 to 2 vote. The applicant lodged an appeal to the Land and Environment Court where the appeal was upheld. In his findings, Justice J. Lloyd provided the following summation on the extent of the issues raised by residents and Councilors:

"The consent authority must not blindly accept the subjective fears and concerns expressed in the public submissions. There must be evidence that can be objectively assessed that shows adverse effect upon the amenity of the area. In this case, the objections must be afforded little weight and appear to have little basis in fact'. (Lloyd, 2003).

This reveals the reluctant positions by some sections of the community to acknowledge representational space, in this instance being a prayer centre to cater for a minority faith

other than the dominant Christian faith. This is clear in one of the issues that was contested by both Council and the applicant in the Court:

"Whether the proposed development is antipathetic to the shared beliefs, customs, values of the local community and, if approved, would result in a change in the character and amenity of the area" (www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au).

Although the appeal was upheld, the Council still imposed stringent conditions of consent. This included the following:

- The construction of half the road, extending beyond the subject site's frontage up to and including a part of the adjoining properties.
- The provision of 3 on-site sewerage tanks to cater for patron usage. Aly (2005) noted that 'if we were to have 500 people using the amenities 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, one tank would be more than adequate, the company contracted to dispose of the waste came a few weeks ago to pump out the sewerage, they told me sorry there is nothing to pump out.
- The installation of high grade security fencing. Total cost $130,000. Cost of standard fencing would have been around $30,000 (Aly, 2005).

Focus has been placed on the use of space by those groups using this space to meet their needs. Due consideration should be given to other individuals who in the short or long term may be affected by this land use indirectly. This could include those neighbours who willingly sell their properties (for higher than market value prices) to the place of worship brought on by the expansionist activity of places of worship. This is not uncommon with some places of worship who have large amounts of capital enabling them to 'buy out' adjoining properties to achieve their objectives. Moriah College in Sydney's eastern suburbs is one example where this has occurred.

Role of the Planner

Within the sphere of town planning, "a planner must consider and reconcile all the factors that influence the culture, the appearance and the functionality of human space with the underlying objectives of shaping space so it meets human needs and desires in an environmentally sensitive way" (www.fbe.unsw.edu.au). In practice, the role of the planner and the planning process can be viewed as a form of 'negotiation'. The concept of negotiation can be used as a means of getting things done when different organizations or groups need to consider each other's viewpoints to get things done(Claydon and Smith, 1997: 2004). Hence, the role of the planner will have different meanings attributed to it by different individuals or groups depending on the position taken by the individual.

In the case of places of public worship, proponents of such applications are more than likely to ensure that their proposal is designed to ensure that cultural and religious requirements are satisfied. On the other hand, the planner's role would require that general planning guidelines and controls are complied with to ensure the streetscape and the broader community is not adversely affected. However, the issue of negotiating planning outcomes that are beneficial to all stakeholders has not been an easy task to carry out regarding the development of mosques. Both Zalundaro (2002) and Cashel's (1992) findings on this point in question shows the complex circumstances planners are faced with in dealing with applications that have proved to be contentious in nature due to the 'type' of land use being proposed as well as the 'group' wishing to operating this land use.

An important issue which is constantly brought to the forefront of debate that planners, opponents and proponents of mosque developments are faced with is that of amenity and the public interest. The issue of pressure exerted on planners is greater when objections are numerous and in particular when subjective perspectives are displayed regarding the issue of amenity and public interest. The following two recommendations are evidence of this in the recommendation given in the planners reports:

"In view of the number of objections received the subject proposal is not in the public interest" (Dunn, 2001: 300).

And

In view of overwhelming opposition to the proposal, approval of the application would not be in the public interest". (Dunn, 2001: 300)

In spite of this, the role of the planner is clear in terms of the duties and responsibilities that must be performed to ensure that stated objectives as outlined in council documents and legislation are achieved. However, the role of the planner is limited to making a judgment in the form of a recommendation to be presented to the elected Councilors who become the determining authority. This is where some applications, in this instance, mosque proposals, become 'political', where some Councilors take the opportunity to win votes by heeding to the calls of those against such developments. In the Annangrove mosque proposal, McDonald observes "…council had ignored its own planning and independent legal advice to vote 10 to 2 to refuse Mr Aly's building application"
(McDonald, 2003). This resulted in the application being taken to the Land and Environment Court where the appeal was subsequently upheld. In this particular case, as both legal and planning advice pointed out that it would not be in the interests of the Council to refuse the application, the advice was still overlooked. Council has therefore wasted the rate payer's money on a matter that was clearly not going to be refused by the Court.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the elements and requirements included in the design of mosques and their place within the urban built environment in Sydney/Australia. In regards to the implications on the use of space, it is evident mosques are still very much contentious developments which some local councils and sections of the community are yet able to deal with. It would seem a mosque is still differentiated from other places of

worship based on the content of the responses received from the local community. The three local councils examined with respect to current policies in place relating to places of worship indicates a relative lack of indifference to this land use given the minimal information at hand in assessing such proposals. The case study of 'Annangrove Mosque' has shown that the planner can influence decisions, but only up to the point of providing a recommendation. Elected representatives at the local level have substantial influence on the final outcome.

Chapter four outlines the key aspects of the study undertaken in relation to the three local government areas (LGA's) selected. This includes the in-depth interview process and the mosques nominated in the study.

Chapter 4: The Study

Introduction

The thesis adopts qualitative research methods based primarily on literature reviews obtained from text sources including books, journal and newspaper articles, local council policies and regulations and in-depth interviews with council planning staff and a representative from each local mosque. This chapter provides a framework for the study undertaken. It looks at the geographic areas selected and the reasons behind their selection as well as briefly describing the qualitative research method/s applied in this instance. Political and ethical considerations are explained given the nature of the research undertaken. Observations made through site visits and previous local knowledge are noted for each of the local mosques nominated in the study.

Geographic Focus

The Islamic Sydney website directory lists a total of 80 mosques and prayer centres within the Sydney metropolitan areas. Mosques and prayer centres as far as Newcastle and Wollongong are also listed on the website. The geographic focus of the study however has been limited to three local government areas within the south-west/western areas of Sydney, being the Auburn, Canterbury and Rockdale LGA's. Figure 4.1 below lists the number of Muslims in Sydney by LGA. The table shows other LGA's as having a higher percentage of Muslims residing there than the Rockdale LGA such as the LGA's of Bankstown and Liverpool. However, the location of a prominent and well-established mosque in each locality was a key consideration in the study and hence the inclusion of Rockdale. An examination of the Figure 4.1 below shows a substantial proportion of Muslims living in the south-west and western parts of Sydney. Although not entirely, these have tended to be industrial and lower socioeconomic areas (Dunn, 2004).

Figure 4.1. Muslims in Sydney by Local Government Area

Local Government Area	No. of Males	No. of Females	Total No. Muslims	% of total population in LGA who are Muslim	% of all Sydney Muslims in LGA
Ashfield	432	310	742	1.88	0.55
Auburn	6,971	6,112	13,083	23.21	9.74
Bankstown	9,978	9,560	19,538	11.80	14.54
Baulkham Hills	1,084	1,006	2,090	1.50	1.56
Blacktown	4,598	4,518	9,116	3.56	6.78
Blue Mountains	95	82	177	0.24	0.13
Botany	1,606	1,340	2,946	8.21	2.19
Burwood	307	243	550	1.84	0.41
Camden	147	142	289	0.66	0.22
Campbelltown	2,510	2,268	4,778	3.28	3.56
Canterbury	8,062	7,011	15,073	11.51	11.22
Concord	191	157	348	1.29	0.26
Drummoyne	174	163	337	1.02	0.25
Fairfield	3,604	3,225	6,829	3.75	5.08
Gosford	205	179	384	0.25	0.29
Hawkesbury	94	74	168	0.28	0.13
Holroyd	2,731	2,536	5,267	6.14	3.92
Hornsby	1,005	991	1,996	1.37	1.49
Hunter's Hill	54	66	120	0.95	0.09
Hurstville	1,141	1,068	2,209	3.13	1.64
Kogarah	827	731	1,558	3.09	1.16
Ku-ring-gai	298	277	575	0.57	0.43
Lane Cove	172	175	347	1.13	0.26
Leichhardt	253	208	461	0.74	0.34
Liverpool	5,995	5,559	11,554	7.49	8.60
Manly	90	84	174	0.46	0.13
Marrickville	1,624	1,165	2,789	3.80	2.08
Mosman	54	41	95	0.37	0.07
North Sydney	187	134	321	0.57	0.24

Parramatta	5,262	4,763	10,025	6.94	7.46
Penrith	1,296	1,098	2,394	1.39	1.78
Pittwater	57	38	95	0.18	0.07
Randwick	1,032	817	1849	1.52	1.38
Rockdale	3,692	3,514	7,206	8.14	5.36
Ryde	993	863	1,856	1.94	1.38
South Sydney	1,022	501	1,523	1.65	1.13
Strathfield	482	407	889	3.15	0.66
Sutherland	841	745	1,586	0.78	1.18
Sydney	231	139	370	0.78	0.28
Warringah	524	432	956	0.74	0.71
Waverley	208	176	384	0.63	0.29
Willoughby	352	335	687	1.16	0.51
Wollondilly	56	59	115	0.31	0.09
Woollahra	101	97	198	0.39	0.15
Wyong	174	145	319	0.24	0.24
TOTAL	**70,812**	**63,554**	**134,366**	**3.36**	**100.00**

Source: CDATA2001.

In-depth Interviews

Given that local government authorities are usually the first point of contact for individuals seeking to operate or develop a place of worship, it was considered appropriate for the selection of the local councils to participate in the interview process.
In order for the research objectives and aims outlined in Chapter One to be achieved, a range of questions were compiled to engage the interviewees thoughts and perceptions on the development and land use impacts of the mosque in their LGA.

'Purposeful or judgmental' sampling (Babbie, 1988: 195) was used to select the appropriate respondents for this aspect of the thesis. Six interviewees were selected, one staff member from each local council and one individual from each mosque investigated. One of the main limitations in the selection process is the difficulty in determining the extent to which the research represents any meaningful population (Babbie, 1998). In this instance, the Council staff interviewed were from either a strategic or development assessment background. This mix was partially a result of planning managers delegating

the interviews to whom they perceived would be in the most suitable position to provide a response.

In relation to the respondent from the local mosque located at Arncliffe, it should be noted that there was bias when selecting the respondent. Due to my religious affiliation and regular attendance at the mosque, rapport was already established with the interviewee. Bias was not considered to have been an issue in this situation with the previous rapport adding to the depth of the interview results.

Initial contact with the Planning staff of each of the respective local councils was made by phone and e-mail in September to introduce the research objectives, establish rapport and to ascertain whether the local council had an interest in participating in the research component of the thesis. Due to time constraints, the interviews with each town planner from two of the three councils were conducted via email. All three interviews were held in October 2006. Each interview was structured with the same content and design for comparative purposes.

A copy of the consent forms from both one Council planner and mosque representatives is attached in Appendix B. Other may be provided on request.

A one-page summary of the interviews conducted for planners and mosque representatives is attached in Appendix C.

Ethical and Political Considerations

Research projects are likely to be shaped by both ethical and political considerations (Babbie 1998). As a result, it is essential to understand the ethical and political implications that may arise when conducting any research. To ensure these concerns were considered and implemented as part of the research project the following measures were taken to safeguard these concerns:

-   A formal letter outlining the project description and purpose; and

- A privacy and confidentiality agreement was forwarded to all participants selected for in-depth interviews. The form included information in relation to how the data would be used, promise of anonymity and destruction of the transcript on completion of the project; and

- Prior to commencing in-depth interviews, consent from the participants was obtained to record the findings.

Given the geographic focus of the study, anonymity of council officers is difficult. However, due to one of the town planners interviewed requesting they remain anonymous, it was decided it would be easier to not identify any of the other planners nor mosque representatives involved. Rather, interviewees would be identified in the form of Planner # 1 and Mosque Representative # 1 and so on. This would overcome the issue of disclosing the positions and names of those involved in the in-depth interviews. Also as stated, given the narrow geographic focus of the study, by identifying two councils and not the other is likely to make it apparent which council requested anonymity. This presents the issue of unethical behavior on my behalf. These measures that have been put in place will ensure that no harm, emotionally or professionally will result from the outcome towards participants in the study. From a political perspective, the nature of the research area can be sensitive in some respects and thus to ensure no political ramifications arise, the request of the participant(s) has been complied with.

Fatima Al Zahra Mosque

The LGA of Rockdale is located on the shores of Botany Bay, 12 kilometres from Sydney's CBD. According to the ABS(2001), Rockdale LGA has a total population of 92, 988. 55% of residents come from non-english speaking backgrounds (NESB). This includes residents from Yugoslavia, the United Kingdom, Greece, Lebanon, Italy and China (Rockdale City Council, 2006). The city of Rockdale is in close proximity to the city and is easily accessible by both public and private transport. Trains travel along the Illawarra and East Hills Line and the major roads include Princes Highway and General Holmes Drive.

The major commercial centre is located in Rockdale. Local neighbourhood centres are found in Arncliffe, Bexley, Brighton-Le-Sands and Ramsgate. Industrial areas are most notable in Arncliffe and Rockdale. The industrial pockets in Arncliffe are undergoing a transition resulting from the transformation of the former industrial precinct at Wolli Creek to residential and commercial land uses.

The Fatima Al Zahra Mosque is located in Arncliffe at the end of a cul-de-sac street. The Al Zahra Muslim Association who own and operate the mosque was established in 1975. The mosque was constructed in 1980 with the assistance of the local community. The building (Figure 4.2) is sited on approximately 1624 square metres and can accommodate approximately 1000 worshippers. The south-eastern elevation faces the railway line while the northern-western elevation faces onto adjoining residential dwellings. The south-western elevation looks onto an adjoining dwelling and primary school (Figure 4.3) both owned by the mosque.

Fig. 4.2 Fatima Al Zahra Mosque, Arncliffe **Figure 4.3 Al Zahra College**

(Source: Author)

(Source: Author)

Figure. 4.2 shows the design of the mosque is similar to other middle eastern models, with its minaret located behind the semi-sphere which is the main entrance to the mosque. Arches are a conspicuous feature in the design with the lower part of the arches forming

the windows. The entrance for women is accessible from the carpark. As the building stands on piers, the car park is based around this area. The men's ablution facilities are underneath the building in close proximity to the main entrance while the women's ablution area is next to the women's entrance.

The use of landscaping in the form of palm trees along the entire length of the cul-de-sac assists in providing a screen for the side elevation of the mosque.

Imam Ali Mosque

The LGA of Canterbury is located 17 kilometres south-west of the CBD. At the 2001 census, the Canterbury LGA has a population of 130,947 residents with 45.2% of these residents born overseas in non-english speaking countries. The main source of countries include Lebanon, Greece, Vietnam and China. It is a culturally diverse city illustrated through the Council's slogan "City of Cultural Diversity". Numerous town centres operate within the locality such as Campsie, Canterbury, Earlwood, Lakemba, Punchbowl and Wiley Park. Canterbury Road is one of the major commercial spines running through the area.

The Imam Ali Ibn Abi Taleb Mosque is located in Lakemba fronting Wangee Road. The Lebanese Moslem Association (LMA) who own and operate the mosque was formed in 1959, and registered in 1961 (LMA 2006). The mosque (Figure 4.4) was built in 1977 on approx. 3000 square metres and is currently the largest mosque in Australia capable of accommodating up to 4000 worshippers internally at any one time.

Both side elevations of the mosque adjoin single storey residential dwellings. Along Wangee Road, there is a mixture of single storey residential dwellings and older style three storey residential flat buildings, mostly built in the period 1950's to late 1970's.

The LMA currently owns a number of residential homes behind the mosque as well as one dwelling across from the mosque. The youth centre currently under construction by the LMA is located 40 metres from the mosque. Between the youth centre (Figure 4.5) and dwelling adjoining the mosque is a canal.
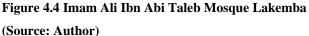
Figure 4.4 Imam Ali Ibn Abi Taleb Mosque Lakemba (Source: Author)

Figure 4.5 New Youth Centre owned by the LMA (Source: Author)

The Lakemba mosque presents similar characteristics to the design of the Fatima Al Zahra Mosque in Arncliffe. A single minaret is included, which is used as a landmark directing the gaze of viewers to the building. The effect of this landmark is likely to be eroded from the western side due to the minimal setback of the youth centre and the bulk and size of the centre. In addition, there is no consistency between the front setback of the mosque and youth centre. The dome positioned on the flat roof of the mosque will not be visible. From an urban design point of view, the location of the Arncliffe mosque at the end of the cul-de-sac has provided the benefit of maintaining the visibility of the mosque from a southern perspective. The front façade again comprises of arches which form an entry to the mosque. As the building rests on piers, car parking has been provided around this area resembling much the same form as that of Arncliffe mosque. There is minimal use of landscaping to add to the visual appearance of the site.

Auburn Mosque

The Auburn LGA is situated 17 kilometres west of Sydney's CBD and has a total population of 55,851 (ABS 2001). Auburn's population is culturally diverse with over 53% of the population born overseas. Similar to Canterbury City Council, Auburn has adopted the slogan of 'Many Cultures, One Community' reflecting the diverse nature of the locality and its residents.

The suburbs covered in the LGA included Auburn, Homebush Bay, Rookwood, Lidcombe and Silverwater. Residential, commercial and industrial development make up 60% of the area with the remaining 40% comprising of open space, Sydney Olympic Park and Rookwood Cemetary (Auburn Council, 2006). The five town centres in the LGA are Auburn, Lidcombe, Berala, Regents Park and Newington.

Auburn Gallipoli mosque is located on North Parade in Auburn, It's development is more recent than the other two mosques previously mentioned. Construction of the mosque began in 1986 and took 13 years to complete with the official opening taking place on 28 of November 1999 (www.gallipolimosque.com.au). The Auburn Gallipoli Mosque also owns an adjoining residential property as well as other land in close vicinity to the mosque. The mosque (Figure 4.6) is sited on a corner block having a total site area of 4000 square metres. It is designed in the classical Ottoman style of architecture characterised by a central dome and minarets. Much of the materials used in the construction of the mosque were imported from Turkey such as the marble and stone used in the external walls and courtyard area. The carpet was manufactured in Istanbul along with the crystal chandeliers.

Fig. 4.6 Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, Auburn

The mosque is adjoined by mainly low rise residential development. The façade of the mosque as shown in the above image looks onto the western railway line. The building is prominent visually due to its size and individual design symbolising a Muslim presence. Unlike the previous two examples, the mosque is constructed from marble and stone, whereas the others were constructed from cavity brick construction.

Other distinctive elements include the ablution area designed as a fountain, noting this is used by the males only. Separate ablution facilities for females are located near their designated prayer area.

The mosque has considered user needs in terms of outdoor sitting areas and courtyard area. However, minimal parking facilities have been provided. This may have arisen due to the siting and size of the building. From a landscape point of view, the site has taken into account the importance of open green spaces containing landscaping and paved walkways.

Conclusion

This chapter has primarily focused on presenting the study area in which the research is based on. The geographical focus of the study is around the south-western parts of Sydney. The ethical and political issues have been discussed as well as a look at each mosque and the LGA in which it is located.

The next chapter presents a discussion on the findings from the in-depth interviews. An evaluation of the results from the three case studies involving the local councils and places of public worship is undertaken. The research questions, themes and concerns arising from the findings are also discussed.

Chapter 5: Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter compares and evaluates the findings of the three case studies in relation to the research questions. In particular, this chapter outlines the themes and issues raised within each LGA and discusses the factors influencing this type of development and the flow on effects it has. In light of the findings, the four main themes identified in the study revolved around religion, community, service provision and land use planning.

Religion

Ayatullah Mutahhery et al define religion as being "an all round movement in the light of faith in Allah (God) and a sense of responsibility for the reformation of thoughts and beliefs, for the promotion of high principles of morality, establishment of good relations among members of society and the elimination of every sort of undue discrimination" (Mutahhery, 1977: 22). This carried further entitles the individual with the right, irrespective of their faith, nationality to co-exist within a community accepting of diversity. Such diversity is manifest in everyday Australian society although this tends to be concentrated in particular areas. Diversity in terms of religious affiliation as shown in the data presented in Figure 4.1 indicates that those of the Muslim faith have generally tended to reside in areas where other Muslims also live.

A key question posed/put forward in chapter One of this thesis asked why do individuals choose to reside in close proximity to mosques? Obviously, the primary objective of mosques as stated by mosque representative # 3 is to "provide religious services, above all". This response is similar to the answer given by mosque representative # 1 who commented "It is a place of worship and solace and is central to many people who reside in the surrounding suburbs". Mosque Representative # 1 further added "people tend to live in one locality due to the high percentage of people from their own ethnic background. They share a lot in their cultural habits and religious values",

And:

"People seek comfort in commonality and convenience besides being drawn to their own kind. I guess it makes them closer to their religion and provides some kind of sanctuary for some".

The issue of location and convenience was raised amongst all three interviewees;
"I find it difficult when I have to travel all the way from Castle Hill to Auburn to worship and it's a lot of trouble. That's why when people find their places to live, they want to be near the mosque (Mosque Representative # 3). Mosque Representative # 2 held the same view; "Location and convenience would have to be the main reasons".

The local council planners also held similar views as observed by Planner # 3 "people like to live near people they know and/or who have similar backgrounds".

It is clear that centrality and convenience are influential factors in the choice Muslims make as to where they will reside. The importance of the mosque to worshipers and Muslims in general is emphasized.

Discussion associated with religion evidently brought to head the issue of ethnicity. These two are intertwined in many respects in the sense that the ethnic background will play a major role in determining the location of residency. As noted earlier in the profiles of each local Council area, each LGA has a relatively high percentage of persons from NESB.

The concept of 'commonality' provides those of the same faith with a sense of community and security. This can however give rise to social issues regarding the integration of these minority groups into the broader community rather than remaining isolated. The findings present a feeling of consensus among interviewees regarding the reasons related to individuals residing in close proximity to mosques. Given this consensus, it is likely this settlement pattern is set to continue with further increases of those of the same minority faiths residing close to one another and their place of worship.

Community

The Muslim community has enhanced the debate in Australian society about the interests of minority groups, which have often had their needs and opinions ignored by mainstream society. Australian Muslims have asserted their desire to be treated equally and to be free from negative stereotypes (Saeed, 2004: 9). In relation to places of worship, negative stereotypes still exist as shown in the Annangrove prayer centre proposal. In general though, local council and in particular those with higher percentages of ethnic minorities have moved forward by acknowledging the presence of the culturally diverse community through the preparation of plans such as social/cultural plans.

The theme of community is closely related to that of religion. All three mosques reviewed were built solely through the efforts and capital invested by the local community:

"This mosque was put together by donation, so there is no government intervention, there is a lot of donations from the community…." (Mosque Representative # 3).

The 'community' referred to above indicates that it is the people with an interest in the mosque and is not related to the broader community. These places will impact on the surrounding environment due to the relationships that are created by the community with the mosque. In addition, other stakeholders with no direct affiliation with the mosque may be inadvertently affected by this land use through things such as parking congestion during worship times, noise impacts and a loss of amenity.

The relationships between each local council and the mosque were also explored to determine whether contact between the two occurs not only when a building or development approval is required. The responses differed between each Council. Mosque Representative # 2 (and Council # 2) has regular contact with Council members as well as working together during the month of Ramadan and other special events. The mosque is also a part of a Festival Committee run by the Council, which organizes a festival every year.

In contrast, the relationship between Mosque # 3 and Council # 3 is minimal:

"Not really as in a working relationship, we do ask Council for certain permissions, such as the calling of the Azan (call to prayer) during the once a year open day". (Mosque Representative # 3.

Again, a different situation exists with Mosque # 1 and Council # 1 where; "two members that attend the mosque are also Councilors, and through them our relationship is based on, especially when issues arise". (Mosque Representative # 1).

Based on the statements made by both Council planners and mosque representatives, it is clear that despite the fact that relationships do exist, only Mosque # 2 has fully fledged correspondence with their local Council. This is interesting given the three selected mosques are now very well established in their operations. With regards to the statement made by Mosque Rep # 1, this type of relationship where if 'issues' arise, is a cause for concern because in the situation that these elected Councilors are not reinstated at local Council elections, this leaves the Mosque in a precarious position.

Service Provision

Planning for social service provision is today heavily connected with religion. Almost all major charities across Australia claim some affinity with a religious organization. According to AAP, quoting BRW, religion run charities "generated almost $23 billion in 2004, with the Catholic Church turning over almost two-thirds of that, an investigation by BRW magazine found. It estimates the not-for-profit sector is worth $70 billion a year" (AAP, 2005)

The Muslim community considers their religious establishments as the nucleus to their day to day activities providing on-going support via educational programs, social activities (i.e. special events/festivals to celebrate or commemorate particular occasions) as well as providing assistance in resolving personal and family matters. The level of the current provision of services undertaken at each of the mosques varied. The biggest constraint in the provision of services for all three mosque surveyed was the issue of funding which is essential in the operation of some of the services. Many of those involved in the mosque do so on a voluntary basis. These human factors reduce the costs involved, however other things such as materials do need to be accounted for:

"…there are financial constraints in relation to the youth centre. We are in need of further finances to complete the youth centre" (Mosque Representative # 2).

This was also the case in the construction of Auburn Gallipoli Mosque which took 13 years to complete, again largely to the construction costs coming from community donations.

Despite this constraint, the mosques have managed to establish and operate social services that are accessible by the whole community and not restricted to those of the Muslim faith. The most important service mentioned above all by the mosque respondents was that of spiritual worship. There are many components that contribute to achieving spiritual enlightenment and guidance in the Islamic faith and it is the mosque

that plays a key role in this. Services including counseling, divorce, marriage, death and burial services and educational programs were all mentioned as being integral in the day to day operations of the mosque.

The Imam Hasan Centre (known as Annangrove Mosque prior to approval) is a good example of this. The centre has now been running for two years and since that time has a host of programs that both genders and people of other faiths can participate in.

The centre runs a regular service for women to receive health check ups as well as organizing screening tests to detect for early signs of breast cancer. This has been a success and is strongly encouraged as Muslim women have the highest rate of breast cancer due to the lack of education in this community on the issue.

Mosques therefore also function as a key service provider in local communities.

The direct and indirect impacts of these places of worship can be evaluated by the benefits and disadvantages they will have on the surrounding environment. For example, the construction of a youth centre will encourage youth to participate and have a greater input in their local community. This may also have the effect of reducing loitering with less youth loitering in the streets as well as giving something back to the community. In contrast this may result in loss of amenity to surrounding residents because of the operating hours of the youth centre, despite Council controls defining the operating hours. From my experience at Blacktown Council, this is not uncommon, as surrounding residents lodge complaints as soon as they feel their amenity has been disrupted. Rather than approach the operators, residents complain to Council which begins a process of investigation and in many cases results in a waste of Council resources as Council seldom takes further actions such the issuing of fines.

Land Use Planning

The provision of mosques in the case studies, revealed some differences in terms of the perceptions and thoughts planners had towards religious institutions from a planning perspective. The other themes previously discussed were seen to be directly related to the development of each mosque and thus, their was a feeling conveyed by the mosque respondents that the mosque was the precipitating factor causing other forms of development to occur. It should be highlighted that in each LGA there exists several prayer centres. This is usually a result of the different dominations within the Islamic faith, where the different sects may choose to operate their own prayer centre or in some cases, construct a new mosque, which again is dependent on the availability of adequate funding. The ethnicity of a group will also be another influential factor in whether a group decides to operate on their own as observed by Mosque Representative # 3:

"the Pakistani community has one, the Iraqi community has one further on top of Auburn, its not a great big deal though".

It was interesting to note that responses from all three Council planners were in contradiction to the three mosques representatives when the question was asked as to whether there had been an increase in the number of places of worship within each locality in the past decade. There was a consensus among the mosque interviewees that there has been an increase in the places of worship operating in each locality, however the planner's thought otherwise.

The mosque was perceived as having an indirect impact on land uses in close proximity to it such as the type of businesses operating nearby. This was one of the indirect impacts mentioned by all interviewees. Direct impacts have been more closely related to the mosque as it has played a part in their development.

"….a primary school has been developed and is running classes from K to 6. It caters for religious education, Arabic and the usual curriculum. Another service that is relatively new is a morgue and washroom for dead bodies" (Mosque Representative # 1)

And:

"A youth centre a few doors down from the mosque is currently under construction. We have also recently purchased property behind the mosque with a view to joining it to other lands owned by us for the purposes of building a school" (Mosque Representative # 2)

And:

"We are trying to build a childcare centre that will service the greater community where people will leave their kids for care while they go to work… we are also thinking of building a gymnasium primarily aimed at the younger generation to bring them to the mosque" (Mosque Representative # 3).

The findings show the Muslim population in general has established themselves within their locality with mosques attempting to provide additional services and facilities for each respective community. This does have implications on the surrounding areas and it is here that the local authority has a role in managing the type of development that is undertaken.

First and foremost, the multicultural reality of contemporary Australia necessitates recognition of the rights of different groups within society to utilize space provided they are not in breach of the law. Proponents of mosque development have used this point to argue and justify such developments (Dunn, 2004). It has been illustrated in Chapter 3, the contentious nature these religious institutions have on the surrounding community.

One of the research questions of this thesis was to consider the environmental planning instruments in place in each LGA and evaluate whether they provide sufficient detail to the development of mosques.

The findings from both the interviews and an examination of local planning instruments revealed that there is little available in the form of plans and or policies in place relating to the place of worship. What is available refers only to car parking requirements and the like despite places of worship (mosques) have nearly doubled in the last two decades. This lack of indifference was also highlighted to extent in the interviews with local planning staff. When asked whether Council or the applicant are faced with any obstacles during the development approval with reference to mosques, the response given was "I don't know" (Planner # 3). As all of the Council involved in the study had no specific policy documents relating to places of worship, it was important to ask if other considerations are given to the assessment of mosques. Again, the answer was general:

"Mosques are treated like all places of worship. Traffic generation and parking is a potential issue for them all." (Planner # 3)

The development of mosques is permitted in residential, commercial and most industrial zones in all the LGA's surveyed. Recurring issues and complaints regarding parking and traffic are common with most places of worship and in particular during special occasions. One of the planners suggested that the established at the periphery of commercial zones where public car parks are located are likely to reduce the amount of problems that may arise in the future with surrounding residents. The same planner did note that it wasn't the use (i.e. place of public worship) that is the cause for concern, but how it is operated. Issues with how it is operated is a matter that should be dealt with during the planning stages rather than attempting to deal with it after the use is in operation. This could be resolved simply by requesting a plan of action from the operators and how certain issues will be resolved or managed.

A different view was held by another planner who commented:

"Given issues of parking, traffic and sometimes of noise generation, especially on weekends, the location of places of worship in industrial areas is a good idea as it reduces potential conflict between uses. Placing them in residential areas, near to where people live, is also a good idea." (Planner # 3)

Indifference is again shown in the above comment. It does not address the problems and issues that arise from such land uses. Places of worship seem to be simply another land use to planner, and little consideration is given to the associated implications this land use can have in both the short and long term.

Conclusion

Religious institutions provide a venue for people to gather and publicly worship and fulfill their religious obligations. From the research it is evident the significance local Muslim communities place on their places of worship, which act as a pillar of support in addition to providing their spiritual needs. In turn, the findings have also revealed the importance for planners to be aware of the diversity of issues that are present in their locality. The following chapter will conclude the thesis and provide recommendations for planners and the broader community on how to manage this land use. Opportunities for further research are also identified given the changing nature and composition of our cities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the development and land use impacts of local mosques. The development of mosques has occurred as a result of the high growth rates of Muslims in Australia. Three LGA's were selected as case studies based on the number of Muslims residing in the LGA and the presence of an established mosque which already serves the people. This chapter provides recommendations that accommodate this use in a responsive manner while providing planning outcomes which can be implemented in the decision making process by Local Council's in dealing with the multitude of opposing factors which confront the town planning discipline.

Summary of Research

The thesis has identified four main themes pertaining to the development of mosques and their subsequent impacts of these on the surrounding environment. These are:

(1) Religion: Each locality has a relatively higher concentration of Muslims in comparison to other LGA's. A place of worship is constructed providing spiritual and social services.

(2) Community: The local community through the mosque develops and through this, relationships are formed. A recurring them in the interviews and literature was that settlements patterns are based on people choosing to live near others with similar backgrounds.

(3) Service Provision: In addition to spiritual services, mosques provide a range of services to the community. These services are usually funded through donations from the local community and voluntary work. Some services provided such

schools associated with the mosque have greater impacts on their surroundings than others.

(4) Land Use Planning: The study revealed a lack of systematic planning policies in place and indifference from planners towards differentiating and planning for mosques. This raises concerns given one of the roles of planners is to engage their communities to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

In contemporary Australia, places of worship are the ultimate expression of a community's culture and individualism. Both planners and planning processes need to take into account the cultural needs of the various groups in society and accommodate these. Caution must be taken therefore, with any such emotional actions.

The research findings show that a lack of indifference and responsiveness from planners regarding the development of places of worship. They are viewed as simply another land use to planners but to communities, they are an outlet for a diverse cultural group, while also functioning as a service provider where government cannot or will not provide the required services. Despite the current laws and policies in place, a lack of understanding and difference still exists between stakeholders. It would appear that there is a need for greater community consultation and communication.

Mosques for Muslims serve a major role in ensuring cohesiveness in Australian society. Conflicting interests do arise as is the case with other land uses. Planners are to ensure a balance is achieved between the desire to protect the needs of established residents and the needs of the growing religious groups to express their religious beliefs. This does present significant challenges for planners during the planning for place of worship, in particular in trying to determine whose interest should be considered and addressed.

Planners need to be aware of the diversity of issue surrounding the local governments in which they work because the notion of public interest is dynamic and increasingly problematic as minority groups become excluded from the policy making process.

Other obstacles relate to objections by the public and a lack of knowledge by local governments towards the needs of minority groups. In many cases, Muslim groups have felt frustrated at the expense and time involved in processing development applications, which have led to court battles between local governments and the applicant illustrated in the 'Annangrove Mosque' proposal.

In the case studies presented, each local government provides recognition to the diverse elements of their communities in their cultural and or social plans as well as working together in some instance with the different groups to overcome and resolve issues that may arise. However, a point worth noting was that during the interview process undertaken, the planners were reluctant to provide responses to some of the questions put forward. This possibly could have been because they wanted to appear as being politically correct rather than discussing the realty of the impacts of such developments. One of the planners interviewed did state that Council was assured at the time that the facility would only serve the local community, however this has not been the reality (Planner # 2).

Recommendations

On the basis of the research and analysis in the preceding chapters it is apparent that there is an indifference to the provision of places of worship evident through the lack of policies in place to accommodate their development. Given the role places of worship have in our contemporary multicultural societies there is a need for planners and other stakeholders to consider their impacts both in the short and long term. The following recommendations have been developed to manage this land use while providing positive planning outcomes. The recommendations include:

- Council derive planning policies that specifically address the different forms of places of worship.

- Develop planning policies which encourage shared parking facilities. In addition, distance separation requirements be implemented in areas where there is more than one place of worship.

- Public participation to be more inclusive to include religious groups in the planning process.

- Local councils consider the allocation of sufficient resources to assist minority groups to operate particular services. This includes greater levels of participation between the two to manage the land use in an appropriate manner.

- In areas where there are relatively higher concentrations of minority groups, planners be equipped with the relevant training and knowledge to deal and interact with these groups.

- Sponsors of mosques should not rely solely on political involvement to assist in the event that complex issues arise.

Opportunities for further research

As a consequence of the research undertaken in this thesis, a range of opportunities have been identified for further study and analysis. This includes a study that follows the same research agenda and objectives of this thesis incorporating other types of places of worship. This will provide a meaningful comparison between different groups within the community and places of worship and the interface between the two.

This thesis has focused solely on a minority group. Planners need to consider the multi-faith communities in the planning process while also acting as facilitators to the broader community to ensure the wider public interest is addressed.

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APPENDIX A

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL APPROVAL

APPENDIX B

PROJECT CONSENT FORMS

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY

INTERVIEWS WITH COUNCIL PLANNERS

APPENDIX D:

SUMMARY – INTERVIEWS WITH MOSQUE REPRESENTITIVES