

**The Effectiveness of Public Open Space  
Systems within the "Radburn" Suburb.**

**CASE STUDY: Rokeby**

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## ABSTRACT

The Radburn approach to suburban design and open space provision emerged out of the popular movement, originating around the time of the industrial revolution, to limit pedestrian activity upon streets and avoid the conflicts resulting from increased levels of traffic.'

In Radburn layouts, pedestrian footpaths and recreation areas are so distinctively removed from the surrounding street network that often even visual connections between the two are avoided. The internalisation of movement and recreational opportunities, and the orientations of dwellings towards these internal areas rather than those surrounding streets are the predominant features of many Radburn applications.

Despite the meritorious objectives of the approach - those being to produce a safe, socially interactive environment where inhabitants feel comfortable to relax and move freely - its appropriateness is discredited by the quality of the urban environment that has often resulted.

The internalisation of a community can have deleterious consequences. Too much open space can compromise the overall quality of the suburban environment and the conspicuous separation of vehicular and pedestrian activity does not guarantee an improved environment. Community appreciation and acceptance of communal concepts are difficult to sustain and the application of an inappropriate suburban typology can significantly impede and even compromise the development of a positive identity.

The Radburn approach to open space provision is inappropriate, particularly in the Australian context. Existing applications should undergo redevelopment works with an emphasis upon diminishing the internalisation and segregation of public areas.

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