



Bob Day calls for a re-examination of governments' overreach in urban planning, and identifies the financial impact of planning policy as hostile to family life and family formation.

CONSERVATISM AND URBAN PLANNING

One of the major problems with the word "conservatism" is hardly anyone tries to give it a precise meaning. It's like "sustainability" or "family values." A friend of mine was in the US in the weeks before the November 1994 election and driving through Maryland, he noticed an election poster urging support for a candidate who described himself as 'A CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRAT.' My friend was told that the label meant the candidate did not wish to be taken as a 'Liberal' Democrat. The term 'Howard Battler' came to mind.

The word "conservative" originally came from 19th Century UK politics and meant a person who supported the Monarchy and the Church of England. The philosopher/politician Edmund Burke gave conservatism institutional form and a doctrinal base when the then Whig party split over the French Revolution, leading to a Coalition headed by William Pitt. This Coalition went on to become the British Conservative Party.

Outside of the UK however, the word conservative is usually taken as meaning support for traditional values of morality and the family. A conservative, for example, would be opposed to the legalisation of euthanasia, drugs, abortion - particularly late term abortion and of course gay marriage. In the US, conservatives are also hostile to and suspicious of big government.

But there is more to conservatism than just issues associated with morality.

Just as the economists of the mid 20th Century - notably Keynes and his followers, believed in central control of most aspects of economic life, the socialists (together with conservatives like Harold Macmillan) accepted the arguments that urbanisation also needed to be controlled by central government and that the sort of houses that people lived in, and the way in which towns and suburbs grew and developed, were matters which needed to be decided by experts - government appointed experts of course.

