

4th. September, 1964.

C. J. Farrington, Esq., F.R.A.I.A.,
President,
N.S.W. Chapter,
Royal Australian Institute of Architects,
79 Berry Street,
SYDNEY. N.S.W.



Dear Mr. Farrington,

Thank you for your letter of the 24th. August, 1964, and the honour of inviting me to represent the Chapter at the meeting convened by the Lord Mayor to consider the replanning of the Circular Quay area. I duly attended this meeting and now report on my representation. Mr. H. H. Smith and I attended as representatives of the Sydney Division of the Australian Planning Institute.

The meeting took the following form. The Lord Mayor took the chair flanked by five of the aldermen of his Council. Present were representatives of property owners on the five city blocks which are subject to the proposals of the scheme, Commonwealth and State public authorities, professional bodies, officers of the City Council and the Press.

Professor Denis Winston had previously acquainted me with the principal features of the compromissary scheme which was the subject of the meeting and the Lord Mayor asked him to explain the proposals to the meeting.

It was evident from the Lord Mayor's remarks that he is making every possible effort to introduce elements of comprehensive planning into the redevelopment of the area rather than leave it subject to the piecemeal redevelopment which has taken place elsewhere in the central area. It is equally clear that he suffers no illusions as to the difficulty of doing this even in a small way.

He then invited each of the block representatives to offer comments in turn. This they did, each referring generally to broad problems raised by the compensation and floor ratio index and height restrictions imposed by the proposals and also to specific matters of access, circulation, traffic flow, etc.

Representatives of the Departments of the Interior and Government Transport then said a few words, some of which were reported in the press, and Associate Professor J. H. Shaw of the University of New South Wales spoke in support of the scheme, stressing its imaginative and comprehensive qualities. At this stage I felt a small contribution from the representatives of the professional bodies would not be out of place. To my knowledge Mr. Smith and I were the only such representatives present.

The substance of my short remarks was to the effect that, as neither of the Institutes I represented had yet been asked to consider the scheme broadly or in detail, I could thus not comment on the content of the scheme. I was certain that the principles and aims it contained would receive the support of both bodies. I said further that, seeing both Institutes included in their membership many persons widely experienced in the interests and problems of both the private and public sectors involved in the scheme, that both Institutes, would, independently or jointly, be only too pleased to assist through formal comment on principles, problems and specific issues, should they be formally invited by the Lord Mayor to investigate the proposals and comment on them.

The Lord Mayor's eagerness for independent assistance in meeting the major problems likely to arise was evidenced by his immediate inquiry as to whether such comment would be available on the issue of compensation and betterment. My reply to this was non-committal, but reassuring in tone and in respect of the willingness of both Institutes to assist as far as their qualities as professional bodies would allow.

The Town Clerk subsequently informed me that a 'tapescript' of the proceedings of the meeting would be available in due course and before a further meeting of representatives foreshadowed by the Lord Mayor in his closing remarks.

Please let me know if you should wish any further details. I would welcome any opportunity to call and discuss them.

I have no doubt that my expressed viewpoint reflects the attitudes of the Australian Planning Institute Division Committee which has previously been in touch with the Lord Mayor regarding redevelopment in the City of Sydney and has had an ad hoc sub-committee report on the matter.

I trust that my remarks in no way conflict with the policy of informal rather than formal action which, I understand, has been the basis for joint activity previously shared by the two Institutes.

Yours sincerely,

(W. V. Abraham)

PRESIDENT
SYDNEY DIVISION, A.P.I.