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Fri 25.9.1970

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Of-the-cuff comments by
Graeme Shankland, my old
UK planning consultant mate

Graeme
was in
Sydney
as my
guest
for a
48
hour
stint.

Outlaw cars, widen pavements

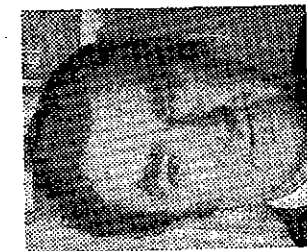
EXPERT'S PLAN FOR CITY CONGESTION

A British consultant to Sydney's strategic master plan said yesterday that on-street parking in the city should be banned, and the space thus freed given up to widening the pavements.

The consultant, Mr Graeme Shankland, head of a British planning company and a leading town planner, said the pedestrian in Sydney got a "raw deal."

"At rush periods he is crowded off the pavements and herded behind sheep pens," he said.

Mr Shankland said, "This stop-walk business is



MR SHANKLAND

nonsense . . . I object to being herded like sheep to allow the car freedom."

He said private vehicles should be kept out of the

centre of Sydney as much as possible.

To this end, Mr Shankland said, parking stations should also be kept to a minimum in the inner city area. They should be built on the perimeter of the city.

He said Sydney had a golden opportunity for this sort of progress with the Western Distributor.

"Parking stations could be built near it," he said, "so that cars can drive straight into them and be within easy walking distance of the inner city area."

Mr Shankland, who leaves for Brisbane today,

was brought to Sydney by the Urban Systems Corporation, which is preparing the master plan for the council at a fee of \$100,000.

'FANTASTIC' CITY

"But I must stress that these are only my personal observations after 11 days in Sydney. We haven't yet got that far with the plan," he said.

Mr Shankland said Sydney was one of the most "fantastic" cities in the world — "only Stockholm has a similar site."

But he said the city's

growth had in the past outstripped its planning.

"One major problem facing the planning of Sydney was its very complicated decision-making system."

"You have committees here, government departments there, the city council—so many cooks that it is not possible to make a good soup."

Mr Shankland said the area north of Martin Place to Circular Quay was already overdeveloped.

"It is obviously madness to approve any more developments in the area—it was a mistake to allow tall

office buildings along Circular Quay to shut off the view of the Botanic Gardens from the north end of the city centre," he said.

Mr Shankland, who has been involved in a number of city plans, agreed that plans have "an unhappy knack" of ending in the waste-paper basket.

But he said the British and United States Governments were now more aware of the value of planning and subsidised planning schemes.

To make the Sydney plan effective, State and Federal Government financial assistance would be needed.

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Graeme Shankland, UK planner/guest
of Geo Clarke/Urban Systems

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very
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toured around the marketplace have indicated that, in this special situation at least, prices have pushed up towards, and possibly beyond, the \$331 a square foot paid for the Australia Hotel site in Sydney.

It is understood that the National has sought arbitration on at least one of the sites it has

conference, probably to be given by the bank's chairman, Mr Alexander Ross, who arrived in Australia this week from the U.K. for a three-week visit.

However, the National's development would be expected to be about three years off.

When the bank bought the

financiers but as developers.

With traditional banking business going through a tough time from a growth point of view the major trading banks appear to regard property as a natural and logical extension of their activities into an area which may provide them with growth lacking in their traditional area of business.

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e Australian Financial Review, Friday, September 25, 1970 33

Discretion—the better part of compulsory acquisition

AFR 25.9.1970

Compulsory acquisition powers to resolve deadlocked development schemes "should not be just a tool for someone else to make a fast buck."

The comment comes from Mr Graeme Shankland, one of the team of technocrats assembled

by Urban Systems Corporation for consultation on the City of Sydney Strategic Plan.

Head of UK planning and architecture group Shankland Cox and Associates, Mr Shankland speaks with the authority of a man who has produced development schemes for the United Nations, UNESCO, government and local government bodies in the UK, France, America and Yugoslavia since he founded his practice in 1962.

Far more important than any one private development project, Mr Shankland, feels, is the need for creation of an overall view of development in Sydney.

This is, of course, his reason for being in Sydney. Urban Systems has nine months to produce Sydney's strategic plan; Mr Shankland follows Professor Alan Proudlove in assisting Urban Systems right at the outset to identify key problems and suggest possible solutions.

However, while he is charged with these objectives, it was more in the role of a very experienced planner that he spoke with "The Financial Review."

Enlarging on his comments about compulsory acquisition, Mr Shankland pointed out that compulsory development of large blocks was not, in his experience, always advisable or necessary.

"Martin Place is a fine street: I don't think it should be allowed to change in a way that will lose its character," he said.

Further, Mr Shankland observed, compulsory powers are used in the name of the public, and hence should be used for the benefit of the public.

Similarly, he suggested, any proposed overall plan should be allowed as long a period of public scrutiny as possible before anything was finalised.

Describing his initial impression of Sydney as "absolutely stunning," Mr Shankland said that he had seen Rio, Venice and Stockholm — other notable harbour cities — and that only Stockholm compared in any way with Sydney.

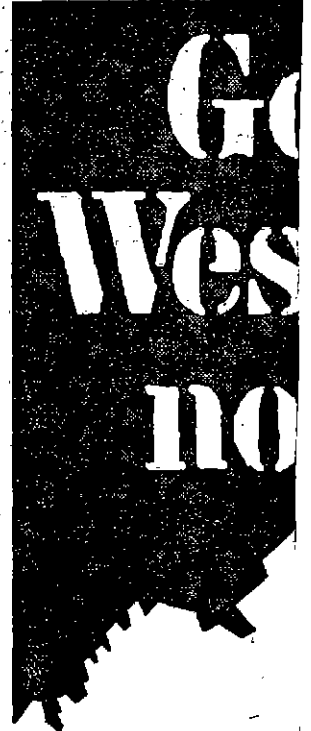
"One of the reasons Stockholm is such a beautiful city is that they have tradition of social thinking in investment.

"In Sydney, you have a fantastic amount of investment; but it's not planned in any way.

"Nor, I suspect, is there public investment to match private investment. For example, there is this enormous development in

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continuation of Graeme's off the cuff
comments

The better part of compulsory acquisition

• From Page 33

the central business area, but what is being done with transportation, or with meeting pedestrian congestion?

No city in the world with a population of over one million can work without very sophisticated investment.

"Sydney is lucky, for example, in having the basis of a very good subway system — but it was never designed for the current volume of passengers."

"Sydney, again, is lucky in being formed by a series of peninsulas. This is a great advantage, too: no one is going to build on the sea."

"Views of the sea are tremendously important. Yet I gather there's not much protection given to protecting people's view of the sea. Certainly, new buildings are creating new views of the sea, but they are also blocking out old ones."

"The point is that private developers could do better things if there was a strategic plan. This plan would not necessarily echo the feelings of the market today, or tomorrow."

"But there is scope for encouraging investment in various ways. It means that a somewhat longer-term view has to be taken."

"One of the complaints about planners is they prevent people from doing things. I put it to you this way: one of the effects of over-building — and the central business area of Sydney seems to be a case of this — is that it takes away any incentive for development in other areas."

"It even leads to another serious problem, that of people trying to get in with consents before authority clamps down on a situation which everyone can in fact see is getting out of hand."

"What one is seeking in city planning is to create a social work of art. The planner is always too late, in a sense; but it's never too late to do something intelligent, something sympathetic."

"But remember that the total view should dominate the organism as a whole. Otherwise the view gets distorted."

Mr Shankland gave some clues to his total view, answering questions on specific areas of concern to developers: plot ratios, parking, and people.

Qualifying his opinions on plot ratio, as a method of building control, but noting that as yet not enough background work has been done, Mr Shankland suggested that ratios must be tailored to specific areas of the city, as well as the central area generally. The purpose, he said, could be to limit redevelopment in

over-congested areas, and prevent the repetition of over-congestion in areas not yet renewed.

However, he said, more work would have to be done on assessing the impact of new development permitted but not yet built, and on testing the capacity of the rail, street and bus systems.

On parking, Mr Shankland sees the Western Distributor as having a key function. He strongly believes that it would be better to have access off the distributor to specially-built parking centres, rather than continue parking development in the city where the streets are already overcrowded.

Financing of these stations could be done "in part" by contributions from developers, Mr Shankland thought. He also thought that regulation of use of these stations could be set by shrewd pricing of parking costs.

He acknowledged that hotels served a useful function in cities, and that major hotels with a convention-centre aspect needed large parking capacity; but Mr Shankland's view is that perhaps hotels in the centre of the city are not really necessary, and that consideration might be given to encouraging hotels on the fringes if the main business area.

Mr Shankland said that residential capacity was very important in all cities. Here he referred to service people, essential for the day-to-day running of the buildings and services which made the area a business centre.

These people, Mr Shankland said, could not afford luxury prices for somewhere to live, yet logic pointed to the need for them to live close to their work. At the same time, there were upper middle class people who were prepared to pay to live in the centre of a city, and the job of a planner then became one of "combining the city area" to place suitable residential sites.

"There seem to me to be exceptional possibilities for this in the Woolloomooloo/Darlinghurst area, in parts of Surry Hills and in the Pyrmont area," Mr Shankland said.

COMPANY NEWS

Shaw River Alluvials NL and Oil and Minerals Quest NL, mwill jointly acquire mineral titles and a tin recovery plant at Tent Hill near Emmaville, and mineral titles at Back Creek near Armidale, NSW from Mining Consortium Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Delat Minerals NL.

Both Shaw River and OMG, or associated companies, operate plants in northern NSW.