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COMMERCIAL OFFICE DEVELOPMENT IN INDUSTRIAL 4(b) ZONES:  
 QUESTIONS OF FUTURE POLICY

24th March, 1971.

THE ACTING TOWN CLERK

During discussions with Council's Planning Consultants concerning the Strategic Master Plan the question of commercial office development in Industrial 4(b) zones has caused concern.

There has been a recent upsurge of such applications, particularly in the Curry Mills area. Several factors appear to be responsible for this. Firstly there exists an obvious demand for office space in this area and its proximity to public transport makes it attractive in this regard. Secondly, the topography and street system are not ideal for industry requiring heavy transport but can be utilized by pedestrian office staff. Further, it would appear that a building developed to the maximum for a site, is difficult to let in total as industrial space. As it is most unusual for any developer to aim at anything less than maximum site utilization, the present trend of maximised floor space and ease of letting will continue. This is a self-generating process as more office development will raise the "prestige" value of the area and so strengthen the trend.

Council's Planning Consultants have indicated that the Industrial Zones are the necessary support precincts for the City Centre and that unless some control is maintained that will foster this strategy, then both areas will become indistinct in form and function and neither will fulfill its proper role.

This report is submitted, therefore, for the purpose of bringing to notice a development trend which appears at this juncture to be prejudicial to the implementation of the Strategic Master Plan and to suggest that action be taken to formulate an interim policy for the guidance of Council's staff.

Council may decide on either a partial or total prohibition on commercial office space, either by limiting the amount of such space on any particular site, or by intra-zone areas of restriction. In either case, such a policy at this stage would be fairly generalized and as such would not gain much legal force unless backed by some research into the problem. It is emphasized that this report is based solely on an emerging pattern of development and a knowledge of the as yet incomplete principles of the Strategic Master Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is therefore recommended that :-

- A. This matter be referred to Council's Planning Consultants and that they be requested to investigate and advise on the following:
  - (a) Is it the Consultants' opinion that the present number of applications (and the size of each building) is in fact a significant trend?
  - (b) If (a) is affirmative, is this trend prejudicial to the implementation of the Strategic Master Plan (as far as it is formulated)?