

32
Summary to accompany
CHIEF PLANNER'S REPORT NO. 48/72

of 23rd May, 1972.

ALL WACD/SL/NI
CONFIDENTIAL
RETURN TO GC

file 7301
CITY OF SYDNEY STRATEGIC PLAN - DENSITY
CONTROL (FLOOR SPACE RATIOS)

19.6.72

1. The purpose of this Report is to bring before the Authority three questions of principle concerning density control as it affects the City of Sydney, so that decisions can be taken and communicated to the City Council. Two questions concerning the method of calculation of floor space and concerning international hotels have already been the subject of policy decisions by the Authority in the past and advice to the Minister. The third question of whether it is appropriate to offer floor space bonuses for the provision of public parking areas by developers has not so far been considered by the Authority.
2. Chief Planner's Report No. 9/72 of January 17th, 1972, provided the Authority with a general description of the City Strategic Plan and drew attention to those issues which were important to the Authority from a metropolitan point of view. The Authority discussed the Report and established a small sub-committee of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Director, Professor Shaw and Mr. Trott to submit recommendations to the Authority in regard to the points brought out in the discussion on the Chief Planner's Report and to provide a basis for subsequent discussion with representatives of the Council of the City of Sydney. There was a meeting with representatives of the City Council but no clear conclusions were reached since the discussion was primarily directed to the list of development applications which were contained in the Addendum to the Chief Planner's Report.
3. The Authority has already made certain policy decisions concerning office development in Industrial zones in the City of Sydney Planning Scheme area.
4. This Report now recommends that the Authority take firm policy decisions with respect to three matters:-
 - (a) The method of calculating floor space for density control.
 - (b) Density control in relation to international hotels.
 - (c) Floor space bonuses for parking stations.
5. If the Authority determines these matters, it will reduce the area of uncertainty with local councils, having regard to the fact that, with some development, the Authority's concurrence is required and, with other development, the Height of Buildings Advisory Committee is involved.

Referred for discussion
with City Council

J.P.F. KACIREK
CHIEF PLANNER

CHIEF PLANNER'S REPORT NO. 48/72of 23rd May, 1972CITY OF SYDNEY STRATEGIC PLAN - DENSITY
CONTROL (FLOOR SPACE RATIOS)THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1. To bring before the Authority three questions of principle concerning density control as it affects the City of Sydney, so that decisions can be taken and communicated to the City Council. Two questions concerning the method of calculation of floor space and concerning international hotels have already been the subject of policy decisions by the Authority in the past and advice to the Minister. The third question of whether it is appropriate to offer floor space bonuses for the provision of public parking areas by developers has not so far been considered by the Authority.
2. Chief Planner's Report No. 9/72 of January 17th, 1972, provided the Authority with a general description of the City Strategic Plan and drew attention to those issues which were important to the Authority from a metropolitan point of view. The Authority discussed the Report and established a small sub-committee of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Director, Professor Shaw and Mr. Trott to submit recommendations to the Authority in regard to the points brought out in the discussion on the Chief Planner's Report and to provide a basis for subsequent discussion with representatives of the Council of the City of Sydney. There was a meeting with representatives of the City Council but no clear conclusions were reached since the discussion was primarily directed to the list of development applications which were contained in the Addendum to the Chief Planner's Report.
3. Chairman's Report No. 27/72 of April 10th, 1972, made certain representations to the Authority on how to deal with 18 development applications for commercial office buildings which had been referred to the Authority by the City Council and which had been the subject of recommendations in the Addendum to the Chief Planner's Report No. 9/72. The Authority resolved that:-
 - (a) As a general policy it was not prepared to concur in the erection of office buildings in Industrial zones.
 - (b) It would raise no objection to the carrying out of such development where the Sydney City Council had given an unconditional approval prior to the date of prescription of the Sydney Planning Scheme (i.e. July 16th, 1971) when the concurrence of the Authority was not required to be obtained.
 - (c) A further report be submitted regarding the remaining matters raised in the Chairman's Report No. 27/72.
4. The remaining recommendations in Chairman's Report No. 27/72 not decided by the Authority were:-
 - (a) The Authority was recommended to concur in applications for office use in Industrial zones within the City of Sydney Planning Scheme area where the office use is ancillary to the industrial use and does not exceed 25% of the total floor space in the building.

of 23rd May, 1972.

- 2 -

- (b) The Authority was recommended to limit floor space ratio generally in Light Industrial zones to 2:1.

5. With respect to 4(a) above, the principle of agreeing to ancillary office use to the primary use of a zone is desirable, and the Authority is RECOMMENDED to adopt this approach as a policy.

6. With regard to 4(b) above, building density control is a very inexact rule so far as industrial development is concerned, because there is a wide variation in the relationship between industrial floor space and the workforce and traffic it may generate. Other than a limited category of industries such as printing and clothing manufacture, industrial development seldom takes place at high floor space ratios. (In outer areas probably no more than ½:1.) For the time being, if a density limit has to be established as policy, then a floor space ratio of 2:1, as recommended in the Chairman's Report No. 27/72, should be adequate for most cases. The Authority is, therefore, RECOMMENDED to adopt this standard as a matter of interim policy.

7. The City Council's Consultants' recommendations on density standards are complicated and the general levels of density obtainable will need to be considered carefully in relation to traffic and transport capabilities and, as indicated in Chief Planner's Report No. 9/72, will need to be reconsidered when the Sydney Area Transportation Study recommendations are available. In the meantime, there are certain aspects of density policy which should be determined firmly now so that the City Council may be aware of the Authority's attitude and of that of the Height of Buildings Advisory Committee. They are:-

- (a) Method of measuring floor space for density calculation.
- (b) Density standards for international hotels.
- (c) Floor space bonuses for parking areas.

METHOD OF CALCULATION OF DENSITY

8. The Authority's advice to the Minister for Local Government on the City of Sydney Planning Scheme was that floor space should be gross floor space, i.e. the overall measurement including the thickness of all walls, including external walls. This practice has long been adopted by the Height of Buildings Advisory Committee and also by the Authority in dealing with buildings both within the City of Sydney and elsewhere.

9. The City Council's Consultants' recommended that the floor space measured should be net floor space, i.e. excluding the thickness of external walls. This results in a usable floor space about 10% or more higher than that calculated on a gross floor space basis.

10. It is undesirable that there should be differences in method of calculation as between one part of the State and another. Consistency is necessary for clarity to the developer. There is no good reason to depart from the "gross floor space basis" in calculating density. The Authority is, therefore, RECOMMENDED to adhere to its existing policy of measurement on a gross floor space basis, i.e. including the thickness of external walls.

*internal
not external
walls
are only
about
2 to 4%*

*13 ...
There are many
good reasons*

of 23rd May, 1972.

- 3 -

11. Appropriate exclusions from any calculations which were recommended to the Minister for Local Government by the Authority in the original negotiations on the City of Sydney Planning Scheme were:-

- (a) Car parking space required by the responsible authorities including internal access thereto.
- (b) Any space for loading and unloading of goods vehicles.
- (c) Machinery and plant rooms and any storage space related to them.
- (d) Any space made available for unrestricted public use.
- (e) Lift wells and fire stairs.

These deductions generally conform with the recommendations of the City Council's Consultants, although at present the Height of Buildings Advisory Committee does not exclude lift wells and fire stairs. The Authority is RECOMMENDED to confirm the exclusion of (a) to (e) listed above for the purpose of calculating floor space ratio and to invite the Height of Buildings Advisory Committee to consider allowing lift wells and fire stairs as an exclusion.

INTERNATIONAL HOTELS

12. The Authority's advice to the Minister was that international hotels have special operating requirements and rather narrow economic limits. Therefore, it was inappropriate to apply normal density standards applicable to that use to international hotels. They should be excluded from any density standards and examined on performance standards alone (i.e. the appropriateness of the development itself in relation to the site and surrounding lands).

13. The City Council's Consultants have built in floor space bonuses for international hotels into their general standards. As a result, there is a very complex arrangement of varying base ratios depending on whether they do or do not include hotels and also additional bonuses for the development of hotels. This makes density standards much more difficult to understand and to operate.

14. The Authority is RECOMMENDED to adhere to its original policy advice to the Minister, namely to exclude international hotels from any floor space ratio calculations.

FLOOR SPACE BONUSES FOR PARKING STATIONS

X 15. The City Council's Consultants recommended offering floor space bonuses in lieu of financial contributions to the Council for the provision of parking spaces in public car parks. They recommended a bonus of 400 square feet per unit of financial contribution per car space, with a maximum bonus of 2:1. Parking policy - including both the financing and the distribution as between public and private parking - is essentially a metropolitan transport planning issue. Parking control in the main City Centre is one of the most important

of 23rd May, 1972.

- 4 -

✓✓ weapons by which a balance can be struck between the capacity of the public transport system, the main road system and the internal street system to efficiently handle movement. I consider it wrong, in principle, to offer floor space bonuses for parking stations where developers happen to be willing to do so. If private finance is to be obtained for public parking stations, with a restriction on private off-street parking, then the Council should consider levying a special rate or obtain some other powers. I would not recommend bonuses being offered for parking space provided.

RECOMMENDATION

16. The Authority is RECOMMENDED to confirm the following policy decisions on floor space ratio control, both within the City of Sydney and elsewhere:-

(a) Method of Calculating Floor Space Ratio

That the method of measurement of floor space be gross floor space (i.e. including the thickness of walls); and that exclusions from any calculations be as set out in paragraph 11 of this Report.

This recommendation involves confirming advice already given by the Authority to the Minister on the City of Sydney Planning Scheme.

(b) International Hotels

The Authority is recommended to adhere to its original policy advice to the Minister, namely to exclude international hotels from any floor space ratio calculations and to deal with them instead on the basis of performance standards.

(c) Floor Space Bonuses for Parking Stations

The Authority is recommended to decide, as a matter of policy, that floor space bonuses should not be offered for parking space made available by developers.

J.P.F. KACIREK
CHIEF PLANNER