

54
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The Editor,
The Sydney Morning Herald

Dear Sir,

4th October, 1971

I have been studying the 16 Policies and 83 Action Priorities of the City of Sydney Strategic Plan as formally adopted by the Sydney City Council on August 2nd, 1971. It is a balanced masterpiece of realistic, social, physical and economic planning. It calls attention to what I call our 'Manhattan madness' for the over-development of office space in the over-large (540 acre) 'County Centre' zone of the City. Manhattan is now an anti-human hell, ~~a city with a death wish~~. Yet, over recent years, our City Council, our real estate developers and, unfortunately, some of our architects, have been complacently leading us to a similar fate.

Manhattan now has a surplus of vacant office space, running into many millions of square feet. Sydney today is at the beginning of a glut of useless office space which threatens to grow to Manhattan proportions of tens of millions of square feet unless sanity is quickly restored.

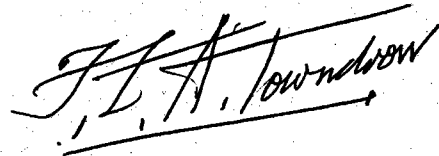
The Strategic Plan clearly prescribes the first steps back to sanity. It recommends that the City Council adopt and enforce Floor Space Ratio controls to reduce the basic permissible bulk of office building to 6 times the site area, instead of the 10 or 12 times which has been permitted in recent years.

It points out, in an illuminating statistical table on page 83, that at the old Floor Space Ratio of 12, the 540 acre County Centre Zone could contain enough office space for 840,000 workers, well over twice, and possibly three times, the total number of City workers we can expect to have by the year 2000.

Meanwhile, the orgy of real estate ~~speculation~~ speculation in sites for highly profitable office development, even spilling into the Rocks, Woolloomooloo and Pyrmont, stops the redevelopment of housing, hotels, theatres and those other diverse uses which are essential to the economic health as well as the cultural wealth of an city.

The State Planning Authority recommended in 1967, and have since consistently urged, that the City Floor Space Ratio should be reduced to 6. The City Council's own Strategic Plan recommends in 1971 a more

sophisticated but basically similar FSR Code. Will the City Council and the Minister for Local Government now have the courage to adopt and enforce the recommendations of their own closest advisers?

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'F.E.A. Towndrow'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name 'F.E.A.' is written in a more formal, blocky cursive, while 'Towndrow' is more fluid and connected.

Emeritus Professor F.E.A. Towndrow
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