

110 56

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SYDNEY

Report on the design of a
Public Information Centre,
for Sydney

Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.
in association with
McConnel, Smith & Johnson
and
W.D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd.

April 15, 1971

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
Terms of Reference and Form of Report	5
Analysis of Alternative Sites	6
Analysis of Information Content	8
Recommended Communications Equipment	15
Design and Cost Estimates of the Public Information Centre	18
Public Information Centre Staffing	22
Promotional Materials Required at the Public Information Centre	24
Promoting the Public Information Centre Through the News Media	27
The Future of the Public Information Centre	29
Specific Priorities	36
Action Required	38
Appendices :	
Advantages and Disadvantages of Sites Other Than Martin Place	
Supplementary Audio-Visual Aids	

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a report on the design of a permanent Public Information Centre for the Sydney City Council to tell the people of Sydney what is new, fresh and interesting about their city. The Centre will be a shop-window for Council's achievements and a monitoring post for the public's reactions to Council's plans.

The report follows Council's request of February 8, 1971 (reference 816/70) to advise on stage one of a three stage proposal to design, document, and administer the erection of a Public Information Centre.

The report's main recommendations are :

1. Locate the Public Information Centre in the north-western corner of Martin Place.
2. Highlight the Strategic Master Plan in the initial display, which should reproduce striking, and enlarged, illustrations from the Strategic Master Plan report.
3. Dramatise, in subsequent displays at the Public Information Centre, new developments in Sydney, or new approaches to the city's attractions and assets, with special emphasis on how the Sydney City Council is in the forefront of such progress.
4. Use still graphics as the basic display medium at the Public Information Centre. Back these with practical information aids such as a moving-lights weather forecaster, temperature indicator, calendar and clock. Introduce limited audio-visual aids and expand their use after they have proven their value.

To build the Public Information Centre to the design recommended in this report, to mount the first display and at the same time provide special communications aids which will encourage expression of public opinion on the Strategic Master Plan, the total cost, including professional fees, would not exceed \$32,000.

It is proposed that the Information Centre should open on September 1. This is a practical goal, if Council authorises prompt progress on stages two and three of the Public Information Centre. Such authority is now sought.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FORM OF REPORT

Council's Terms of Reference to the Consultants to advise on Stage One of the Public Information Centre, were :

1. Analyse alternative sites and recommend the most appropriate location.
2. Analyse available information related to the purpose of the Centre and define the most appropriate information content to be translated into audio-visual displays by the graphics contractor.
3. Analyse available communications equipment and recommend the most appropriate media for conveying the information.
4. Prepare and submit a design and estimate of total cost for the Centre and its display content.

In subsequent sections of this report, we examine each of those four aspects. We follow with a review of :

Public Information Centre staffing.

Promotional materials required at the Centre.

Promoting the Centre through news media.

Future of the Public Information Centre.

Specific priorities.

Action required.

3. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE SITES

Seven main sites were considered as the site of the Public Information Centre. The sites were :

Martin Place, Town Hall, Circular Quay, Australia Square, Hyde Park-St. James, Mark Foy's Plaza, and Fitzroy Gardens (Kings Cross).

Of those seven sites, Martin Place has the following advantages :

- * It has sound claims to be regarded as the heart of Sydney, being midway between the retail and office cores of the City.
- * It is already the scene of a notable Sydney City Council initiative which has made the site attractive to pedestrians, and will become even more so in the near future.
- * It is close to very heavy concentrations of people - Wynyard Station, George and Pitt Streets.
- * It is flanked by some of the most important public and commercial buildings in the City.

Within Martin Place, the North-West corner has particular attractions as the best single position for the Public Information Centre. They are :

- a) The location can be visible to both the George Street pedestrian stream and the Martin Place stream, thus providing a potential point of attraction for a great number of Sydney people.

- b) The Public Information Centre can complement further attractions planned for the western end of Martin Place, without interfering with the location of any one of them.
- c) The Centre can be sited so as to avoid affecting the right of way to the Cenotaph.
- d) The site is easily and safely reached by pedestrians.

The North-Western corner of Martin Place is therefore recommended as the site for the Public Information Centre. The relative attractions of other sites mentioned above, are examined in Appendix 1.

4. ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTENT

If the Public Information Centre is to perform well as a public relations vehicle for the Sydney City Council, and a genuine public service to the people of Sydney, it must achieve the following :

- * The information given must be of value to the largest possible audience, drawn from a wide cross-section of Sydney people.
- * The displays must encourage a direct response from the people who see them, to guide Council on public attitudes to civic matters.
- * The Centre must provide news, as well as information. It must win again, and again, the attention of the same audience who use Martin Place often. As well, it must meet the needs of people who come rarely to the heart of the City.

Those views are not those of the Consultants alone. They emerged clearly from a series of discussions with executives in organisations like the Government Tourist Bureau, The Australian National Travel Commission, Qantas, P & O Lines of Australia Pty. Ltd., the New South Wales Council of Social Services, representatives of leading banks and retail groups and a cross-section of journalists from "The Sun", "The Australian", and "The Sydney Morning Herald".

There was unanimous agreement from those groups that the initial Public Information Centre display should feature the Strategic Plan for the City of Sydney.

There are a number of advantages in that course :

1. The Plan will affect virtually every person who comes to the centre of Sydney.
2. Council will gain greatly by giving the public an excellent opportunity to review the Plan - provided it is presented simply and clearly.
3. The Plan will be news at the time the Centre is scheduled to open - early September, 1971.
4. The Plan will provide striking evidence of a City and its Council, on the move.
5. The public display of the Plan will give strong evidence that the Council is determined to avoid charting Sydney's future in secret, behind closed doors.
6. The display will do much towards taking the Strategic Plan clear of political connotations, by placing it prominently in the general public's domain.
7. The display will provide a sound reason to reprove any critic who suggests that the Strategic Plan Report will be "pigeon-holed". The reply would be that precipitate action would not be taken without first gauging public opinion on important matters - the purpose of the Centre.

Content of the Strategic Plan Display

The initial Public Information Centre display on the Strategic Plan should be strict in its adherence to simple, practical themes which show clearly what sort of city Sydney could be in future.

Thus, while the Strategic Plan Report should provide the basis of the display, through enlarged graphic reproductions of parts of it, only the most appealing and directly communicative pages should be presented to the general public.

For example, if new types of pedestrian amenities are suggested for Sydney, the graphic should show an artist's impression of people walking, say, along a Pitt Street Mall, or, perhaps, under Queen Victoria Building, on their way to Farmer's etc.

The graphic should ruthlessly avoid the opposite extreme of a series of geometric circles or draftsmen's radii superimposed on a street pattern, on the principle that while planners see people's movements in such a way, the layman does not. And in Martin Place we will be preaching to the layman - not the converted.

Other graphics, at the initial display, might illustrate :

- * Challenging new developments for old or depressed areas of Sydney, such as Pyrmont.
- * Imaginatively illustrated graphics - preferably pictorial or "actual" representations as opposed to diagrams - showing new initiatives towards solving the city's great parking problems.
- * Evidence of new thinking on a regeneration of the City's entertainment, shopping and relaxation facilities.

- * Confirmation that special efforts were planned on the preservation of the City's finest old buildings and historic amenities.
- * Visual proof of a breakthrough in civic attitudes to Sydney's health, education and social welfare administration.

The emphasis, as already indicated, should be strongly on graphics that people will immediately recognise. And at least some of them must show people, on the proven axiom that people are most interested in looking at pictures of other people - rather than of buildings without people.

Nevertheless, the display would call for a limited number of arresting maps or diagrams, such as will be in the Strategic Plan Report. These might show the possible land use development of the City of Sydney; illustrate the rate at which the Central City was growing (and the rate at which the total metropolis was expanding as compared with some other great cities); and indicate, too, where the great areas of Sydney's physical growth had been.

If the emphasis, thus far, has been on the City's brilliant possibilities, the display must provide evidence that Sydney also has major problems which admit of nothing but the Strategic Plan approach.

Again, the evidence should be telling and credible. For example, a photograph of the Harbour Bridge traffic at sunset in, say, 1940, could be contrasted with a similar scene today. The inevitable question is : "What will this be like in 10 or 20 years?" ... that, too, could be shown in an artist's projection which, if well done, would be front page news for Sydney papers.

In short, as well as showing the enormous potential which Sydney can realise through implementing the Strategic Plan, the display must show succinctly and dramatically, how intolerable the city's problems will be, if no action is taken.

The Need to Guide Public Response

As well as explaining briefly, that the Sydney City Council is now assessing the grand design for Sydney's future, the initial Public Information Centre display must stress that Council earnestly seeks citizens' - and visitors' - reactions and suggestions.

But people will have to be guided carefully. They will have to be told why their views are wanted, and be confident that they will not feel foolish in giving their opinions.

To encourage such participation, people could be shown that many others have already given their views. A series of comments could be featured from individuals and groups who have already written to Council (or the Consultants), saying what they think Sydney's future should be. If necessary, those people need not be named. But brief, straightforward views could be blown-up, in graphic form, and people told "This is what someone else thinks Sydney should be. What do you think? Sydney City Council would like to know".

To encourage the public to give their views about the Strategic Plan, at least three facilities are needed :

1. A person to whom people can talk - and from whom they get answers.
2. A recording device where people can record their views.
3. Facilities for writing and a mail slot into which people can put written opinions.

This suggests :

- A. The Centre must be staffed - it cannot be a display only. This aspect is reviewed in detail later in this report.
- B. The recording device must lead to a Central Information Storage Unit which ensures that people's views can be monitored and assessed for possible action. At its simplest, this calls for a telephone and a recording unit. People would pick up the phone (at the Centre) and give their views, free, for a specific period, say three minutes.

Their opinions would be recorded on a control unit. This matter, too, is examined subsequently in the report.

- C. The mail slot could be a simple suggestion box. Supplies of paper and "souvenir" pencils would be provided (through the Centre attendants or another control medium).

Subsequent Strategic Plan Display Themes

It will not be possible for all key aspects of the Strategic Plan to be presented in the limited scale of one display.

This means particular aspects of the Plan would be elaborated on in follow-up exhibitions.

For example, if the initial display on the Strategic Plan was featured from, say, early September to early October 1971, there could then be a change in focus to highlight the Plan's approach to, say, future pedestrian amenities.

For a further month, say to November, 1971, the public could be shown, in more detail, plans for the prospective new pedestrian precincts and walkway systems. Again there would be a heavy emphasis on public participation to test reactions to Strategic Plan proposals.

Further aspects of the Strategic Plan would be displayed in subsequent months - for example, health, education and social welfare; building preservation ; property development.

In each of these aspects, new possibilities for Sydney could be presented to the public as evidence of the sweep and vigour now characterising Sydney's planning.

And in each case, it could be made clear what the Sydney City Council was already doing in each field. Thus, for example, if a display emphasised future pedestrian amenities, it would be balanced by a simple caption and graphics showing what the Council had already done in Martin Place. In other words, the displays must ensure that displays of future planning is always accompanied by evidence of practical action.

5. RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

Communications equipment for the Public Information Centre should be chosen with an eye to economy and practical effectiveness.

Thus, initial commitments should be cautious until there has been ample opportunity for particular communications to demonstrate their value and public appeal.

The basic communications media should be still graphics, in both black and white, and colour. These should be backed by a simple colour slide presentation, from a single 35mm slide projector.

Such media should be served by the illustrations of the Strategic Plan Report, or by colour slides already possessed by the Consultants. Those resources should be sufficient to plan the initial Public Information Centre display.

Other Communications Equipment Needed

To give topicality and eye appeal (and to make news), five other communications aids are recommended as permanent features of the Public Information Centre :

1. A moving light sign visible from both Martin Place and George Street. The sign should say what the Centre is, and who runs it, i.e.

"Public Information Centre
Sydney City Council"

2. A prominent calendar, giving the day, month and year. This should be electronically controlled.
3. A simple clock. Even though it could be argued that Martin Place is relatively well served by public clocks, the omission of this aid would leave the Public Information Centre noticeably incomplete from the viewpoint of public service.
4. A temperature display. This would show, in lights, by day and night, what Sydney's temperature was. This indicator could be combined with the clock, so that in one display, people saw both the time and temperature. This would be a feature new to Sydney.
5. A lighted weather forecast display. The displays are now an accepted feature of buildings like the M. L. C. offices (North Sydney). By combining the forecast's visual impact with a graphic chart explaining clearly what various light displays meant so far as weather forecasts were concerned, the Centre would meet a particular public need.

Special Communications Features at the Initial Display

While the above would be the permanent communications features at the Public Information Centre, at the initial display, impact would be achieved through the following :

1. A free public telephone. Through that (as indicated) the public will be invited to give their views on the Strategic Plan.
2. A teletype, fed from the news sources of an Australian news group. From the teletype, round the clock, people would see the news coming into Sydney from across the world, thus achieving a sense of immediacy and participation they would rarely otherwise experience. People would be encouraged to take away "strips" of news, as the news sheets came off the teleprinter.

3. A disguised "juke box". This would be, in essence, a series of recorded messages (on aspects of Sydney's future planning) written and delivered without pretension. People would press a button against a particular subject and hear how the Strategic Plan was catering to that need. This facility must be backed by opportunities for the public to give their response (the free telephone calls would suffice). Only in very unusual circumstances would an individual be invited to cut a record for the "juke box".

As well as the above, more sophisticated audio-visual displays would be mounted, as the Public Information Centre gained in stature. The equipment required for such displays is discussed in Appendix 2.

6. DESIGN AND COST ESTIMATES OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

The design of the Public Information Centre stresses lightness, airiness, movement and activity. It is designed, in part at least, as a foil to the very solid buildings that now front Martin Place, thus being instantly distinguishable from any other structure in the vicinity.

This distinction will be emphasised by the absence of doors in the design. Nobody seeking information will have to enter "someone else's building". Instead, the Centre will be part of the streetscape, taking information to people where they move naturally and freely.

Form of the Public Information Centre

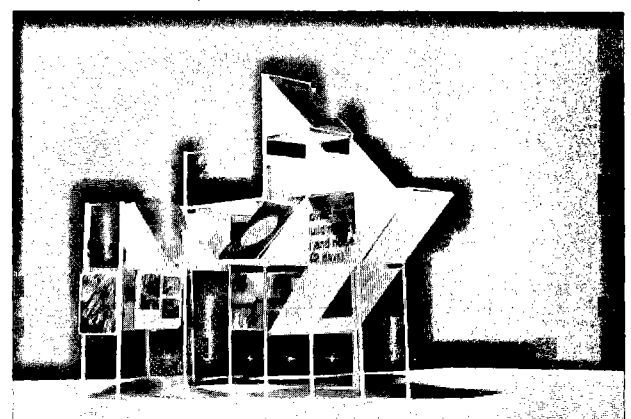
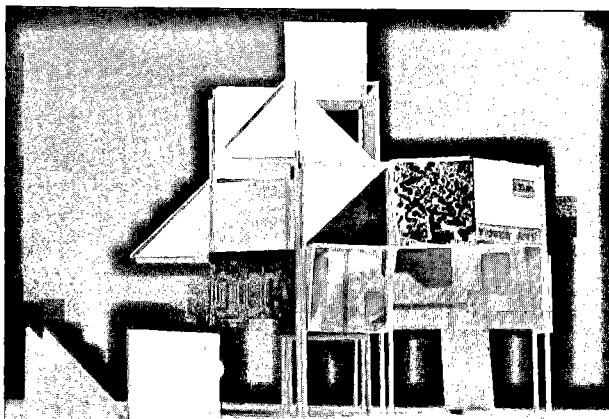
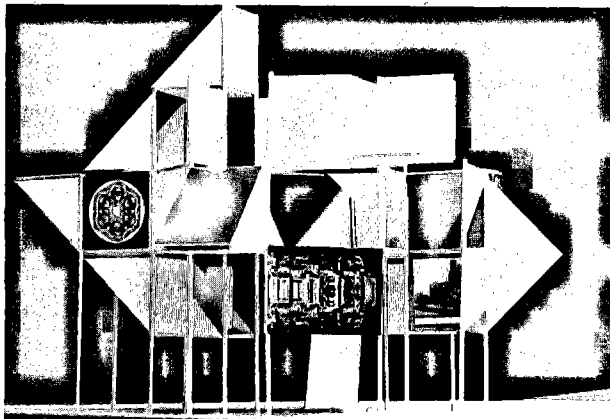
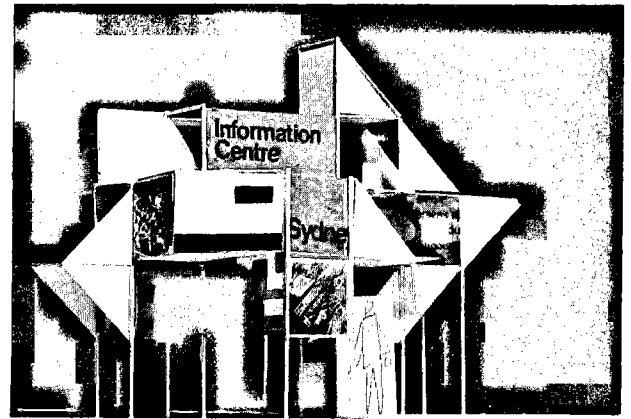
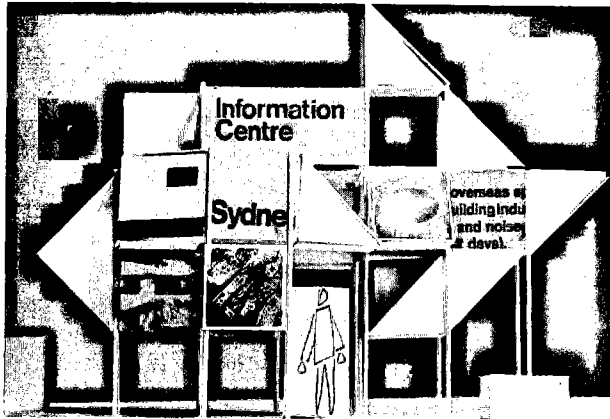
Construction of the Centre will be based on a four foot "box" module. By using such a simple module, the Centre can be added to or changed in much the same way as a child's set of building blocks. Thus, the recommended form of the centre, as indicated in the attached photographs, can easily be amended to suit different displays or even different locations.

The "box" module is very adaptable and can incorporate all kinds of displays, from slide shows, to graphics, to model presentations.

In addition, the "box" module can be assembled as a sculpture, producing attractive and visually exciting forms that will win people's attention and draw them to the Centre, encouraging them to become involved with the information on display, by permitting them to move easily in and around the module groupings.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPT
PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

19.



A simple system of chromed steel tubes provides the support for the box-modules, which would be constructed of waterproofed plywood.

A basic pattern would be developed from mirror-finish aluminium sheeting, applied to selected panels in the structure.

The mirrors will reflect the surrounding environment and ensure that the Centre becomes a striking picture of the City around. As well, the modules will be so designed that people will be able to see through parts of the structure to graphics and activities beyond the immediate surface, thus heightening the effect of transparency which will characterise sections of the Centre.

Thus, the Centre is designed for people to wander through it, as they are moving naturally across Martin Place. All displays will be at eye level or above, leaving the ground level free of obstruction and virtually open.

That approach will be continued, to the degree possible, in the supporting structure which will house the Information Centre attendants. While it will have many similar characteristics in appearance, to the main Centre, the fact that the attendants must have a roof, a counter and lockable drawers means certain modifications of approach, as the illustration shows.

Cost of the Public Information Centre

The cost of the Public Information Centre basic structure and initial display (including the month-long free telephone service, "juke box" recorded messages and the teleprinter news device) is estimated at \$24,500. Professional fees are estimated at \$7,500. The total maximum cost is therefore \$32,000.

ATTENDANT'S BOOTH



7. PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE STAFFING

Information Centre attendants must be on hand to provide the degree of flexibility and informality that people would find missing from any purely mechanical or material display. As well, a security attendant would be required to make periodic visits after hours and at week-ends.

The Type of Staff Required

While it is certainly not essential for attendants to project themselves as celebrities, every effort must be made to avoid creating the impression of indifference, or ignorance or nervousness on their part.

The need is for poised, welcoming and informed staff. Moreover, they must be energetic, personable and vivacious if they are to provide fine service to the public throughout the day. When, to those requirements, is added the need to keep the attendants' salaries to relatively modest levels, there is strong evidence for suggesting that the Council follows the lead of leading Commercial groups when staffing, say, booths at the Royal Easter Show. On such occasions, firms tend to select attractive and engaging young women and dress them distinctively either in a modern uniform, or in an outfit designed to show they are keenly aware of fashion trends. Naturally, such attendants are given training courses before they appear in public.

In recommending that the Council follows the same practice in staffing the Public Information Centre, these thoughts have been borne in mind:-

- (a) Council staff would be eligible, if they wished, to apply to staff the Information Centre. They would be given preference.
- (b) As well as Council staff, however, other girls should be invited to apply for the positions. This means advertising in Sydney newspapers.

- (c) No one girl should ever be left alone at the Information Centre. This suggests a minimum of three girls would be required as full-time staff, with a further, say, two Council staff trained as back-up staff in the event of the permanent staff's resignation, sickness, vacations etc.
- (d) Arrangements should be made with a nearby office - such as the Government Tourist Bureau - for the girls to take rest breaks.
- (e) The girls should be given high fashion uniforms to wear. Arrangements should be made with a nearby office for the girls to change into their uniforms on arrival at work.
- (f) In the event of difficulties with any individual (for example, a drunk) provision should be made at the counter at which the girls are located, for a button signal to a nearby office from which an attendant could go to enquire into the cause of the problem. As with (d) such a service may be available from the Government Tourist Bureau.
- (g) The information attendants must be connected, by telephone, with the main Town Hall switchboard and directly to the person appointed, at the Town Hall, as their superior and liaison information officer.
- (h) Before any attendant is asked to go on duty at the Public Information Centre she must be given broad public information training in areas of interest to the Sydney City Council and to prospective enquirers.
- (i) Attendants will expect small lockable drawers in which they put personal items, and personal working papers.
- (j) Attendants should be on duty from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday.

8. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS REQUIRED AT THE PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE

Apart from the displays on the City of Sydney Strategic Plan, and the back-up information services already mentioned, there will be a call for hand-out material. The need for this has been shown repeatedly at Public Information Centres in the past here, and elsewhere.

This material, which must be available free to enquirers, should include :-

1. A Sydney City Council leaflet on the City of Sydney Strategic Plan. This leaflet must explain, briefly, what the Plan is, what benefits it will have from Sydney, what problems will ensue if such a plan is ignored, and what particular advances will be made in the near future as a result of the plan.
2. A brochure - such as 'This Week in Sydney' - which describes succinctly what is new in the City.
3. Tourist brochures on the main attractions in and around Sydney.

Council will almost certainly be expected to meet the cost of the leaflet (which is part of the recommended Public Information Programme to explain the Strategic plan to the general public), but supplies of other leaflets (say, 500 copies a week of 'This Week in Sydney' and lesser quantities of most tourist brochures) will be available free from other sources.

Other Promotional Material

Also required will be such items as the following:-

A City Map and Fact Sheet

This should be a high quality 'graphic' map of Sydney which captures the image of the City in pictures and ideas of what to do and where to go.

Such a map could form the basis of a handout which will become increasingly important as the main informational aid, as the initial impact of the Strategic Plan tapers off, and the interest of visitors to the Public Information Centre focuses more strongly on the City of Sydney itself.

On the back of this map could be a fact sheet showing what are the main statistical features of the city, and how these relate to the Sydney City Council. For example, the statistics could indicate the amount of square feet of office space in the city, the quantity of paper that is in it any one day, the water consumed, the tonnage of garbage produced, the number of miles of pipes etc.

Such a hand-out brochure could be produced for the city by a public-spirited enterprise headquartered in Sydney.

Calendar of Events

One of the main promotional aids at the Public Information Centre should be a Calendar of Events. On this display should be highlighted the important events of each day for that week (or for that month). This would cover, for example, the visit of a dignitary to Sydney, an exhibition in Hyde Park, a concert at the Town Hall etc. The panel could be designed so that it was always up-to-date. Several days would be slotted in at the bottom of the panel and obsolete days removed from the top.

Miscellaneous Materials

Inevitably, there will be a demand at the Public Information Centre for such items as airline timetables, train, ferry and bus timetables; hotel and motel brochures; for guidance on doctors, dentists, chiropodists; for facts on churches, galleries and museums; for information on child-minding centres, kindergartens, schools; for advice on restaurants, telephone numbers etc.

While much of this information will be more appropriately handled by the Tourist Bureau, the General Post Office, Banks etc. to which enquirers can be directed, a large part of it will have to be provided at the Information Centre itself.

Provision will need to be made for these aspects in the training of the Public Information Centre attendants. And ample space must be made for storage - and the regular supply - of the bulk of promotional paper that must be maintained on the spot in Martin Place.

9. PROMOTING THE PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE THROUGH THE NEWS MEDIA.

It will be important to publicise the Martin Place Public Information Centre, if it is to achieve the required public impact and provide the scope of public service needed.

It is true that a well located and effectively designed centre will itself win a considerable public response, but that response will be strengthened immeasurably by a sustained programme of public information.

This publicity must be woven into that associated with Martin Place reconstruction as a whole, to ensure that there are no competing Council claims, so far as the news media are concerned. Moreover, the completion of Martin Place will have direct impact on the completion date of the Public Information Centre (though it is true part of the Martin Place work could be accelerated to accommodate the Centre). September 1st, however, is the likeliest early completion date for the Public Information Centre. Nevertheless, the Public Information Centre publicity must also be accommodated to the needs of the Strategic Plan public information, and it is to meet that requirement, as well as to integrate with Martin Place's needs, that the following steps are recommended:-

June 24th: Announcement, by the Sydney City Council, on the proposed Public Information Centre. Also, Council would release pictures of the proposed Centre.

July 8th - 9th: Selection, with pictures, of any Sydney City Council girls who had been chosen to staff Information Centre.

July 14th and July 17th: Advertisements in 'The Australian' (Sydney edition), 'The Sydney Morning Herald' and 'The Daily Telegraph' to recruit additional attendants for the Public Information Centre (it being unlikely that more than one or two girls would come from the Town Hall).

July 30th: News pictures - possibly with Lord Major - of Public Information Centre girls.

August 9th: News picture of Public Information Centre girls, this time showing their new uniforms.

August 16th: Pictures of Public Information Centre girls, in uniform, on a training programme at, say, Sydney Opera House.

September 1st: Opening of Public Information Centre, by Lord Mayor.

September 1st: Alderman Pilone and Alderman Port act as information attendants at Public Information Centre.

September 2nd: Alderman Port participates in a talk back session in respect of Strategic Plan.

September 3rd: Women journalists invited to act as Information Centre attendants to report for themselves on Sydney's attitude to the Strategic Plan.

September 10th: Alderman Pilone takes part in a talk-back radio programme on how the City Council, partly in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, was preparing to meet human and social needs of the city.

September 15th: The Lord Mayor announces plans for the other Public Information Centres and for making use of public gathering places throughout the city to unify the City's public information themes.

10. THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE.

There are two important aspects relating to the future of the Public Information Centre. One is the future of the Martin Place Centre itself, the second is the future of Sydney Public Information Centres as a whole. Dealing first with the Martin Place Centre, the following assumptions are made:-

- (a) Public interest will decrease in the Strategic Plan after some months of being exposed to it.
- (b) To retain public interest, a continuing effort must be made to present new and distinctive aspects of Sydney.
- (c) To monitor the public's attitude on important matters, Council can continue to use the Public Information Centre to highlight major issues.

These assumptions give rise to the following plans for the Public Information Centre in Martin Place.

While aspects of the Strategic Plan may well occupy the Public Information Centre for three, six, nine or twelve months, a careful watch must be maintained on public response, with a view to changing to the continuing theme 'Know Sydney'.

Under that theme 'Know Sydney' people would be invited to know their city and to offer their views on it. Thus a series of exhibitions might be mounted at the Public Information Centre on:-

'Know your Harbour'

'Know your Opera House'

'Know your Parks'.

Such subjects would lend themselves well to the basic black and colour graphics and slides already recommended for the Centre displays.

The themes could lead on to:-

'Know your Past'

'Know your Forebears'

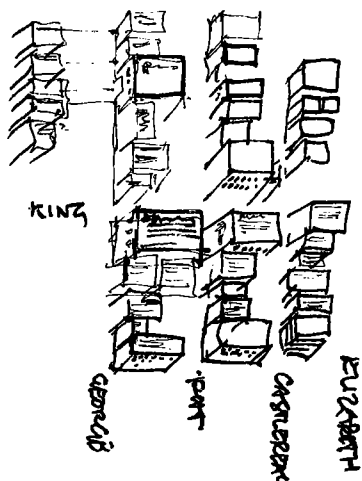
'Know your Council'.

Such aspects would show an historical outline of the City, how it grew, who was behind Sydney's rise to greatness, and who was responsible now - i.e. the Sydney City Council - for preserving the best of the past, and welding it to the most promising future.

In all such displays, people would be given the opportunity to record their opinions on what appealed to them most in current or past developments. Council would monitor these opinions and give generous public acknowledgement to those of special merit.

Many other themes could be presented persuasively and informatively. For example, 'Know your Shops', 'Know your Restaurants', 'Know your Churches' are aspects that lend themselves well to strong pictorial and informative content for the Public Information Centre.

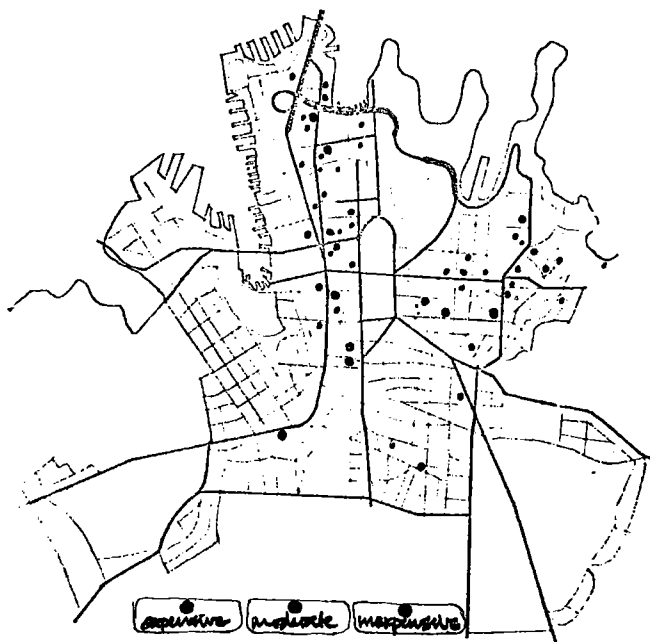
Below, as indications only, are suggestions on possible Public Information Centre presentation of those or similar themes.



SYDNEY'S SHOPS

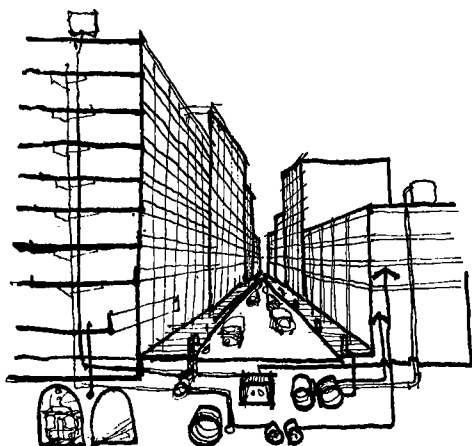
The Retail Core

A 3-D map of the retail core with a directory of all shops graphically represented on the roof top space of the building. The base map could be an oblique aerial photograph - enlarged to give a sense of scale identity at the footpath level.



WHERE TO EAT IN SYDNEY

An animated location map showing three categories of restaurants and their menus. The classification would be for inexpensive, moderate and expensive restaurants and the panel could be provided by the restaurant proprietors.

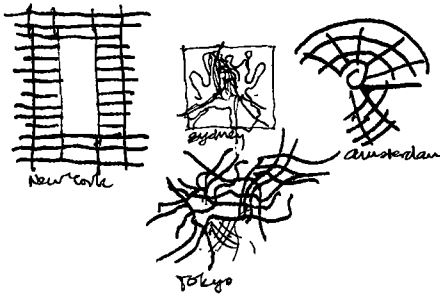


THE CITY AS A SYSTEM

A drawing or three dimensional model of a cross section through a City street showing the multiplicity of services beneath and on ground level.

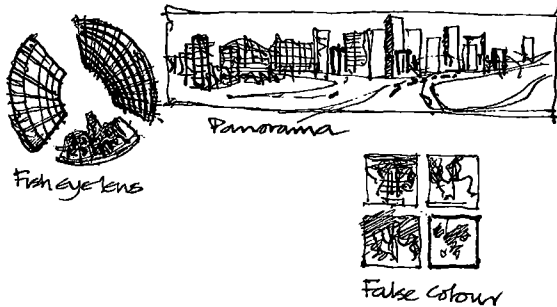
HOW BIG IS SYDNEY

OTHER CITIES AT THE SAME SCALE

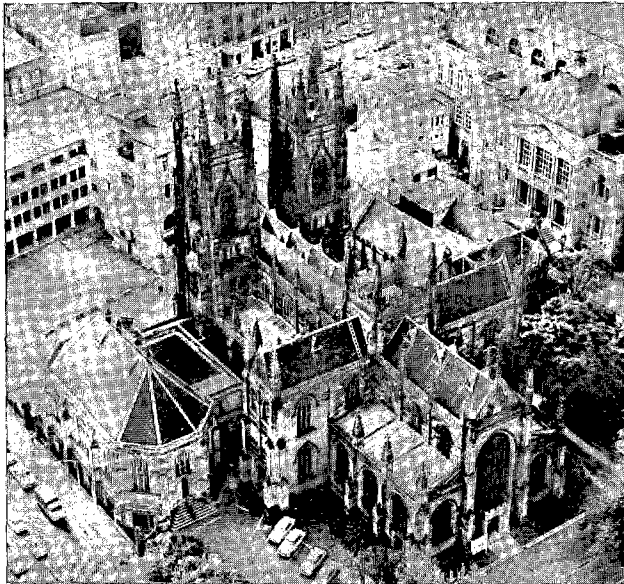


A comparison of Sydney with other globally important centres, such as New York, Paris, Tokyo, Amsterdam, would be shown by reproducing aerial photographs of all these places including Sydney, all reproduced at the same scale.

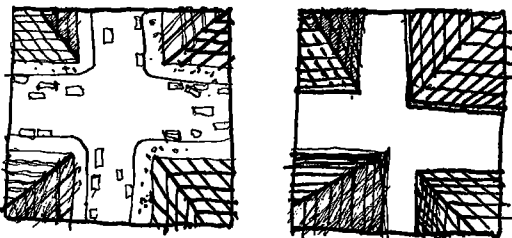
ONCE INVISIBLE IMAGES OF THE CITY



A graphic panel showing some of the exotic scientific imagery that is being developed to study the urban environment ; infra red, ultra violet, radar and high altitude images that show things like heat patterns and social patterns of settlement. This display would include views of the City from the fish eye lens and the panoramic camera image (early and recent photographs).



Familiar buildings in the City could be shown from a different point of view and the worms eye view and the birds eye view of a detail, like a city intersection could reveal the City in ways that have not been appreciated before.



Public Information Centres, As a Whole

With the future success of the Martin Place Public Information Centre, Council will subsequently be faced with the challenge of presenting similar information centres, or systems of information, in other parts of the City.

This will be almost inevitable as different parts of the City of Sydney will have different information needs. The specific information required as, say Circular Quay, will be quite different from that dispensed near Town Hall. It is true, though, that certain elements will be common to both locations.

In essence, as the need for further information centres becomes clearer, at particular locations, those centres will require:-

1. A counter with space for two or three girls, and lockable facilities for storage and graphic panels.
2. From time to time, an audio-visual device to relay a film loop, or slide show.
3. A table top display case, suitable for showing a model of a particular development in the city, or a model of the whole city.
4. A device through which people can record opinions.
5. A map showing how that point of Sydney relates to other parts of the City.
6. A variety of graphic display panels.

Ancilliary equipment will include a clock and calendar, a temperature and weather indicator, an illuminated sign 'Public Information Centre, Sydney City Council', reflective wind machines and banner displays to attract people to investigate the centre, shade and wind protection, seating, drinking fountain, waste disposal and, possibly, a coffee area and toilets.

At any one point, as already indicated, the emphasis would be different. For example, at Kings Cross, the main display map may stress different kinds of local entertainment facilities, restaurants, motels, bars etc. On the reverse side there could be a map of the whole City showing the relationship of Kings Cross to Sydney.

Further panels, at the Kings Cross Public Information Centre, would show the Sydney City Council's involvement in improving, say, pedestrian amenities in the area or plans for further progress in the Fitzroy Gardens Location.

In short, the Kings Cross Information Centre would reinforce the identity of Kings Cross, while at the same time evidencing the elements that help give a structure to the City as a whole.

Modifications of the Information Centre Concept.

While places such as Kings Cross have definite information needs, and lend themselves to distinctive public information centre displays, many other parts of the city also have specialised information requirements. Though these do not necessarily merit a full-scale Public Information Centre, they offer an excellent opportunity to provide a public service while reinforcing the elements that give structure and coherence to the City.

For example, bus stops are places where special information is required. Bus timetables, clocks, a local directory, seats and shelters are usually needed. Those elements could be used to build up a unit that makes provision for all the requirements of a bus stop. The same kind of supports, graphic panels, roofings and seating might be uniform elements that give continuity to the City's streetscape.

Thus, the Sydney City Council may well be able to create a system of Public Information Centres, flowing from the main display at Martin Place, through the subsidiary Public Information Centres at Kings Cross, Circular Quay, Town Hall etc. onto minor information points throughout the city's streets.

All would feature the same kinds of supports, graphic panels, seating and roofing, giving striking evidence to every person that the City Council had a new and vital concept of the City as an information system.

11. SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

In addition to the design stage of the Public Information Centre, on which we have been reporting, two further steps are needed to complete the task of erecting the Public Information Centre in Martin Place. Those steps are documentation and contract administration.

In more detail they involve:-

DOCUMENTATION

1. Develop working prototype full scale mock-up of the modular component characterising the Public Information Centre.
2. Finalise the design and build a model of the Public Information Centre, scale 1" = 1'0".
3. Prepare specifications for the construction of the Public Information Centre, for the execution of the works required, and for the erection of Centre. This will include the preparation of the surrounding area, and audio-visual displays.
4. Prepare a detailed cost estimate.
5. Submit drawings and details to the selected contractor. *
6. Advise Council on the contractor's price.

*If public tenders must be called, this stage will be completed twelve weeks after receiving Council's instructions to proceed, following approval of the design submitted with this report. If contractors can be selected without public tender, by regarding the Information Centre as within the total Martin Place plan, the documentation stage will take six weeks to complete. The estimated September 1st opening date for the Public Information Centre is based on the selection of contractors without public tender. If public tenders have to be called, the Public Information Centre would be ready in mid-October, 1971.

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

1. Prepare contract documents for Council to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer.
2. Supervise fabrication of the Public Information Centre.
3. Supervise development of graphic support material.
4. Gather support and material from other agencies for incorporation in the Information Centre.
5. Supervise the erection and mounting of the centre on location, in Martin Place.
6. Arrange opening ceremony, publicity and special events.

12. ACTION REQUIRED

We have reported on Stage One, the design of the proposed Sydney City Council Public Information Centre, in accordance with your request of January 8th 1971.


We now ask Council's approval to proceed to the remainder of the work, embracing documentation and administration needed to complete the Public Information Centre by September 1st 1971.

We further request Council's agreement to negotiate with a selected contractor for construction of the Centre at a total cost not to exceed \$32,000.

Submitted for:

Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.
in association with
McConnel Smith & Johnson and W.D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd.

by



Peter J. Knox
W.D. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd.

April 15th 1971.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SITES
OTHER THAN MARTIN PLACE

Below we examine, briefly, Circular Quay, Fitzroy Gardens, Mark Foy's Plaza, Australia Square, Hyde Park-St. James and Town Hall as sites for the Public Information Centre.

Although those sites are not as suitable as Martin Place for the initial Public Information Centre, they may well provide the locations for future Centres.

We look first at Circular Quay.

Circular Quay is the prime take-off point for Harbour trips and is a prominent public meeting place at week-ends. It also has the advantages of good rail, bus and ferry services.

On the other hand, Circular Quay has not yet developed the public recognition it is likely to receive with progress on the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority's Rocks project and the Circular Quay Redevelopment Scheme.

While it has claims to be the site of a Public Information Centre, therefore, the real need is not likely to be felt for some years yet.

Fitzroy Gardens has the advantage of being in Kings Cross, and therefore, at the heart of Sydney's entertainment and tourist business. On the other hand, it is on the edge of the City proper and is identified with a very specialised section of Sydney's life, rather than with the City as a whole, which the Public Information Centre should be.

Mark Foys Plaza has merits as a gathering place, and it is close by Museum Station, as well as major bus routes. However, that part of Sydney attracts only a modest amount of pedestrian traffic compared with sites between Park Street and Hunter Street.

Australia Square has already established itself as a popular gathering place. Against it, however, is that the site is privately owned. It would be difficult, too, to see how an Australia Square Public Information Centre could be located in a place sufficiently prominent to attract a large number of passers-by.

The St. James site has the advantage of being in one of Sydney's most important public amenities (Hyde Park) and being close to the major retail stores. It is also handily placed for rail and road transport. The position lacks the public appeal of a site like North-West Martin Place, however, which is closer to the main thoroughfare (George Street) and the main city station (Wynyard).

Town Hall has some obvious advantages. For example, there are at least two possible sites - either on the George Street-Druitt Street intersection beside the Town Hall, or on the traffic island which separates cars turning left, into George Street, from Druitt Street, from those going up Park Street or turning right in George Street. (If the latter site were pursued, the left hand traffic turn to George Street would have to be prohibited.)

However, there are at least two disadvantages to the Town Hall site :

1. Unlike Martin Place, which is at least partly reserved for pedestrians, Town Hall is sited by an intensely busy traffic intersection which is not conducive to the relaxed pedestrian approach wanted at the Public Information Centre.

2. While the area may well be a future central meeting place with the creation of a City Square, or even the redevelopment of the Queen Victoria building site, it now lacks the amenities possessed by Martin Place and some other sites as an attractive public gathering place.

APPENDIX 2

SUPPLEMENTARY AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

There will be occasions when special presentations at the Public Information Centre warrant sophisticated audio-visual displays. This is especially likely when the Sydney City Council gains more experience in the public appeal of such aids.

The additional equipment is described under three main headings - slides, films, and audio-visual devices.

Slide Equipment

The range of desirable equipment includes two 35 mm slide projectors (one to be in reserve in case of breakdown), four slide magazines, one rear projection screen, one projector mounting frame, one aluminium canopy (over the projection screen) and one projector control unit. The cost would be some \$1500.

Sound Equipment

To provide a sound commentary on the slides, the audio equipment could include one medium reliability audio/control cartridge recorder and one speaker system, costing \$600.

Additional Slide Equipment

This would include a display operation button, display duration control system, the compiling and recording of audio and control tract for tape cartridges, the recopying, enlarging or superimposing of wording for 35 mm slides and the mounting of slides. This would cost, say, \$1250.

Films

An endless loop of film carried in a looping attachment mounted on a projector will provide up to 15 minutes of material. This can be broken into several segments by the use of a duration control unit. This will stop after each segment, requiring the audience to re-operate the push button.

Likely expenses would reach about \$1200. This would cover one 8 mm sound projector; one looping attachment; one projector stand; one rear projection screen and frame (already mentioned in relation to the slide equipment); one speaker unit (also covered previously); one display duration push button (already mentioned); and one display duration control system (covered before).

Audio Units

While limited audio units are already recommended, for temporary use, at the initial Public Information Centre display, future exhibitions may call for the permanent acquisition of more such aids. The technical equipment required would be two medium reliability audio tape replay units (a single unit would unduly restrict the audience that could be served), two display operation buttons and an audio duration control system, costing approximately \$1500.

In total Council could be faced ultimately with a total of around \$6,000 in equipping the Public Information Centre with the complete range of audio visual aids. That cost excludes the production of films, recordings, slide presentations etc. which would be promoted through the audio-visual equipment.