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FILE NOTE
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G. Clarke

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOOLLOOMOOLOO

WHAT THE SYDNEY CITY COUNCIL'S PLANNING
CONSULTANTS REALLY SAID

There has been some degree of misunderstanding, misrepresentation and mis-quotation regarding what the Sydney City Planning consultants actually recommended to the Council concerning the future development of Woolloomooloo.

The facts are as follows:

1. The City of Sydney Strategic Plan was published in the form of a 200 page book on July 21st, 1971. Consideration and recommendations regarding Woolloomooloo contained in that report are as follows:

POLICY 2 CITY STRUCTURE

Pages 78 - 91 inclusive

Policy 2 represented a significant innovation in Australian City Planning practice at the time of publication of the City of Sydney Strategic Plan. It has since been adopted by others. The principle is not new in planning practice overseas, but had not previously been adopted in Australia outside of Canberra.

Policy 2 recommends that the City be managed as a system of environmental areas or Precincts integrated by a network of transport facilities and open spaces. Previous to the enumeration of this principle and its adoption by City Council on August 2, 1972, as part of the Strategic Plan, Statutory Planning for the City had merely coloured a total area of 540 acres as the "County Centre Zone", within which almost any use was permissible and within which a high blanket basic plot ratio of 10.0 applied.

Action Priority 2B on Pages 82-84 inclusive, has been widely misunderstood and misinterpreted in the press. It is important to quote the opening paragraph of Page 82

"This Plan's recommended strategy is to begin to manage the City now, so as to make the Central Spine Business District capable of accommodating the possibility of workforce growth from between 230,000 and 240,000 today to the order of 360,000 - 400,000 by the year 2,000. In the light of our current knowledge of the likely future, it would today be unwise to act on the basis of any lesser contingency.

Despite repeated efforts by correspondence and personal representations by the consultants to The State Planning Authority, The Authority declined, or was unable to indicate, or provide any data, research, analyses, or policy determinations, of what the City of Sydney Workforce might be, could be, or should be at any time in the future. The Authority's Sydney region outline plan indicated that the CBD workforce could grow to the order of 500,000 by the year 2,000. The consultants specifically requested the State Planning Authority to indicate either formally or informally, the approximate orders of future magnitude envisaged by The Authority for decentralised sub-regional centres at such places as Parramatta, Chatswood, Burwood, Mt. Druitt, Campbelltown and Blacktown.

The Authority declined to attempt to indicate any such orders of magnitude. The consultants were informed that The Authority had carried out no investigation that would permit them to indicate any such orders of magnitude and furthermore declined to assist the consultants even informally by attempting to postulate any off-the-record guesstimates of future workforce distribution.

The Consultant Project Director, Mr. George Clarke, has had written a number of University Theses, Papers and Articles, dating back to 1957, strongly advocating and urging that Governmental Planning Policies should be decisively directed towards establishment, nurturing and stimulus of a system of major sub-regional centres of tertiary employment throughout the Sydney Metropolitan area. This concept was an important part of the 1948 County of Cumberland Planning Scheme. In that Scheme, a number of suburban centres were specially zoned as "district centres". Mr. Clarke had long been urging that the principle recognised by these District Centre Zonings, be followed up by decisive action to stimulate the growth of such sub-regional centres, particularly in the northern, western and south-western sectors of the Sydney Metropolitan area.

Mr. Clarke's 1957 Thesis for the University of London set out a long-term strategy or outline plan for the Sydney Metropolitan area, based on the principle of the gradual conversion of the monosentric Metropolitan mass in which a regional cluster of cities, arranged in corridor form, each focusing upon a major sub-regional centre of tertiary employment. These principles were later repeated and slightly expanded in the S.P.A's 1968 Sydney Region Outline Plan.

The City of Sydney has more commercially zoned land within it than can possibly be well redeveloped within the foreseeable future. The Draft City of Sydney Planning Scheme, as prepared by the State Planning Authority and exhibited by the Minister, proposes to zone 540 acres

as 'County Centre.' After deducting streets, parks and places and structures which should be preserved, about 350 net site acres are capable of commercial redevelopment in this zone alone. The gross and net developable acreages of Precincts within the currently proposed 'County Centre' Zone, and the workforces which those Precincts could accommodate at average Floor Space Ratios between 4 and 12, are shown on the accompanying table."

The accompanying table shows that Woolloomooloo, designated as Precinct B5 of the City's total of 32 Precincts, contains a gross area of 70 acres zoned by the Statutory Planning Scheme, prepared by the State Planning Authority, and a net developable area of 50 acres.

B. Clarke