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attractiveness, efficiency and the convenience of people within the city.

"We are interested in testing the strategic plan against the objections claimed for it, and particularly the practicability of the methods proposed for its implementation.

While admitting that the SPA and the city council disagreed on some points, it was said this disagreement has been grossly overstated. "Our differences are not irrevocable."

A POSITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE PLAN

The Real Estate Institute of NSW has fewer reservations about the plan than the SPA. Mr Neville Tucker, director manager of city sales of L. J. Hooker Ltd and president of Sydney branch of the Institute, described the plan as a "very positive and progressive plan." Although a number of property owners will suffer financially, the implementation of the plan will serve the community as a whole, he said.

But because of the present prevailing uncertainty of the plan, the developers and landowners are hesitant to launch new projects. Once the Minister for Local Government, Mr C. B. Cutler, has approved it, the developers would know where they stand.

Mr Tucker predicted that it would take five years before people could physically visualise Sydney as envisaged in the plan.

In September the Real Estate Institute of NSW conducted a seminar on city planning entitled: "The Developing Sydney—Winning or Losing?"

Among the speakers were the ex-Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Sir Emmet McDermott; Dr Robert Neilsen, who spoke on Sydney's transport network and its needs from the present time onward to the year 2000; and Mr E. S. T. Stephens, Minister for Housing and Co-operative Societies.

At the seminar, the plan came under fire by Mr John Toon, a senior lecturer at the Department of Town and Country Planning, Sydney University. He said:

"The strategic plan is not revolutionary, as some may claim. It is, in fact, extremely conservative. It is directed towards maintaining and reinforcing the status quo—the locus of those institutions that have enjoyed political and economic power in the past and who seek to continue wielding that power."

Speaking on the first objective of the plan, that of fostering economic growth, Mr Toon said it revolved around the powers of the City Council and the management of the city. "It is very debatable whether any policy the City Council may initiate or pursue will have any effect on economic growth," he said.

According to Mr Toon, the plan clearly aims to diminish the power of State Government by reinforcing Local Government. While there is, he said, much argument for the rationalisation of authority, there is a curious inconsistency in urging the creation of another tier of government at the metropolitan level. On the second objective, accessibility to and within the city, Mr Toon maintained that this objective was entirely consistent with the "established interests" in the City and the plan indicates metropolitan transportation priorities as far as the city is concerned. It is widely recognised, he said, that any increase in accessibility vis-a-vis other locations will reinforce the locational advantages of the city relative to all other locations.

His view on the third objective, diversity, was equally

critical. This objective aimed at maintaining the richness of city life by encouraging otherwise non-economic activities, he said.

The fourth objective, environment, was based on a series of precincts which would each achieve a distinctive environment. The major environmental proposals are a series of boulevards of which William St is the best known, he argued.

Describing these boulevards as the "Napoleonic symbols", Mr Toon regarded the environmental proposals as directed towards increasing the power of the image of Sydney, and the establishments contained within it.

Such criticisms and suggestions from this and similar seminars as well as those from the 53 Governmental authorities and non-Governmental committees will all land on Mr Cutler's desk, who has the final word on the plan. It is a tortuous game, and one doesn't envy Mr Cutler.

List of 53 committees and organisations which have a say in the Sydney Strategic Plan.

- Premier's Department
- Police Department
- Department of Labour & Industry
- Chief Secretary's Department
- Board of Fire Commissioners
- Office of Civil Defence
- Department of Child Welfare & Social Welfare
- Health Department
- Air Pollution Advisory Committee
- Hospitals Commission
- Ambulance Transport Service Board
- Department of Environmental Control
- State Pollution Control Commission
- Metropolitan Waste Disposal Authority
- Ministry of Transport
- Department of Motor Transport
- Traffic Advisory Committee
- Department of Railways
- County of Cumberland Passenger Transport Advisory Committee
- Department of Government Transport
- Sydney Harbour Transport Board
- Public Works Department
- Government Architect
- Ministry of Housing
- Housing Commission of NSW
- Agriculture Department
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Domain
- Land Department
- National Parks & Wildlife Service
- Sydney Cricket Ground Trust
- Sydney Sports Ground Trust
- Department of Education & Department of Technical Education
- Conservatorium of Music, Library of NSW, Art Gallery of NSW
- Australian Museum, Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences
- Department of Decentralisation & Development
- Hotel Accommodation Advisory Committee
- Department of the Attorney-General & of Justice
- Licensing Court
- Land and Valuation Court
- Local Government Department
- State Planning Authority
- Height of Buildings Advisory Committee
- City of Sydney Parking Advisory Committee
- Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority
- Valuer-General's Department
- Ribbon Development Committee
- Department of Main Roads
- Electricity Commission
- Treasury
- MWS & DB
- Maritime Services Board
- PMG
- Australian Gas Light Company

If all goes well . . .

SYDNEY WILL BE ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT CITIES

Sydney is already the world's most highly capitalised land outside New York and Tokyo. And the Sydney strategic plan envisages to make it one of the world's great cities. But like any city planning affecting the life of millions of people, the plan has become highly controversial.

The controversy over the strategic plan is expected to continue for some time, more so because no less than 53 different Government authorities have a say in it. They range from such an unknown body as Ribbon Development Committee to the Premier's Department. Sir Emmet McDermott, the Lord Mayor of Sydney who retired last month, was quoted in the Press as saying:

This is the second of two articles on the Sydney strategic plan. In the first article our staff writer ADAM TAROCK reviewed the plan as adopted by the Sydney City Council. Here he describes the conflicting views expressed on the plan by various authorities.

"They (the authorities) all go their own merry way." The new Lord Mayor, Alderman Griffin, has declared that the Sydney City Council should be "freed from the domination" of the statutory bodies, which are "creeping over the body politics".

While the views of these organisations are divided on the methods of implementing the plan, almost all of them are unanimous that the strategic plan, in principle, is the most comprehensive city planning ever drawn up in the Commonwealth.

However, among the more vocal critics of the plan is the Building Owners and Managers Association of Australia Limited. One of the philosophies of the plan

is to make the city a residential-cultural-business centre. The Association is not opposed to this concept but it questions whether this is desirable or economical. Drawing out a fat correspondence file exchanged between the City Council and the Association, Mr Kenneth Walter Milner, the executive director of the Association, said:

"The City Council has taken a page from the Roman philosophy of city planning, the philosophy of living, working and being content within a city.

"We believe that movement within the City should become more convenient, as the plan envisages. But the central business district should be kept separated from the residential and cultural centres for economic reasons."

Also, for economic reasons, Mr Milner's Association rejects the plan's suggested space floor ratio. If the old 12:1 space floor ratio is replaced by 6:1 code, it could cut the value of city properties in half.

Because of the bonus system allowed in the strategic plan, it is not very easy to cite accurate examples of this price reduction. But it is simple mathematics that when a developer can build only six instead of 12 floors on his actual site, then the income from that office development will be reduced by half.

According to building owners and managers, the previous code for the central business district generally allowed a plot ratio of 12:1 so that, broadly speaking, for every 1,000 sq ft of site it was possible to build a 12,000 sq ft building. The new code reduces that ratio in the prime precinct of the city to a 4:1 for a 5,000 sq ft or 5½:1 for a 12,500 sq ft site.

But property owners can build 14:1 if they provided public amenities such as suggested in the plan. What did Mr Milner think of this?

"PLANNING BLACKMAIL"

"The proposal is planning blackmail and would still be uneconomical," he said. "In return for the bonus the developers are required to build theatres, restaurants, hotels, and other living accommodation. Unless tenants can be found who would pay sufficient rents, these proposals would prove uneconomical."

On this point, the Council argues that the average capital unit cost has been adjusted to allow for such contingencies as the relocation of the utility services. The number of bonus square feet of floor space will yield a net profit which, when capitalised, yields a sum equal to or more than the cost of providing the facility.

According to the Council, the calculation made of net profit allows for the construction cost of the additional floor space and for all normal outgoings.

But Mr Milner says that the new bonus is a "false bonus" and not a strong incentive for owners. After the present boom in building industry is gone, the industry could stagnate under the planning restrictions imposed by the strategic plan. The Sydney developers will have to look for more prospective cities if development in Sydney becomes uneconomic, Mr Milner said.

He thought that if the present 53 Government authorities, who may have to be consulted before a development project is launched, were reduced, it would both save time and money for developers, thus stimulating the building industry.

Another area of difference is the parking codes which create a heavy two-way cost factor for developers, according to the Association. The planners seek to rid the central business district of the massive numbers of cars which park in it each day—currently around 30,000. This will increase to 44,000 by the year 2000, although the plan envisages provision of working space in the central business district for up to 400,000 people by then.

The codes restrict on site parking in new developments and levy developers to pay for Council parking stations. The Association considers this as "iniquitous and discriminating".

The Association cites two reasons for its objections:

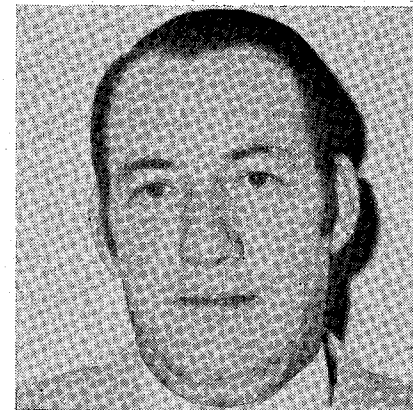
(i) A small number of building owners have been selected, with apparent disregard of equitable consideration, to bear a financial burden which should be paid by those who would make use of the car. If the City Council wishes to finance such car parks then it should raise money from all ratepayers including the State and Federal Government who are big employers of office staff who would use the car parks.

(ii) Under the system adopted by the Council, the developing owner not only may not allow for the parking of cars of tenants within his own building, he must also pay money to establish car parking facilities which could be to the advantage of other buildings which are fortunate to be located near the proposed parking stations.

A likely effect of the parking code, it is argued, is the increase in parking costs. Because of parking scarcity, rates in existing stations will probably rise. Another question is whether developers be given priority spaces in parking stations which their money has helped build.

On the other front the Parking Advisory Committee has come under fire by Sir Emmet for a different reason. Sir Emmet was quoted in the "Sydney Morning Herald" as saying:

"The Committee would like to see all cars banned from the city. We feel that would be like sweeping dirt under the carpet. It wouldn't solve the problem, it



M. Wickham

would only hide it. We haven't been able to get the Parking Advisory Committee to approve some of the parking stations we want to build on the western distributor."

PUBLIC TRANSPORT OVER-TAXED

The ex-Lord Mayor has also said that the State Planning Authority (SPA) has an outline plan for Sydney in the year 2000 based on urban or metropolitan decentralisation—an urban conurbation comprising a number of integrated cities from Port Stephens to Jervis Bay. It feels that such decentralisation will relieve and avoid congestion, and that if people return to public transport the need for cars might be kept to manageable proportions.

But Sir Emmet believes that public transport is over-taxed already, and the banning of cars from the city will further aggravate the problem of transport.

To this the SPA says that some planners have tended to concern themselves with development and ease of movement within the central business district and have tended to overlook the metropolitan decentralisation policy of the Sydney Region Outline Plan and the related, and perhaps more critical, question of the journey to work—the need to ensure that there is not an over-concentration of the work force in the heart of the city. After all, the city council's jurisdiction doesn't cover beyond the city centre, although in many respects the effect of its decisions has an impact on the overall metropolitan area.

Mr J. J. Wickham, associate chairman of the SPA, told me: "The Council's area of jurisdiction is the city core, a small but a very important area. But equally important for the total metropolitan area is the city core which must be seen not only in the local or inner city concept, but in the broader metropolitan concept. "The prime consideration should not only be transport and convenience within the city core itself, but within the broader metropolitan area as a whole.

"We have proposed a major role for the city core, but within a policy of metropolitan decentralisation. To establish and maintain a reasonable convenience within the central business district, it is necessary to consider firstly the movement of the people in and out of the centre and, secondly, the convenience of the people within the centre itself, after they get there. For the second phase it is necessary to provide adequate facilities such as the widening of the streets, improvement of transport, the provisions of open areas



Sir Emmet McDermott, KBE

and adequate space for pedestrian movement. The bonus for the floor space ratio encourages developers to provide plazas, colonnades and so on, but it does not solve the in-and-out problem for those who would occupy office blocks built on floor space ratios as high as 12:1, and sometimes to 14:1. Such high densities will inevitably cause serious congestion problems, and the SPA wants to control density and thereby limit the work force that may occupy the centre of the city. So it has suggested a substantial reduction on floor space ratios and a limit to the amount of commercial office space to be provided.

However, the SPA was flexible on the question of high-rise buildings, depending on individual circumstances. An overall floor space ratio of 12 to 1, as suggested by the Council, will cause over-development and overdensity in the city core, especially if the emphasis is on commercial office space.

The SPA is very conscious of the plan's forecast that there could be 360,000 to 400,000 people working in the city by the year 2000 (the present work force is about 240,000). This working population, the SPA argues, could conflict with the plan's aims to improve convenience, the environment, maintain a variety of use and reduce congestion. Not only would numbers crowding into public transport increase, but average distances to work would be greater because a high proportion of city workers would live in outer suburbs. But both the Council and the SPA agree on the concept of the plan: to make Sydney a more congenial and livelier place to work and to live in. In recent years there has been a marked decline in Sydney's "evening activities" as Mr Wickham put it. After 6.00 p.m. the city tends to become deserted and dull. This is partly because there are not enough entertainment and cultural centres, and partly because the residential areas are too far away from business centres. Land economics based on high densities for commercial office development will make it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain entertainment, cultural and retail activities—activities necessary for the maintenance of a lively centre.

"Unless we create a lively and convenient city values will ultimately decline because when a city loses its attraction and cannot handle the movement of the people with reasonable convenience, it will eventually decline economically and otherwise. The SPA wants to strike a balance between development,

