

Plea for old Supreme Court

S/M/H
23/7/73

The Royal Australian Planning Institute called yesterday for the retention of the old Supreme Court block on the corner of King and Elizabeth Streets, City.

A Department of Justice spokesman said that the institute's call was "rather late in the day" because the decision to demolish the block had been made in 1962.

The Supreme Court building, the Registrar's building and the Banco Court will be demolished as accommodation becomes available in the new Commonwealth-State law courts which will be completed next year.

An open concourse will be built across King Street

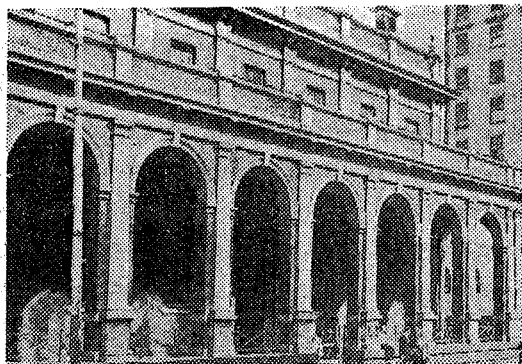
to link the new courts with the St James' Church island block.

King Street will be closed to traffic, which will be rerouted into a widened Elizabeth Street and then into St James Road.

* The president of the institute's NSW Division, Mr G. Clarke, said the Supreme Court, built in 1820/27 and designed by Francis Greenway, was one of the only two colonial buildings in the City which had been used continually for their original purpose.

The other was St James's Church.

Mr Clarke said the Registrar's building was built in 1859, and was a fine example of the Tudor Gothic style.



The Supreme Court in King Street, showing the 1868 colonnade designed by James Barnett.

The Banco Court was built in 1896 and the Victorian richness and workmanship of its interiors probably would never be repeated.

"In the decade since it was proposed that these buildings be demolished, many important historic buildings in the city have disappeared," Mr Clarke said.

"This situation has reached a crisis point, and

the demolition of the three buildings is now impossible to justify."

He suggested as an alternative scheme the closing of St James Road, and the use of King Street as a two-way route.

This would enable the Supreme Court block to be retained, and would create a larger area for use as a pedestrian plaza, he said.

22.7.1973

The New South Wales Division of the Royal Australian Planning Institute has published its case for the retention of the Supreme Court Complex of buildings.

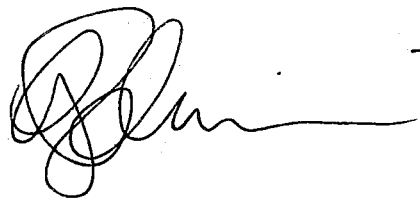
The Institute's submission, which is in the form of an eight page report and plans, has been presented to members of the Federal & State Governments, the National Trust and associated professional bodies with a view to revising the 1962 decision of the Commonwealth/State Law Courts Building Joint Committee to demolish the three important historic buildings within the Complex.

These are the original Greenway Supreme Court building, the Registrar's building and the Banco Court.

The 1962 decision required the demolition of the buildings and the creation of a civic square or plaza. Contained within the submission is a comprehensive case for the retention of what are considered to be three irreplaceable historic buildings which date back to the establishment of the Supreme Court in the 1820's and have been occupied continuously by that Court for the whole of its history.

As well as outlining the historic aspect associated with the buildings the Institute's proposals relate to their architectural and aesthetic importance. It is also considered that a highly effective group of small open spaces could be created when the ugly additions are removed and the site restored.

Following the Institute's submission it is hoped that the State Government, in whom the buildings are vested will reverse its 1962 decision to demolish these three buildings which form an integral part of Australia's legal and cultural heritage. The preservation and planning of this area would create an historic legal precinct of which both the legal profession and indeed, the people of Sydney, could be justifiably proud.

 President