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Professor Melvin M. Webber
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Dear Professor Webber :

Our talk and your company on the plane between Perth and Adelaide was a treat for me - I enjoyed it tremendously. I hope the rest of your trip went off well and that you weren't too exhausted by the end of it.

On the plane, I mentioned that I was mulling over whether or not to apply for the Chair of "Town & Country Planning" at the University of Sydney. When I arrived back in Sydney, I received private telephone calls from the Dean and another member of the selection committee, to the effect that the list of applications (which had officially closed April 30 last), was pretty weak, and urging me to submit an application by this week, before the meeting of the selection committee this coming Friday. I mulled over it further, discussed it fully with my wife and some of my closest colleagues here, and came to a decision that I really wanted to retire from consultancy to teach. I've been chafing at the routine of practice for some time now, and I'm keen to take on some new challenge.

I feel like a battle scarred veteran of the early guerilla phase of what has now, in this part of the world, escalated into full scale war.- and would enjoy teaching the massive numbers of young people who must now carry on the war. I'd like the opportunity to entirely reconstruct and update the Sydney Department which, although still the first, best and largest in Australia, has stagnated over the last years of the retiring Professor's tenure.

It's become obvious recently, particularly since the new Labor Government's "revolution" in approaches to urban and regional issues, that the demand in this country for competent "planners" of various types now far exceeds any currently conceivable supply. The critical weaknesses in the system are now no longer on the "demand" side of planning (the propaganda, crusading phase is over). The call is now

for professionals who can perform - not only as cannon fodder in the bureaucratic trenches - but also in the evolution of new ideas, theory and methodology.

Back in 1960, I promised myself I'd spend up to 15 years in practice finding out what self-conscious urban "planning" was really about, and then go academic and teach. It's taken me the last six months to realise that its now or never. So last weekend I sat down and compiled an application for the Chair, and took you up on your ready acceptance of my presumptuous yet tentative request that you might act as a referee. I air-mailed a copy of the full application to you last night. I do hope it reaches you safely, and ahead of the University Registrar's official letter to you.

The Application document sets out my academic and professional history pretty well, and lists a few of my commissioned works over the past 13 years of practice. I'm today posting to you, by 2nd class airmail, a rather large parcel of books, reports and papers, being a sample cross-section of the kind of work I've done over recent years. On the plane, I gave you a copy of the book Australian Society (Davies & Encel, Eds, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1970) for which I wrote Chapter 3 "Urban Australia". You were going to have the US Consul send it on to you - I hope it has arrived by now. Today's parcel contains :-

1. Tullamarine Airport Industrial Park Study - Report No. 1
Surveys & Analysis, December 1965.
2. "Intergovernment Relations & The Metropolitan Area", July 1967.
Published as "A critique of intergovernmental relations affecting the Sydney Region", Australian Planning Institute Journal,
Vol 6 No 1, Jan 1966, pp 5-13. (Co-author and editor).
3. The Darling Point Precinct Environmental Control Plan,
Volume 1 : The Evolution of The Plan through Public Participation.
4. "Administrative Discretion in the urban planning and development fields", Public Administration, Royal Institute of Public Administration, Sydney, Vol XXIX No 2, June 1970, pp 129-144.
5. City of Sydney Strategic Plan, 1971, The Council of the City of Sydney, 166 pp illus 7 Appendices, July 1971. (Joint author and Editor).
6. City of Sydney Strategic Plan - The Strategy Summarised.

7. Wynyard Pedestrian Network - City of Sydney Action Plan No. 3.
8. City of Sydney Development Control & Floor Space Ratio Code.
9. City of Sydney Parking Policy & Control Code for New Development.
10. Newsclips re 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan.
11. Martin Place Pedestrian Precinct - City of Sydney Action Plan No. 24 - Brochure.
12. Come help plan Kings Cross, an 8 page newsprint progress report on detailed action planning: The Council of the City of Sydney, May 1973.
13. Do you care for Surry Hills, an 8 page newsprint progress report on detailed action planning: The Council of the City of Sydney, June, 1973.
14. "The 1973-74 Review & Revision of the 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan", Proceedings, 1972 City of Sydney Planning Forum, Sydney City Council, 1973, 10 pp.
15. "St Kilda Foreshore Action Plan", Architecture in Australia February 1973.
16. "Planning as a community learning process", Proceedings: Governments in Planning, 12th Congress, Royal Australian Planning Institute, Brisbane, 1972, 14 pp.
17. "The economics of tall buildings", Proceedings, Australian & New Zealand Conference on the Planning and Design of Tall Buildings, 1973, (Joint author), University of Sydney (in process of publication), 12 pp.

Please accept them as a gift to your Library.

I do hope it isn't asking too much of you to look all this over and then to say that I'm just the right man for the job. If it is, then please let me know and I'll ask the University to withdraw your name from the list of six referees I gave them - they only asked for three. I venture to suggest that there are two reasons why you just might do it. One is that I share your view of the theory and process of planning as set out in the papers you read in Perth - most particularly as put in your delightful and so important paper that you gave me - "Dilemmas in a

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General Theory of Planning". There is no one in any Australian Chair of Planning who has any interest, let alone ability, in this kind of view. This I regard as tragic, because it leaves the entire profession - and the public - bereft of any intellectual guidance as to the true nature of planning processes. Without such fundamental understanding, the super-structure is dangerously weak. All Australian chairs in planning are unfortunately currently occupied by rather low-calibre Englishmen of some relatively ancient vintage. This makes it seem important that the Sydney Chair be occupied by someone, myself or another, who has this basic and contemporary view of planning theory.

Second, as the first Australian to receive a US Master's Degree, and unashamedly as a long standing fan of your own work, I would wish to balance the still traditional English approach in the schools here by an infusion of some influences of American origin. I would very much like to see the Sydney School in closer contact with Berkeley, which would now have even more relevance to the Australian scene than MIT.

You may remember my mentioning a paper which had a formative and quite decisive influence on me at age 20. The reference is "Some Thoughts on Planning" by P.H. Partridge, then Professor of Philosophy (Moral and Political) at Sydney, in the Australasian Journal of Philosophy & Psychology, 1941, pp 236-252. I am asking my secretary to copy some of the most relevant passages and will send them on to you.

Regards,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George Clarke". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.