

The City of Sydney Pedestrian Network

Aug 74

What is the Pedestrian Network?

The plan shown here outlines the main walkways which link together existing and proposed pedestrian spaces, and the places where people start and finish their trips on foot, such as railway stations and parking stations. The plan shows overpasses, underpasses, plazas, through site links, street closures and footpath widening. A pedestrian network is thus formed to provide the people of Sydney - residents, workers, shoppers and visitors - with traffic free, convenient and pleasant ways to walk about the City.

While it would be theoretically possible to walk from Circular Quay to Central Railway without having to battle with traffic, that is not likely to be a typical pedestrian trip. More typical is the trip from ferry or train to office, with a lunchtime trip from the office to shops. For the visitor, perhaps a walk from the Quay to the Opera House and the Rocks, then a stroll around the shopping centre or the parks. For the housewife, a walk from a parking station to meet friends for lunch in the City, to shop, to see a film.

This brochure has been produced to show some of the aspects of the pedestrian network recommended by Council's Planning Consultants, MSJ Keys Young Planners, for adoption by Council. Alderman Andrew Briger (Chairman, City Development Committee) acted as liaison between Council and the Consultants. The co-ordination of the Action Plan within the Council's Action Planning Programme was the responsibility of the Deputy City Planner, Michael Llewellyn-Smith. A full report is being prepared for publication and discussion.

Uptown

The area includes, or is known variously as, Haymarket, Brickfield Hill, Central Railway or the Southern Business District. It is referred to here as Uptown.

Uptown is seen as developing primarily as an office area, with supporting retail and entertainment and possibly some residential development in the form of hotels or home units. This is more likely now that commercial activity has been considerably reduced in Woolloomooloo and possibly in the Oxford Street Precinct. However, the Central Business District is currently over-committed with commercial development, pressures and incentives will progressively be applied to decentralise commercial activity, the Rocks and William Street will be competing as commercial locations, the rail stations do not geographically serve the area conveniently. Thus the regeneration of the area may take some time. This provides the opportunity to build into the regeneration of the area better provision for pedestrians than downtown has been able to.

Recommendations are made for routes stemming from Central, Museum and Town Hall Stations; from the Goulburn Street Parking Station and from the parking stations to be established in conjunction with the Expressway at Ultimo; between Uptown and Mid Town Hub, the Civic and Entertainment Precinct, the Education Precinct, Chinatown and Surry Hills. New commercial development in the area should be connected to Hyde Park South, to Belmore Park and to such plazas and public open spaces as will be created during redevelopment.

Mid Town

The shopping core of the City, the Mid Town Hub as it is known, is that section of the City bounded by King, Elizabeth, Park and George Streets. Although this has traditionally been the principal retailing district of the metropolitan area, it has in the past decade, contracted considerably and is having to find and fill a new role. It has the potential, backed by its full range of entertainment, restaurant and professional services, to make the "trip to town" an interesting and stimulating experience.

If the area is to thrive as a retailing centre then it must compete with other regional shopping centres as a pleasant, stimulating place to be and to shop.

Recommendations are made for routes into the retail core from the surrounding railway stations at Town Hall, St. James, Martin Place and Museum; and from existing and future parking stations. A complex of routes in the shopping centre itself would provide traffic free and weather protected shopping on several levels. Proposals are made to connect the Town Hall Civic Precinct to the retail core and to give the civic Precinct more focus while retaining its formal character. A new ferry terminal is recommended at Pyrmont Bridge, with a moving footway to the retail area.

Wynyard

Wynyard Station disgorges to the streets more than 40% of all rail passengers entering the City and receives them back again when they leave. These people are on foot when they leave the trains and from then on, their experience is

unpleasant and inconvenient. Pedestrians suffer the discomfort of congested streets and footpaths, they battle with cars, taxis and buses to reach their destinations. Furthermore, unclear air, noise, continual delays and obstructions on overcrowded streets and footpaths contribute to the dangerous, inconvenient and uncomfortable environment.

A pedestrian plan was prepared for this critical area and was adopted by Council in 1971 as Action Plan No. 3. Two publications are available from Council - a general brochure describing the plan and a technical report describing the network in detail and the design standards for the city-wide network.

Many parts of this network have already been planned into new development in the area and are either being built or provisions have been made so that walkway links to adjacent sites can be made in the future.

The network consists of overpasses, underpasses, arcades, plazas and minor lane closures. In general, the network radiates from Wynyard Station into the surrounding area to improve connections to and from the station. It links the proposed Harrington Street mall in the Rocks area, through Qantas Plaza, Lang Park and Wynyard Park to Martin Place. It interconnects major redevelopment in the area. It links future fringe parking stations near the Western Distributor into the centre of the City. Strong recommendations were made for the redevelopment of the Wynyard Station concourse and concession areas to make them more pleasant and convenient for the people who use them.

Circular Quay

The Quay is Sydney's most symbolically important and impressive gateway to the City for workers, residents and visitors from other parts of Australia and the world. For such an important place it has been sadly and shamefully neglected. The Quay has vitality, and people manage to use it well enough but, by any standards, it is an ugly place. It is inconvenient and it feels as though nobody cares about it.

The changes recommended for Circular Quay itself are not drastic. Significant improvements could be achieved within 2 to 3 years. The basic questions preventing change are of values. Is the Quay important enough to the City so that it is justifiable to treat it as a special place? Is it worthwhile to develop a vastly improved environment for the majority of pedestrians who use the area, even if these improvements cause some inconvenience to, or reorganising of vehicles? The answer to both these questions is obviously Yes.

The main barrier to change has been that the many public agencies in control of the area have never agreed. Agreement is conceivable, however, and the improvements recommended are made on that assumption.

Proposals are made for a Harbour Promenade, a plaza from the Customs House across Alfred Street, redesign of the railway station and ferry building; new activities and community facilities; a traffic separated network stemming from the transport interchange linking to the Rocks, the Tank Stream Business District, and to the Wynyard Pedestrian Network.

Summary of Recommendations

General: It is RECOMMENDED that:

- this Action Plan for the Central Spine Pedestrian Network be adopted as a formal expression of Council's intentions concerning pedestrian movement in pursuance of Action Priority 8D of the 1971 City of Sydney Strategic Plan.
- all development applications within the Central Spine Pedestrian Network be assessed in terms of the Network Plan to determine appropriate walkway contributions which should be built into, or allowed for, in new buildings.
- the co-operation of the Public Transport Commission of N.S.W. be sought to achieve a better integration of the rail, bus and ferry systems with the pedestrian movement systems.
- a Pedestrian Improvement Fund be established.
- a submission be prepared and presented to the Australian Government for funds necessary to improve pedestrian movement in the Central Spine District, in order to carry out the public commitments of the Pedestrian Network Plan, which is an essential extension of the City's public transport system.

Circular Quay: It is RECOMMENDED that:

- a detailed scheme be prepared for a Harbour Promenade from Dawes Point to Bennelong Point in terms of the established design criteria.
- the part of Alfred Street in front of the Customs House be closed on a trial basis and that a behavioural and opinion evaluation be carried out on the acceptability of the closure in terms of the established design criteria.
- a detailed scheme for Circular Quay Plaza be prepared in terms of the established principles and criteria.
- detailed schemes for the pedestrianisation of Loftus,

Underwood, and Dalley Streets and Bulletin and Macquarie Places be prepared in terms of the established principles.

- the assistance of the Public Transport Commission and Maritime Services Board be sought to investigate redevelopment of Circular Quay railway station and ferry wharves in conjunction with the creation of Circular Quay Plaza and Harbour Promenade.

Wynyard: It is RECOMMENDED that:

- the Wynyard Pedestrian Network continue to be implemented.
- action be continued to press for the renovation of Wynyard railway station to provide a more efficient and pleasant environment.

Mid Town Hub: It is RECOMMENDED that:

- negotiations be initiated with major retail traders to investigate the provision of public routes through stores.
- Pyrmont Bridge be retained as a pedestrian connection to the Pyrmont Peninsula.
- action be initiated to introduce a new ferry terminal at Pyrmont Bridge to act as an entry point to the Mid Town Hub for pedestrians.

Pitt Street: It is RECOMMENDED that:

- the traffic role of Pitt and Castlereagh Streets be changed from north-south distributor roads to predominantly pedestrian and public transport arteries.
- Pitt Street be developed gradually as an interrupted mall to act as the spine of the pedestrian network.
- a pedestrian assistance system be introduced into Pitt Street and the feasibility of a Personal Rapid Transit system for the central area of Sydney be investigated.

What Do Others Think?

"It is not often that the people of one of the world's great cities are given the opportunity to ask themselves some fundamental questions about the area in which thousands of them spend most of their working lives. There is a tendency for many Sydney commuters to accept, without thought, a car-choked, smelly and noisy Central Business District as a necessary evil in a modern metropolis. . . . The plan seeks to breathe life into the City's heart, now suffering from clogged arteries by day and a dark and dreary dullness by night. . . . the plan can be welcomed for its imaginative approach to a most difficult problem and as a basis for discussion." Editorial, Sydney Morning Herald, 4 July 1974.

"It is a challenging blue print for Sydney in the 80's. . . it is an imaginative concept which deserves study and refinement." Mirrorview, Daily Mirror, 3 July 1974.

"The most revolutionary pedestrian plan ever put before Council." Alderman Andrew Briger, C.C.S.

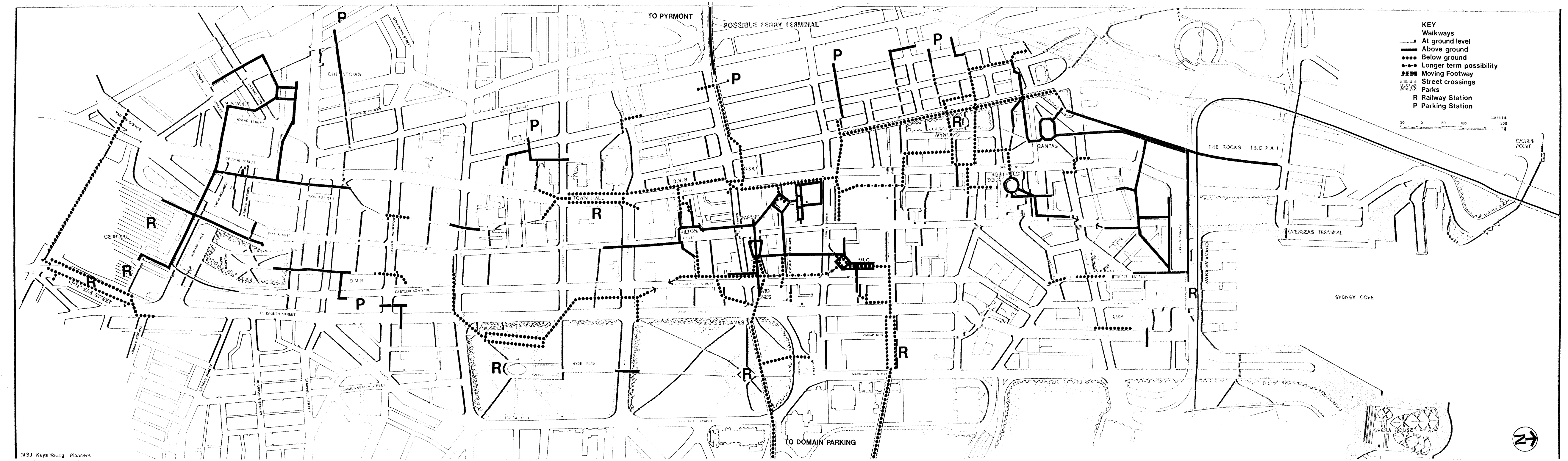
What Do You Think?

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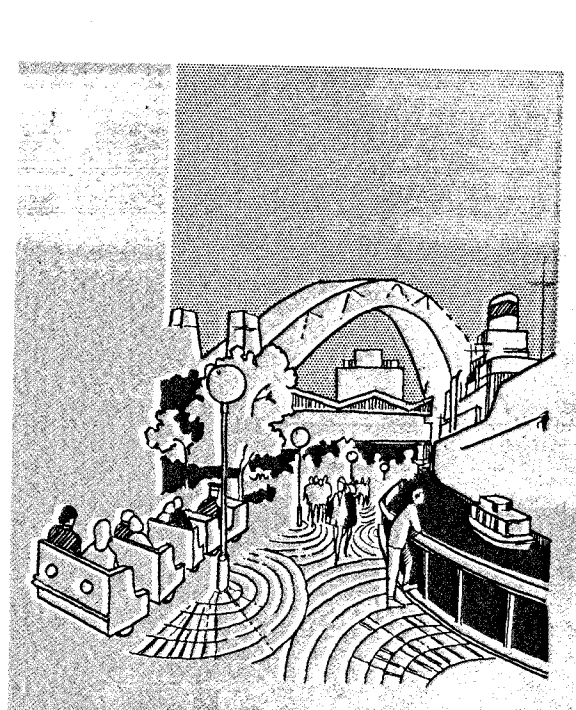
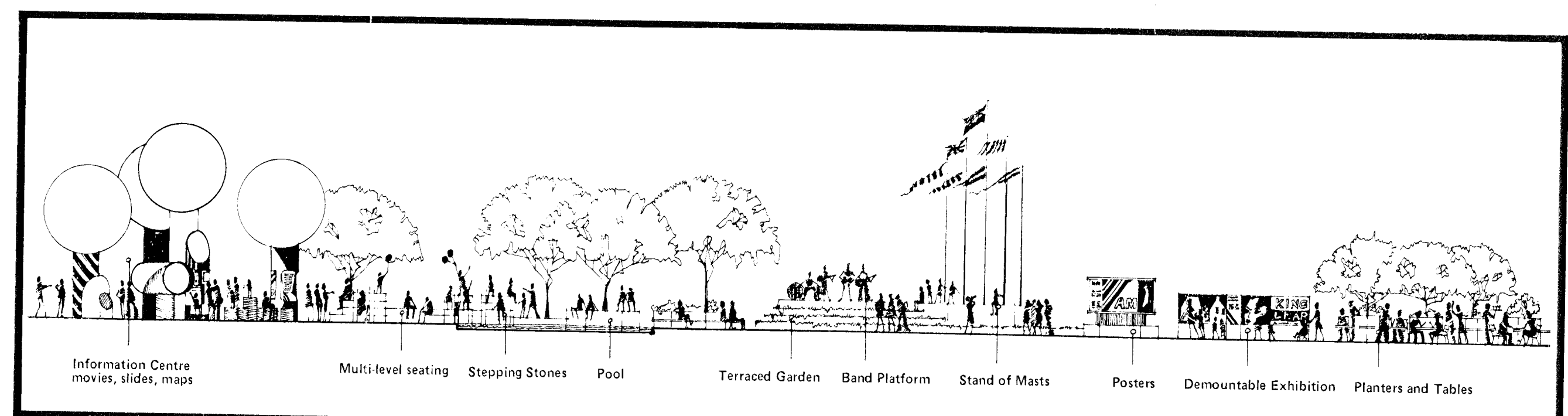
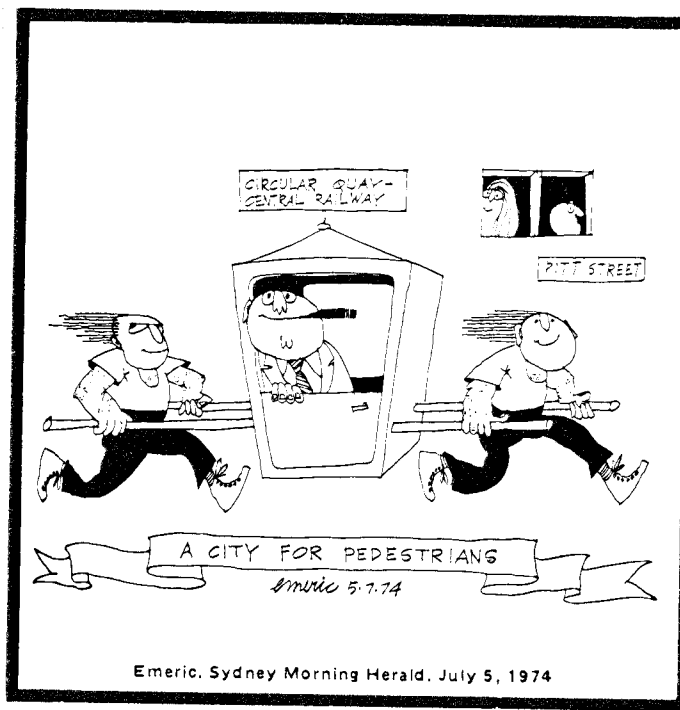


Action Plan Number 6
Prepared for the Council
of the City of Sydney by
MSJ Keys Young Planners
Project Director: Barry Young
Chief Planner: Ian Napier

August 1974



Pedestrian Pitt Street for People



Pitt Street

The Needs and Desires of Pedestrians

The Plan sets out the basics for a new deal for pedestrians. The basic objective is to improve the experience of people walking through the city. The detailed design of the components of the system are what people will experience and these small-scale environments are extremely important to the success of the Plan.

General design guidelines are described to encourage those professionals working on specific parts of the pedestrian network to give close consideration to the behavioural needs and desires of the people who will walk the network.

Pedestrians sometimes want sun, sometimes shade, they nearly always want protection from rain, from cold, dust and noise. They want warmth when it is cold, cool when it is hot. They want personal security and safety, especially from moving vehicles. They want visual interest and they want to know where they are and how to get to their destination. They don't want to be unnecessarily diverted from their desired route, whether up onto bridges, down into underpasses, or around major obstructions. They want convenient access to transport, shopping and other public activities.

When they are old or incapacitated, they need assistance and protection in moving about and protection from stress and fear.

When they are young, they want opportunities to mingle and places to meet new friends. When they are very young, they want to be carried. Provision for prams and strollers should be considered as part of the city pedestrian system. When they are shopping, they need directories which are quick and easy to read, telling them where the goods are.

When they are strolling, they want the bustle of the city and the quiet of a resting place. They want interesting things to see like historic places, exhibitions that explain the city and its daily, weekly and seasonal events. They want to know what the city will be like in the future.

When they can't speak the language, they want maps, simple pictographic signing, a multi-lingual information centre.

The multiplicity of needs and wants of pedestrians demands that in the design of the walkway system, detailed and painstaking attention is given to the interaction between the behaviour of people and the environment that should cater for these behavioural needs.

Six environmental criteria are recommended to guide detail designs towards producing a pleasant and stimulating pedestrian environment.

A comfortable and appropriate micro climate
Walkways should be sheltered from rain but open to the sun where possible, and should be protected from excessive wind, noise, fumes and dust.

A visually interesting experience for the pedestrian
Walkways should not be barren and dull; they should be full of interesting things to look at as the pedestrian walks through, like changing floor and wall textures, varied spaces and differing character and atmosphere.

An environment that feels safe and comfortable
Dark corners and hidden spaces, long tunnels and cramped spaces should be avoided. Change of level should be made easy and should be limited to one change at a time. Special provision should be made for the disabled and the aged.

A diversity of activities should be provided through the system
Shops, theatres, bars and taverns, restaurants, resting places, specific facilities like public toilets, drinking fountains, children's play areas and child-minding centres, should be integrated with the network.

Capable of access twenty four hours a day
Many existing arcades are shut at the end of the working day and at the weekend. New parts of the network should be designed so that it is possible for the essential links to be open all the time.

Easy to understand
It is essential that people can find their way around the network easily, by using special signs, symbols, colours and paving textures.

Why Pedestrianise?

It is physically impossible in most densely developed cities, for all those who would like to travel in the inner city to be able to do so. This implies some form of restriction on the freedom of the individual. It implies a return to public transport, it implies more rational and efficient use of limited road space.

A hierarchy of roads from limited access, vehicle-only freeways, through distributor and local streets to pedestrian-only streets, can thus result in streets better designed for their role in the overall system. Pedestrianisation is an integral part of this system. For it simply recognises that the predominant role of some streets is to cater for pedestrians, and that this role is best fulfilled when the conflict with vehicles is reduced to a minimum or removed altogether.

In doing so, noise and fumes are reduced and the opportunity created for better environmental design in the form of paving materials, landscape, and street furniture. It provides above all, space for people, space for people to stroll, to sit, to talk, to be entertained, to relax.

Pedestrianisation can therefore improve the environment for the people who use the city, which is a good enough reason in itself. But this process, if successfully carried through, has economic benefit for the city.

Experience in other countries has found that retailers are initially suspicious of proposals which restrict the opportunity of potential customers to park outside their doors, and which threaten to make deliveries inconvenient. Generally however, it only takes a few months of increased custom, turnover and profit to win them over to the idea.

If the Pitt Street mall does indeed become a more pleasant environment, if it is attractive, alive with people and happening, a place to stroll and window shop, if it is still an activity centre on warm summer evenings, then it can become an important tourist attraction.

Rearranging the Movement System

Pitt and Castlereagh Streets service the length of the Central Business District as a north-south traffic-management scheme. Between Hunter and Park Streets, Pitt Street is carrying over 14,000 vehicles per day. To close just one section of Pitt Street would mean the disruption of that one-way scheme. Pitt Street at present carries ten different bus routes. Even with improvement to the pedestrian scheme, people will want some form of public transport to move them down the Spine and even if private motorists were banned from the streets, buildings would still have to be serviced by vehicles.

Rearranging the movement system is not discussed in detail in this brochure. Instead, the recommendations for the first steps towards pedestrianising Pitt Street are described and shown on the plan.

Recommendations for Action

The Plan shows buses two ways in Castlereagh Street, thus freeing Pitt Street for greater environmental improvement as a pedestrian shopping mall. Castlereagh Street could take both north-bound and south-bound buses, off Elizabeth Street, but George Street would have to carry some buses, possibly augmented by York and Clarence Streets to serve the western side of the Spine.

With Pitt Street free of other vehicles, at least during peak pedestrian times, experiments could begin with pedestrian assistance systems. If at a later stage, after upgrading the rail system, (including the completion of the Eastern Suburban Line) it is established that a high capacity, high speed system is still required in the Spine, then this should be introduced in Castlereagh Street.

While Pitt Street is the obvious choice for a pedestrian mall in the Mid Town Hub, at Circular Quay, the natural axis of pedestrian movement is further east at Loftus Street. This coincides more with the 'centre of gravity' of development in the Tank Stream business precinct. How, therefore, should these two axes be linked?

The role of Pitt Street is fairly clear from Park Street to Hunter Street while from Circular Quay it is planned that Loftus Street should be pedestrianised as far as Bent Street with an underpass under Bridge Street. With a further underpass at Bent Street into O'Connell Street, a grade separated route would link Pitt Street at its junction with Hunter Street.

Although this latter route would serve the Tank Stream business district well as a route to the Pitt Street Mall, due to the topography, it is more natural to continue the activity of Australia Square down as far as Bridge Street, then cross diagonally to Macquarie Place and Loftus Street.

Eventually an overpass crossing of Bridge Street may be possible, linked to upper level movement on the 'Gateway' site with possible entrance to Circular Quay Station at a high level. For the present and immediate future, a grade crossing would have to suffice.

A Pedestrian Assistance System

