

# HOMES And BUILDING

## Overall Plan For Inner City Is Vital—Planner

Time and opportunity still remain to remodel the inner City of Sydney to a high standard of external appearance and unity.

—By—

MANY projects for the redevelopment of streets and squares are on the drawing-board or under construction.

But these, although well designed in themselves, are isolated and unrelated.

Therefore the challenge is to conceive such schemes having in mind an architectural, economic and social coherence for the city as a whole.

This will require a high degree of skill, imagination and co-ordination on the part of the City Council and Government committees, such as the Height of Buildings Advisory Committee.

Then there are precincts of the city such as Macquarie Street and Martin Place which should be areas of special architectural and civic design control.

The Opera House and the A.M.P. building have given the city a new and exciting scale.

But this will be destroyed unless neighbouring buildings and spaces are designed



MR SHAW

having in mind the overall appearance and form of the city—its waterfront and skyline—especially as seen from the Harbour.

A glance at the city from the Cahill Expressway reveals today a jumble of buildings.

New and obsolete build-

A LEADING town planner, J. H. Shaw, in this article calls attention to the urgent need for an overall plan to control the city's development, particularly the erection of skyscrapers.

The new Circular Quay scheme, and other planning schemes proposed or under construction, may be well designed in themselves but they are isolated and unrelated, he says.

Mr Shaw is senior lecturer in town and country planning at the University of N.S.W.

ings—some tall and lean, others bulky and squat on all of their sites, oriented in every direction and dressed in glass, brick or stone—front chasm streets.

Only through imaginative regulations for controlling the appearance, height and bulk (or floor space) of new buildings can harmony be achieved.

It is worthwhile reviewing some of the major projects in hand which form the "complex" of the city but which should add up to an architectural "unity."

### Finest Streets

A scheme prepared by the State Government in 1960 will make Macquarie Street and Martin Place the finest streets in Australia.

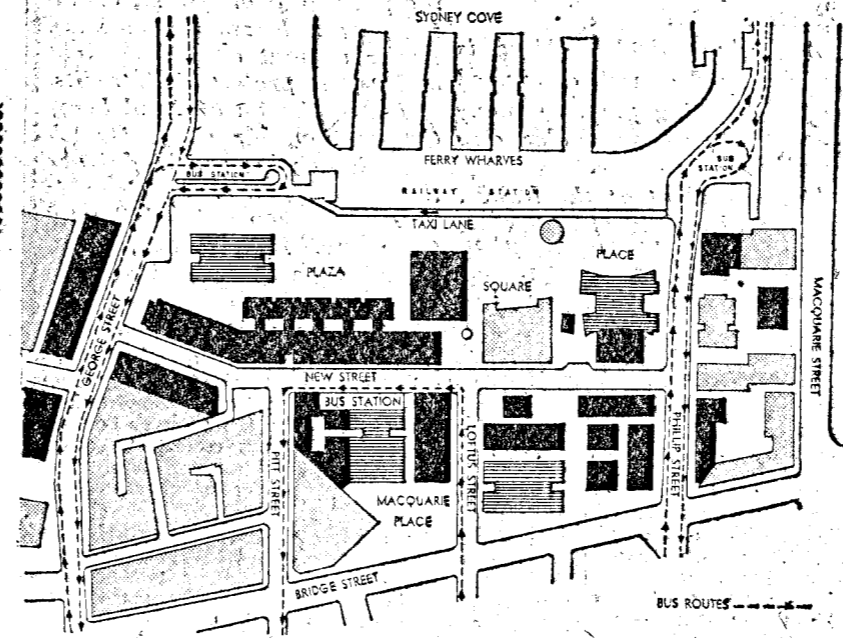
Two visual axes will be opened up; along Macquarie Street from Hyde Park to the Opera House, and from Martin Place through to the Art Gallery and the green of the Domain.

New parliamentary and Government buildings will frame a civic square of dignified proportions at the summit of Martin Place.

St. James' Church, the old Hyde Park Barracks, Mint Building and Rum Hospital will have more chance to show off their historic and architectural character.

Around Queen's Square the open pedestrian courts to the extended Registrar-General's Department will link with spaces fronting St. James' Church and the new Law Courts.

The siting and form of



A map of the Sydney Cove redevelopment scheme, showing proposed new buildings, plaza, bus terminals, and road linking George and Phillip Streets.

the new Commonwealth Offices building have aroused controversy since 1959.

To the visitor, this end of the city must appear confusing and an architectural mess.

There is a strong case that because of levels it would have been impossible to symmetrically match the new Commonwealth building with the short curve of the Qantas building.

However, a much older city plan provided for Phillip Street to be extended in a curved fashion to meet with Elizabeth Street similarly extended and thus create a curved facade to a garden "roundabout" or traffic island.

Instead, we now have a "peninsular" or piazza treatment of awkward proportions, but perhaps the biggest tragedy is that Phillip Street should have been closed off at all, losing another opportunity for a vista from the city to the Quay.

### Opportunity

The Australia Square project for the redevelopment of the area bounded by George, Bond, Pitt and Little George streets represents an exciting opportunity for the comprehensive redesign by private enterprise of a whole city block.

However, the scale of this project, that is, the effect of the total floor space provided by the proposed 58-storey tower building and the 13-storey office block, is questionable.

Such projects cannot be examined in isolation. Their impact, such as traffic generation on local streets and footpaths, is of prime consideration.

The City Council's proposal to develop the site of the present Queen Victoria Building for a civic square has not materialised; in fact, thought is now being given to the alternative of creating such a square on the east side of George Street opposite the Town Hall and St. Andrew's Cathedral.

### A Mecca

THERE is no doubt that a square in either location would provide an excellent mecca or precinct for the thousands of people shopping or seeking entertainment in that part of the city.

With private enterprise proposals for the renewal of the West Rocks area—a scheme promoted by the Government—and with new buildings such as the I.C.I., Unilever and Lend Lease group on the other arm of Circular Quay it is essential that a plan be evolved for the area south of the Cahill Expressway.

Such a scheme has now been put forward by the Department of Town and Country Planning of the University of Sydney and associates, recognising the problem of scale created by the A.M.P. building.

Sydney Cove as the gateway to Sydney and the most

historic spot in Australia deserves the best civic design treatment.

This, then, is a preview of the new city, or rather its parts. But without adequate "Planning for the Height and Density of Buildings" skyscrapers will not produce a beautiful or workable city.

Such is the study theme of a summer school organised by the Sydney division of the Australian Planning Institute to be held at Ter-rigal next weekend.

## A QUAY WITHOUT CARS

THE latest planning scheme for the city was announced last week and involved a multi-million pound proposal for the redevelopment of Circular Quay with a vehicle-free plaza in front of the ferry wharves and railway station.

The plan was presented to the City Council by the Sydney Cove Area Improvement Committee.

The plan provides for the demolition of many existing buildings in the area and the construction of three multi-storey

tower blocks as well as several smaller buildings.

Under the scheme, the Customs House would be retained. According to the committee, this building, and the area around it, would be given new dignity by the creation of a series of pedestrian squares running the whole width of the cove.

In front of the Customs House, a "quiet and dignified" square is planned.

On the western side would be a commercial plaza, with shops, kiosks and a hotel.

The scheme provides for Pitt Street and Loftus Street to halt at a new cross-street between George Street and Phillip Street.

It also closes several streets, including Young Street and Arbitration Street.

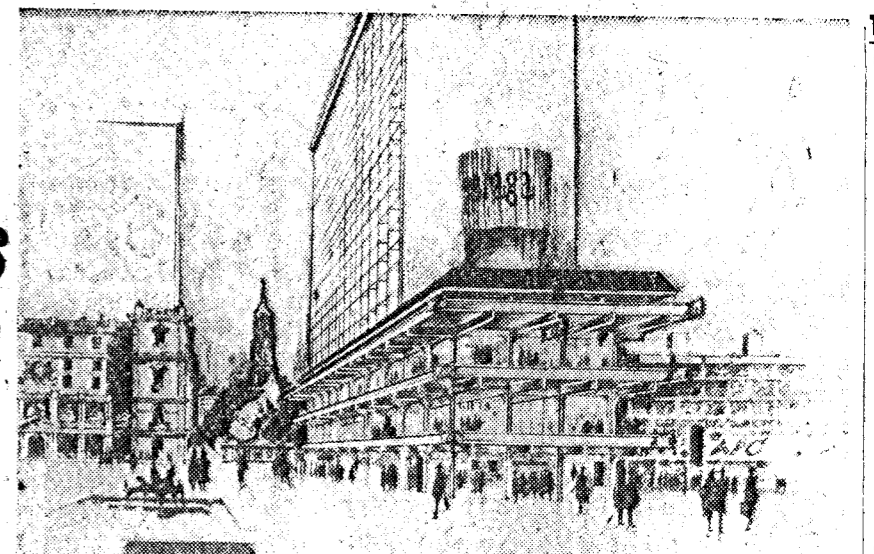
Two large car parking stations are proposed—one in York Street North, with access from Bradfield Highway and the other close to the Opera House.

In all, there would be off-street parking for about 3,500 cars.

The plan provides for three bus terminals within easy reach of the Circular Quay station and ferry terminals.

A narrow one-way road would enable taxis and goods vehicles to drive up to the station.

The scheme was prepared by the Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Sydney.



Two views of the proposed plaza in front of the ferry wharves which is a feature of the Sydney Cove redevelopment scheme.