

Department Asked To Delay Plan To Lease Quay Site

SMH
MAR 7th '62

Professor Denis Winston yesterday asked the Railways Department not to go ahead with its plan to lease a site suitable for a multi-storey office block at Circular Quay, until the Quay redevelopment plan had been considered.

Professor Winston is Professor of Town and Country Planning at Sydney University and a member of the Sydney Cove Area Improvements Committee.

A multi-million pound plan for the redevelopment of the Quay, prepared by the committee was explained to Sydney City Council aldermen on Monday.

The plan provides for the redevelopment of the area bounded by Alfred, Phillip, Bridge and Pitt Streets, and aims at preventing the construction of a wall of tall buildings around the Quay foreshores.

It provides for the erection of three multi-storey buildings in the area and several smaller buildings.

Alfred Street would become a series of open squares for pedestrian use.

The Railways Department site is bounded by George, Alfred and Pitt Streets.

99-year Lease Of Site

The department has called tenders for a 99-year lease of the site, which the Cumberland County Council has approved in principle as being suitable for multi-storey development. Tenders close on March 28.

Professor Winston said individual development would seriously jeopardise replanning of the Quay area.

Construction of a multi-storey building on the railway land would prevent a pleasing disposition of buildings around the Quay.

"As a public body the department should give a lead in a scheme which will greatly benefit the city," Professor Winston said.

"The block is an awkward one and not well adapted for the erection of a big building.

"The Sydney Cove Area Improvements Committee envisages a multi-storey building roughly near this site, but it would be very hard to make it fit on the railway site.

"Our scheme will probably be modified if it is carried out. This building would spoil not just our scheme, but any other scheme.

"What we are battling for is some orderly development."

Support For Request

The Senior Lecturer in Town Planning at the University of New South Wales, Mr J. H. Shaw, said he supported Professor Winston's request to the Railways Department.

Proper redevelopment could make Circular Quay one of the finest gateways to a city anywhere in the world, and it was worth delaying any individual building until a comprehensive plan for the area was prepared.

The Lord Mayor, Alderman H. F. Jensen, commenting on the Sydney Cove Area Improvements Committee's proposal, said: "I believe this kind of town planning will have to be applied in Sydney for the best use of individual areas.

"The only impediment to the ready implementation of this or any similar plan is the requirement that the council use its resumption powers to help private developers make profits.

"I know there will be a reluctance by the council to use its resumption powers for this purpose.

"The question will be whether the council considers the benefits to the city justifies resumption action."

"The alternative to the planned development of the Quay will be an extension of the type of development that has already occurred.

"This may result in a wall of buildings around the foreshores of the Quay."

The Minister for Local Government, Mr P. D. Hills, said there should be co-ordinated development at the Quay and The Rocks.

For this reason he had suspended the Cumberland County Council planning scheme on the Quay area.

He had also asked the City Council to prepare a planning scheme for the Quay.

Mr Hills said tenders for the redevelopment of The Rocks would close at the end of this month.