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Planning the Quay

CITY Council aldermen have now disagreed on the third plan put forward in 18 months for the redevelopment of Circular Quay.

To disagree over what should be done about Circular Quay—and something must be done—has become almost standard practice not only among aldermen, but also among town planners and architects.

The result is that we seem to be getting nowhere, and the A.M.P. skyscraper and the period Customs House dwell unwillingly and aloofly amid a gaggle of greater and lesser delapidation that sighs to be gone.

The redevelopment of Circular Quay is important. It is the gateway to Australia's greatest city.

Before very long it will be flanked by the Opera House on the East, and a redeveloped Rocks area on the west. It already has a background of modern skyscrapers, which will soon feature more and taller ones.

Comparison will then make this old place looked even dowdier than now.

Talk about Quay redevelopment has been going on for years, and 18 months ago a concrete plan was advanced by an association of companies and other interests known as the Sydney Cove Area Improvements Committee. Its estimated cost was £30 million.

'Classical style'

Some aldermen criticised it, on aesthetic grounds among others, and suggested that because of the area's historical association a "classical style" building should be included.

An expert associated with the S.C.A.I.C. promptly said that classical architecture was "out," and a town-planner retaliated by damning modern "glass tomato houses."

A plan was then prepared by the City Planning Officer, Mr D. McLachlan, which aldermen criticised as "mundane."

Now aldermen are at odds over the third plan, prepared jointly by Mr McLachlan and the Professor of Town and Country planning at Sydney University, Professor D. Winston.

The irony of the situation is that the decision does not rest with the aldermen, or, in fact, with anyone except the Minister for Local Government, Mr Hills.

The area was suspended from the County of Cumberland planning scheme early in 1962 and Mr Hills was placed in virtually absolute control of it.

This special power carries a great responsibility, and time is pressing hard for some plan to be approved and work begun.