

The Quay Awaits A Plan

No unanimous, or even substantial, agreement upon a future design for Circular Quay seems likely ever to emerge from the fog of controversy which has settled over the various plans submitted to the City Council. On Monday the council's Planning and Improvements Committee had before it the third of the plans drawn up in 18 months. The aldermen's comments, for and against, showed that they are as far apart in their ideas as ever. The plan was a compromise between the two previous ones, produced respectively by the Sydney Cove Area Development Committee and the council's principal Planning Officer, Mr McLachlan.

The dissenting aldermen found it "devoid of aesthetic value," "unimaginative" and "a mass of concrete." Some of them could see little difference between it and Mr McLachlan's original plan which they had castigated in similar terms. But whatever the merits or demerits of any of the plans, they have one thing in common: the City Council has no power to carry them out. It has had no

dominion over the area since the Minister of Local Government suspended the area from the operation of the Cumberland Planning Scheme last year, and himself assumed complete authority over it. If the council does finally recommend a plan Mr Hills does not have to accept it. Nor can the council issue any building permit for the area without his approval. Mr Hills is a man of judgment and discretion who, presumably, would permit nothing to be done at Circular Quay without consulting his own and outside experts, but he will not remain in office for ever, and plainly the present condition of suspense cannot be allowed to continue much longer. Circular Quay is the City of Sydney's most important gateway, and it should not be beyond the imagination and resources of the planners, whether they be civic, State, private or academic, to produce a design of taste, with as few discordances as possible, providing ample light and air and adequate provision for car parking. The next move seems to be up to Mr Hills.

SMH 21st Nov.

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