

George I think I get the message of this, but ~~let~~ ^{stressed} me know if there is anything super-subtle. Denis ~~stressed~~ ^{stressed} mainly about its convenience for bus travellers - everyone concurred.

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CITY OF SYDNEY
CIRCULAR QUAY REDEVELOPMENT

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Proposals by the Council's Principal Planning Officer and Professor Denis Winston submitted to the Works Committee and the City Planning and Improvement Committee on
December 2nd, 1963

The purpose of the scheme now put forward is to ensure the improvement of this focal point in the City of Sydney which will become of even greater importance in the future with the completion of the Sydney Opera House on the east and the Rocks Redevelopment Scheme on the west.

This area is the historic heart of Sydney, of New South Wales, and in some senses of Australia. The area is now entering a new phase of significance and it would seem most appropriate for the Council of the City of Sydney to give an inspiring lead to those private enterprises who will be changing the area for better or worse over the next years.

The main intentions of the proposals are:

(1) TO MAKE THE CIRCULAR QUAY AREA MORE ATTRACTIVE GENERALLY

For this purpose a pedestrian shopping area has been created which would form a major new commercial centre for people coming and going to work by ferry or rail, for the greatly increased numbers of office workers in the vicinity, and for the growing numbers of tourists.

A new shopping frontage over 300' in length has been created on the line of the present Henrietta Lane to which a series of shopping arcades lead from Circular Quay under a new three-storey building specially designed for the purpose with a hotel, restaurants, and perhaps a theatre on the upper floors.

A new pedestrian square is proposed adjacent to Customs House Square. The new open area marks the approximate location of the raising of the flag by Captain Phillip on January 26th 1788, the day after the first landing, and might well be given the name of "Landing Place" and suitably marked by a permanent pole for flying the flag on public occasions.

(2) TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC CIRCULATION ESPECIALLY BETWEEN GEORGE AND LOFTUS STREETS

The line of the new main street running from George to Loftus Street has been carefully selected, generally through old property in the neighbourhood of Underwood Street and Bulletin Place, and so as to interfere as little as possible with better properties to the north and south with improved capital values of up to £900,000.

(3) TO ENCOURAGE THE MAXIMUM USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT BY FERRY, BUS AND RAIL FROM CIRCULAR QUAY

Circular Quay Road-Alfred Street has been reduced in width with median strip to make an easier pedestrian crossing while still allowing three lanes of traffic in each direction. The new shopping mall should attract ferry users particularly.

(4) TO PREVENT OVER-BUILDING WITH CONSEQUENT TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES

Building height and bulk is controlled in conformity with the Minister's policy for the approval of development applications.

The height of the arcaded shopping block nearest Circular Quay has been limited to three storeys to give the maximum feeling of openness and to contrast with the towers of the A.M.P. and the new Mainliner building on either side.

The buildings immediately to the rear have been limited to a height of 120' in conformity with building approvals already given.

Heights over the rest of the area, with the exception of the two "gateway" towers, have been generally limited to 150' so that the higher buildings, which will form something of a horse-shoe to the east, west and south, will get views and breezes from the harbour over this lower central group.

(5) TO BE CAPABLE OF REASONABLY SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION BY THE COUNCIL

Such a scheme should be one in which there are reasonable prospects of reaching agreement with the various authorities, developers, owners and tenants concerned: these proposals appear to meet this requirement.

The scheme should be financially within the resources of the Council: it seems likely that these proposals could be carried out

successfully if a fund of £500,000 were available for necessary resumptions and compensations; it being possible to dispose of reorganised sites during the implementation of the scheme and thus to keep the fund going. This does not appear to be a large amount to ensure the improvement of this vital area of the City - particularly in comparison with the costs for development being invested by private enterprise.

Mention has been made of the architectural character of the proposals. It is not considered desirable that the Council should impose any "style" of architecture on the different private developers but designs should be examined in relation to neighbouring buildings when applications are submitted.

When the Minister asked the Council to prepare a development control plan for the Circular Quay area he described the latter as including the two arms of Sydney Cove up to Bennelong Point on the east and as far as the point where Hickson Road passes under the Bradfield Highway on the west.

The present proposals do not include these important frontages to Sydney Cove which should be planned in detail to provide fine promenades leading to the Opera House and the Overseas Terminal. The planning of the approaches to the Opera House, with the very extensive parking problems involved, may affect developments in the Young and Phillip Streets areas near the Quay.

I consider therefore the present proposals to be a good first step in the redevelopment and improvement of this area of central Sydney which should be followed by similar block by block proposals for the remainder.

DENIS WINSTON
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University of Sydney

2nd December, 1963