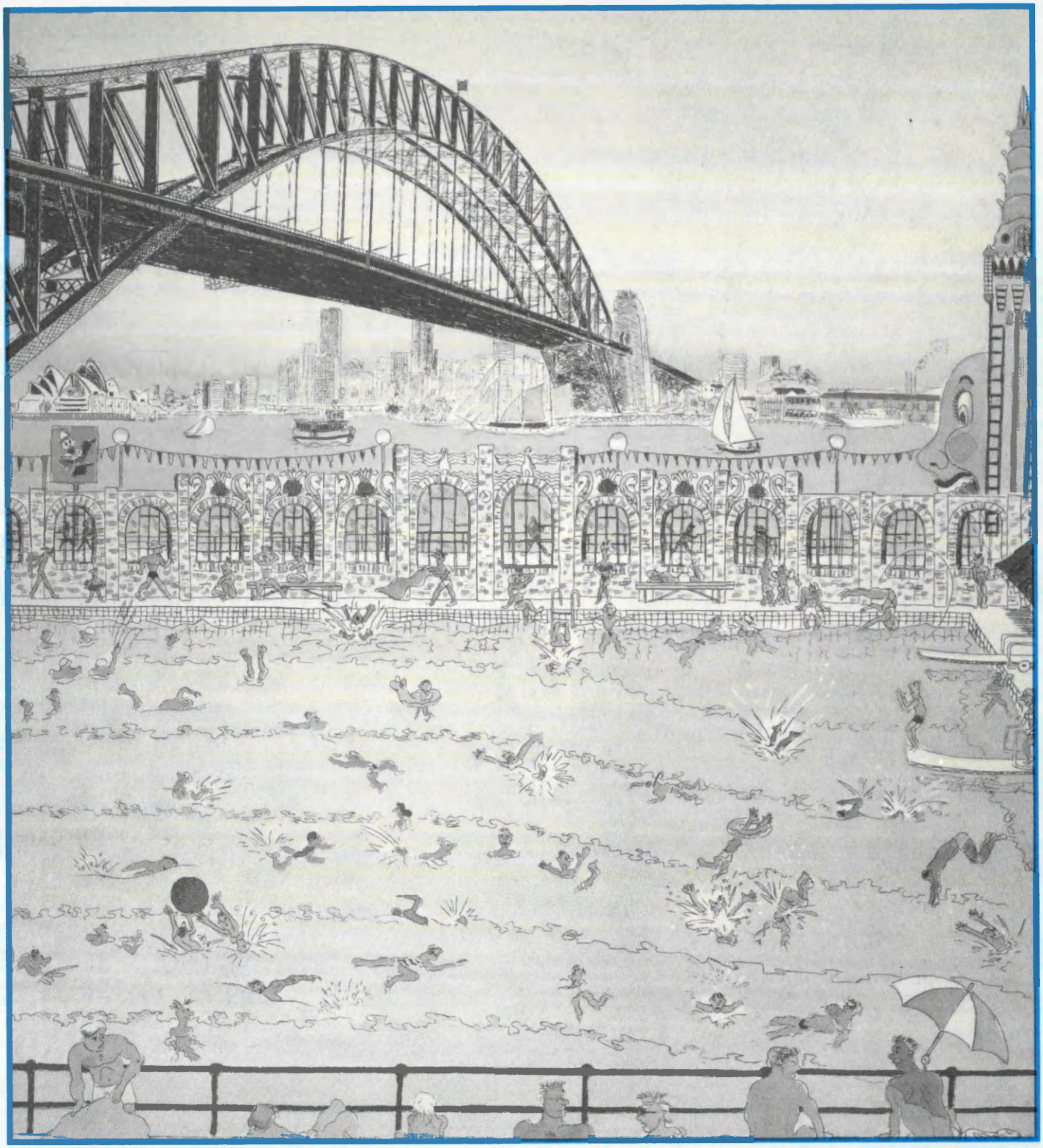

URBAN DESIGN IN SYDNEY

Reflections on its Uniqueness and Strategy
Conservation and Waterfront Developments

UDQ Issue 39 JULY 1991 ISBN 0266-6480 £3.00

URBAN DESIGN QUARTERLY

REFLECTIONS ON PERESLAVL

At 07.55 on the morning of 19 May eleven urban designers waited for the late arrival of their leader Arnold Linden. Six hours later the same group was sheltering from a majestic thunder storm under the golden domes, painted arches and towers of the seminary of Zagorsk some 60 km north east of Moscow. What a splendid introduction to Russian ecclesiastical architecture. It was already clear that Russia was more than pot holes, pine forests and heavyweight housing systems. Here was a clear indication of the multiplicity of cultural strands that make up the USSR today.

It was as the result of an invitation from the Centre for Independent Analysis that the group were heading for Pereslalvl Zalessky, twelfth century capital of Yuri-Long-Arm, site of six Monasteries, practice ground for Peter the Great's navy, site of a Lancastrian style linen mill and Russia's largest photographic works. Now the town was the focus of a National Park and the possible location of a 20,000 employee "Technopolis". A last minute change from the aerospace city of Chykovsky meant that the group was not as well briefed as the traditional UDAT.

Arrival in Pereslalvl revealed one of Russia's contradictions; the town's hotel had been inspired by the "west coast" but its plumbing, wiring and construction were from rustic sources. The hotel was to be home for the next week. It was after a brief tour of the town on Monday morning that the Team was introduced to the Party Headquarters of the Communist Party Central Committee work base for the week. Monday afternoon, and the team was arranged like so many turkey heads along the dais to hear formal presentations from rostrum and floor. More contradictions were revealed and the town's tensions began to emerge. But what was really expected of us? There had been plenty of experts around. Why add us?

Back at the hotel a brainstorming session was held and four issues emerged. Somebody needed to try to unravel the tangled web of organisation, who did operate in the town and how? The distinctive land form around the town and its links to the hinterland were an important influence on the shape of the existing city and would influence the shape of future action. The "natural realm" needed examination. The monasteries, the soon to be opened by-pass and the wish to provide basic services all presented an opportunity to exploit and enhance the special townscape that was Pereslavl. The townscape needed study. Why persist with the slab blocks of Micro-disrict 6 when the timber houses of the loder quarters seeme to offer such a flexible and economic alternative? Housing was clearly an issue. Then there was the "Technopolis" what was this? Was it really relevant? Did it offer benifits to the town as a whole? Finally the analysis had to be matched with consideration of means of implementation.

A team of twelve can be divided in a number of ways and Tuesday saw groups spread through out the area, investigating the single track railway by lake Plescheyevo - could the private operator really make a go of a passenger service? What potential was there for tourist traffic? Other groups were interviewing local industrialists, the town's housing manager and visiting schools, photographing, even sketching in the streets.

Wednesday and the form of the final report began to emerge. But there were problems with plans and copying. Then at last Valerie Popov the city architect released some 1:2000 plans of significant parts of the town and the Progamming Institute had a photocopier that could reduce. But even with these riches and the two lap-tops and a portable printer the team had brought with them the old skills of tracing and freehand drawing would have to be used in the final presentation. Arnold received an urgent message, the priest from a nearby village had called at the hotel. He wondered if we could pursuade the local cooperative manager to return all and not just half of his church. Later that evening a list of thirty questions appeared. What did we think of trolley buses? What was the optimum relationship between the villages and the town? Too late to answer these questions directly now, any answers would have to be woven into the main text of the report.

By Thursday morning the structure of the report and presentation was finalised and drafting underway. Still information flowed in, an architect/sociologist brought in his study of housing preferences. Then crisis the Party was having a meeting in the main committee room on Friday. The presentation would have to be elsewhere. Tensions rose. It was the committee room or no presentation and the formal layout would have to be changed and black out provided.

"OK, no problem."

Work went on through Thursday night, foils for the overhead projectors were prepared, slides made and a running order defined. Friday dawned, the nightingales stopped singing. Preparations for the presentation went on. The housing group tutored their translator. A portable photocopier (gift from Mr Bush) was rushed in from one of the translator's homes. Two copies of the report could now be made and the overhead projector foils copied.

A rehearsal was timed in room 9. It worked! But Anatol the translator would have to see the speakers lips, the room was reorganised. Three projectors were focused. People began to arrive, school children, the Museum Director, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, the Director of the Dendrological Museum left her conifers to the Russian spring, Arnold's priest arrived and the founder of the Contact Club entered the building for the first time in thirty years.

The presentation went according to plan, questions were asked, answers promised. Documents were signed and copied. Then the Party offices were cleared. The finale dinner at the hotel marked with endless

toasts, a suprise visit from a local folk group and the celebration of a one hundredth birthday.

Saturday and the journey to Moscow. A time for reflection, did we contribute anything to the people of Pereslavl? We seemed to have gained a lot as individuals, perhaps as a group, but have we really understood what was expected of us? Had we been a small part of a power game? Or had we merely contributed to the "collective irresponsibility" that we had been told characterised Russia today?

Next quarter's journal may provide some answers.

Richard Cole.

AUTUMN PROGRAMME

Details of the dates of activities will be circulated later, but the subject of events beginning in September will include:

- Presidential Address by Francis Tibbalds.
- Annual lecture which it is hoped will be given by Christopher Alexander.
- Proposals for Greenwich Waterfront.
- A report on the Design Workshop Pereslavl-Zalesski.

NEW BUILDINGS IN HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Architecture and Urban Design will be on the agenda of the Canterbury Festival this year in the form of an exhibition (from 14-25 October) and an afternoon of talks (on Saturday 19 October). The theme of the events will be New Buildings in Historic Contexts within the overall festival theme of Time.

Material for the exhibition is being sought from Architects and Urban Designers who have either produced projects or completed works on this theme. Those interested in contributing material should contact Keith Bothwell for further details on 0227 762060 (day), 0227 459469 (eve) or write to 19 Lichfield Avenue, Canterbury, CT1 3YA.

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URBAN DESIGN IN SYDNEY

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COVER: "COOLING" by Peter Kingston shows the scene by the harbourside North Sydney Olympic Pool,. It is flanked by the "Just for Fun" face of the 1930's Luna Park on the right. The Opera House, the City, Millers Point and Walsh Bay are in the background. Peter Kingston is a Sydney artist and architecture graduate.

EDITORIAL

During the course of editing this issue of UDQ I realised that I had an ulterior motive for selecting Sydney as its subject. It's main purpose was to present a portrait of Sydney which would reveal its character and offer insights into its attitudes, through the work and views of a number of architects and urban designers who knew the city well, activities, aspirations and concerns,. But it was also to be the means by which I would resolve my ambivalent feelings about the city I had forsaken three years ago for London. I hoped that, having the opportunity to examine it from a distance of 12,000 miles, I might be able to come to a conclusion about its position and potential as a city on the world stage. I might, I thought, be able to extract and analyse its essence, so that finally I could understand Sydney in its most meaningful dimensions, and then, be able to put it away, wrapped up like a huge Christo parcel, to glisten omnipotently in the dark recesses of my mind, until such time as I wanted to open it up again.

But cities are not easily wrapped up; they are fluid and dynamic, their essence is elusive and not easily surrendered. Sydney is no exception and a recent visit to the city, while making it all the more immediate and sensory, has made my hidden agenda even more difficult to achieve.

Nevertheless, "Urban Design in Sydney" attempts to address both objectives. It shows some of the recently completed urban design projects and discusses their political context, design, implementation and the impact they have had; it looks at new plans and proposes new ways of designing for the City. While expressing contradictory opinions about specific issues, it reveals the passion for the city and belief in its past, present and future that are held not only by the contributors but by most of its inhabitants. The following introductory article is an attempt to resolve the issues which concern me and to make a contribution to the understanding of Sydney.
Francesca Morrison

Francesca Morrison, Guest Editor, was Principal Urban Designer at the Sydney City Council 1981-87 and Manager of Architecture and Planning at the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority 1987-88. She currently works in London.

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Aerial view of Sydney showing from left; Woolloomooloo Bay with Finger Wharf, Mrs. Macquarie's Point, Farm Cove, Royal Botanic Gardens with the Domain and Hyde Park behind, Bennelong Point with the Opera House, Sydney Cove and Circular Quay, the Rocks area, Dawes Point and approach to Harbour Bridge and part of Pyrmont Peninsula. In the background is Botany Bay.

SYDNEY! SYDNEY!

Sydney, like all Australian cities, is an isolated urban entity. Behind it, beyond the coastal mountain range, stretches the country's vast empty interior; before it is the ocean which separates it from the rest of the world. It is a young city with an optimistic open-ended view of itself and an energy which is both dynamic and laconic. But is Sydney a city with meaning for the world, or is it one which exists purely for itself, influencing and influenced by little beyond its shores? The question is one which constantly nags me.

If great cities are those that play host to important world events, those in which historic dramas are acted out, then Sydney cannot be described as great - it has had little to do with the shaping of global opinion, whether cultural, political or economic. Yet, at the moment, the image the world has of Sydney is changing.

These days a mention of the name, Sydney, will frequently provoke an interested response. It is now seen as a glamorous modern city surrounded by beaches, set on the edge of a vast, sparkling, blue expanse of water which converges at the horizon with an equally vast and blue sky. The Opera House and the Harbour Bridge are juxtaposed dramatically in the foreground and the city centre rises vigorously behind. It is a sumptuous image, breathtaking and energising, expressing a relationship with the natural environment and ideas about space which do not exist in European cities. But what lies behind that image? Is it all superficial; mere surface gloss arrived at mostly through good fortune, symbolising a life which is dedicated mainly to ease and leisure? Or is there behind it a serious attempt to fuse the physical attributes and the glossy image with a way of life which might provide a new model for urbanism in the 21st century?

Sydney has indisputably been blessed with good fortune. From some vantage points its location on the harbour makes it seem more like a vast natural reserve than a city. It is the harbour which is the generative force in Sydney, in a sense its image and its essence. Wherever you look - there it is - a glimpse, a vista, a panorama. At the end of a narrow street of terraces where you least expect it, there suddenly is the Bridge, looming large and out of scale, a reminder of the harbour and its great watery expanses. Or crossing the Bridge, a dazzling sweep of the land form and waterway pattern is all around you. The harbour has seeped into the bloodstream of Sydneysiders, it affects mannerisms, myths and mores; it has created the form of the city and the spread of the suburbs; it provides the cyclorama against which Sydney life is acted out and at the same time it is the city's playground and main street. It is central to Sydney's idea of itself. But although the harbour is the city's raison d'etre, it is not its heart. While it provides a splendid array of physical and visual benefits it does not replace that intense urban core which European cities, less blessed with extraordinary sites, possess. The problem is perhaps well illustrated by an anecdote I heard recently: Ettore Sottsass was visiting Sydney; at yet another cocktail party in an elegant Eastern Suburbs apartment with magnificent harbour views he was asked yet again how he liked the Harbour. Didn't he think it was beautiful? This time, having grown accustomed to local expressions, he was able to answer with true Sydney forthrightness, "I'm sick to death of your bloody beautiful harbour, where is your city?"

The creation of symbiotically related urban artefacts has never been Sydney's forte. Although it had a respectable traditional physical coherence it never achieved a rich intensely urban centre formed by the relationship of buildings and spaces. The Opera House and the Harbour Bridge which have come to symbolise the city, were inspired by theharbour and relate to it; the City's Art Gallery sits in isolation amid the parklands on its eastern edge; a formalised street of grand public buildings dating from colonial times lies between the eastern parks and the city's edge; it's first museums were built at the edges relating to the city's park system rather than the core; and the universities are beyond its southern boundary.

In recent developments a new theatre complex has been set up on a once derelict harbour pier; new museums have opened at Darling Harbour and another is to be located at Circular Quay - all at the city's edges and in relationship with the harbour.

Thus the buildings which could have produced a frisson of cultural activity in the centre and become permanent physical monuments around which an urban core could evolve have been dispersed in Sydney's plan and continue to be. This is not to say that they have been considered unimportant, rather they were considered to be of such significance that they were given prime sites in the landscape, sites which command grand views and which can be viewed from various vantage points. The historical problem has been not only the loss of richness and intellectual life for the centre but the isolation from each other of the cultural elements.

Sydney's planning has always been concerned with landscape and, from its earliest days, a cultural life was sacrificed for a landscape vision, an intellectual life for a physical and visual relationship with the landscape. This vision created great tracts of parkland associated with the harbour but failed to create and link them to places where people would meet to discuss events and ideas. At the end of the day, it is the landscape that Sydney people prefer to be in, with backs to the city and faces to the view, to take respite from the demands of urban life, which is itself acted out against the background of the beckoning landscape.

Although inspired by a passion for the harbour, it is primarily in the city's landscape context that the Bicentennial Darling Harbour and Circular Quay projects took place. Their main objectives were to open up the edges of the city to theharbour, to link elements and make connections along the foreshores which had either been lost or had never existed. With these projects can be seen the beginnings of the city's recognition of the existing, but almost forgotten landscape framework, and a move towards a plan which can embrace both city centre and harbour by building on that framework and the city's landscape potential.

Darling Harbour can also be seen as the catalyst for a wider public concern for the city centre. When the government proposed an elevated monorail to run through the centre to Darling Harbour the people expressed their objections in two protest marches. The monorail was built, but development in the city centre became a major issue, with every large proposal held up to public scrutiny. People were beginning to realise that the delicate balance which existed between the built environment and the landscape system was threatened by the ill-conceived insertion of gigantic new developments in the city's fabric. A new appreciation of the city's framework was developing as the need for a plan to prevent wholesale disaster became imperative.

With the new Strategy Plan, Sydney is making its first comprehensive attempt to clearly define and build on its landscape framework, to exploit its topography and relate its disparate elements by creating a new series of physical and visual links which will also connect to and expand its centre. But, it has not yet made the gesture that would give the centre a real significance and a positive relationship with its framework - it does not propose a central open space, a heart for the city. Sydney still prefers to continue the visual drama of its edges.

As the city's concentration on its edges reflects the country's pattern of intense coastal development it is pertinent to look at the wider picture. Australia itself, is intrinsically a landscape country; vast areas of its interior lie undeveloped in their natural state. To the urban population Australia has an empty centre; to its aboriginal population, the empty heart of Australia is where the body of its meaning exists. With its new emphasis on relationships and connectedness in the landscape, Sydney may be coming to a closer understanding of its place in the landscape pattern of the continent and eventually to an understanding of the relationship between the land and the aboriginal people. Australia's greatest good fortune is the rare opportunity it has to discover an identity based on a two-way flow of knowledge between its original inhabitants and its relatively recently arrived settlers. Although it still has a long way to go, Sydney may well be on the way to creating the foundation for that essential symbiotic relationship and a new Australian culture. If it does its meaning in the world is assured.

In the meantime, behind the image there is a city with a philosophy which is beginning to be expressed through its urban design. It is a city which is committed to creating an open, expansive and egalitarian environment, and Darling Harbour and Circular Quay are the physical manifestations of those principles.

Francesca Morrison

SYDNEY - SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE CITY

• SIR PHILIP DOWSON •

I first came to Sydney as a 20 year old Naval Officer in February 1945. Standing to attention in the eyes of a Fleet Destroyer negotiating the Heads in the early hours of the morning, I was astonished to see thousands of people waving large white sheets who had come out at that hour to greet the Pacific Fleet. Sydney provided both a great harbour and a great welcome.

I remember a relaxed society, with a sense of distance, compounded by so many people still referring to England as home. Whilst the cultural focus may have seemed in some ways ambiguous, I felt there was nevertheless, underlying it all a strong commercial bite and a hard edge to this vital maritime city, with its unique Australian identity. I remember too a "Georgian House" on Bellevue Hill, perhaps 1840, of extraordinary elegance, standing in its own grounds surrounded by a high stone wall, with lawns that sloped towards the Harbour, and with a ballroom in which Melba sang. It was demolished in the 1950's, before the importance of conservation was more widely recognised. I think it could not happen now. The walls still exist but within them are three tower blocks.

When I came back in 1973 for the opening of the Opera House, Sydney was a cosmopolitan city. The design and completion of the Opera House were both a triumph. It was not thus however for Ove Arup, for the wounds ran deep and he came with a certain sadness, rather perhaps in the spirit of benediction. Standing with him on the deck one evening during an interval I tried to put the whole story into a longer and larger perspective, and argued that he should accept the achievement for what it was, and what it meant to the city and the country as a whole and rejoice - but he shook his head. I am reminded that behind most great buildings there lurks the shadow of Icarus.

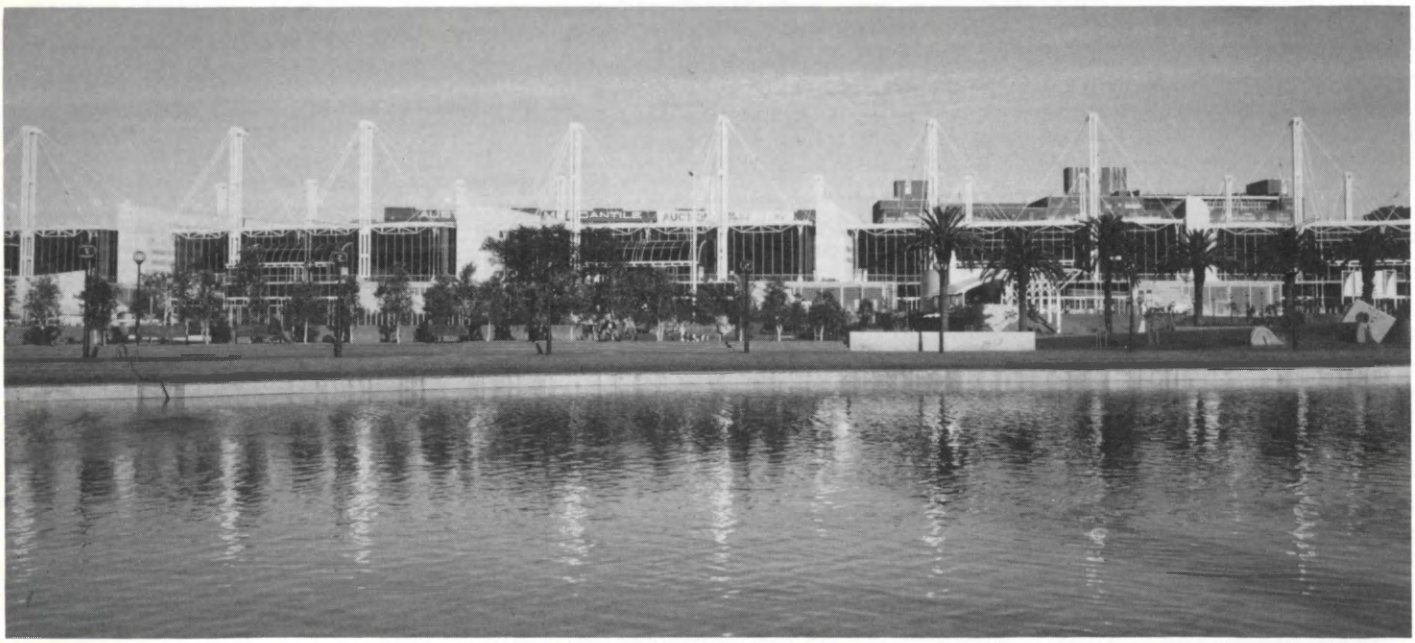
Design is not safe, nor culture sterile. In England, we live at a time when paradoxically we seem to try and rob our cities of their twentieth century reality. We have a regressive instinct which seeks to insure against the fear of the unknown by taking refuge in the false security of known historical patterns. We do this even where these patterns are quite inappropriate or inadequate, and are, by definition, yesterday's solutions to yesterday's problems. This becomes a substitute for the real "an escape culture" which is exemplified by Prince Charles who, when opening the Wren Exhibition in Washington, said that he "understands all about expressing the spirit of the age, but is alarmed that the age has no spirit". There is a futility in chasing mere memories, rather than pursuing ideas that can sensibly draw lessons from our great precedents. Certainly, with an ancient tradition steeped in discipline and logic, as it will be, there will always lie a seed for a reawakening to its principles and ideas, which are enduring and beyond fashion. But that is about principles, not styles.

So with the architectural compass slowly swinging on its binnacle in search of tawdry variety, there emerges the mediocre, emulsified by bureaucratic regulation, that sadly makes up so much of our urban development. To a large extent central Sydney seems to have avoided this problem. Within the Australian character there are perhaps two very different, yet apparently compatible, qualities which are also expressed in their cities. There is the practical, down to earth attitude in their building, which visibly speaks of common sense and produces a background of good and unostentatious architecture. On the other hand, there is a love of gambling, and of taking risks, which has produced some of the most radical and outstanding public buildings of this century.

Sydney, like no other harbour city that I have ever known, and unlike so many others that have been isolated from their shores by roads, is not on the edge of the harbour at all, but embraces it. The water and its activities are in its very midst and are the visible and very public domain that unites the whole. The increasing pressure towards the shore tends to expose the innate form which in some strange way has become more evident and distinctive as this pressure has increased, further emphasising the nature of the city itself and its pattern of growth. As I have remembered Sydney in the three times I have visited in '45, '73 and '90, the relationship between harbour and city has become closer and stronger, with the Opera House now anchored at its very focus - a wonderful Trafalgar Square on water.

Wandering one evening in Darling Harbour, I wondered where else in the world one could see such a modern microcosm of a city within a city. This extraordinary area, bounded by the exhibition hall, is so vital a place with its commerce and shopping, museum and ferries, parks and fun fair, small yachts at their moorings and large ocean-going cargo ships - both the public and private domain - which are all seen against the backdrop of downtown Sydney.

There is variety and activity, the vulgar and the elegant, the juxtapositions that speak less of places than of relationships. These, one recognises, will be often accidental and subject to change, but there is beauty in the



disordered as well as the ordered, in the contradictions and in the complexities. There is also the sense of it all being part of the same theatre - with relationships that could develop and grow. Here is an urban setting, a new piece of city, that owes nothing at all to the nostalgic view of History which plagues us here (in fact owes nothing except to the late 20th Century), which is being inhabited, possessed, and above all, quite evidently enjoyed. It made me feel as some other rare places have done, that I had myself come home in the last decade of this century.

The "age has no spirit"? - what nonsense.

Speaking with the experience of the English scene, I marvel at how the Opera House managed to break and blunder its way through all the webs of anti-patronage, against all the odds, to exist at all and to become a building which now the whole world admires, and which has displaced the kangaroo as the symbol of its country. The Exhibition Hall in Darling Harbour, by Philip Cox, is another example of inspired patronage. It is radical and does not in any way conform, yet it is most appropriate for a dockside building, with its framed steel structures which are of a scale generally associated with civil engineering. Glimpsed from a side street, it is of a different scale completely, and most dramatic. At another level though, it is a signal within the city of a major civic space, and in these terms alone justifies its existence as a powerful object within the cityscape. Its "presence" and sheer size stimulate expectations of an important destination, and it does not disappoint. In detail, what I liked so much was that in spite of its size, it provides a lively, interesting and human background for the space it dominates with both its form and silhouette. The impact of the regeneration of a part, even a relatively small part, of a city can be dramatic. When national pride acts in concert with an anniversary, the result becomes a major gesture in urban development, as Darling Harbour demonstrates. Here the urban content can be seen to affect not only the physical environment, with all its social and cultural overtones, but also the morale of people.

Every generation, as every individual, has a need for self-discovery, if it is to have a recognisable identity and the self confidence to act in its own interest. It needs, in a sense, to put a mirror up to itself, to have its symbols for self recognition and for self respect, and to inspire effort and place its own generation in its own time.

Both the Opera House and the Exhibition Hall are brave gestures of this kind, playing for high stakes. Gambles yes, but also expressions of confidence - that vital ingredient that beggars analysis - which is so necessary as a base and stimulus from which splendid things can happen.

In 1951, the Festival of Britain burst on a drab and degraded wartime London. We walked suddenly into a new world, with a new spirit, on the edge of the Thames. Not only was it a place of light and gaiety, and thriving activity, but it was primarily a statement of hope; it was a vision. It was a tryst with a future that was not beyond the realm of dreams. It was a prototype of what could be done in the public realm and with civic places where the political will existed. Sadly, it was stillborn and its lessons were never really grasped. Subsequent developments along the Thames have little of the urban and metropolitan quality that should invest the centre of a great capital city. There are areas, as in Docklands, of reconstructed devastation, and others which are simply selfish or bland. Behind it all is the lack of any political will.

It is argued that there is less place nowadays for civic form and symbols in societies in which the telephone, television and the motor car are the means of communication between people, and that the randomness and lack of urban quality is merely a reflection of this development. I cannot believe this to be true. With advanced and multiple pressures perceptual references become more important than ever. I believe it is one of Sydney's great achievements, and in rare measure, to have accomplished an image which is now amongst the most immediately recognised and evocative in the world. But it is also a city with so many of its Victorian roots intact. In experiencing places we do so in memory and the perception we have of them is furnished by this memory. It is also Sydney's great achievement that conservation has not been a mere reaction to change, but an assessment of values. An attitude that has made, I believe, its radical achievements possible.

Left. The Exhibition Hall by Philip Cox. Above. The central space at Darling Harbour, Tumbalong Park.

Sir Philip Dowson is one of the founder partners of Arup Associate.s

SYDNEY'S STRUGGLE TO URBAN MATURITY

KRYSTYNA LUCZAK • FRANCESCA MORRISON

From its unpromising beginnings as a convict settlement in 1788, Sydney has grown into a beguiling city. Its internationally recognised icons of Harbour Bridge and Opera House suggest technological and cultural maturity, pragmatism tempered by higher aspirations. However, this powerful imagery combined with its splendid harbour setting disguises the difficulty that Sydney has experienced in achieving successful urban design.

Sydney's story is one of a city growing up. From its birth as a British outpost and its childhood as the recipient and respecter of the principles of the mother country, to its energetic and somewhat unruly teenagehood, it has developed a dynamism and identity which is all its own. As it enters early adulthood Sydney's energy and vitality are gradually being harnessed to develop what Sydneysiders hope will become a city of world significance.

As the country was not settled by Europeans until the late 18th Century, its cities lacked a regional urbanistic tradition to draw on. Australia's identity and place in the world were defined by its British heritage and secured by having the world's highest Gross National Product per capita. By the late.nineteenth century, Sydney's growth had outstripped the landscape visions of the early governors and it developed into a city of European character and scale. It was characterised by fine Colonial buildings and landmark Victorian monuments which had been financed by wealth generated from the goldfields. It was visually unified and spatially coherent; buildings, between six and ten storeys high, defined the streets and the golden glow of Sydney sandstone gave the city its colour. This state of urban tranquility, which lasted well into the 20th century, had three main causes; the Height of Buildings Act of 1912 which limited building height in the city to 150 feet; the economic limitations resulting from the onset of the two World Wars and the Great Depression; and the continued adherence to a conceptual city model of European origin.

BEAUTIFICATION OF SYDNEY 1908

The city's regard for this model was demonstrated by the designs produced for the Royal Commission for the Beautification of Sydney and its Suburbs (1908-09) - Sydney's first attempt to develop an urbanistic vision. The Commission generated a wealth of designs which in many instances expressed the ideas of contemporary European and American urban design principles; the Garden City Movement, Beaux Art Planning and the City Beautiful Movement. Ambitious plans were drawn up for various parts of the city by leading architects (the majority of whom were trained in Britain) but they did not derive from an overall vision for the city. While most of the schemes were not acted on at the time for economic reasons, they were the genesis of significant works carried out in the next 30 years.

The most notable of these was the construction in 1932 of the Harbour Bridge, a structure which, apart from its rusticated stone pylons, had nothing in common with formalised architectural or civic design styles. Until the Opera House was built in the 1970's, it was the city's only potent man-made visual symbol.

The scale and dynamism of the Harbour Bridge notwithstanding, Sydney remained essentially a low scale European style city until 1957 when the Height of Buildings Act was abolished.

The late 1950's and 60's marked a turning point in Australia's cultural outlook and identity and during this period ties with Britain were weakened. The Second World War had brought with it a realisation of Australia's geographic and economic isolation from Europe and the country began to turn towards America for cultural inspiration. America symbolised modernity and progress, nowhere more potently than in its corporate architecture. Sydney, more than any other Australian city, identified with and embraced the vitality exhibited by the American prototype. Thus the erosion of the fabric of the city was begun by the superimposition of a new physical and spatial concept. Based on the idea of elements sitting freely in space, it was in contrast to the existing pattern in which buildings defined and enclosed space - street walls of buildings began to give way to single towers set in plazas or on low podiums. Architects revelled in the possibilities of the new building and construction technologies and the end of post war limitations in materials and finance, while developers enjoyed the windfall returns gained from the economies of scale that the new form of construction offered.

The enthusiasm of the architects and engineers of the day is demonstrated by the execution of two developments which heralded the city's new aspirations. The first was the construction in 1959 of the Cahill

Expressway across Circular Quay. It was constructed above an elevated railway built in 1956. The railway line and the station building were the first elements to visually separate the city from its waterfront gateway. The expressway obliterated the remaining sense of connection. The second was the construction in 1961, of the A.M P. building facing the Cahill Expressway on the edge of Circular Quay. 26 storeys high, it was Australia's tallest building and was the first significant departure from the 150' height limit.

THE MINISTER'S ORDINANCE

The Height of Buildings Act was replaced by an ordinance which was designed to encourage the new tower building type. It allowed a basic floor space ratio of 10:1 and an additional 2:1 for the provision of open plazas, colonnades and pedestrian access through or around the building. No height limit was reintroduced and Sydney soon discovered that it had a taste for high-rise towers. The challenge to construct the city's highest building began.

Australia Square, the most successful building erected under the ordinance was completed in 1968. Designed by Harry Seidler, it is an elegant 50 storey circular tower flanked by a lower slab building. Between the two buildings is a sheltered sun-filled open space which was instantly popular with the people of Sydney. However, the success of Australia Square was due to the imagination of the architect rather than the requirements of the ordinance and few other buildings were as well-designed.

Although in principle the new buildings mostly followed New York's Seagram Building and Lever House, the Sydney street pattern and block size did not accommodate them as easily as Manhattan's grid. By the early 70's the city's fabric had been significantly altered.

Coinciding with the changes occurring in the city a critical reaction was emerging. In 1971 the government proposed to raze the Rocks, the waterfront quarter at West Circular Quay, which dated from the city's first settlement and was still intact. The proposal, to develop the whole area as a high-rise commercial precinct, so outraged the people of Sydney that the Builders' Labourers' Union joined with the residents in protest and banned its members from working on the job. These 'green bans' were so influential that the project was abandoned before any building had commenced.

The green bans heralded the beginnings of a conservation movement in Sydney and formed the basis for collective public opposition to future attempts by government to carry out wholesale redevelopment of residential areas. Thus even while Sydney was developing a liking for tower buildings it was beginning to protect its low-scale suburban heritage. The rejection of both the Rocks scheme and the redevelopment plan for Woolloomooloo in 1975, (also the subject of green bans), marked the end of interventionist physical planning for Sydney.

CITY OF SYDNEY STRATEGIC PLAN

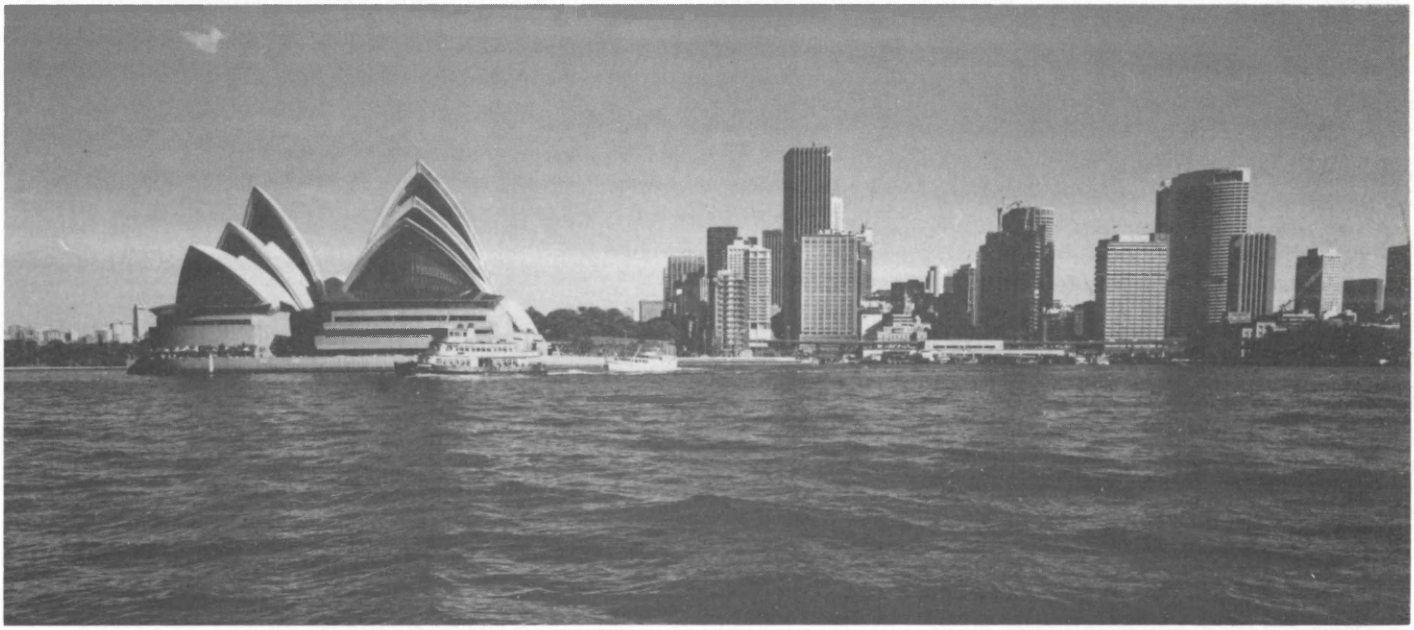
In 1971 the adoption of the City of Sydney Strategic Plan by the Sydney City Council, ushered in the practise of planning as a flexible process, allowing adhoc change which, in theory, was tempered by the requirements of a new Development Code and the checks and balances of community participation.

The Strategic Plan was the first comprehensive planning strategy for the city, It tackled the most pressing issues of the day - movement, function and city-planning administration - for which the Council set up a Strategic Planning Department. Amongst its recommendations was a new system of development controls for the city. Under the Development Control Code basic densities were decreased to 5:1, with different maximums set for each city precinct, varying between 10:1 and 12:1. A complex system of incentives was introduced by which additional floor space could be awarded in exchange for the provision of bonus elements, a system which in principle offered more for the city than the previous ordinance. Based on the New York System, the Code, over time, experienced problems similar to those of New York and the intended benefits for the city largely became benefits for the developer.

The Strategic Plan also specified Action Plans for the implementation of civic design, the most successful being the pedestrianisation of Martin Place, Sydney's grandest street, and the creation of Sydney Square as a civic space and setting for the 19th century Town Hall and St Andrew's Cathedral. The two most significant projects identified by the Plan were the development of Darling Harbour and the creation of a pedestrian promenade from the Opera House to Circular Quay, both of which the State Government eventually developed in 1988.

Although the Strategic Plan recommended that urban design guidelines and controls be devised for all the city precincts the recommendation was not carried out. Thus, while its implementation resulted in significant improvement in pedestrian movement and amenity, the ad hoc nature of its attitude to the height, bulk and siting of buildings led to much criticism.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its high density of development Sydney did not suffer site sterilisation - one of the key problems associated with over-zoning. Demand for office accommodation remained high and the city remained the preferred location for international and national corporate headquarters, even though the government



Left. Sydney in the mid 19th century Above. The Opera House and the City with the AMP Building and the Cahill Expressway, 1988.

encouraged decentralisation. Building height and proximity to the waterfront became the strongest economic imperatives for a property owner and the tall office tower came to be associated with Sydney's image and cultural values.

Cities with long urbanistic traditions such as Paris and Barcelona have understood the effect of the tall object tower being imposed on the traditional spatial pattern and have quarantined it in areas of new development. Sydney on the other hand, likes its new skyline of towers with their whiff of power and energy, and has recently been seeking a way to have its towers, and its traditional street pattern and block form as well.

By the late 80's public awareness of environmental and urban issues had grown. There was a new sense of identity emerging, and with it, a desire for a new city which in its maturity, would understand its roots and the meaning of its patterns and structures, and build on these to evolve a unique form.

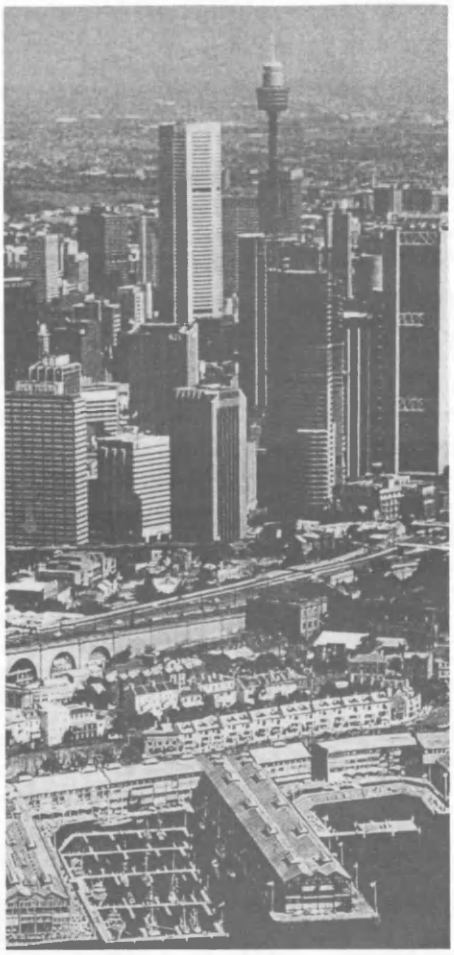
Thus the debate was no longer whether Sydney should have tall towers but how tall they would be, how they were to be designed, where they were to be placed, how they were to connect with and improve the overall physical structure and how they were to relate to historic buildings.

Proposals for new buildings were hotly debated in the press, in articles, editorials and in letters. Demands were made for reductions in height in many cases (particularly when proposals were made for buildings as high as 120 storeys which would cast huge shadows over parks and other urban spaces), for relocating buildings on their sites to achieve more cohesion in terms of streetscape and form, and for conservation.

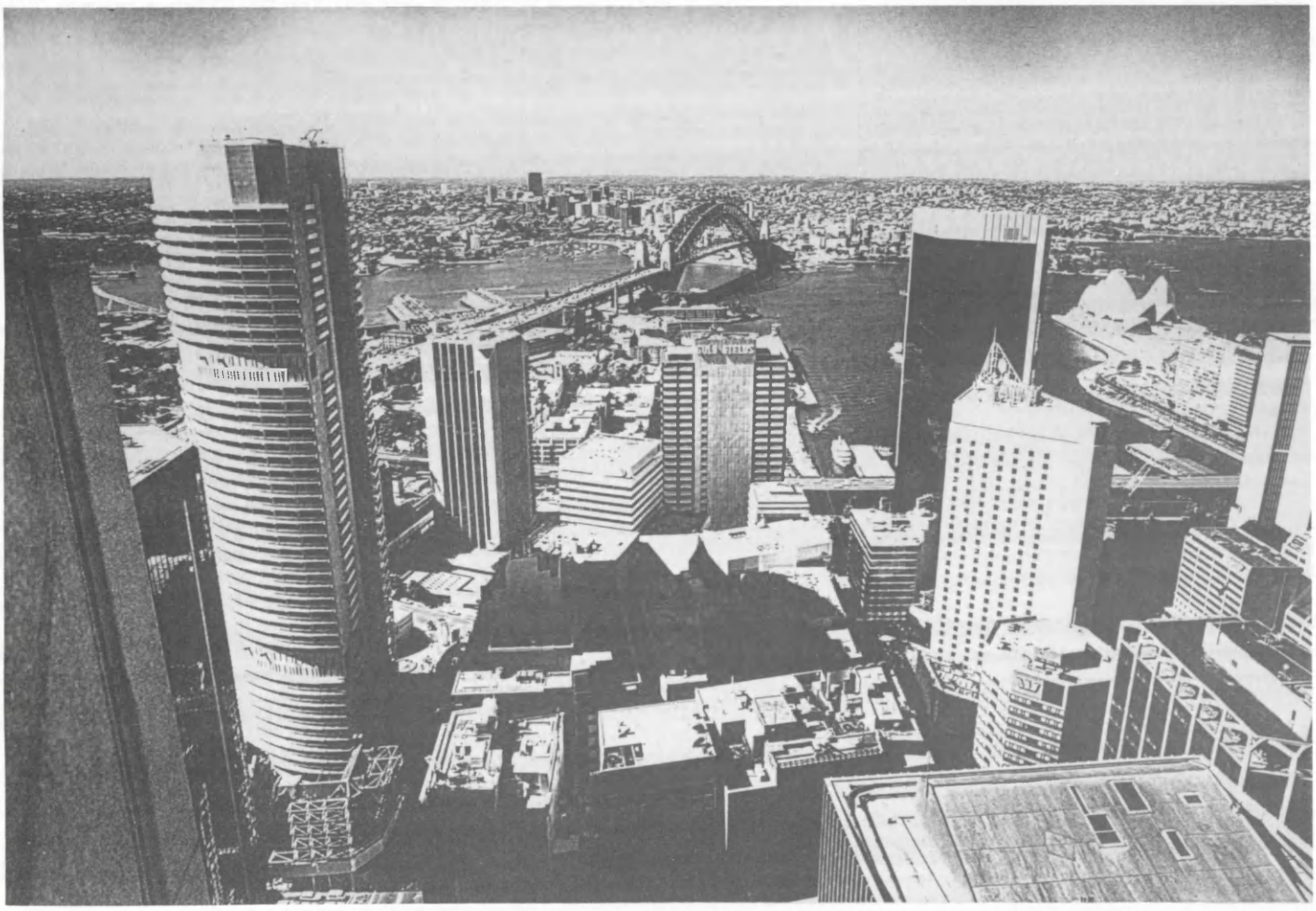
There was often disagreement between architects and others involved in the urban design process. (For example the recent Grosvenor Place issue in which the architect for the proposal fought unsuccessfully for the removal of the Conservation Order on the facades of the group of buildings on one corner of the site). Architects were openly critical of proposed buildings they considered to be detrimental to the well-being of the city. The R.A.I.A's Design Committee took members to task for designing insensitive additions to the existing fabric of the city.

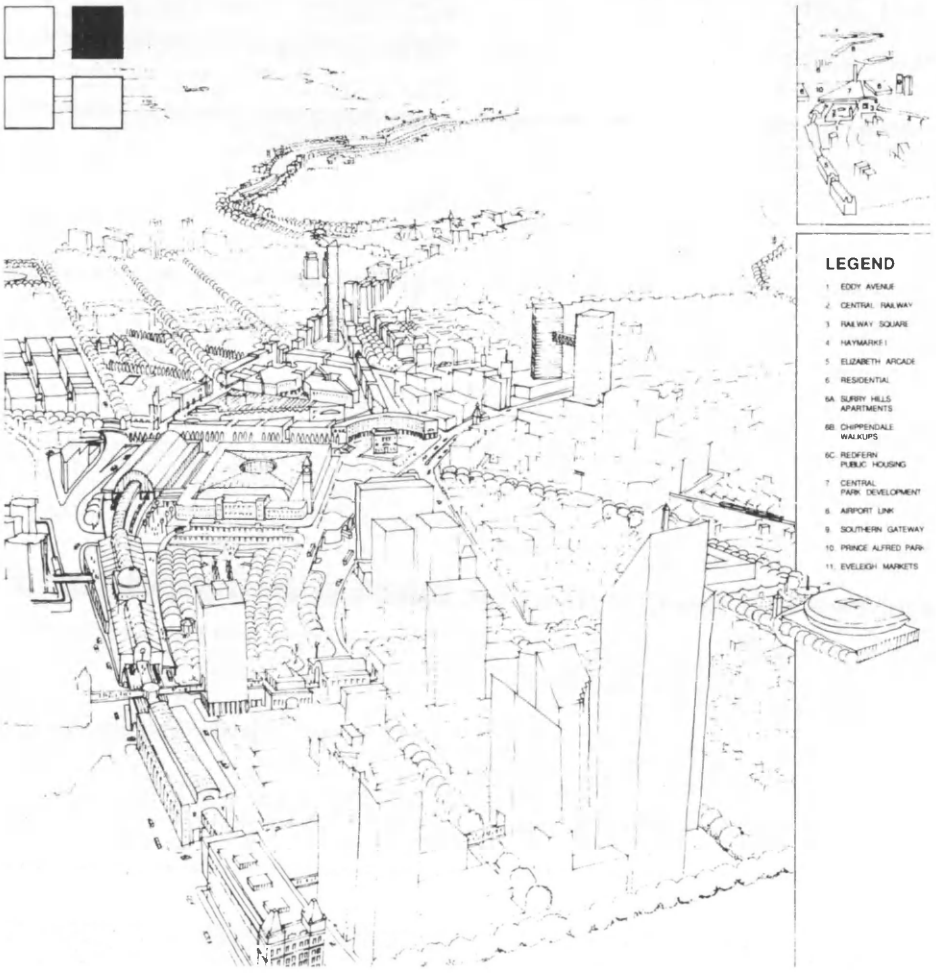
The people of Sydney came out in force in 1986, in two street demonstrations to oppose the Darling Harbour monorail which was designed to run through the centre of the city past some of its best loved Victorian buildings.

The Labor State Government began to intercede in situations in which it thought the interests of the economy were not being served by the City Council. It took applications out of the hands of the city, and approved developments in contradiction to the planning legislation.



Right. Sydney skyscrapers with West Rocks and Walsh Bay in the foreground.
Below. Grosvenor Place on left with historic buildings on the corner.





Big firms of developers began to by-pass the City Council altogether, going straight to the government for backing for their proposals. Other developers complained of the lack of rules and inconsistencies in approvals.

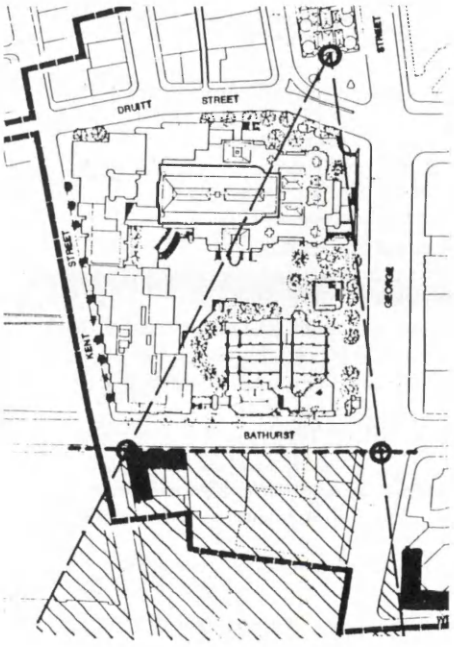
The City Council's architects and planners discussed an urban design plan which would examine and analyse the city's form and create tools to sensitively guide new development into the existing fabric, using its structure as the basis for making decisions about the role and siting of new buildings and the creation of new open spaces. Seminars were set up in which architects, planners, members of the public and developers discussed a vision for the future of Sydney and the means by which to achieve it.

CENTRAL SYDNEY PLAN 1988

The political solution seemed to lie in a plan which was acceptable to both the State and the City and a change of government in 1987 meant that the proposition of a joint plan was acceptable. Thus, after a lengthy process of involvement with all sections of the community had been undertaken, the Central Sydney Strategy Plan 1988 was prepared by the City Council and the NSW Department of Environment and Planning to set out a new vision for the City and a strategy for its achievement.

The focus of the Strategy Plan was the "City Centre" which includes the traditional Central Business District, the parklands, the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Area (the Rocks) and Darling Harbour. It recognised that the City Centre was no longer confined to the Central Business District and identified opportunities for long-term growth on the eastern edge of the CBD and to the south of the Central Railway Area. The Ultimo Pyrmount Area to the west of Darling

Top Left. Darling Harbour monorail under construction in city centre.
Left. Idea for southern CBD, MSJ Group.
Below. Town Hall Precinct, Height Control Plane No.1.



Harbour was designated as a "Special Development Area" for more intensive residential, tourist and commercial use.

The Development Control Code was simplified. The complex bonus system which was so often exploited by developers to the detriment of the city was replaced by the basic floor space ratio of 10:1 with one bonus only of 2.5:1 for purchase of floor space from historic sites or for particular public benefits (to be specified in the forthcoming associated statutory plan). The maximum floor space ratio remained at 12.5:1. Height parameters were introduced to the development control system which were set by certain requirements: the maintenance of sunlight access to parks and squares; the conservation of heritage streetscapes; the maintenance of vistas to major landmarks and the harbour; the reinforcement of the character of squares, places and parks; the reduction of high winds at street level and the encouragement of cooling breezes. Thus maximum floor space ratio will not be attainable on all sites.

To provide the basis for the urban design requirements and for new civic works programmes the Strategy identified those elements and qualities which give the city its special character and analysed relationships between them - the harbour, the parklands, the street pattern, the shape and form of the CBD, the gateways, precincts, streetscapes views, landmarks and heritage items.

The Strategy also identified and illustrated opportunities to achieve greater physical and visual cohesion throughout the centre by linking the parks, city streets and the harbour with a series of tree-planted avenues and small open spaces; by specifying new landmark sites; creating new focii of activity; and further extending public access to harbour foreshores.

Requirements for new buildings to enhance streetscapes were set out to define and reinforce the city's street pattern and to maintain an overall city form which steps up from the eastern, western and southern edges to a north-south ridge. As well as building on the city's existing shape to emphasise its strength and drama, this form allows the penetration of sea breezes and pollutant dispersing winds, minimises high winds at ground level and is consistent with avoiding overshadowing of the parks. In certain areas buildings are required to set back to an existing parapet height to maintain continuity and to allow penetration of light, air and sunlight to streets.

The urban design principles also covered the location of parking and vehicular access points, the creation of pedestrian interest at ground floor levels, pedestrian protection, maintenance of vistas, impact on the skyline, and development around parks.

A Heritage Inventory was established to clarify the status of old buildings and structures and urban design principles were set out to assist the integration of old and new buildings in streetscapes.

A framework was established for the integration of policies for public transport, traffic servicing and pedestrians. Under this framework new routes for ferries, buses and rail have been identified and new transport interchanges have been planned in locations which will add further to cross-town (east-west) movement.

A key aspect of the strategy was the concept that Central Sydney contains a number of precincts of distinctive functional and physical character. Each precinct was analysed in detail and planning objectives were identified to provide a broad guide for environmental management of the city. These objectives are being developed into detailed development guidelines, of both mandatory and advisory nature.

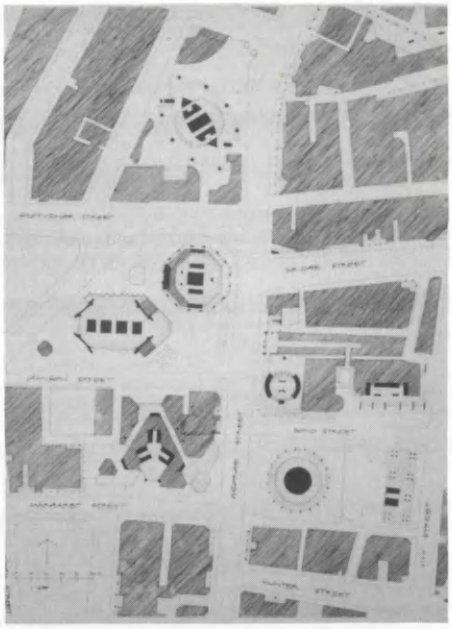
The broad directions of the Strategy are now being translated into a Statutory Local Environmental Plan and a prescriptive Development Control Plan which will be supported by technical guidelines and programmes for civic works for each precinct.

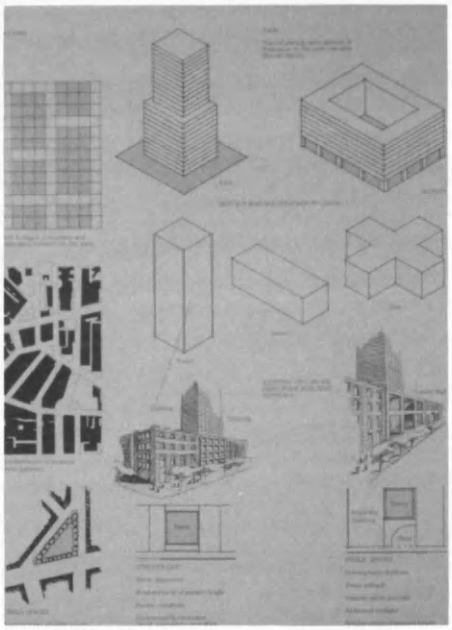
The 1988 Strategy is the first planning document in Sydney to contain an analysis of the three-dimensional structure of the city and initiatives to reinforce and restore it's quality and character . It has made great progress in developing an understanding of the composition of the city in urban design terms. Although it stops short of being a physical master plan it is based on a vision for the city and proposes statutory mechanisms for its achievement.

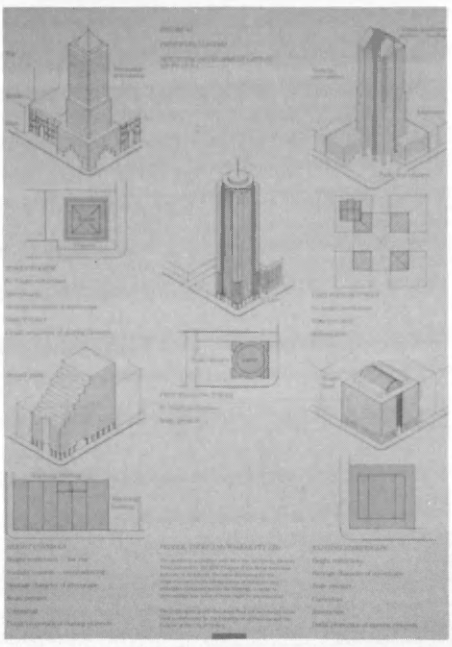
This plan, if followed should provide the means for the city to win back its order and meaning and to start drawing on its site and climate for unique building type.

However the perennial chestnuts remain. How is planning legislation framed to achieve good architecture and not merely prevent the worst excesses? How is mediocrity and shabby architecture eliminated? And will the Strategy, and the concept of urban design, that long-term process which requires commitment and adherence to a city vision, succeed in a city that is bedevilled by highly politicised local cultural conditions and has yet to develop a non-partisan city government?

Sydney's major opportunity to explore regional typology and to implement this through a physical plan is the proposed redevelopment of Pyromont Peninsula - a site which echoes the topographic features of Sydney's CBD across Darling Harbour and like London's Docklands was made available for development by obsolescent industry and port activity.







Top, Centre, Below. Central Sydney Strategy Plan diagrams.

Krystyna Luczak is an Executive Planner at the Sydney City Council and is a member of the RAIA Design Committee. She was involved in the preparation of the 1988 Central Sydney Strategy Plan.

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENTS
Darling Harbour and Circular Quay
• ANDREW ANDERSONS •

Sydney is one of the few modern cities in the world to have a clearly discernible image. Unlike other cities which grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, Sydney's image is not based upon great architectural ensembles or monumental boulevards but results from the juxtaposition of relatively recently man-made elements upon its greatest asset - Sydney Harbour.

All of Australia's cities, with the exception of Canberra, hug the coastline of the world's driest continent. All these cities enjoy the proximity of great rivers, harbours or estuaries, but it is in Sydney that the very ethos of the city lies in its physical, historical as well as economic relationship with the harbour.

Only a few days after arriving at Botany Bay in 1788, the first pathetic band of convicts, transported from Britain's over-crowded jails, were moved to the more hospitable shores of what is now Sydney Harbour. Here, around Sydney Cove, adjacent to sheltered deep-water anchorage the humble settlement began.

Growth was slow initially, but with the discovery of gold, the coming railway, the steamship and the telegraph in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria boasted what today would be termed the highest gross national product per capital of population in the world.

Grand public buildings were built upon Sydney's pragmatically distorted street grid and pretentious mansions dominated harbour headlands, symbolising the wealth of the recently emerged middle class. The port was the City's life-blood, its connection with the world in an export-orientated economy, but it was also a transportation burden, as in the absence of a bridge, the harbour could only be traversed by punts and ferries.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the days of Australia's first architect, the convict Francis Greenway, the need for a harbour crossing had been under discussion. A hundred years later tangible progress took place as a result of the ambitious vision of N.S.W Government Director of Public Works, Dr. Bradfield who, in a series of reports promoted the transportation infrastructure which was to support the tripling of Sydney's population in the next half century.

Contractually committed in the boom year of 1924, the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge continued during the depression years to open in March 1932, when more than a million Sydney siders, crossed the newly constructed engineering marvel. Builders Donnan Long, engineer Ralph Freeman and architects Sir John Burnet and Partners, gave Sydney the first of its man-made symbols. Its graceful steel arch and hangers, contained by massive rusticated-granite pylons still dominate the magnificent vista along the east-west axis of the harbour and can be seen from hundreds of locations all around the harbour as well as from high points in the outer suburbs.

In the inter-war period, the harbour was the focus of many of the city's activities. Tens of thousand of wharf-labourers man-handled the cargo of hundreds of steamships at picturesque hardwood wharves around the city and quenched their thirst at waterside pubs. Australia's isolation from the rest of the world was dramatised by the departures of large ocean liners amid festoons of paper streamers thrown by well wishers from the wharves.

Before the post World War II advent of universal car ownership, numerous ferries plied the harbour giving access to many beaches and bushland reserves on weekends. This period was also the heyday of the "eighteen-footer" sailing boat, Sydney's bizarre contribution to sailing in which a large complement of weighty sailors seeks to balance a small boat with excessive sail area in a fresh Sydney "north-easter" blowing from the not always aptly-named Pacific Ocean.

Sydney's second, and more memorable, architectural symbol, the Sydney Opera House dominated both political life and gossip in the city for two decades from the mid 1950s to the 1970s. Upon its completion in 1973 it set in motion a renaissance of the performing arts in Australia, was acclaimed as one of the world masterpieces of 20th century architecture and became Australia's most visited tourist attraction.

Largely at the prompting of Sir Eugene Goossens, composer, Director of the N.S.W. Conservatorium of Music and the then chief conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the State Labor government in 1954 decided to hold an international competition for the design of a two hall multi-purpose performing arts complex, inappropriately to be called the Opera House. A distinguished jury, including Eero Saarinen and Sir Leslie Martin, judged a young Danish architect, Joern Utzon to be the winner in 1957. Commenced in great haste for political purposes, the building was not completed by its architect who felt compelled to resign in 1966 because of a multitude of problems which were not of his making. However it is unquestionably Utzon's creative genius that makes the Sydney Opera house the universal success that it is today.

Sculptural, tile-clad shells rise from a pink granite podium, magically reflecting the sun and the moon. Stepping out on to the podium at interval, into the balmy salt-tinged ocean breeze makes attending performances in this building a unique experience.

The success of the Sydney Opera House emphasized the perception of the adjacent Sydney Cove as Sydney's principal civic space. Increasingly the rituals of city, state and nation are played out on the water to be viewed from boats, the water's edge and the surrounding amphitheatre formed by thousands of buildings. This was particularly the case for Australia's celebrations for the bicentenary of European settlement in 1988 in which a massive complement of cultural facilities and civic improvements was unveiled, resulting largely from the vision of Neville Wran, the N.S.W. Labor Premier from 1977-1987.

Wran presided over an extraordinary number of substantial additions to the cultural life of the city. In a decade of activity leading up to 1988 new football stadiums, botanic gardens, halls for pop-concerts and sophisticated drama theatres were built; major additions to the State Library, the Art Gallery of N.S.W. and the Australian Museum were carried out; and at Ultimo a new museum was created in the old Power Station. The restoration of many historic buildings was also included in the programme. Unprecedented in the traditional roles of the State Government were the two major waterfront projects at Circular Quay and Darling Harbour which have done so much to enhance the quality of life for Sydney's residents and visitors alike. It was a bitter twist of political irony that after Wran's retirement from politics, the Labor government was to lose the 1988 elections - partly because of a public perception of "profligate government expenditure".

CIRCULAR QUAY IMPROVEMENT

Both the Circular Quay and Darling Harbour schemes were made possible because of changing transport technology. The Quay had been dominated by thriving activity in passenger liners which abruptly came to an end about 1970 when travel by jet aeroplane became the norm. Darling Harbour was the victim of containerisation of maritime cargo and the replacement by road transport for less bulky items previously carried by rail. While there are similarities between the Circular Quay and Darling Harbour projects, there are perhaps more important differences between the two, in terms of scale, content, impact and implementation.

Although the Sydney Opera House and the historic "Rocks" precinct, on the western shore of Sydney Cove, attracted several million visitors each year, and tens of thousands of commuters passed through the rail, ferry and bus interchange daily, the physical reality was a foreshore largely alienated from public use, with barbed wire fences protecting dilapidated wharves and surface car-parking occupying invaluable waterside land. The approach to the Opera House was disfigured by a "temporary" covered way and an ugly staff car-parking area. The unfortunate rail and road viaduct, which was built in the 1950s cutting the city off from the water's edge, was devoid of charm and any activity at its base worthy of its location. On the west side unnecessary port roads and an over - capacious shipping terminal debased a potentially attractive waterfront park.

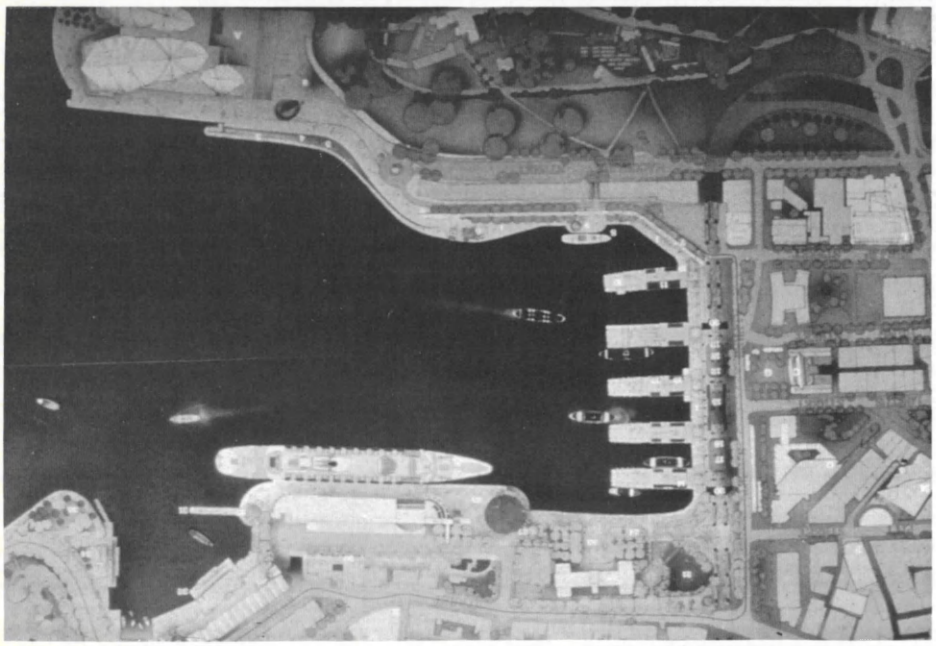
The potential for the creation of a pedestrianised promenade from the Opera House to the Harbour Bridge had been recognised by the Sydney City Council in its 1971 Strategy Plan and subsequent reviews. However most of the land and buildings affected were owned by various State Government Authorities; the State Rail Authority, the Urban Transit Authority, the Maritime Services Board, the Department of Main Roads, the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority and the Sydney Opera House Trust. The Council was unable to act on its proposals.

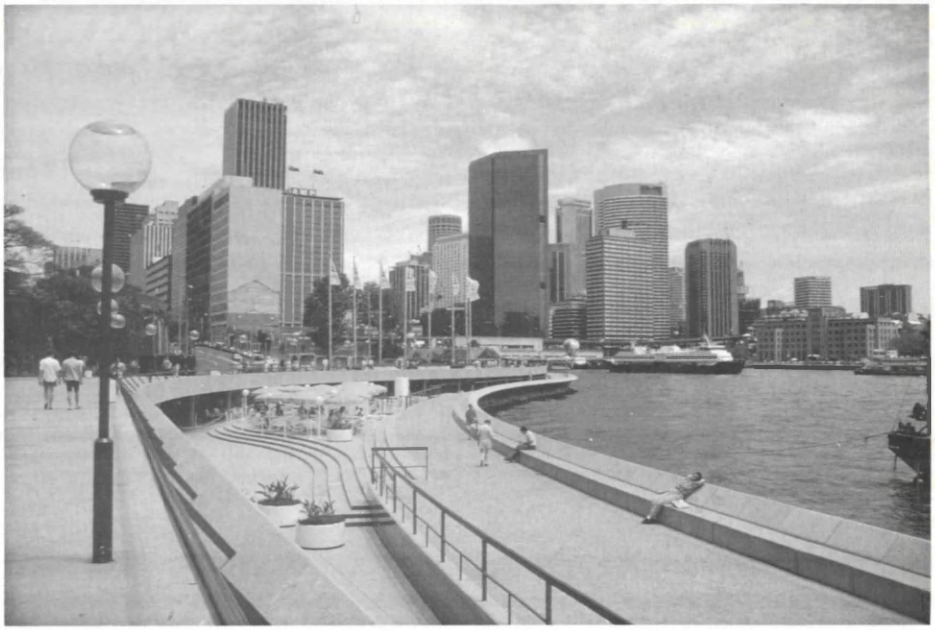
In 1983 an international conference organized by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, entitled "The City in Conflict", paid considerable attention to the unrealized potential of Circular Quay. Distinguished participants such as Kenneth Frampton and Jaqueline Robertson made well reported public comments upon the lack of appropriate design and facilities for an area of such significance in the city as Circular Quay. The R.A.I.A.'s Circular Quay Ideas Competition and publication "Quay Visions" presented tangible evidence of what could be done, creating an appropriate climate for government involvement. The N.S.W. Public Works Department proposed an upgrading of the Quay as a project to Premier Wran and a Steering Committee, which was managed by the Department of Environment and Planning, and consisted of representatives of all the government bodies, prepared a series of reports forming a development plan.

The development reports were the result of a remarkable exercise in co-operation between government bodies which previously had taken decisions autonomously with little consideration for any adverse impact which might be caused to the whole urban complex.

The development plan achieved the desired promenade along the waterfront by a careful analysis of the potential of each section and assessment of the role it would play in a final scheme. Thus to alleviate the effect of the barrier created by the overhead rail and roadway which separated the city from the harbour, the railway building was to be pierced to allow new openings creating visual and physical access to the waterfront, and replanned to provide new uses such as outdoor cafes and shops. The road in front of the 1950's Maritime Service Board building was to be closed to form a park, the building itself to become a museum when the Board moved to new offices. The Overseas

This page, top and centre. East Circular Quay before and after improvement.
Below left. Circular Quay Plan.
Right. Remodelled Overseas Passenger Terminal, West Circular Quay, Lawrence Nield Partners.
At right; top and centre left. East Circular Quay, before and after.
Top and centre right. Opera House approach, before and after.
Below left and right. Railway station forecourt, before and after.





Passenger Terminal was to be truncated and remodelled to achieve a level of architectural distinction worthy of the location, create a new public square and encourage pedestrian movement through and around it. On the east side of Circular Quay the road was to be narrowed to allow a wide promenade and a new covered access to the Opera House.

At the end of 1984 the Public Works Department was appointed the construction authority and a team of architects was set up to work together with the Department in the design development and documentation of various precincts around the Quay. The team included architects Peter Hall, Lawrence Nield, Peter Stronach and Darrel Conybeare as well as myself, Brian Zulaikha and Oi Choong from the Department.

Policies were developed on street furniture, paving, landscaping, lighting, signage and colour schemes to effect greater unity. At the same time the detailed design of the Opera House forecourt, and the remodelling of the railway station, ferry wharves and shipping terminal paid particular regard to the innate architectural qualities of each building.

Special emphasis was given to the orchestration of cafes, restaurants and retail activities to animate the promenade around the water's edge, and to ensure that the needs of visitors were properly met, whether they be commuters during morning or evening peaks, tourists, Opera House patrons or CBD workers. Notwithstanding lapses in the quality of maintenance, the Quay today is one of Sydney's most vibrant places, actively used from early morning to late at night. Its impact upon the quality of life for those visiting the city is considerable. It is reputedly now one of the world's best locations for street theatre and buskers and makes Sydney's financial district seem more like a holiday resort. Building upon this success, new institutions around the foreshores such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, a Cinematheque, and various other exhibition spaces promise to add a further cultural dimension to Sydney's new found urbanism. Designed and built in three years at the cost of $100m, the work was subjected to normal public exhibition and planning approval processes with existing consent authorities. It attracted no controversy and was immensely popular from the day it opened.

DARLING HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT

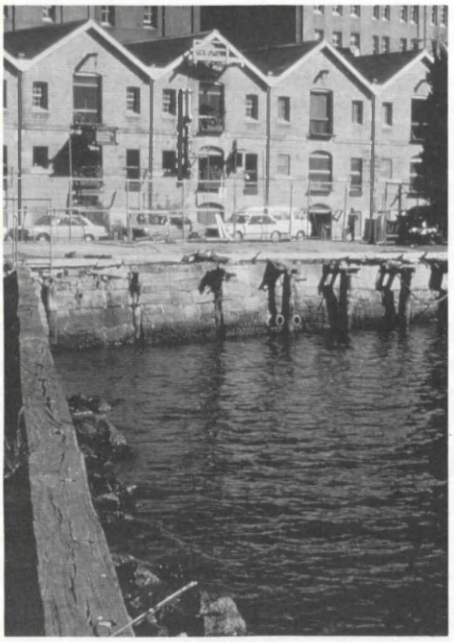
Such harmony was not the case with the Darling Harbour development, a 54 hectare site to the west of Sydney's CBD. By the 1970s the site was largely derelict or underutilized because of changing transport technology and the relocation of the Sydney Farm-Produce Markets. Much of the area was destined to be swallowed up by a tangle of perimeter expressways which had been under consideration by the Department of Main Roads for many years. With the election of the Labor Government in 1976, much of the expressway reservation was abandoned and the government took the initiatives of developing the Sydney Entertainment Centre, a 12,000 seat auditorium, the Powerhouse Museum and new buildings for the Institute of Technology in the area.

In 1977 the N.S.W. government had commissioned a study on Sydney's need for exhibition, convention and popular entertainment facilities and Darling Harbour was recommended as an ideal location. Early efforts looked at ways of subsidising such facilities with commercial developments or of achieving them as the residual of an international exhibition, "Expo 88" or even the Olympic Games. These and other initiatives came to nothing for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the lack of desire on the part of the State Government to share the limelight of high-profile events with a Federal Government of different political persuasion.

In May 1984 Premier Wran announced his government's decision to develop Darling Harbour as the centre piece of the state's program for the 1988 bicentenary. The development was to include convention and exhibition facilities, a park and foreshore promenade, a National Maritime Museum, commercial development sites including a "festival marketplace" and a Chinese garden (the site is adjacent to Sydney's Chinatown). Darling Harbour would be connected to the city by means of a "people-mover" and the whole development was to be a "peoples' place".

The momentous development was to be planned, designed and built in three and a half years! To ensure rapid progress, a special act of parliament set up the Darling Harbour Authority, which was charged with carrying out the works with comprehensive planning powers unaffected by any other state legislation. The Council of the City of Sydney was particularly concerned at the loss of such a large and important area from its planning control. In turn the government publicly expressed its concern at the unwieldy behaviour of the Council and ultimately disbanded the Council. A Development Strategy was produced by the Public Works Department and was put on exhibition in December 1984. A major input in this strategy came from the late Mort Hoppenfeld of the Enterprise Development Corporation in Baltimore, who had been involved with several waterfront redevelopment schemes in the USA including the Baltimore Inner Harbour Redevelopment. Perhaps the most controversial and politically damaging aspect of the scheme was to build the "people mover" as an elevated monorail through the centre of the city. This privately funded venture was again made possible by its own unique act of parliament exempting it from normal planning control. The imposition of the monorail led to public protest marches and criticism by the public and professional organization.

In 1985 the architectural and planning firm MSJ was appointed as the "project design directorate"to provide the essential skills in briefing, urban design, landscaping and



development control. Unusually for a government funded project, a private firm of contractors was appointed to provide services in project management, financial and construction programming, administration and supervision. As a check on this fast-track process a Quality Review Committee, comprising practitioners and academics in architecture and design as well as distinguished lay persons, was established to advise the Authority on the quality of the development on a regular basis.

Leading architects were selected for the main elements; Philip Cox for the Exhibition Building and Maritime Museum, John Andrews for the Convention Centre and Architecture Oceania in association with RTKL for the privately funded Festival Markets. A number of other privately funded schemes, two hotels and an aquarium were also commenced and further private developments are now under construction.

The expenditure of well in excess of $500m of state funds was not without criticism. It was not surprising that there were cost-overruns given the timescale. The construction unions had a field day at public expense because of the unalterable completion date. However, the development was sufficiently finished to receive the superb gathering of tall ships from all over the world in January 1988 to celebrate Australia's first 200 years. Nevertheless, it was a newly elected Liberal Premier who escorted the Queen when she formally opened the Darling Harbour Development later in May 1988.

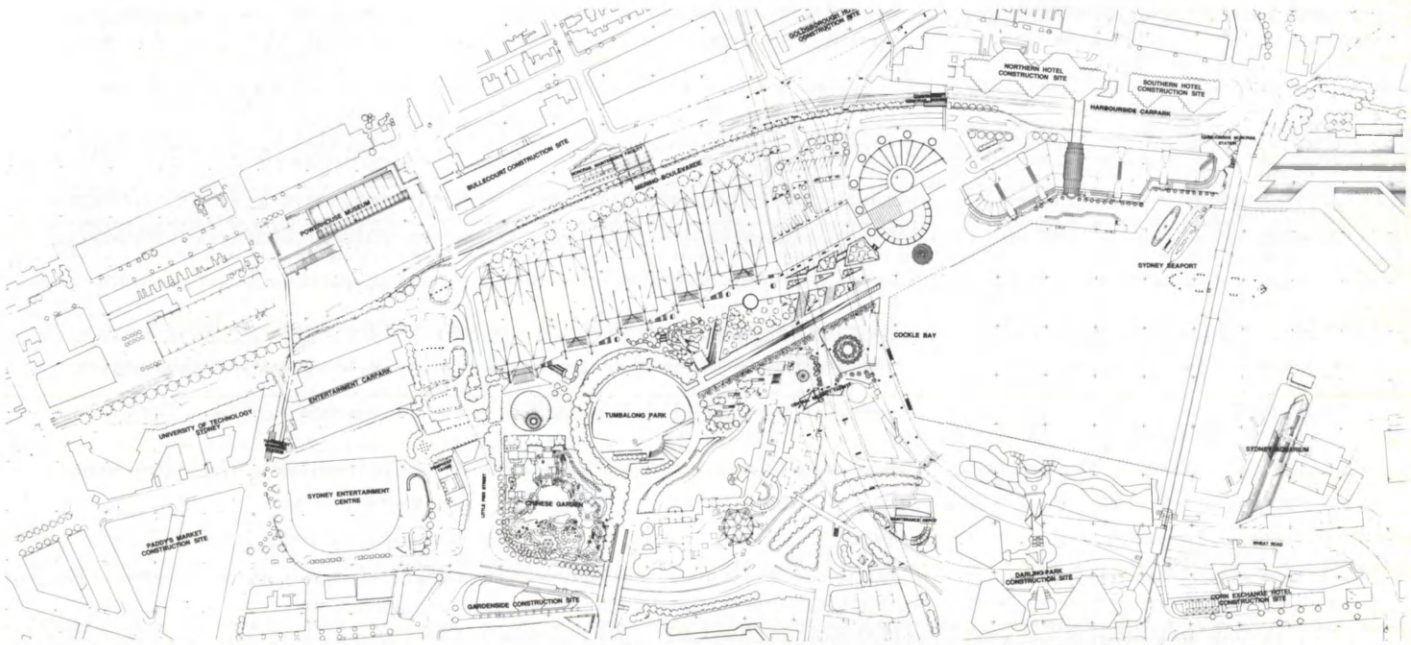
Although Darling Harbour still has its critics, during its first three years of operation it has become a popular success. The Festival Marketplace is metropolitan Sydney's fourth most popular shopping centre. The Convention and Exhibition Centres are functioning well but still below capacity. The National Maritime Museum and two of the hotels are due to open in late 1991 and will give a further boost to visitor numbers. In addition work has just commenced on two other major sites, which upon completion will ensure greater integration with the City of Sydney to the east. Beyond the perimeter of the Darling Harbour site itself, there has been massive enhancement in land values and numerous improvements are taking place in what was previously a run-down peripheral area.

The political price of Darling Harbour was high and the tax-payers' debt burden considerable. It can never be totally substantiated that the "multiplier effects" of the massive expenditure created an adequate return upon investment. This situation is further aggravated by the current downturn in Australia's property market. However with the growth of the city to the west of Darling Harbour, to include Pyrmont, as currently envisaged in the City of Sydney Strategy Plan, the development of Darling Harbour should prove to be as visionary as Dr. Bradfield's efforts at the beginning of the century.

As well as creating a new way of life for it's inhabitants, Sydney's new waterfront developments have done much to enhance its precedence as Australia's financial capital and gateway city. The qualities which make Sydney loved by its residents also appeal to external investors, conventioneers and tourists. The bicentennial projects have done much to demonstrate that the financial well-being of a city is only possible when there are commensurate investments in raising and maintaining the quality of the public realm.

Below left. West Circular Quay, before and after.
Top. New First Fleet Park at West Circular Quay
Centre. Darling Harbour before redevelopment.
Below. Darling Harbour Site Plan

Andrew Andersons was Assistant Government Architect and Head of Special Projects Branch, which implemented the Circular Quay Project. He is now Design Director of Peddle Thorp Architects.



SYDNEY - A UNIQUE PLACE
Reinforcing the City's Image & Identity
• DARREL CONYBEARE •

The underlying identity of a place - in this case Sydney - is not properly used as a basis for urban planning and design controls, nor is it used by those involved in the redevelopment process including architects and developers. Yet the rich legacy of the past is a design resource that should inform the urban design practice. The following paper outlines the case for more active recognition and promotion of the concept of urban image and identity at every scale of design.

Sydney's urban image and identity is inextricably linked to the natural setting of this centre on the visually spectacular foreshores of Sydney Harbour. It was this waterway that initially provided the convict settlement with safe anchorage and that later became its economic raison d'etre - a port city.

Its urban image also derives from the network of unplanned streets which are interwoven with the later irregular grid that was thrown over the narrow harbour peninsular (barely half a kilometre in width) and a legacy of attractive Colonial (Georgian), Victorian and 20th Century structures, including the notable Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House. Buildings and street are huddled into the tight peninsula restricted by harbour and the eastern chain of parklands comprising, the Domain, Botanic Gardens and Hyde Park.

Sydney's entire CBD centre fits neatly into a space equivalent in size to Central Park, New York. Therefore, it is not surprising that its urban scale appears less than full size. Compared to its counterpart, Melbourne, or other traditional grid cities in North America, Sydney in terms of historic infrastructure is of 'toy town' scale, where it is rewarding to be a pedestrian - except for the traffic! At nearly every turning of its maze of streets and lanes there are visually rewarding vistas and views which entice the observer to new discoveries. The scalar mismatch of historic and modern high rise buildings superimposed on this somewhat haphazard street network makes the place distinctive in ways not unlike Boston and San Francisco. Were it not for the high rise it could be compared in scale to the traditional cities of Europe - even parts of Venice.

The very intensity and compactness of the centre contributes to the sense of diversity of activity; transportation hubs, commercial, tourist, leisure and residential uses, a strong retail core and an active fringe business area are layered and interposed.

The post-war development of the city, characterised by a series of office booms, a brief interest in urban apartments and a recent hotel boom, has tended to fracture the once consistent traditional urban fabric, leaving it seemingly less coherent and certainly a more chaotic place. Curiously though, the apparently unplanned, wayward nature of these developments sometimes renders them more visually compatible with the overall urban disorder. In this sense it is a very forgiving place for architects and urban designers and it is the combination of natural setting and man-made infrastructure that makes it so.

There is a pervasive view that Sydney's urban identity, so dominated by a spectacular harbour setting and 200 years of largely unremarkable buildings, cannot be seriously marred or destroyed. Interest in architectural quality and urban and landscape design refinements suffers from a "she'll be right" attitude in the approach to urban redevelopment. Whilst it is true that it is difficult to marr the overall urban image - 'bad design' simply becomes part of its brashness - it is clear that this will not always be the case. Such a large amount of redevelopment will have to take place in the next 20 years that it will become increasingly important to ensure that it is carried out sympathetically and in ways that reinforce the magical qualities of the place.

Urban design, still in its infancy here, has not yet fully addressed Sydney's essential unique qualities. It is only relatively recently that there has been a demand to explore the idea of the opening up the City to its foreshore margins at Woolloomooloo, Circular Quay, Darling Harbour and Walsh Bay and to link these into a continuous foreshore parkway. The opportunities for the city to interact more dynamically with this new-found waterfront have at last begun to be realised. There remains a preoccupation with the control of development **within** the CBD and not with the City **edges** where the City intersects and abuts parkland, dockland, ferry terminals, freeways (surface and elevated) and Darling Harbour. There is also little attempt to examine the urban design implications of development on both the historic south and post war north side (North Sydney) CBD precincts. In fact, the planning and design of these centres is carried out in splendid isolation with each planning department operating as though the other did not exist.

With the construction of the Harbour Tunnel, which will provide a new connection between the City and North Sydney, it will soon become imperative to address the issues of urban development within the vicinity of the northern and southern Tunnel access points, as well as the impact of the Tunnel on the transport role of the Harbour Bridge. There is one supreme opportunity that emerges from the inclusion of an amalgamated North Sydney and Sydney CBDs on the urban design agenda and that is the potential for the inner harbour and adjoining green spaces (from Garden Island to Berry Island) to become one of the worlds great urban water parklands. Such an asset cannot go unnoticed for much longer although the concept will require political will and specialist urban and landscape design skills to bring to realisation.

Urban design, as it is currently practised in Sydney, tends to draw from an international language of controls and practices that have varying applicability in different urban situations. As a profession that is somewhat uncertain of its true mission the urban design language is not commonly understood and is often crude in its administration controls. For example in the 1971 Sydney Strategy Plan, controls borrowed from New York and San Francisco were used to reinforce development around the City underground stations. This measure failed to acknowledge the fact that the Sydney CBD is essentially a pedestrian scaled environment and is relatively well served by public transport throughout the spine. Sydney has therefore, tended to embrace imported controls unthinkingly, without tailoring them to its different needs and circumstances, and without due regard to the central issues of its unique urban identity and visual quality. The concept of incentives for encouraging site amalgamations for better standards of redevelopment has proved disastrous and in many instances has led to destruction of fine groups of buildings and the creation of useless windswept sunless plazas.

Sydney's character is made up of a great number of diverse elements. These are not limited to physical human-made elements, but extend to activities, institutions and the natural environment. Sydney's special urban character needs to be be identified, inventoried, examined in detail, (a process that the 1988 Strategy Plan has encouragingly embarked upon) and recognised for what it is: the principle reason for continued economic investment in the city, for tourist

Top left. Inlets, bays, parklands, street pattern.
Top right. Sydney Harbour and inlets from the south-west.
Centre. Harbour Bridge, North Sydney in background.
Below left. City view with Circular Quay and part of Walsh Bay.
Right. Street furniture, Circular Quay Promenade.

attraction and for the psychological well being and the cultural and artistic fulfilment of its citizens. For this process to take place, it will be necessary for urban designers to join with other disciplines such as urban management, promotional and advertising experts, to expand the design opportunities.

Urban design initiatives of more recent years have begun to recognise Sydney's unique identity. Precious waterfront areas have at last become opened up to public access and there is even talk of removing barriers such as the Cahill Expressway. Sydney's planners and urban designers need to recognise those qualities that make this place unique and to properly reward innovative design that strengthens the City's urban character. It is unfortunate that the planning and design controls which may prevent the worst from happening are not geared to directing that the best be given a chance to happen. Whilst it is not possible through controls to legislate for good design, it should be our goal to better define the characteristics that make this a special place.

The City's unique qualities as a waterbound city once properly recognised by urban designers and decision makers will dramatically alter our perception of the place, and provide a more enlightened framework for those determining the redevelopment process as well as a richer canvas for urban designers. Such a framework will ensure that it is a place that remains different from other cities and hence intrinsically interesting.

The Conybeare Morrison & Partners office has attempted to deal with the problem of Sydney's urban identity through a wide variety of design projects. A selection of these is outlined below.

The practice is informed by the philosophy that design is an essential part of the whole environment composed of natural as well as human made elements. It is the integration of all these elements into a unified scheme that creates unique places reinforcing the City's identity. The sense of continuously evolving links between the past and present are considered to be as important as the connections between physical elements of the design. We believe that architects and urban designers can play a more pro-active role in projecting new images and showing how the City can change.

PROJECT SUNRISE, DARLING HARBOUR

Initiated through a concern to preserve the 110 year old timber and cast/wrought iron Pyrmont Bridge (a concern that proved successful in reversing the Government's decision to demolish the Bridge), this project sought to focus Government attention on a large derelict segment of Sydney's foreshore only half a kilometre from the City Centre. Previous plans prepared by the NSW Maritime Services Board were to extend container wharfs into the Bay. The CMP proposal envisaged the creation of a new mixed-use urban precinct incorporating housing, retail and recreation activities along canals that extended the harbour to its original shoreline, a recycled Pyrmont Bridge, new attractions such as a maritime museum, festival market, aquarium, and natural history museum and a Tivoli/EPOCT style theme park. The urban structure involved extending both the CBD and Pyrmont grids into the seam of open space in the valley floor. Although this proposal was never implemented it was instrumental in demonstrating to the NSW Government that such a project at Darling Harbour was both economically and physically feasible.

CIRCULAR QUAY / MACQUARIE STREET IMPROVEMENTS

The firm was commissioned by the NSW Public Works Department to prepare urban design guidelines and detailed designs for Macquarie Street and Circular Quay as the centrepiece of the 1988 Bicentennial celebrations. The practice submitted a proposal for the upgrading of these precincts to the Premiers Department in 1984. This scheme proposed the integration of all the building forecourts and the parkland with the boulevard treatment of Macquarie Street - wider footpaths, avenue planting and co-ordinated street furniture etc. At Circular Quay, the concept was to open up public access to the foreshore and to treat the whole area from the Opera House to the Harbour Bridge, as a unified pedestrian space, by closing off unnecessary roads and parking areas. The design concept was to open up the waterfront and parkland frontages, with generous twelve metre wide public promenades grand enough in their scale to mediate between the grain of the city, the spatial civic room of Circular Quay and the rich exotic parkland of the Botanic Gardens and Domain. This was realised by rationalising traffic movements and parking. Significant additional space was added to the city's pedestrian / open space system.

One of the team's essential concerns was the establishment of design standards for the various elements of paving, planting lighting and street furniture. The paving palette was a well-tried local brick laid in herringbone and stretcher bond with stone trim in trachyte, sandstone and granite.

WALSH BAY

This winning design concept embracing the northern waterfrontage of Millers Point (part of Sydney's historic Rocks Precinct) proposed the preservation and adaptive re-use of most of the existing infrastructure of timber wharfs, shoresheds and masonry bondstores, and included sympathetically-designed infill of the few remaining development sites. The planning concept suggested the establishment of a new village community to be integrated with Millers Point in a mixed use precinct. Threading the precinct together was the revamped crescent of Hickson Road robustly designed as a shorefront drive, with widened footpaths, provision for a new tramway, avenue planting and specially designed civic furniture evocative of this industrial waterfront precinct.

CIVIC ACCESSORIES

The lack of any well-designed street furniture for major civic projects such as Macquarie Street and Circular Quay, gave rise to the establishment in 1987 of a design and production house, Street Furniture Australia. This company specialises in the design and manufacture of a wide range of furniture including seats, litterbins, tables, drinking fountains, bollards, street carts, kiosks, bus shelters and phone booths.

The designs are contemporary, light and transparent; sunlight, shade and shadow patterns are important. Although they are sometimes inspired by traditional forms, (the seat echoes the slatted seats of Sydney's now defunct trams), the design intent is to create a timeless civil elegance. Most importantly, the range is designed as an integrated family to assist in achieving a level of design coherence.

QUEEN VICTORIA BUILDING BUS SHELTERS

To complement the restoration of the Queen Victoria Building to a grand 19th century shopping galleria, a series of bus shelters was designed based on an adaptation of the Macquarie Street shelter with details referenced from the Queen Victoria Building itself. The design references are also drawn from the architecture of Sydney's trams with their lightweight hovering roof forms and slatted timber seats.

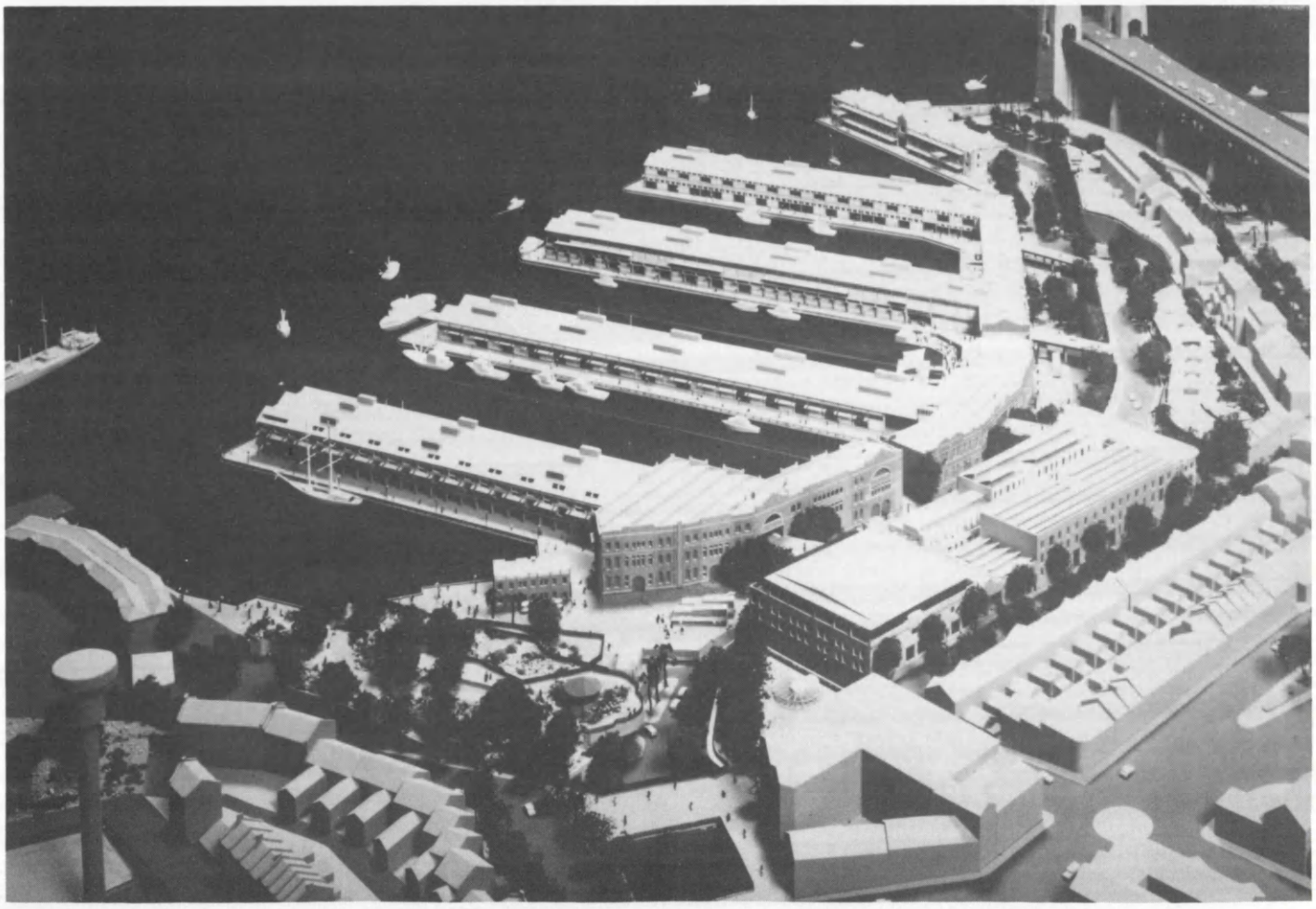
HARBOUR BRIDGE ILLUMINATION

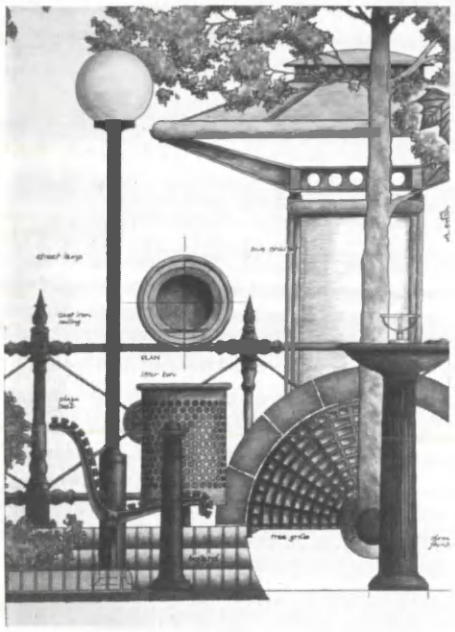
Prior to the Bicentennial, CMP recommended the illumination of the western side of the Harbour Bridge to provide a new night-time image to the populace of the western areas of Sydney and a new dimension to the perception of the extent and significance of the western waterways. The proposal has since been carried out.

Currently, CMP is seeking sponsors for, and promoting the recycling of the Southern Pylons of the Bridge as an architecture/ engineering museum with the incorporation of a gondola ride and walk over the arch. The Bridge is Sydney's "Eiffel Tower". It's iconographic function can be further strengthened by the development of a new role.

The underlying aim of these projects was to lift the sights of everyone involved in the urban development process and to initiate a new way of thinking about Sydney's urban design potential and the ways it could be realised. They have been remarkably successful in this regard. However, post-Bicentennial "blues'', a change of Government and the present recession have set this process back somewhat so that it may take

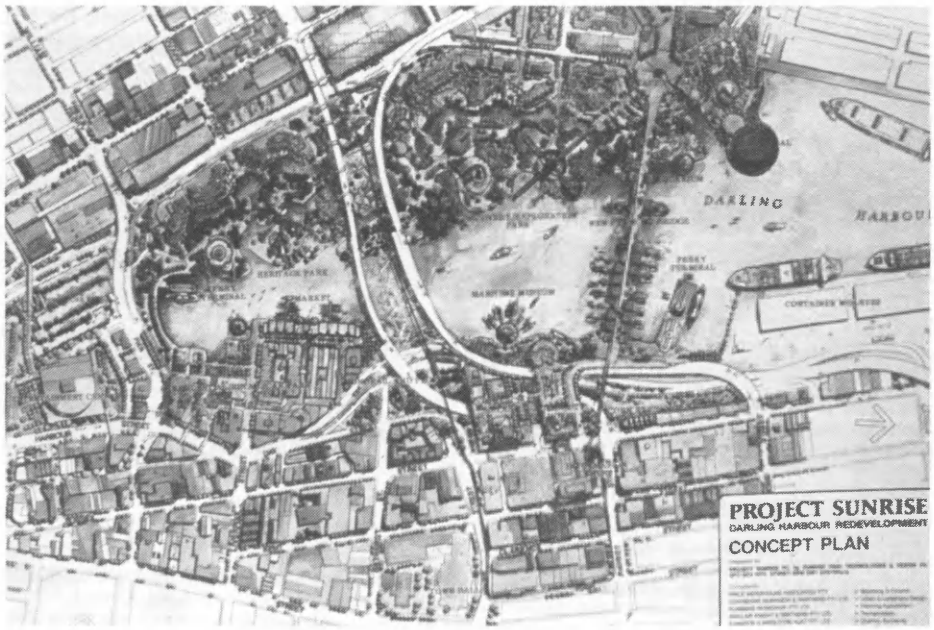
Top left. West Circular Quay promenade. Right. Macquarie Street improvements; footpath widening, paving, planting, street furniture, lighting.
Below. Walsh Bay Regeneration Project, model.





more than Sydney's Olympic bid for the year 2000 and the 2001 Federation of Australia celebrations to rekindle the spirit of the 80's.

It is ironic that this article is being written to draw attention to the need for urban design to re-define the way it deals with issues of urban image as the New South Wales Government is proceeding with plans to demolish the 500 metre long Woolloomooloo Bay finger wharf, the longest such structure in the southern hemisphere, and one of Sydney's great landmarks and potential harbourside attractions. It's demolition is not justified by the reason given - to open up the Bay visually; there are literally dozens of inlets in Port Jackson like Woolloomooloo Bay that do not have a great timber finger wharf gracing their shores. This decision ignores the wharf's historic, architectural and engineering excellence, and its social significance as another unique Sydney icon. More importantly perhaps, the removal of this structure does not make economic sense; it annihilates an urban asset with real value and its demolition flies in the face of initiatives to promote tourism and the Year 2000 Olympic Games.



Top Left. Civic accessories, Street Furniture, Australia.
Top right. Queen Victoria Building Bus Shelter.
Centre. Project Sunrise. Plan for Darling Harbour.
Below, Timber Finger Wharf at Woolloomooloo Bay.

Darrel Conybeare is a Principal of the Sydney firm of Conybeare Morrison & Partners, architects, urban and landscape design consultants.

THOUGHTS ON A STRATEGY

• PHILIP COX •

Sydney, Australia's oldest settlement is considered by many to be one of the world's most beautiful cities. Much of this has to do with its magical, geographical, harbour and estuary setting and its gentle topography which extends across the western Cumberland Plains to the Blue Mountains beyond.

The Sydney Central Business District (CBD) is restrained by natural features on three sides. To the north by the harbour (linked only by the Sydney Harbour Bridge), to the east by the Botanic Gardens and Farm Cove, and to the west by Darling Harbour. Expansion of the city is possible only to the south, or by bridging over the waterways to the various adjacent promontories.

This phenomena has controlled space and kept Sydney compact and vertical. The CBD is, therefore, relatively small in comparison with its conurbation which stretches over hundreds of kilometres.

Sydney has, however, ignored the natural blessings of the water environment and many of the obvious opportunities of relating buildings and public spaces to the harbour have never been fully exploited.

The majority of Australian cities have been planned, surveyed, measured, documented and regulated. They are not planning accidents, they are the determination of planners, surveyors, architects, builders and politicians at any one time. They are both the embodiments of the past and mirages of unfulfilled dreams, especially of three early Colonial Governors who had splendid visions which were never realised. A particularly interesting characteristic of Sydney is its 'unplanned' feel, which contrasts to the highly structured form of the other Australian cities that rely essentially on mechanistic grid layouts and a consequent subdivisional pattern.

Australian cities, either tend to thrive in buoyant economic circumstances, in periods of vitality, or they stagnate and die under economic downturns, or excessive imposed regulation. This boom or bust reaction is characteristic of the Australian economy and reflects something of its ethos. The general tendency of city growth, especially Sydney's, is cyclical and historical. Man is a creature of memory however, and in Sydney the past, and historical sequence is confused by problems of overlaid and non-sequential structures.

The present urban crisis as evident in Sydney and elsewhere (Melbourne, Brisbane or Darwin are no exception) is decidedly pressuristic. Twentieth century Sydney follows the rest of the world in being technology-driven without an understanding of the basis of history and its continuity. In city planning and architecture, the scientific outlook still has the romance of the untried dream. Sybil Maholy-Nagy once stated "The technocratic illusion that the man-made environment can ever be the image of a permanent scientific order is blind to the historical evidence that cities are governed by tacit agreement or multiplicity, contradiction, tenacious tradition, reckless progress, and limitless tolerance for individual values." This is true of Sydney.

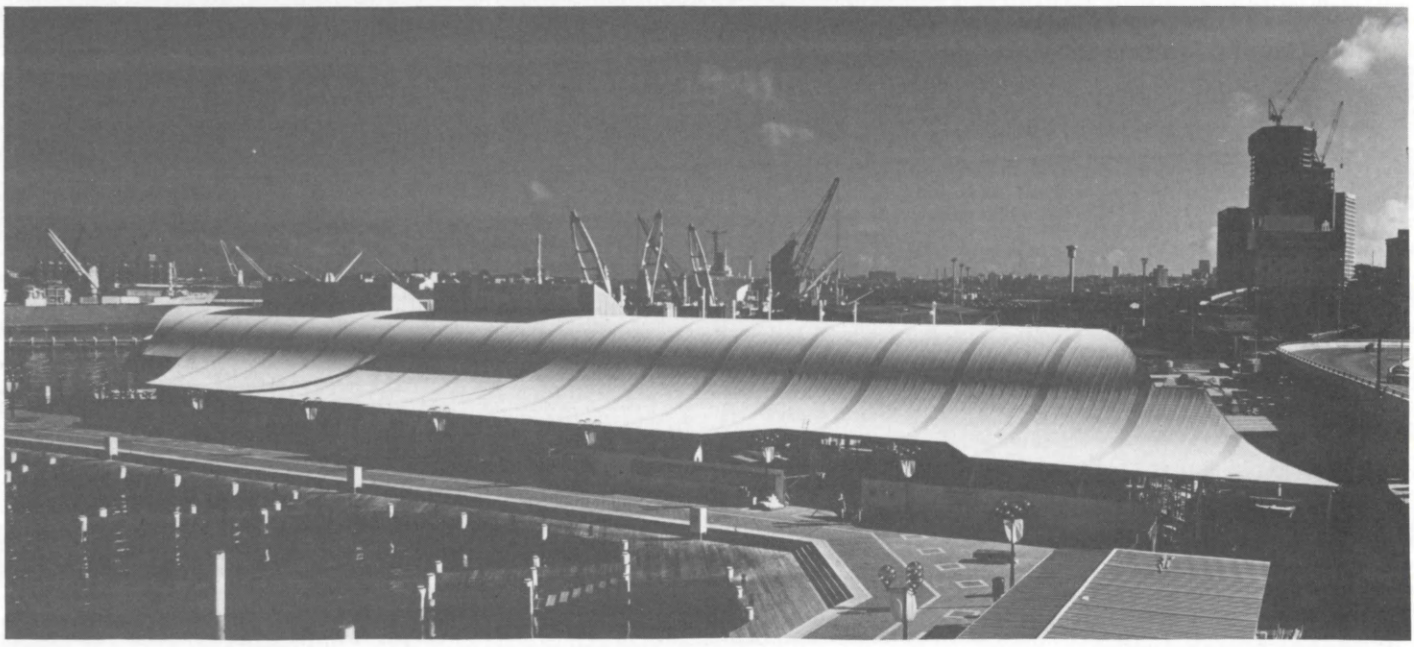
Sydney's past has virtually disappeared. The result is that its predominant architectural expression is that of the modern movement. The modern movement has become inextricably identified with the corporate capitalism of Sydney and much of the resulting architecture has failed in creating either urban place or civic identity. Sydney remains essentially a pattern of streets without a civic focus.

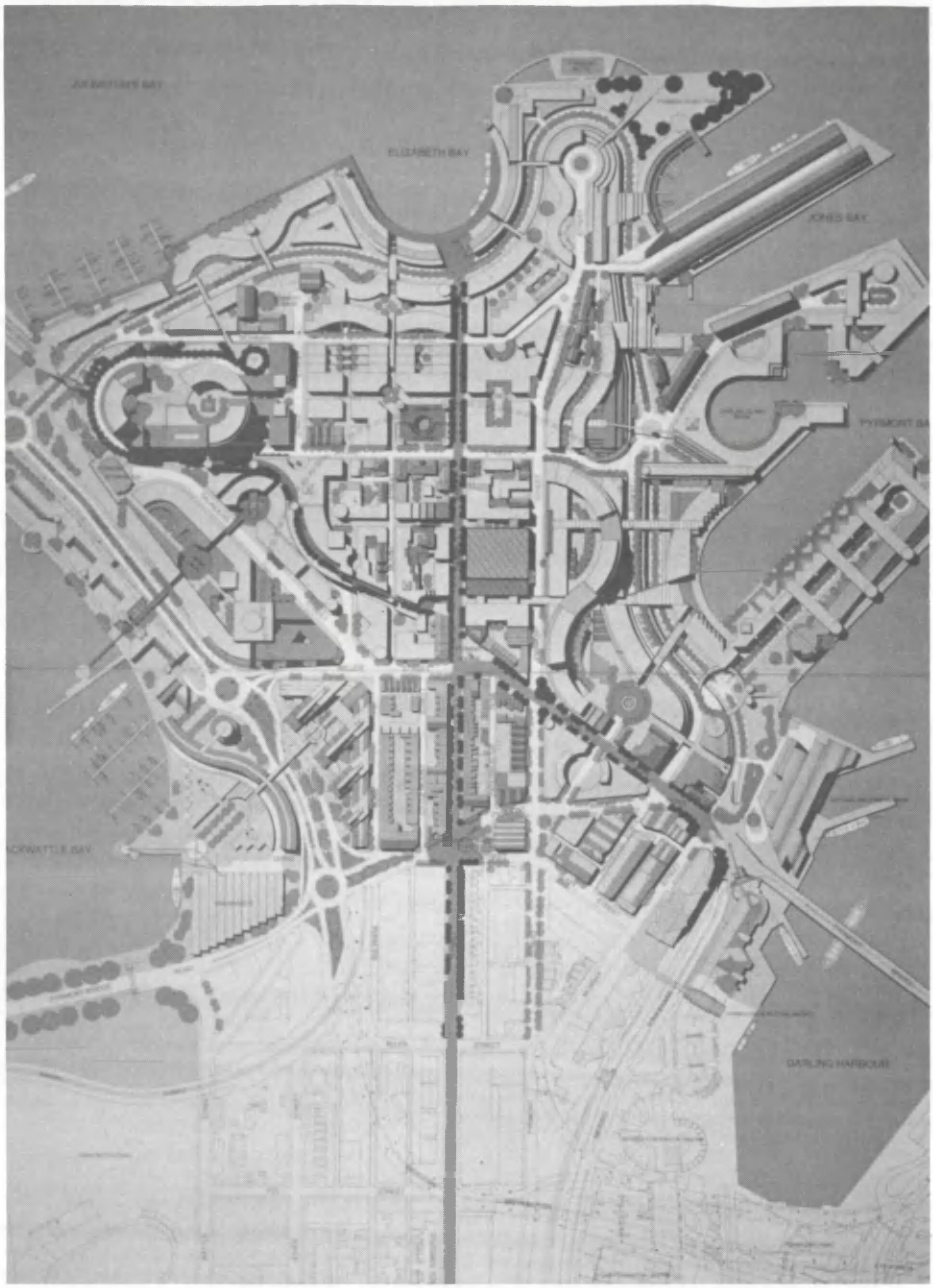
There are few public buildings, built or conceived within the CBD of Sydney, which afford a sense of intellect or urban ability. The city planners have consistently ignored the opportunities of locating libraries, galleries or museums within the heart of the city, allowing easy pedestrian access and adding richness to the centre. These amenities have been jettisoned to the fringes, parks and peripheral areas; hence the Harbour is the real public space of the city.

Because of its splendid setting, Sydney should be and still has the opportunity of becoming one of the great cities of the world. However due to the bland, corporate architecture and the lack of a cohesive plan, it is fast gaining one of the country's ugliest CBD's.

Sydney has been the product of many urban plans, from the initial plan of Governor Phillip culminating in the Gardenesque and Romantic Landscape visions of Governor Macquarie and architect, Francis Greenway (which to date have been the only valid long term objectives and plans for Sydney) to the 1909 Royal Commission of Inquiry which did much to address the city but, not taking a comprehensive view, ended merely in a precinctual analysis. The 1971 City of Sydney Strategy Plan contained blatantly negative attitudes in its attempt to control the centre. It gave no hope, inspiration, image or

Below. Darling Harbour Aquarium by Philip Cox.




ELIZABETH BAY
JONES BAY
DARLING HARBOUR

determination to the city. It was hoped that the Central Sydney Strategy Plan of 1988 would indicate a path to the 21st Century. However, the document is not a plan; it may be a useful enunciation of policy, it may identify some objectives, it may provide an analytical base from which a plan can be developed, but it is not a plan in the creative sense. It does not aspire to concepts of spatial awareness - form and space. It does not define or articulate space and form as the city meets the sky, the ground, the water's edge. Nor does it define points in space in the design sense, or identify other basic requirements such as materials, colour, shape, feature, either physically or in an architectural sense.

One constraint Sydney does not have in common with London, Paris or Rome, is an extensive historic core, and yet our planners are reluctant to define the city on a precinctual basis, to identify significant preservation areas and areas where mediocre or unworthy architecture can be removed to make way for more imaginative and less constrained development.

Sydney is bedevilled by negativism and an unwarranted conservatism, which demand the preservation of indifferent architecture and the suppression of imaginative and spirited solutions. Planners have a deep-seated fear that architects are irresponsible and insensitive to urban issues; therefore the status quo situation is preferred. The result is mediocrity. The great urban structures laid down by Wren, Nash or Haussman, are testimony to universal principles which are capable of being sustained. Sydney desperately needs this type of structure.

A plan for Sydney must develop a new and positive strategy; it should be imaginative, concept-making and realizable in terms of development objectives. It should exhort, rather than suppress, development; it should encourage the vision splendid. The 1988 plan fails in this purpose.

On the more positive side, Sydney has recently executed to its credit a most ambitious scheme of urban renewal; the Darling Harbour project which has turned a defunct industrial section of the western CBD into a new and integral part of the City.

The Darling Harbour development is essentially for entertainment and tourism with convention and exhibition centres and commercial office space. Philip Cox, Richardson Taylor and Partners designed three major buildings, the Exhibition Hall, the National Maritime Museum and the Aquarium. They are all painted steel and glass; white, light , lyrical structures which reflect the maritime nature of the site. In many ways these buildings represent the 'new' Australia with its vigour and opportunism. They express a vision of the future rather than picking up on typologies or influences from the past.

Darling Harbour is enjoyed by many. It is humanly scaled, bright and exciting. It is not forced in the way that the London Docklands appear. In terms of place and architecture, it is relaxed and inviting. The real proof of such developments is surely in their popularity and for Sydneysiders, Darling Harbour is a most enjoyable place, catering to the needs of all socio-economic groups and all kinds of tourist. It has become the first real attempt in urban planning, of relating new development to the water and to the Harbour, and though the critics of Darling Harbour feel it could have been more coherently planned it remains the best example of urban renewal in Australia.

Many opportunities are arising from the Darling Harbour experiment. The adjacent area of Pyrmont is an example and is currently being replanned as a commercial/ residential precinct which will integrate with the social infrastructure of Darling Harbour. Pyrmont offers unlimited opportunity to create a most exciting environment adjacent to the CBD.

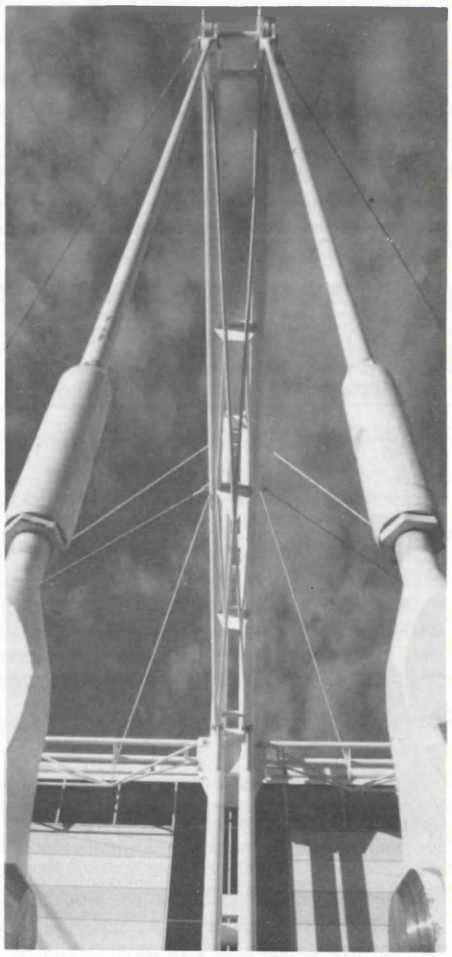
Pyrmont peninsula has similar physical characteristics to the Sydney CBD in that it too is surrounded on three sides by water and has high sandstone bluffs which give it an exciting topography. The peninsula is also fortunate in having only two owners - one the Government and the other, the Colonial Sugar Refinery, one of Australia's oldest companies. The replanning of this area is, therefore, not hampered by myriads of individual owners.

Originally a residential area Pyrmont became industrial during the nineteenth century with the establishment there of sugar refineries and shipping. With the decline of Sydney as a port, so too has Pyrmont declined. Today the sugar refinery is no longer viable as sugar processing is taking place at the plantations in Queensland. Pyrmont provides, therefore, a wonderful opportunity to create a development of distinction. No other major city in the world has such a dormant area adjacent to it, separated only by water. The economic temptation is to allow commercial development to repeat the CBD, with more high rise office buildings and high rise apartments. However this is being resisted by the government and CSR. CSR have appointed the Lend Lease Group to manage and develop their parcel and this they are doing with sensitivity and integrity.

The plan, by Cox Richardson Taylor, is for low to medium rise buildings, preserving the existing required densities and providing the floor space essential for development feasibility and infrastructure replacement.

The plan is based upon accessibility and car thresholds which have been determined to ensure that a residential population of 10,000 people can be accommodated, with a working population of 30,000. In Sydney in the past, there has been a tendency to separate working and living environments. Planning legislation has tended to reinforce the situation rather than encourage the interplay of the two. Pyrmont provides an opportunity to create an active and culturally interesting environment through a genuine mix of work and residential areas.

It also has the advantage of being able to put residential and commercial activity into a direct relationship with the waterfront and this, if properly handled, will result in unique



environments which have so far been ignored in Sydneys CBD.

The total development of Pyrmont is likely to take up to 10-15 years. There will be many players and interpretations. The plan however, is a three dimensional realization rather than a statutory document and therefore has visual coherence. If it goes ahead, Pyrmont will provide one of the few examples in which commercial objectives have been met in lower scale development.

Both Darling Harbour and Pyrmont are, by world standards, exciting projects - they can be compared to London's Docklands projects in terms of opportunity. But in their relationship to Sydney they have the ability of turning the city around, giving it a new focus. These projects show that Sydney may be waking up to its potential and may well live up to the expectation of becoming an extraordinary and exciting city.

Top left. Plan for Belmore Park, Royal Commission 1908.
Centre. Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour.
Right. Pyrmont Point plan, Cox Richardson Taylor Architects.
Below. Pyrmont Point from the north 1990.
Above. Exhibition Centre.

Philip Cox is a principal of Cox Richardson Taylor Architects.

CONSERVATION & FACADISM

• HARRY SEIDLER •

Disenchantment must be the appropriate word to describe what most people feel about the new Sydney city environment taking shape around them. Unfortunately much present day building is unskilled, its visual impact undistinguished at best, and due to the lack of effective planning, oppressive at worst. The few examples of good architecture are drowned out in a sea of mediocrity, and there is a general lack of confidence in the present and the future of the city. The result is that any proposal for a new building is now immediately placed in a defensive position. Invariably the call is for the abandonment of new projects and the retention of any old existing buildings whether they are good, bad or indifferent. This fashionable interest in the past is symptomatic of our time - we have lost the confidence in our ability to express our will to create an environment of our own making.

No-one would question the importance and validity of retaining and rehabilitating worthy structures and beautiful total environments of the past. Sydney now has a distinguished record of preserving and giving a new lease of useful life to important historic buildings such as the Hyde Park Barracks, the Mint and State Parliament House, all Colonial buildings; the Queen Victoria Building and the Strand Arcade, important monuments from the Victorian Era; and Paddington and Glebe, the superb areas of 19th century terrace houses.

These significant buildings and districts were not only sensitively restored and given valid new uses, but have become important visual reminders of the best architecture of Sydney's past.

Superb examples of revitalisation of great and important old buildings abound in other parts of the world; Paris has the new D'Orsay Museum of 19th century art within what was a disused but fine old railway station of the 1870's. The new Picasso museum in that city is now housed in what was once a rotting grand palais. The Louvre has a new magnificent underground entrance hall. Vienna's 18th century Lichtenstein Palais has become its Museum of Contemporary Art and New York's historic Soho district has been restored to become an area of art galleries and loft apartments.

What all these exemplary efforts of adaptive re-use have in common is the new life within the unaltered totality. Their character was recognised as valuable and the buildings, as a whole, were adapted to new uses.

Symptomatic of the new fashion and interest in the past is the recent "Central Sydney Heritage Inventory", prepared for the Department of Planning and The Council of the City of Sydney as part of the 1988 Sydney Strategy Plan. This document lists thousands of buildings and hundreds of streetscapes and other items in the CBD. It includes approximately 120 buildings in George Street alone, over 50 buildings in Kent Street and similar numbers in Pitt Street, some with the Darling Harbour monorail flying across their face. The list seems to include just about every other building in existence!

The express purpose of this listing is to pinpoint works of "cultural, historic, social, aesthetic, architectural, creative, technological, scientific and archaeological significance". It categorises 84 architectural styles with such absurd names as "Inter-War, Chicagoesque, Immigrants Nostalgia, Post-War Stripped Medieval and Exotic".

Since many the buildings are low rise, and have a useable floor space or an "index" of between 1 to 3 times the site area, a serious conflict arises because present Sydney regulations allow for a development factor of up to 12.5 times the site area.

If the buildings in the Heritage Inventory are truly valuable and are to be totally preserved, any new structures of this allowable maximum potential size would become impossible. The only compensation available to owners of "heritage" buildings is the selling of air rights which can never reimburse them for the value of the land and a new building. For those who want to stay put and build anew on the land they own, the inevitable compromise is the official edict to retain the facade only and build huge new structures behind the old fronts.

The very idea of keeping only the front of a building is abhorrent to any genuine conservationist. "Facadism" represents a shallow, provincial view of history and the increasing examples in Sydney are monuments to the sham underlying these less than erudite official edicts. The discordance of the resulting change of scale and clash of materials is truly painful to the eye.

The Heritage Inventory increases the likely continuance of such procedures in the future. It is a regressive document and its bonafides must be questioned. There is no doubt that it will have the effect of preventing new buildings and at the least will severely compromise new building proposals and detract from the contribution they could make to the city.

The real sin of omission of this Inventory is that it does not even hint at a total vision for the city. The Department of Planning and the Sydney City Council must be challenged to show us tangibly what they want the city to be. Anyone can make listings of existing buildings, but the planners, bureaucrats and politicians responsible for this report must show us, lead and guide us to the city beautiful of tomorrow.

What the citizens of Sydney are entitled to see is a three dimensional image of staged development into the next century, which gives evidence that such images are able to be adjusted realistically and shows an awareness of market forces and ensuing demands. Such images for the city would give the people the confidence that it is possible to have a truly harmonious, useable and beautiful total environment in which the ever increasing population of the city can enjoy their everyday life. The image must show that this can be achieved without undue congestion, confusion and inhuman crowding; where breathing space and open outlook from buildings is ensured; where oppressive canyon spaces between new buildings are banished; where noise is prevented from areas of housing; where traffic is no longer a life endangering phenomenon.

Buildings of true historic value should be preserved totally, without doubt, but the hollow pretence of listing and keeping cosmetic facades will rob the old of any character and will certainly prevent any chance of the new being genuinely itself - let alone great.

Harry Seidler is the principal of Harry Seidler & Associates.

Facadism in Loftus Street Sydney.

GREETINGS FROM OZ!

We came out from London 18 months ago, intending to be here for a year, but have now decided to extend our stay. We have been having such a good time and the letters from friends back home bemoaning the state of the economy, politics and the lack of employment helped our decision to postpone our return.

Mind you, the recession has hit this large island with a vengeance. Only last week the Sydney Morning Herald carried a front page article stating that by June 50% of the architects in New South Wales would be out of work.

It's a very serious state of affairs, all I can say is that plenty of sunshine and beautiful beaches help. The city's eastern edge is terminated by the Pacific Ocean, which provides a goodly number of beaches within ten minutes drive from the town centre. These were once indescribably polluted with raw sewage, but are now much improved. At any rate there seems to be plenty of people surfing, swimming and lazing on them most days.

The beaches, and the Harbour, are what makes Sydney special. Sydney, like London, is divided into a Northern and a Southern half by a body of water; but whereas in London it's a dirty brown ribbon, here it's a sparkling blue sheet that bustles with sailing boats, pleasure launches, working ferries and real cargo ships from all over the world. And even though the part of town behind Circular Quay, the main ferry terminal, and the place where the city began is now dominated by pseudo-Manhattan towers, much of the rest of the foreshore is still bush. When all else fails, you can generally lift your spirits with a two-dollar ferry ride, courtesy of the Urban Transit Authority.

Most of the rest of the urban transport system is on a par with London, which means that by world standards it's mediocre (Melbourne, which still has trams, does rather better). There are various efforts to reduce the car traffic in the city even under a Conservative government; some roads are restricted to cars carrying more than three passengers in peak hours but even so traffic in the city centre slows to a crawl between five and seven o'clock.

One of the main things about Sydney is eating. Every second location seems to be a restaurant, and they're almost all good and cheap. The other main thing about it is that it's a Pacific city rather than a specifically Australian one - the dominant culture is not red-necked beerswilling potbellied men making jokes about Sheilas, as most of our English friends seemed to have assumed.

The city is probably more multiracial than London, with lots and lots of South East Asians. And the European population isn't predominantly Anglo either - there's Greeks and Turks and Spanish and East Europeans and French and loads of Italians. There seems to be about five Italian language newspapers - there are three Spanish ones that I've come across, plus assorted Yugoslav, Greek, Hungarian, German, French, Thai...

The electronic media are generally quite bad - we've decided not to get a telly - but there is one multiethnic channel that shows a lot of Channel Four stuff and a couple of really alternative ethnic radio stations which spent most of their time denouncing the police and the Anglo power structure.

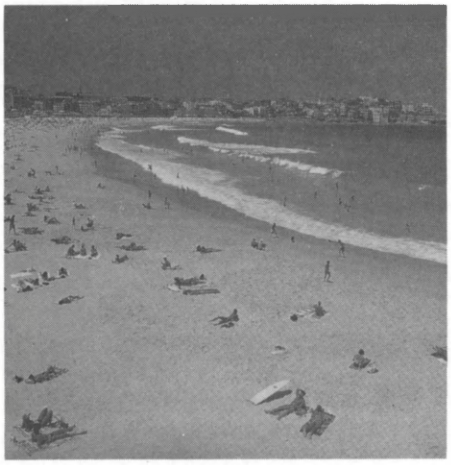
Glebe - our suburb (Australians call every part of a city a suburb whether it's suburban or not, so we live in an inner city suburb), is a bit like the trendy bits of London must have been before they became too expensive and precious for anyone to live there; there's even more coffee bars than in the other parts of the city, there's a trendy bookshop that's open 9-9 every day of the year except Christmas day (when it's open until 6), and an alternative cinema.

I've been gainfully employed most of the time, first with Philip Cox's office, and now with Howard Tanner, one of the city's eminent conservation architects. Sydneysiders take their conservation very seriously at least they do now, having torn down much of the older buildings in the city during the 1970s and 1980s!

Hope all is well with the UDG.

Best wishes,

Ruth Schamroth



URBAN DESIGN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

PETER WEBBER

The first post-graduate urban design programme in an Australian university was established at the University of Sydney in 1989, and the first graduates are now in active practice.

Throughout Australia there has been a remarkable awakening to the importance of urban design skills. A better-informed and more articulate community has seen both evidence of the transformations which can be effected by creative design and the dismal results of conventional city development processes. City and country local government councils and state governments are undertaking major reviews of urban design objectives and controls, and urban designers are in increasing demand. Planning courses, like those almost everywhere in the western world, have retreated from involvement with the physical design process.

Sydney provides one of the world's most exiting laboratories for urban design research and the University of Sydney is located strategically close to the heart of Australia's oldest and largest city. With generous support from one of Australia's largest and most highly respected development organisations - the Lend Lease Corporation - a new Chair in Urban Design was established with a guarantee of funding for an initial five years. In addition, funds were donated by one of Australia's greatest artists - the late Lloyd Rees - for a prize for the outstanding graduate each year.

An enthusiastic course advisory committee consisting of practitioners, officials in government agencies and academics supported and guided the development of the academic programme. There were two critical decisions about the direction which the course should take.

The first was that it must be a genuinely postgraduate-level course in design. Only graduates with a first degree in architecture or landscape architecture and a satisfactory folio of work or, in the case of graduates from areas such as engineering or planning, demonstrably equivalent levels of design ability, are admitted. This is a significant difference to many of the present courses in the U.S.A. and U.K. which have a very difficult task in developing in some students with other backgrounds, a credible post-graduate level of urban design achievement.

The second decision was that the programme must have a broad range of inputs of the knowledge and skills which are essential to develop an understanding of urban design, possibly the most complex and challenging of all art forms. Although the programme is based in the Department of Architecture, it was important that the other departments in the Faculty - Town Planning and Architectural Science - should contribute, as well as there being a policy of utilising expertise from many external sources. Urban design students attend one of the core planning courses, as well as a new course in urban environmental science and services developed specially for the course by the Architectural Science Department. The core courses in urban design studio, theory and method, history of urban form and landscape are provided by the Department of Architecture together with service courses covering the financial and legal environment.

There are Diploma and Masters level programmes available on a full or part-time basis. The Diploma requires the equivalent of one year of full-time study, and the Masters an additional 3 to 6 months research work. A research ethos is being fostered so that long overdue work can begin

on some of the many aspects of urban design requiring investigation.

The broad educational objectives were stated as follows:

1. To develop ability to define and analyse urban design problems and opportunities.
2. To develop abilities in the development of urban design concepts, principles, criteria and programmes.
3. To develop abilities to evaluate the performance of urban design projects and policies and the processes by which they can be achieved.
4. To develop abilities to develop strategies and manage the implementation of urban design projects.
5. To develop skills to work successfully with the public and with the planning, development and design professions that shape the physical environment.
6. Additionally, the Master's Degree has the objective of developing research skills and extending knowledge in the field of urban design through the research project.

The University of Sydney Faculty of Architecture is well placed to mount the new programme. It was able to build on a long tradition of involvement in urban issues in undergraduate courses, and on the established interests of a considerable number of staff. It has good physical facilities including wind tunnel, artificial sky, urbanscope, workshops and excellent library.

The Chair for the first year was held by Professor Fritz Stuber from Zurich, with academic visitors including Professors John de Monchaux (M.I.T.), Anne Spirn (University of Pennsylvania) and Peter Rowe (Harvard).

Professor Harry Bechervaise - the second occupant of the Chair - is an Australian with extensive experience in local government and private practice in a number of the large Australian cities. Most students so far have been drawn from the Sydney area, but there is growing interest from the South-East Asian region for which Australian universities are increasingly providing post graduate opportunities.

There are many similarities between the curricula of the Sydney course and those of the U.K. universities and polytechnics. The programmes at Oxford Polytechnic and Herriot Watt University for example, contain mostly the same core subjects and are of the same length for diploma and masters students. Contacts have been established between staff responsible for most of the U.K. programmes, and there are obvious opportunities for students in the U.K. to undertake certain work at Sydney which could be credited to their U.K. programmes - and of course vice-versa. Although there are distinctively different issues and challenges in each region, the underlying principles are timeless. The Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sydney welcomes close and continuing contact and debate with colleagues in the U.K. on urban design teaching and research.

Professor G P Webber is head of the Department of Architecture, University of Sydney.

SYDNEY 2000

• PETER MYERS •

This plan for Sydney - potentially one of the world's great maritime cities - is based on simple objectives that can be easily realised before the next millenium. In the following summary the main issues of the proposal are set out using the same key text as the illustrated plan.

1. HARBOUR TUNNEL ALLOWS TRAFFIC TRIANGULATION & thus liberates the city centre from the cross town commuter traffic presently choking the Cahill Expressway whose elevated trajectory across Circular Quay is one of the grimmest legacies of the perception of the city as a traffic engineer's tabula rasa.

2. REMOVAL OF THE CAHILL EXPRESSWAY & THE CONSTRUCTION OF CIRCULAR QUAY AS AN URBAN PROMENADE WITH FERRY STATIONS ALONGSIDE & WONDERFUL VISTAS TO & FROM THE CITY CENTRE recalls the neo-classical vision of Sydney promoted during the early colonial era (of which only the elegaic Mrs Macquarie's Chair now remains) and extends the radical monumentality of Jorn Utzon's sadly mutilated Sydney Opera House. Utzon, acutely aware of the attenuated siting of his building prepared a beautiful design for the eastern Quay precinct that was rejected out of hand by city hall. It has since been overtaken by a 'Bicentennial' covered way which will now be made redundant by the amalgamation of all the adjacent sites between the Opera House and the Cahill Expressway for redevelopment.

As a promenade the proposed profile allows for both new ferry stations as extensions of the original settlement and for the construction of a cathartic sweep of wall and water - with a clean hydraulic contour - that will return the city to its harbourside. Maclean's masterpiece, the Corniche at Alexandria, 1921, is both a wonderful prototype and proof that it is never too late to propose a new harbour edge.

Sydney has now reached a situation in which the former maritime diversity has been almost supplanted by the monocultural conformity of late capitalism. At the harbour's edge change and popular complexity are still possible once the hideous expressway is demolished.

3. A TOWER OF 40 + FLOORS AT 40 m. dia. & 1260 sq.m. area WITH A CIRCULAR PLAN to be built at no cost on the former site. Public housing is proposed - not more anonymous office space to an already oversupplied rental market-but public housing on leases commensurate with the location. The need for publicly owned sites to regenerate the city both culturally and as secure assetts has never been greater. The financial returns on this project would easily fund the proposed expressway demolition and harbourside regeneration.

4. ESCALATORS LINK THE QUAY TO

5. FORT STREET STATION ON OBSERVATORY HILL using the same technology as the recently completed external escalator system connecting Barcelona's Parc Guell to the city below. Preliminary enquiries indicate that this technology is both available and adaptable to the gradients and conditions of a Circular Quay to Observatory Hill alignment. A new station at Observatory Hill is a long overdue addition to the city rail network and would also further encourage public use of a habourside venue still unspoilt and fabulously beautiful. Concurrently the removal of the expressway also makes possible

6. A NEW CITY RAIL STATION APPROPRIATELY THE FIRST AND LAST to be located at the present cutting in Macquarie Street and serving straight into the existing commuter rail network. These new stations would in turn be linked by

7. A LIGHT RAIL NETWORK WHICH IS EASILY ACCOMMODATED ALONG EXISTING STREETS & will provide a very accessible supplement to existing public transport infrastructure. Cheap, low impact and variable light rail is the obvious answer to both connect east and west Circular Quay and to provide a low maintenance public transport system within the existing city fabric. Study by local specialists indicates that the establishment costs are modest and the increase in amenity exponential.

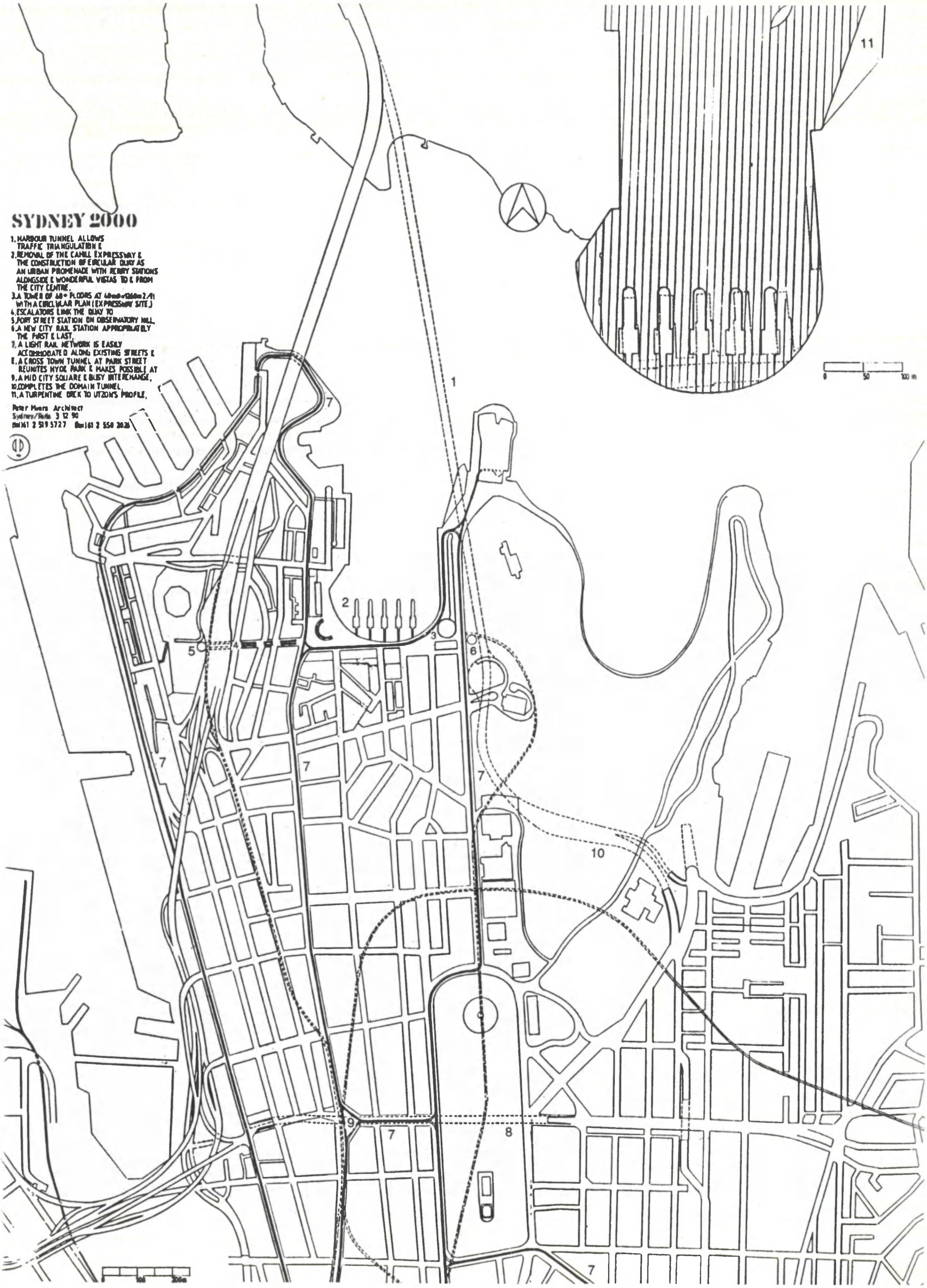
8. A CROSS TOWN TUNNEL AT PARK STREET REUNITES HYDE PARK & MAKES POSSIBLE AT

9. A MID CITY SQUARE AND BUSY INTERCHANGE. By the simple device of chamfering off two existing development sites a really urban place is achieved with a welcome density of people, public and private transport - the sort of place Town Hall should have become years ago. The temporary nuisance of the tunnel construction is more than offset by the reuniting of Hyde Park and the hubbub of a busy Town Hall minus the anxiety of cross town commuter vehicles.

10. COMPLETES THE DOMAIN TUNNEL. This cutting should never have been allowed to alienate the city's sward. An easy exercise in rock cutting and an extension of the existing tunnel profile could see this achieved in two years.

11. A TURPENTINE DECK TO UTZON'S PROFILE. The existing locally designed approaches to the Opera House could well be enhanced by some attempt to construct an edge profile to Utzon's 1964 design (that somehow always gets pushed aside). If this deck was to be made in Australian hardwood - specifically Turpentine - a new vivacity would be added to the Circular Quay precinct.

Peter Myers is in private practice and a lecturer in Architecture at the University of Sydney.


SYDNEY 2000
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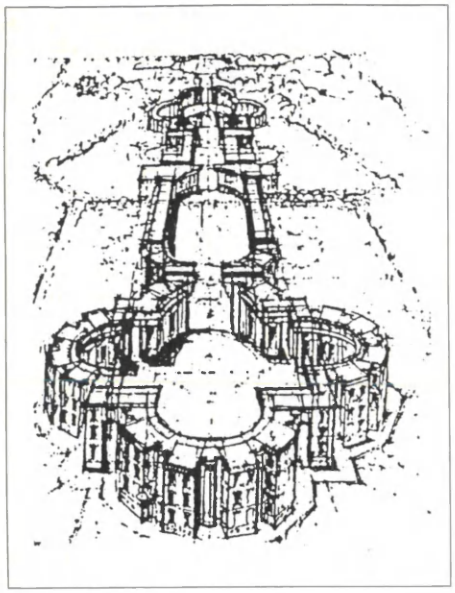


EMERGING CONCEPTS IN URBAN SPACE DESIGN
Geoffrey Broadbent
Van Nostrand Reinhold (London) 1990.
£39.50

First impressions of this book are that it is very attractive and comprehensive, with plenty of well known urban design images, an extensive bibliography and a well referenced text. Nothing appears to be missing. However, the title raises suspicions; it is similar to Gosling and Maitland's 'Concepts of Urban Design' which considered urban design as clearly defined architectural concepts. But the expectant reader hopes that Broadbent will avoid this trap and the inclusion of the word 'Emerging' suggests the prospect of a deeper intellectual analysis of urban design. Indeed the Contents and the first chapters promise that there is a clear rationale to the final objective that will give meaning to the title.

However, as one progresses through the book, the initial sense of unease and disappointment is confirmed. Despite some very well written and knowledgeable sections, it is more a collection of self-contained essays than a book with an objective to reveal the 'emergent'.

As essays, it is more a review of current - or 1980s - urban design thinking within a historical context than a revelation of emergent trends. Partly this is due to Broadbent's view of urban design as primarily spatial ideas rather than a combination of the socio-economic, cultural and technological factors that influence urban planning, within which urban design fits and from which new concepts will emerge. Broadbent may try to counter this criticism by stating that these issues are addressed, but this happens only in isolated parts of the book; where he explains the theoretical background of the Italian Tendenza or where he describes American urban growth. The section on the Italian Tendenza, like many others, is revealing and well worth reading.

The problem with the book is that it suggests that there is something to be revealed, that there is a climax, a point to be made, and that the book is structured around this. Broadbent reveals a dichotomy between the empirical and rationalist schools in urban design, but fails to analyse how this can be resolved. He adopts a liberal historical approach to the book, starting with ancient urban design, before jumping to more contemporary approaches - and like many British planning texts falls down by not asking 'why does this happen?' Why has urban spatial design become separated from technological and transportation issues, what problems is this causing and how can they be resolved? By asking these questions, and answering some of them, Broadbent would have established a sound methodology and provided the answer the reader was looking for in his title.

However, what is in a title anyway? As it stands, the book is well presented, there are very interesting sections on which Broadbent is undoubtedly expert and it will be useful to the student as an introduction to Urban Design theories and as a reference document.

Philip Jackson

REVIVING THE CITY
by Dr Tim Elkin and Duncan McLaren with Mayer Hillman.
Published by Friends of the Earth. £12.95.

'Reviving the City' sounds like yet another book on urban renewal or inner city regeneration. It is more than that. The subtitle 'Towards sustainable urban development' suggests a more global dimension. The book is in fact the first blueprint about urban planning to appear in the UK since the global warning scare (at least I think so).

A more catchy, more sellable title might have been 'The Sustainable City' (subtitle: a new approach to city revival). 'Sustainable' is clearly the key buzz word. Sustainable development is defined on the first page of the book as 'development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their needs and aspirations'. In other words it is about environmental protection and the conservation of resources.

The book begins with a chapter on the Built Environment which includes a section on Urban Design. The authors stress the need for high density and diversity of land use in our cities in order to provide a compactness that encourages social interaction and reduces motorised transport. Development on greenfield sites must stop. They urge that streets become safer and more friendly with the introduction of traffic calming measures and more frequent doors and entrances at ground level. Francis Tibbalds is quoted (well, naturally, who else?).

This section on Urban Design is very obvious to us, but it is then followed by a subsection on 'Designing with Nature' which contains ideas which are less obvious. For example, the introduction of natural areas in our streets and carparks can absorb the rainwater run-off in place of the drains and culverts that perform this function at present. How many urban designers have given this matter thought?

The reason I found this book useful and can recommend it to members is that Urban Design is placed in a very wide context. The rest of the chapter on the Built Environment covers such issues as the choice of building materials (e.g. tropical timbers to be avoided), building design (including the sick building syndrome), the development process and policy framework.

There then follows six chapters dealing with transport, energy, the natural environment, food production, waste and pollution and finally society and the economy. These chapters make essential reading. Our approach to urban design can not be divorced from any of these wider considerations.

The eighth chapter provides a synthesis. Sustainable urban development, with its emphasis on resource conservation and environmental protection, is seen as a preferred alternative to economic growth with its widespread abuse of resources and environmental degradation. Sustainable development is also seen as more equitable, providing for an improved quality of life and a healthier environment for all, including the least advantaged.

The final chapter concludes with a discussion of the roles to be played by different sectors of society, including planners, developers, politicians and the public, in translating the rhetoric of sustainable development into action. This is followed by a series of policy recommendations.

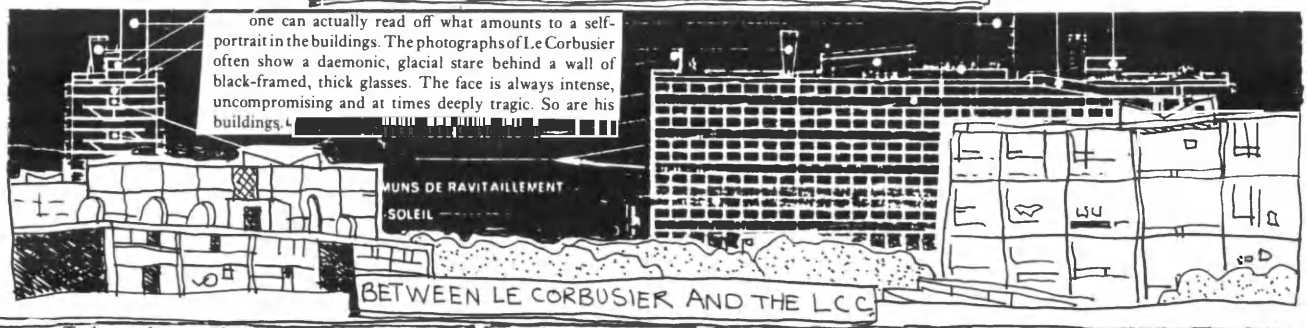
The book is well organised and neatly laid out. It contains many useful tables and references. My only slight concern is with the production quality. In good FoE tradition the book has been printed on recycled paper; some of the pages in my copy have blemishes and one page looks as though it has been eaten away by insects. But don't let that put you off. It's the content that counts.

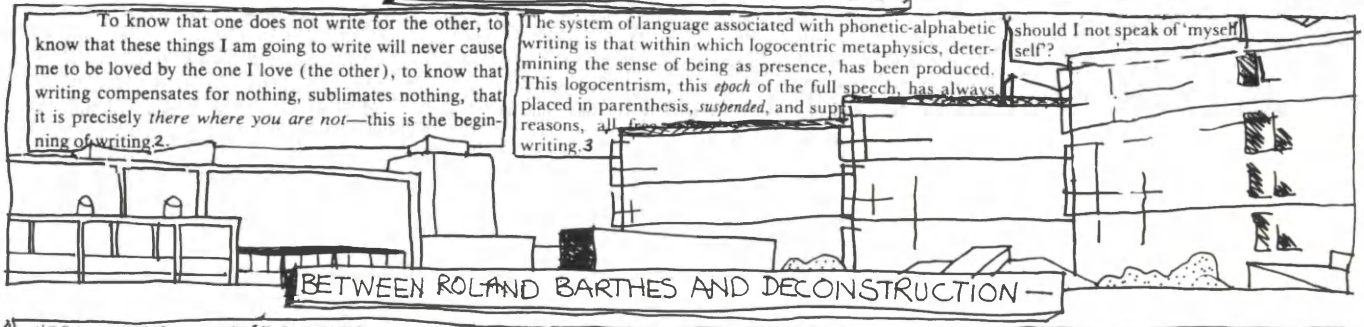
Tim Catchpole

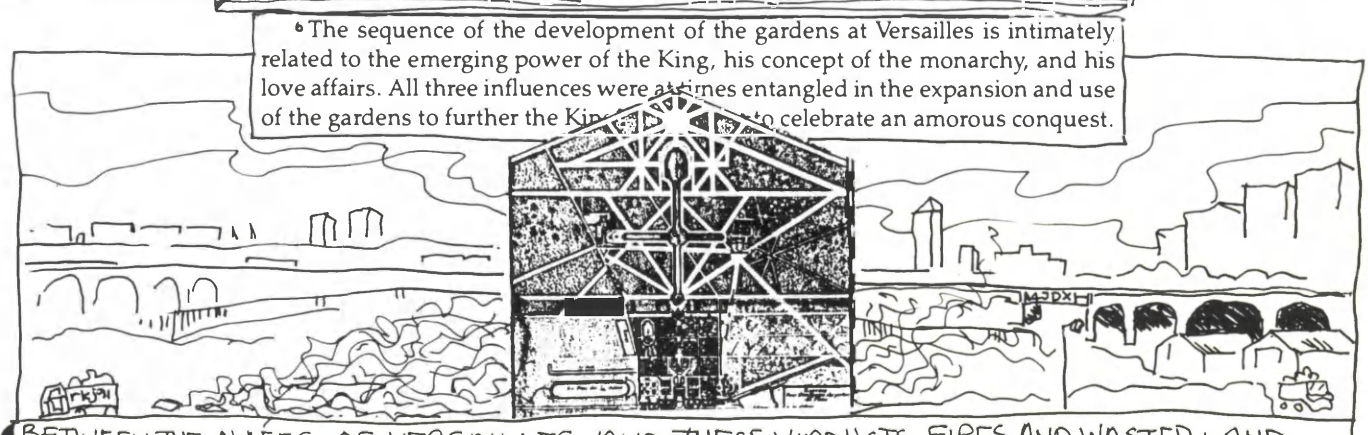
Tim Catchpole is the Book Review Editor. All approaches to publishers on behalf of the UDG will be initiated by him. Anyone interested in reviewing books should contact him at 56 Gilpin Ave, London SW14 8QY.

THE LOCUS OF DESIRE

BOB JARVIS







1. Jencks Modern Movements in Architecture
2. Barthes. Lovers Discourse. 3. Derrida Grammatology
4. Byrne. Union. 5. Byrne. Big Country (Lyrics)
6. Adams. The French Garden

URBAN DESIGN CONFERENCE, LIVERPOOL
URBAN FUTURES
SEPTEMBER 27th to 29th, 1991

A conference on the subject of Urban Futures is to be held in Liverpool in September. A group of Urban Designers, Economists and Planners will present papers describing programmes in urban design and regeneration from Britain, Europe and the United States.

The conference will be presented through a series of papers and workshops. The papers will describe successful urban design programmes and projects drawn from Britain, Europe and the United States, offered as 'case studies'. The workshops will be led by presenters of case studies based upon the Urban Design Action Team (UDAT) approach to team working in urban design policy and plan making, and with reference to specific themes and locations within the City of Liverpool.

The event intends to develop themes in urban design relating to the 'public realm' in urban conservation; urban movement and transportation, urban continuity and integration, and to develop techniques in multi-disciplinary team working and public and private agency collaboration.

Speakers will include Francis Tibbalds, David Lewis, John Thompson, David Liggins and Roger Zogolovitch. The event is promoted by the University of Liverpool, Department of Civic Design; Liverpool Polytechnic, School of the Built Environment; RIBA CPD Groups (North and North West) and the Urban Design Group.