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**RECENT U. S. EXPERIENCE IN URBAN RENEWAL
AND ITS RELEVANCE TO AUSTRALIAN OPPORTUNITIES FOR
COMPREHENSIVE CITY-BUILDING**

A paper delivered by W. George Clarke,
Architect and Chartered Town Planner,
to the Sydney Division of the Australian
Planning Institute, February 19th, 1960.

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Urban Renewal is a new-fangled term for a new-fangled idea. It is barely five years old, but it is growing and developing rapidly in its country of origin, the United States.

Urban Renewal was invented in 1954, as a comprehensive term referring to a combination of public and private activities aimed at eliminating and preventing urban deterioration, blight and slums.

Put that another way, and one can define Urban Renewal as the total of all the public and private actions which must be taken to ensure the continued, sound maintenance and development of an urban area.

But Urban Renewal at its best, as is evolving today in the United States, would be more accurately defined as the systematic application of all the powers of government, in partnership with private enterprise, to the reshaping of the urban environment to better meet the needs of modern society, with special reference to the obsolete and decaying areas of cities, where the immediate need and opportunity is greatest.

When one regards it in this light, Urban Renewal is merely a more positive and more practical technique than we have previously had for achieving the long-standing aims of comprehensive city planning and urban design.

Sydney is a city large sections of which are obsolete, and which have needed redesigning and rebuilding for many years. As time goes by, more and more districts will pass into decay and will qualify for rehabilitation and redevelopment. It seems clear, from what many of our most prominent citizens and newspapers have been saying, that a-warmly favourable climate of opinion has grown up around the idea of large-scale redevelopment in Sydney. As long as our present prosperity continues, there doesn't seem to be any doubt that the already decayed districts of Sydney will in fact be largely rebuilt, somehow or other, over the next twenty years. The key phrase in that statement is, of course, the "somehow or other". The rebuilding work could easily make our city much worse than it is now.

At the moment, it seems as if everyone in Sydney is in favour of something being done, but nobody seems to know quite how to go about doing it. We don't know just what organisational and financing techniques will be used, or the scale on which they are really needed. Even if we do have a successful competition for the redevelopment of The Rocks area, which is mostly owned by the State Government, we will still not have evolved any overall technique for dealing with areas split into hundreds of fragmentary private ownerships. And on top of this, we have every reason to be apprehensive about the quality of overall city-planning and environmental design that will go into the rebuilding programme.

It is our professional responsibility to examine closely all techniques used elsewhere in the world to cope with these re-organising, re-financing, re-

planning and re-designing jobs that Sydney is now beginning to face. Our interest, as Australians, in overseas trends and developments such as the U. S. Urban Renewal Program, is most strongly directed towards those things which have some relevance to our own peculiar situation and which have some valuable lessons for us. Because we are still a young and dependent outpost of European and American social systems, we are continually able to profit from the record of research, experiment, success and failure, compiled overseas. Our junior and peripheral situation has saved us a great deal of time and money because we don't have to make the same mistakes as have already been made overseas in developing and refining some new idea or technique.

We can again save ourselves time, money and trouble by learning from European and American experience in urban redevelopment. While we do this, we must, of course, be especially on guard against the making of new kinds of mistakes, different from those already made somewhere else. Furthermore, we must be especially sensitive and realistic in adapting or attempting to transplant ideas or techniques which have flourished in a foreign climate but which may wither in our own.

From my experience, both in Europe and in the United States, I have no hesitation in saying that the problems of U. S. cities are more akin to those of our own cities than are those of Europe. Also, the techniques available to us in the organising and financing of renewal are more similar to those available in the U. S. than to those in Europe, at the very least because we, like the Americans, still retain a "mixed" economy, in which Local Government is particularly weak and badly financed.

European-style urban development is exemplified by the London County Council. Employing one of the biggest and best town-planning and architectural staffs in the world, the L. C. C. has been slowly but steadily replanning London for twenty years, and rebuilding it according to plan for more than ten. This work will ultimately, I believe, prove comparable to Baron Hausmann's rebuilding of Paris. This and other great achievements of European city-building since the last big war have been the achievements of strong Local Government, backed by strong planning and building powers, financed by large national money-grants, and employing large numbers of the most talented and qualified people available.

These achievements (the British, Swedish, Dutch and Germans can all provide particularly good examples) have largely been the achievements of an imaginative elite, an official, governmental elite, armed with all the powers of government, who have been able to implement their plans more or less from the top down.

But for all sorts of reasons, this European style doesn't fit American or Australian circumstances very well. We, in common with the Americans, can admire and try to emulate much of the design quality of what the Europeans build, but we of the "New World" can hardly hope, and perhaps don't really wish, to copy the European modes of organisation which made these things possible.

Local Government in Australia is in many ways stronger and slightly less fragmented than most U.S. Local Government, but both are nevertheless extremely weak sisters to their English and European counterparts. It may well be possible for us in the near future to improve and strengthen our Local Government, notably by revising its financial structure, and also by adopting a metropolitan level of government for metropolitan development as well as planning.

But even if we succeed in doing these things, we would still retain our "mixed" economy which encourages private enterprise to do as much as it possibly can do and will do, subject only to supervision in the public interest. In a prosperous and expanding economy like ours, private enterprise can, and is naturally anxious to do much more in the way of housing and urban development than is the case in Europe. If this situation continues in Australia, then we will continue to be closer to the United States than to Europe in matters of the organisation and financing of city-building.

With these thoughts in mind, I shall try to sketch for you some of the most significant facets of the U.S. Urban Renewal Program, giving particular emphasis to those things which may be relevant or potentially relevant to Australian problems.

I warn you that I shall be forced to over-simplify the very real paradoxes and complexities which occur over such a large, paradoxical and complicated country as the United States. Like many things on this earth, the U.S. urban renewal effort is a curious compound of the highest aspirations and very wide actual shortcomings, of enlightened and intelligent co-operation side by side with self-defeating self-seeking of the pettiest kind. But add to this the fact of American restlessness, energy and practicality, and one finds that new ideas are constantly being experimented with, to such an extent that organisation charts are quickly outmoded.

Therefore if I simplify and select my material on this occasion, I must warn you against any impression that urban renewal in the U.S. is easy or straightforward. Many Australians get this impression by reading too many glossy magazines. There is no easy answer or simple panacea for urban problems in the United States or anywhere else.

Again, I cannot tell you that what has been done so far under the U.S. urban renewal effort is anything like a real answer to their urban and metropolitan problems. In terms of the sheer size of U.S. urban obsolescence, the present effort in urban renewal is merely a very successful pilot programme; and it will probably have to remain so until the 60 or 70 per cent of the Federal Budget which now goes to pay for past, present and future wars can be safely diverted to more constructive investment.

The 1949 Act, the first large-scale effort in urban redevelopment.

Let us now go back and begin with the U.S. Housing Act of 1949, the forerunner of the 1954 Act which first gave legislative form to the concepts of urban renewal.

The 1949 Act was the first comprehensive legislation in the U. S. Housing field. It grew out of nearly 20 years of research into, and worry over, slums. This Act fairly faced the issue of Federal responsibility for housing and set out a statement of National Housing Policy, in which city-planning was recognised for the first time as being of national interest and concern.

I quote an abridged version of this National Housing Policy, which stands unaltered to the present day:- "The Congress hereby declares that the general welfare ... of the Nation ... require(s) housing production and related community development sufficient to remedy the serious housing shortage, the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas, and the realisation as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, thus contributing to the development and redevelopment of communities (emphasis added)

"The policy to be followed in attaining the national housing objective hereby established shall be:-

- (1) private enterprise shall be encouraged to serve as large a part of the total need as it can;
- (2) government assistance shall be utilized where feasible to enable private enterprise to serve more of the total need;
- (3) appropriate local public bodies shall be encouraged and assisted to undertake positive programs of encouraging and assisting the development of well-planned, integrated, residential neighborhoods, the development and redevelopment of communities"

The 1949 Act recognised that the high prices of slum land, particularly in relation to the prices at which builders can obtain outlying suburban sites, was one of the major factors stopping private enterprise from buying up slum sites for redevelopment. Another major factor was the simple fact that private enterprise could only rarely buy up a sufficient number of small existing inner-urban lots to be able to put together a single site large enough for desirable types of comprehensive redevelopment. Even if and when the public power of resumption or some other means is used to amalgamate ownership over sufficiently large areas of land, the costs of acquisition, clearance and preparation for redevelopment are, taken together, prohibitively high.

But even if a private operator or a local government authority could and did pay out these high costs for cleared land, then the only way for such a private operator or local authority to make a profitable or economical proposition out of redevelopment would be to crowd an excessive number of dwelling units onto the land. The extraordinarily high plot-densities which result from this unsubsidised procedure are a sure-fire guarantee that the new buildings are headed for slumdom as soon as they are built.

Now this sort of thing has been happening and is happening every week in Sydney. It's not happening on large sites, the way it did in Stuyvesant Town in New York, for example, but even worse than that, it's happening

on small scattered sites. It's happening wherever there are high costs involved in buying and clearing an existing site in an inner or middle-ring suburb, and it's happening on government projects the same way as it's happening on private projects. It would be most unfair to single out any single public authority or any single private operator for criticism on this point of excessive plot densities, because the present system of land-costs and land-acquisition makes it pretty inevitable.

The 1949 Act also recognised that Local Government finances were simply unable to cover the costs of any write down on the existing market-values of inner-metropolitan land. The Act therefore provided for Federal capital grants which would help a Local Authority to write off and forget two-thirds of the loss involved in making slum sites available for private redevelopment.

The Local Authority was to:-

- (1) resume blighted areas and the obsolete buildings on them, thereby amalgamating many small fragmented ownerships into a single large parcel, a parcel suitable for comprehensive redevelopment;
- (2) assist in relocating or rehousing the existing residents and businesses;
- (3) replan the area, establishing land-uses, densities, building coverages, floor space ratios, building and design requirements, and perhaps even setting up examples of the quality of design required;
- (4) demolish the buildings and clear the land;
- (5) prepare the site for redevelopment by replanning and adjusting the public utilities, public roads, public facilities and public open spaces that would be required;
- (6) sell or lease the vacant land, prepared for redevelopment, to some private developer or to some public authority who will abide by the requirements laid down in the re-use plan.

This sale or lease may be by tender but is more often a matter for negotiation. Since the Federal authorities supervise and must be able to approve the project, the public interest is adequately protected against corruption when the choice of a redeveloper is made by negotiation. In either case, the most important aspect of the deal is the plan and the design which will be followed in the re-building job; the size of the price or rent the new developer will pay is a secondary consideration.

Now it might cost the Local Authority anything up to, say, six or seven dollars per square foot to resume, clear, replan and prepare the land for resale. The new value of the land to a new developer who had to abide by a re-use plan set by the Authority, might be only one or two dollars a square foot. The Local Authority would therefore lose about five dollars a square foot on the operation. But under the 1949 Act, the Federal Government pays two-thirds of this loss.

Over the first nine years of experience under this Act, from 1949 to 1958, it has been estimated that for every dollar allocated to be paid by the Federal Government in writing-down land-values in this way, the private redevelopers of the land have, or will have, invested five dollars in actual construction.

From the Local Authority's viewpoint, then, one can say that for every dollar of local Government expenditure on a project, the Local Authority has received in return ten dollars worth of private investment in construction. Most important of all, this construction has been built and designed just the way the Local Authority wanted it. And not only that, but over future years, the annual rates and taxes on the redeveloped land are going to be much, much higher than they ever were on the land in its previous condition.

From the viewpoint of the general public, Federal taxpayers and local ratepayers together, an outlay of three dollars of public funds has resulted not only in the clearing away of an area of substandard and obsolete dwellings, but also in the making possible of ten dollars worth of private investment in new construction. This construction has been under the strict control of public authorities, and will benefit the public purse by making the best possible use of a scarce resource, namely, well-located urban land.

Now this technique is the simplest and the most basic single technique the Americans have evolved for getting over the artificial blockages to urban redevelopment.

It can be contrasted with the post-war British attempt to nationalise the potential development value in land, which was a brave and possibly quite practical technique, but which was perhaps never given a fair chance to prove itself before being abandoned.

As a method of getting slums cleared and valuable land redeveloped, it can also be contrasted with the now standard and universal British and European procedure. This is the direct-action method, by which Local Authorities simply go out and resume land, and build their own housing, without bothering to muck about with private enterprise at all. They use central government tax money to do it, and it has not been uncommon for European countries to build between 50 and 100 per cent of the nation's new housing in this way. Even under this method, however, the taxpayer still forks out the high ransom money demanded by the last private owners of the land.

Because the European Local Authority continues to own the land in perpetuity, it also gains all of any increase in the land's capital value over future years.

But the European Local Authority has to maintain an architectural and construction enterprise, together with a building management and maintenance section. This, as has been proved many times over can be a magnificent and an impressively efficient organisation, like that of the L. C. C., but it hardly seems feasible in Australia at the present time.

In a developing country like Australia, which is chronically short of capital for public developmental works, it would seem that we should try to let private enterprise do as much as it can, always with the proviso that what private enterprise does conforms to some sort of pattern or plan which safeguards the public interest. If this is so, then the American technique which uses three pounds of public money in order to get ten pounds worth of work done, might be preferable to the European system under which ten pounds of public money only does ten pounds worth of work.

This might be a point worthy of some research and consideration by the Sydney City Council. The Council expects, I believe, to have about 2 or 3 million pounds to invest in high density housing; and I have heard the Lord Mayor say that this sum in itself would not be enough, and that he would like to stimulate a much greater flow of investment from private sources.

Let us now return and briefly sum up the 1949 U. S. Housing Act. It was first and foremost a housing measure, with its famous Title One section which gave the green light to slum clearance and redevelopment. This kind of complete clearance and redevelopment was the only technique of urban revitalisation that it envisaged. It recognised and proclaimed the importance of neighborhood planning, although it didn't do anything concrete to encourage or enforce it. It was nevertheless a fair start and much better things were to come.

The 1954 Act, introducing Urban Renewal as a concept and as a technique

When President Eisenhower took office in 1953, he appointed a 23 man Advisory Committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs. This Committee reported to the President that the 1949 Act was all right as far as it went, but that it needed to be radically broadened and improved. The Committee invented the new and previously unheard name of Urban Renewal to describe the broader concepts and techniques they favoured.

The President and Congress went along with the expert's report and incorporated their recommendations into the Housing Act of 1954.

The President's Committee recognised that it was useless to wait until a living area had finally completed the cycle of degeneration into a slum and then to hope that even the combined powers of public and private enterprise would be able to clear and completely redevelop all such areas over the country. "It is obvious," said the Committee, "that we must check the cycle of decay before slums are born."

The 1954 Act laid down that all living areas ought to be watched for signs of decay. Good existing neighborhoods were to be carefully conserved, and wherever possible, partially-blighted neighborhoods were to be rehabilitated and renovated.

The 1954 Act said, in effect, that the Federal Government was prepared to loan money for planning studies, to give money for land-cost write-downs, and to insure private investors against loss, only on condition that

a Local Authority proved that it had gotten down seriously to the job of overall slum prevention and overall city-planning. *

The old style U. S. redevelopment project under the 1949 Act was like a single surgical operation on the body of a city suffering from a neglected, malignant cancer. The new style of "urban renewal" under the 1954 Act introduced the concepts of preventive medicine, of early diagnosis and of early treatment, combined with strengthening exercises in the form of comprehensive city planning.

The Act states that a Local Authority must produce a "Workable Program" for the elimination of existing blight and perhaps more important, the prevention of further decay. A "Workable Program" must include:-

- (1) A comprehensive plan for the future growth and change of the community.
- (2) A demonstration that the Local Authority has, or will have, an administrative organisation sufficient and able to carry out the urban renewal program that it proposes.
- (3) A demonstration that the Local Authority has, or will soon have, proper building, safety and health codes, and that these codes are, or will soon be strictly enforced, especially in "borderline" neighborhoods which may be slowly sinking into a slum condition. (It will come as a surprise to Australians to learn that many U. S. cities and towns have been, at least until recently, severely deficient in these matters.)
- (4) Analyses of blighted and decaying neighborhoods to determine whether they need complete redevelopment or merely some degree or another of renovation and rehabilitation. These neighborhood analyses are supposed to be full-bloom planning investigations, and they themselves, when complete, make up the real 'meat' of the local urban renewal program. The Federal Government makes loans and advances to communities which would not otherwise have sufficient funds to pay for the proper preparation of these neighborhood planning studies.

* This, I am told, was the idea that the Australian Federal Government adopted in 1944, when it was offering the States what later became the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. Federal money was to be made available for Housing Commission work only on condition that the States established strong comprehensive town-planning legislation. The result of this insistence was that several States did, in fact, pass town planning legislation. New South Wales was notable in this regard. However, in the sixteen years which have elapsed since then, the Commonwealth Government appears to have lost a lot of the interests it once had in the quality and permanent nature of the neighborhoods being created with Commonwealth money.

- (5) A demonstration of the financial ability of the Local Authority to meet its share of urban renewal costs, together with all the other costs of general community services and facilities which may be necessary to keep up the residential quality of the district. This should ideally include a Capital Improvement Program which budgets the Authority's capital investments over the coming six year period.
- (6) A demonstration of the community's ability to rehouse adequately all families displaced by redevelopment projects, rehabilitation projects and by other public works. Federal grants are available to assist with moving expenses; \$200 may be granted to each family, and \$2,000 to each business.
- (7) A demonstration of what has already been done, or of what is being done to encourage and to maintain public support and active citizen participation in the urban renewal program. This may be a top-level and city wide committee of bankers and insurance company presidents working on the financial side of things, and it may also be a group of very ordinary citizens who have formed a neighborhood committee to work with and assist the planners in the job of neighborhood analysis and planning.

All of these requirements must be fulfilled before Federal grants for a write-down of land-costs can be made. They seem to me to be for all the world what any Bank Manager would want to know before he would invest money in anyone's private enterprise. In this case the city or town desiring Federal aid is treated like a private company seeking to borrow extra working capital to extend and improve its business. Whoever would provide the capital wants to be assured that the borrower knows what he is doing, has a workable plan of what he intends to do, and that what he intends to do will be profitable, or useful, or in the urban renewal case, in the highest public interest. It's all eminently sensible and businesslike. The only trouble is that the process of checking and approving what the Local Authority wants to do takes a long time and uses up a lot of red tape.

The 1954 Act also extended to all types of urban redevelopment and rehabilitation projects the same kind of mortgage insurance that was previously available for private suburban housing. Under this system, if the Federal Government approves the designs and plans for a project, it is also willing to insure any mortgage that any lender will give on the project, up to 90 per cent of replacement cost.

When mortgages are insured in this way against any default, there is of course no risk involved for the lender. This safety of investment attracts a lot of investment money into the real-estate market which would otherwise have gone elsewhere. A high and continuous flow of money into real-estate mortgages means that interest rates tend to be lowered by competition among lenders. And of course, mortgage insurance of up to 90 per cent of the replacement or cost price of an urban renewal project means that a private redeveloper can push ahead with a project if he can raise a mere 10 per cent cash equity.

The 1954 Act also made money available for various kinds of planning studies. Metropolitan and regional planning is specifically encouraged and assisted.

Finally, the 1954 Act also made special grants available for "Demonstration Projects". \$5 million were set aside for the payment of a Federal two-thirds share in the costs of special experimental projects.

So far, the rate of combined public and private investment in Federally sponsored urban renewal is only about 2 per cent of the total U.S. rate of investment in all forms of construction. Now the public share in this urban renewal investment is three dollars out of every thirteen. Therefore the total amount of public money going into urban renewal projects is something like a mere half of one per cent of the total overall U.S. construction investment. This latter overall construction investment includes highways and public works as well as residential, commercial and industrial buildings.

This is pretty tiny proportion. You may appreciate that critics of the U.S. urban renewal effort seem justified when they say that it's simply not enough, and that even today, slums are being formed in the United States at a faster rate than they are being cleared or rehabilitated. As I mentioned before, the present urban renewal effort is nothing more than a highly successful pilot program. It will have to be greatly enlarged if American metropolises are to be saved from utter disruption.

But Federal aid for urban redevelopment is only ten years old, and the 1954 Act has been operating for barely five years. The most significant and beautiful projects are naturally not yet fully constructed.

Nevertheless, the size, fine finish, imaginativeness and urbanity of many projects now going into construction will, I believe, make this coming decade one of the finest ever in American city-building history.

The standards of urban design are improving rapidly, and urban design is evolving into a distinct discipline in its own right, separate from architecture and city-planning. This is a most exciting new frontier yet to be fully explored and developed.

But the production of these designs needs to be backed by enthusiastic and determined support in order to get them adopted and built. And this brings us to what I consider the most important practical technique of the U.S. urban renewal program, namely, the extent of citizen participation in city planning and urban renewal.

Hard though it may be to believe, leading citizens in cities all over the United States are organising action committees to spur urban renewal. Bankers, business and professional men, retailers, civic and labour leaders are getting together in co-operation with local government leaders. They are setting up their own well-financed and well-staffed organisations to carry out all kinds of research, planning, designing, campaigning and financing operations in the field of urban renewal, covering commercial

and industrial projects as well as residential ones.

There are a lot of people, both 'big' and 'little' people who have a stake in the revitalisation of central urban areas; and these people are rallying to the support of their local governments to make the renewal process work.

The official Federal Program is really only half the story. It drew national attention to urban problems by giving them official recognition. But public servants, either Federal or Local or both together are not capable of replanning or rebuilding cities on their own.

Let's take two cases of this citizen participation. One, in New Haven, is an example of urban renewal where the leadership came from and remains with the Mayor of the city. The other, in Baltimore, is one where the initial leadership and the real work have both been given by private citizens and businesses. These two cases are typical of others throughout the country.

Mayor Richard Lee of New Haven was the first U. S. city mayor to make urban renewal the cornerstone of his career. In the early fifties he decided that here was an issue capable of winning elections and building a reputation. He proved the first point in 1953 by winning election as Democratic mayor of New Haven, the first Democrat to win for many, many years.

He then set up a Citizen's Action Commission, which has a small executive committee and six sub-committees. The sub-committees deal with:-
(1) Metropolitan planning, (2) Human values--health welfare, recreation and social problems, (3) Industrial and Harbor development, (4) Housing, (5) Education and (6) The Central Business District, traffic and parking.

Members of the professions, union representatives, clergy, managers and executives, newspaper men, and minority groups are on these committees, each of which has a membership of about 100 people!

The central committee comprises nine presidents of banking, insurance and business corporations, the President of Yale University, the Dean of the Yale Law School, district leaders of the A.F.L. and of the C.I.O. labor organisations, two civil servants, three lawyers, and a high school headmaster. Each of the sub-committees is represented on the central committee.

The central committee functions as a Mayor's 'Citizen Cabinet' on the City's Development Program. It meets monthly in the Mayor's office, where plans are presented and given detailed consideration. This committee is made up of influential citizens. They are non-partisan in party politics. They are accustomed, however, to large operations and quick decisions and are invaluable to the city government in assessing and promoting the various projects. Their prestige gives impressive support to urban renewal.

These men represent the real 'power structure' of New Haven. Nothing really big could get done anyway without the joint support of both the financial

institutions and the labour organisations. So it's really the most practical thing to get these people into the planning process right from the start.

The Federal Administrator of the U.S. Urban Renewal Authority has described the urban renewal program being carried out by New Haven as "spectacular, imaginative, exciting and comprehensive - a model for urban renewal in the cities of America".

In Baltimore in 1954, the city's merchants realised that suburban shopping centres were draining away their trade. Downtown retail trade had dropped by 19 per cent in seven years, in the same way that Sydney's city retail trade has been dropping. A merchants' committee was formed but the head of this committee soon discovered, as he said, that "downtown decay is not just a retailer's problem". A new organisation, the Committee for Downtown, was set up with a levy against the members of one-tenth of one per cent of the assessed value of their property. About the same time, the Greater Baltimore Committee, a group widely representative of business, commerce and industry, was being set up to advance the fortunes of Baltimore and the metropolitan area that surrounds it. The population of the Baltimore metropolitan region is about 1,700,000, only slightly smaller than Sydney.

These two organisations, one for the central city, one for the metropolitan area, got together and financed a joint Planning Council, which hired a staff of city planners. The planners set about a two year study of the central business district, and came up with a Master Plan, all for the expenditure of only \$150,000. The plan was prepared in close collaboration with the City's official City Planning Department, and other government agencies.

The Planning staff then went on to work out details of a commercial project covering nine blocks in the centre of the city, which has come to be called "Charles Center".

Charles Center covers 22 acres right in the middle of downtown, where the financial center and the shopping center overlap. Baltimore's about the same size of Sydney, so that's the equivalent of a 22 acre site here somewhere around Hunter Street or King Street.

Only 5 existing buildings are to be kept, the remainder will be replaced with eight new office buildings, an 800 bedroom hotel, a television centre, and an underground parking station for 4,000 cars.

Most of the existing streets will be closed and discarded. The area will be divided into several pedestrian precincts, with parks and malls.

The total cost of Charles Centre was estimated at \$127 million, of which \$35 or \$40 million were to be in necessary public works which would have to be done by the City of Baltimore. The remaining \$80 million is to come from private investment. Now this is commercial redevelopment, which is rather difficult, although not impossible, to have subsidised by the Federal Government. So the Baltimore people decided that they didn't want to even try for Federal help; they would rather do the job entirely themselves.

The plan and the proposal for Charles Center were presented to the public at a City Council meeting on March 8th, 1958. The Council soon agreed to back the plan and do its share of the necessary public works. The City went to the voters to gain approval of a \$35 million bond issue to finance the city's share. In November, 1958, the bond issue was passed at the polls by a resounding majority. The Council and the Committee for Downtown are now working on the details of implementing and building Charles Center.

Charles Center is a good example of the only proper way to build cities in this second half of the twentieth century. The old way of building one small structure on a tiny lot wedged in between two other small structures, all facing onto a hopelessly outmoded street, is as obsolete as the hansom cab. The motor car has come to stay. We have to provide properly for it, and then to keep it in its place. We can only provide properly for it by comprehensively designing large pieces of a city to a co-ordinated plan. And we face the same necessity for large-scale design and comprehensive planning in trying to deal with our inner-area housing and slum-clearance problems.

The planning and design know-how is there if we choose to take advantage of it. But we don't yet have in Sydney the new type of civic organisation which is necessary to sponsor, promote and then to implement and build the plans and designs. This lack of organisation is now the major blockage to the proper renewal of our city.

Let us therefore give very serious thought to that definition of Urban Renewal which I gave you at the beginning of this paper: "the systematic application of all the powers of government, in partnership with private enterprise, to the reshaping of the urban environment to better meet the needs of modern society, with special reference to the obsolete and decaying areas of cities, where the immediate need and opportunity is greatest."

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