

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE 50TH MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY,
THE 13TH AND 14TH JUNE, 1946, IN THE BOARD ROOM, DEPART-
MENT OF WORKS AND HOUSING, MELBOURNE.

PRESENT:

Mr. H. M. Rolland (Chairman)
Mr. C. S. Daley (Executive Member)
Mr. R. J. Keith Harris
Mr. F. J. Walters.

(Apologies were received from the Chairman (Mr. B. J. Waterhouse) and Mr. Rowland James, M.P., who were unable to attend owing to other engagements).

The meeting commenced at 2.30 p. m. on Thursday, the 13th June.

ACTING
CHAIRMAN:

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Rolland, at the request of other members, acted as Chairman for the meeting.

CONFIRMATION
OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of the 49th Meeting were confirmed.

NOTIFICATIONS
BY EXECUTIVE
MEMBER:

The following notifications were made by the Executive Member for the information of the Committee, viz:

(a) Flats- Reid:

Tenders had been received for the six blocks of flats (40 in all) designed for the approved site in Reid. One tender only was submitted, and that from a local Contractor. The price (£97,889 - in addition to £1,684 for engineering services) was considered to be unreasonably high and it was proposed to readvertise the work at a later date together with other works in the hope of interesting other builders.

(b) Letters had been received from the Chairman (Mr. B. J. Waterhouse) and Mr. Rowland James, M. P., indicating their inability to be present at the Melbourne meeting. (Their letters were read and noted).

(c) Block 4, Section 48, City. Restaurant in Basement:

The Architect who submitted a proposal for the establishment of a restaurant in the basement of Block 4, Section 48, City (Sydney Buildings) had been informed that the proposal was not approved. He had requested that the matter should be reconsidered and had submitted his views in detail in a letter which it was proposed to read later for the Committee's consideration.

(d) Railway:

Subsequent to the last meeting the Commissioner for Railways, in accordance with the promise made by him in a recent interview, had sent his Engineer (Mr. Kirkbright) to Canberra to commence consideration of the matter. He had discussed the

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question of its various bearings, and the information that was available, and it had been suggested to him that he review the details in the light of present day conditions, with the object of having a discussion with the Committee at its next meeting in Melbourne.

(e) Canberra as Regional Centre:

A conference had been called by the Ministry of Post War Reconstruction at which proposals were put forward having for their object the establishment of Canberra as the centre of the district embracing the south east portion of New South Wales. The scheme suggested the advisability of developing Jervis Bay as a port for this large district. The Executive Member had objected to Canberra being, as he put it, reduced from a "national" to a "provincial" status. He felt also that it would not be in the national interest for Canberra to be brought into the ambit of State industrial enterprise, with the possibility of pressure groups being located at the Seat of Government. The conference had agreed, after discussion, to review the scheme and consider what suitable industries could be established at Canberra within its proper scope, in order that employment might be assured for as many as possible of the rising generation of the Territory.

URGENT
PROPOSALS:

Mr. Rolland requested that the Committee should give consideration to several urgent individual proposals which he desired to submit, before taking up its study of the general planning questions for which the meeting had been specially arranged. This was agreed to and the following matters were submitted, viz:

(i) Design for Omnibus Shelter:

A sketch for a type of omnibus shelter revised as the result of the Committee's previous discussion, was presented- Works and Housing Department Plan No. 166025- with the suggestion that one be erected as a proto type. The plan provided for a more simple structure in concrete with a flat roof and having double seating so that waiting passengers might better escape from the wind.

The Committee concurred in the design and the proposal.

(ii) Electrical Workshop:

Mr. Rolland stated that further consideration had been given to the contention that the site previously agreed to by the Committee for this building would subject the equipment to effects of humidity, and that additional opinion supported the view put forward. A revised plan had been prepared for the workshop and it was now proposed to locate it between the sub-station and the Avenue, and between the Power House and the wooden residences. For the building now designed there would be sufficient room for this to be done effectively. The Committee considered the amended scheme, as indicates on Works Department Plan No. 15906, and resolved that the site be approved.

RAILWAY:

By arrangement with the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner (Mr. Gahan), Mr. Kirkbright attended the meeting to have a general discussion on the railway situation with the Committee.

Mr. Rolland indicated to Mr. Kirkbright the position in regard to the consideration of the railway problem as it affected the Committee's developmental work for Canberra, confirming information given to him by the Executive Member whilst in Canberra and pointing out that it would be necessary for a report to be made to the Minister in the near future

with a recommendation to settle definitely the features of the railway connection with Canberra even if constructional work in respect to the railway were not to be proceeded with for some time.

Mr. Kirkbright explained that from the point of view of the Railways Commissioner the route for the railway as indicated in the approved plan of Canberra had been accepted and his Department had not taken the initiative to put forward any alternative schemes. It had conceived that its function was to provide the necessary technical knowledge and experience to implement the railway proposal laid down and endorsed by the Public Works Committee.

The Committee then had a general discussion with Mr. Kirkbright in regard to the main features of the City railway and its connection with Yass and Queanbeyan and in particular the suitability of the location that had been proposed for the railway yards and industrial area, the central railway station at City, the crossing of the Molonglo at the Causeway, the extent of railway connection required for the Power House and other requirements on the southern side of the City and the possibility of establishing two rail heads, one at City linked with Yass and one at Kingston linked with Queanbeyan, omitting the river crossing.

Mr. Kirkbright submitted plans and gave valuable information to the Committee to assist in this discussion and he offered to make such further investigations as the Committee might desire in relation to the features discussed and the general problem.

It was resolved accordingly to invite Mr. Kirkbright to submit a report, in the light of the discussion with the Committee, in relation to -

- (i) A northern terminal and incidentally whether the cutting could commence further north to prevent severance in the City area;
- (ii) A southern terminal including the question of terminal at Kingston in relation to the Power House, regarding the Power House as likely to be a permanent feature;
- (iii) The general question of the railway linked across the Lake system;
- (iv) The general question of the extent to which railway connection, as against improved road and air communication, is necessary to Canberra;
- (v) In the event of one railway connection being retained whether it should be the existing one or whether the new route through Yass would be justified.

The Chairman expressed the views of the Committee to Mr. Kirkbright and promised to go into the various matters as discussed at the interview.

At 6 p. m. the meeting adjourned until the following day.

The meeting was resumed at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, the 14th June, 1946.

WORKMEN'S
SUBURB,
NARRABUNDAH:

A revised plan of layout for the Workmen's suburb, Narrabundah, was submitted for consideration by Mr. Rolland. He indicated that it had been prepared in accordance with the recommendation made at the last meeting of the Committee that the layout should not interfere with the permanent features of the approved plan.

During the discussion of this item Mr. Rolland stated that he had received advice that the lessee of the area, Mrs. E. Murray, was

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engaged in ploughing and he thought that this activity should be stopped in view of possible compensation to be paid by the Commonwealth.

The Executive Member accordingly telephoned to the Commonwealth Surveyor-General who stated that he had already notified the lessee of the possibility of resumption of portion of the area and advised that further ploughing should not be proceeded with.

The Committee then studied the revised plans Nos. C.D. 1139 and C.D. 1140. It noted that these confined development in an area between the reservation of the future railway, according to the approved plan, and a permanent road on the north east parallel to Canberra Avenue.

Plan C. D. 1140 showed the general arrangement of the dwellings together with open park spaces and provision for recreation and community facilities which could be provided as and when required.

Mr. Rolland explained that the initial proposal was for the erection of 100 dwellings in the area shown on the plan in lighter colour.

Plan C.D. 1139 showed to a larger scale greater detail in the actual arrangement of the dwellings and treatment of the allotments.

After study of the plans and discussion of the proposal in detail the Committee noted the following factors that were involved namely:-

- (i) That the scheme provided for erection of dwellings on a temporary basis, the prefabricated houses to remain only until such time as suitable permanent housing might be available;
- (ii) The area and layout were suitable for permanent housing, if and when desired, on a variety of bases, involving, say, group dwellings and semi-detached dwellings as well as single residences;
- (iii) Reasonable provision could be made for recreation and sports areas of ample dimensions;
- (iv) Community facilities could be conveniently arranged on either a temporary or a permanent basis.
- (v) The proposal does not involve alteration of any existing features of the approved plan of Canberra.

and it decided to recommend that the design be approved on the basis of a temporary housing scheme, without prejudice to the question of the permanent treatment of the area at a later stage, if desired, when the time is opportune.

The Committee noted that the proposal for a suitable site for 40 houses at Yarralumla for accommodation of workmen engaged in the brick works had been referred to the Surveyor-General.

The Executive Member reported that this matter had been discussed by him at an interview with the Director-General of Forests (Mr. Rogers) and the Principal of the Forestry School (Dr. Jacobs). Both these gentlemen said they viewed very unfavourably the proposal to build on the site suggested by the Committee in front of the Forestry School. They indicated that important development would shortly be taking place requiring additional buildings in the neighbourhood for their own purposes and that from the higher elevation of the school it was a detriment to overlook a temporary subdivision such as the one proposed.

Mr. Daley stated that he has assured Mr. Rogers and Dr. Jacobs that the layout would be quite presentable and that with planting it would soon look little different from other residential development already extending to the right of the main school axis. He had indicated that the Committee's recommendation was a tentative one subject to further enquiry as to whether a more suitable site within reasonable

WORKMEN'S
SUBURB
YARRALUMLA :

distance of existing services could be obtained.

He proposed to discuss the matter further with the Commonwealth Surveyor-General and the Forestry Authorities with the object of submitting some alternative proposal, if practicable, for the Committee's consideration.

This report was duly noted and concurred in by the Committee.

RESIDENTIAL
SUBDIVISION,
GRIFFITH AND
NARRABUNDAH:

Consideration was resumed of the proposal for residential and community facilities in Griffith and Narrabundah on the basis of an amended layout plan No. Canberra 21, which Mr. Rolland had arranged to have prepared in the light of discussion at the last meeting.

In discussing the community provisions Mr. Rolland indicated that these were diagrammatic and generally flexible. Mr. Daley stated that the school would be required to cater for the public school primary requirements for the southern side of the City and it would not be confined to children in the local area as had been mentioned in a description on the plan.

It was agreed that there would be ample space for school buildings required for primary, infant and pre-school sections, the last being directly associated with the infants school in view of a special arrangement come to with the Director-General of Education for a trial of this particular arrangement in Canberra.

The details of the residential sections were also carefully reviewed including the desirability of providing for group houses. Mr. Harris suggested that the opportunity should be taken to provide group houses where they might best make a pleasing architectural feature. Mr. Daley stated that it was the practice of the Department to permit private enterprise to develop a reasonable proportion of the residential areas and he suggested that a plan be prepared indicating the sections that might be left for private enterprise and these it was suggested may be developed by the Government. He thought that private enterprise might be given the opportunity to do some of the group houses. This, however, should be indicated from the commencement to achieve general harmony as it was difficult otherwise to ensure that designs prepared by various architects for their clients would reasonably conform to an architectural scheme. If the scheme were generally outlined from the commencement, however, lessees took the blocks on this understanding and there was less difficulty in securing the desired result.

During the discussion of this layout Mr. Rolland raised the question of amendments to the City plan that might be involved. Mr. Daley explained the method laid down for making variations stating, in the first place, that any alteration to a road, the elimination of a road, or the introduction of a road, was legally considered to be a variation. Subdivision of areas within roads, however, not involving alterations or new roads, did not constitute variation. The procedure was for the Minister for the Interior to approve of the variation, notifying his intention to do so in the Gazette. If no objections were made the Minister would then definitely approve of variations, gazette the plan containing them, and then lay it before both Houses of Parliament. If either House of Parliament passed a resolution, of which notice had been given at any time within fifteen days after the plan had been tabled, disallowing the modification or variation proposed, then such modification or variation would cease to have effect.

Mr. Daley went on to state that many variations required for detailed subdivisions had already been made to the approved plan and that there would be no difficulty, if the Minister approved, in giving effect to any variations which the Committee might put forward in relation to the subdivisions now under consideration.

As a result of this review the Committee approved of the plan. No. Canberra 21, in principle, subject to its revision in the light of the discussion and, in particular, in relation to the following points:

- (i) Omission of the road east of the community area A and B, and inclusion of the area indicated for residential allotments facing that road in the community area;

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- (ii) In relation to area (C) (single-storey units) a certain proportion to be reserved for single-storey group buildings;
- (iii) Reservation of proportion of the allotments for development by private enterprise and recommendation as to which blocks should be so treated;
- (iv) The retention of the road between (C) and (C) opposite the park for access by pedestrians to the community area, park and school;
- (v) Provision for triangular residential blocks where desirable on corners;
- (vi) Provision for splay of 10 feet at right angle corners;
- (vii) Furnishing of plans suggesting blocks for development by private enterprise and by the Government in (C). Inclusion in private enterprise allotment of some blocks where architectural treatment more important.

COMMUNITY
HOSPITAL:

An amended plan showing a proposed method of providing additional accommodation for the obstetric ward was placed before the Committee for consideration.

Mr. Rolland explained the general views of the Health Department in regard to arrangement and also as to the distance that should separate the main building from the Isolation Block. There appeared to be some difference of opinion as to what this distance should be but from fifteen to twenty feet had been suggested.

The Committee noted that the plan did not accord with the suggestion made at its previous meeting to confine development so that it did not cross the internal road at present linking the main area with the Isolation Block. The sketch plan submitted showed a building crossing this road and the position of the road appeared to be considerably altered accordingly thus reducing the parking area.

The Committee requested that an amended sketch be submitted showing the relation between the proposed building and the internal road, the position of trees and other features and suggested that there be reconsideration by those concerned of the distance between the extension and the Isolation Block.

Mr. Rolland agreed to have further action taken accordingly.

POWER HOUSE
AND MECHANIC-
AL WORKSHOP:

A scheme was outlined by Mr. Rolland which had for its object the provision of a new mechanical workshop after the removal of the Electrical Workshop to a proposed new building, the site for which had been approved by the Committee.

He explained that involved in this scheme was also a proposal for raising the height of the Power House chimney from 25 ft. to 75 ft.

In a discussion that occurred the Committee realised the importance of providing for a Mechanical Workshop adjacent to the Power House as a feature with the same degree of permanence as the Power House itself.

In regard to the proposal to raise the chimney there was some concern as to the effect of this from the aesthetic point of view and the question was raised as to whether provision could not be made, as is required elsewhere by Regulation, for smoke to be consumed.

It was resolved that the report submitted by Mr. Rolland be noted and that the area concerned be made the subject of special inspection during the Committee's next meeting, but that, in the meantime, Mr.

Rolland be requested to obtain a report as to whether the smoke nuisance could not be eliminated or reduced substantially by equipment or treatment, thus avoiding the necessity for a high chimney.

LAKE SCHEME

(A) GENERAL REVIEW

In accordance with a decision at its last meeting the Committee embarked upon consideration of the Lake Scheme as a feature of the approved City plan and its effect upon the treatment of contiguous areas.

For the information of the members of the Committee the Executive Member outlined the general history of the scheme, mentioning consideration that had been given by the Public Works Committee and the extent of engineering surveys that had been undertaken. He mentioned that the Public Works Committee had generally approved of the Lake Scheme, with the exception of the larger area involved in East Lake, which it had suggested be indefinitely postponed. As such area comprised the principal dairy farms supplying the Capital with milk it was probable, he thought, that East Lake would never be made and might be eliminated from the beautification scheme.

In addition to Departmental investigations into the measures necessary to control the flow of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers, including the proposed dam at London Bridge on the Upper Queanbeyan, the Federal Capital Commission had arranged for a hydrographic enquiry to be made by Mr. A. Peake, a New South Wales Engineer who had specialized in this type of work, in association with the Deputy Chairman of its Developmental Committee, Colonel P. T. Owen. This valuable report was submitted about 1928. So far as he could recollect no further data had been accumulated since that time beyond the gauging of the streams.

Mr. Daley stated that in a special report on developmental schemes for the Territory submitted by him for the Minister's information on the 29th January, 1943, and copies of which he now handed to members of the Committee, he had expressed the view that considerable investigation and study by a highly qualified engineering authority should be made as a preliminary to the commencement of any practical designing of the various component parts of the Lake Scheme. In his opinion the immediate necessity was for a decision as to the extent of the Lake Scheme which, it must be admitted, was an integral portion of Mr. Griffin's plan.

Mr. Walters suggested that it would be appropriate for the Committee to recommend to the Minister that a request be sent to the Director-General of Works asking him to arrange for his engineers to make a special study of the Lake Scheme in the light of present day conditions and resources.

The Committee resolved accordingly to make such a request, and that it be suggested the investigation review the whole question of the feasibility of the Lake Scheme as designed and the amplitude of the flow of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers for that purpose, having regard to the following reports made by the Public Works Committee-

- (a) Storage and Regulating Reservoir, Upper Queanbeyan River - 17th March, 1915;
- (b) Dams for Ornamental Waters at Canberra - 28th November, 1916;
- (c) Construction of dam and improvements on the Molonglo River - 2nd June, 1926;

to the special report on the Lake Scheme and ornamental waters by Mr. A. Peake, M. Inst. C. E., as Consultant to the Federal Capital Commission's Development Committee; and other official reports and data on this subject available in the Engineering Section of the Department of Works and Housing or the Property and Survey Branch of the Department of the Interior.

(B) ASSOCIATED PLANTING:

Consideration was given to a report submitted to the Secretary

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Department of the Interior, by Dr. M. R. Jacobs, Chairman of the Consultative Committee, Parks and Gardens, which raised certain issues involved in preparation for planting in association with the ornamental lakes and the water axis generally.

Dr. Jacobs pointed out that the design of the landscape effects and the gardens associated with the Lake Scheme and with other City planting was dependent upon decisions as to whether the Lake Scheme as originally conceived is to be carried out or whether modifications are to be made. The Secretary, Department of the Interior, desired the views of the Planning Committee on this report.

The Executive Member suggested that there be an early meeting of the two Committees in order that the views of Dr. Jacobs' committee might be fully expressed and discussed and the present position of the whole subject explained. This would serve to attain desirable coordination between the two committees in view of the interdependence of general City planning and the design and provision of parks and gardens.

It was resolved that the Planning Committee meet Dr. Jacobs' Committee during the next Canberra meeting or as soon as practicable.

INDUSTRIAL
AREA:

The location of the main Industrial area for Canberra was briefly discussed in the light of previous consideration given to this matter. The relationship between this subject and that of the railway system was recognized and it was mentioned that a proposal had already been put forward to transfer the Industrial Area from the north of the city, as provided for by Mr. Griffin, to a suitable area adjoining the Canberra Queanbeyan line. In view of the re-opening of the question of railway connection with Canberra there was a possibility, in the event of railway connection with Yass being adopted, that an Industrial Area would still be necessary on the north side of the City.

As a result of the discussion it was decided to take the opportunity, if possible, during the next meeting of the Committee in Canberra, to make further inspection of areas to the north of the City both in Dickson and in the neighbourhood of the railway route to Yass.

CIVIC AND
COMMERCIAL
CENTRE:

The Committee discussed the problems involved in the planning of City Hill and the main commercial centre. Mr. Harris briefly indicated suggestions that he had made a considerable time ago as modifications to the scheme envisaged by the Sulman Committee. These had not been fully examined for various reasons arising out of the war situation.

It was agreed that there was urgent necessity to settle the lines of development in this important area, as otherwise individual proposals could not be properly handled in their relation to a general scheme.

Mr. Rolland had mentioned that he intended to put suggestions before the Committee in relation to this area and it was agreed to request him to have a sketch prepared for the Committee's consideration after study of the proposals of the Sulman Committee and those made by Mr. Harris.

UNIVERSITY:

The Executive Member explained to the Committee recent developments that had occurred in relation to the Canberra University project.

Although the subject had been investigated by many Committees, including the Council of the Canberra University College, this was the first time that a Government had definitely decided to introduce legislation to provide for founding the University. The Government's action was taken as a result of recommendations made by the Interdepartmental Committee on education on which the Department of the Interior had been represented by the Executive Member.

The University scheme had been envisaged as commencing on much more ambitious lines than those conceived by the Council of the Canberra University College, and the Bill introduced into Parliament foreshadowed

the establishment of important research schools in Medicine, Physical Science, Social Science, and Pacific Affairs, in addition to making provision, of course, for the under graduate studies now being conducted by the present College. These functions would require a much more extensive building scheme than was previously contemplated and it had been necessary, for the purposes of the Government's presentation of the matter to Parliament, to prepare rough estimates of the cost of such buildings. For this purpose the Inter-Departmental Committee had convened sub-committees of leading Scientists and Specialists in the various categories and, on the estimates for accommodation and equipment that they had drawn up, building estimates had been prepared after consultation with officers of the Works and Housing Department in relation to Canberra costs. These figures represented building proposals in the vicinity of £850,000.

With the passage of the Bill through Parliament, and further action to set up a University Council and appoint a Vice-Chancellor, it was likely that there would be an early move towards the planning of the University area and the designing of the buildings.

The Government had in mind the possibility of attracting to the Commonwealth Australians who had distinguished themselves in scientific and academic work abroad, and it was certain that such persons would not agree to come to Australia unless provided, within a reasonable period, with modern buildings and equipment.

Mr. Daley stated that he had mentioned the desirability of arranging for an architectural competition for the general layout of the University area as this had been under contemplation over the years.

He suggested that the Committee might devote some time, at an early meeting, to a general consideration of the University problem from a planning point of view.

PRIVATE
ENTERPRISE
BUILDINGS:

Block 4, Section 48, City : Basement Cafe:

Mr. Daley stated that, in accordance with the discussion at the last meeting of the Committee, he had informed Mr. K. H. Oliphant, the Architect who had submitted a design for a cafe in the basement of the building on Block 4, Section 48, City, that his proposal was not favourably considered. He took the view that there were strong reasons why a cafe should be established at the present time and he was invited to put these in writing. He had done so and argued that a basement area was very suitable for a restaurant because -

- (i) It gives easy access to the public;
- (ii) Does not interfere or disturb office accommodation on other floors;
- (iii) Allows for the ground floor areas being used for shops giving window displays to the public.

He considered that the provision of air conditioning and modern lighting would overcome the problem of ventilation and natural lighting, that the alterations required to bring the proposed building into use were much less than would be required for a new building, and he again stressed the need for a suitable restaurant to provide evening meals which were at present lacking in Canberra.

The Committee reconsidered the matter in the light of Mr. Oliphant's letter and it decided to adhere to its original decision to advise against the provision of a restaurant in a basement, under the conditions obtaining at Block 4, Section 48, City, which it thought unsuitable for the purpose.



NEXT
MEETING

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Committee at Canberra on Thursday and Friday, the 11th and 12th July.

The meeting terminated at 5.30 p. m.

C O N F I R M E D

John R. ...
of CHAIRMAN

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