



NATIONAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

REPORT ON
SIR WILLIAM HOLFORD'S
OBSERVATIONS ON THE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF CANBERRA, A.C.T.



30th JUNE, 1958

Reprinted at Canberra by the Union Offset Co.,
Wiluna St., Fyshwick, November, 1958.

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Apart from the proposal for unifying the city by early implementation of the Lake Scheme, the most important suggestion made by Holford is undoubtedly that concerning the position of the future Houses of Parliament. We believe that new Houses of Parliament are required. This is a matter with which Parliament itself is vitally concerned, but we feel we should point out that if new Houses are likely to be required within five to ten years, preliminary planning for the building will need to start now.

In the opinion of the Commission and of the National Capital Planning Committee, the most fitting site for the new Parliament is that suggested by Holford. Reasons for this view are set out in our report. We strongly recommend that Cabinet should take whatever steps are necessary to authorise us to proceed with our planning on this basis.

Holford has made many interesting suggestions for siting of other buildings and architectural treatment of different areas. However, apart from the major issues which I have mentioned, we do not think that it is necessary, or indeed practicable, to seek Cabinet's endorsement for these details at this stage. We will incorporate as many of Holford's suggestions as possible in the plans which we will be submitting later this year.

There is one matter which is not discussed by Holford, but which we think is of vital importance. It concerns the use of the area near the Australian-American Memorial. Until this part of Canberra is developed, the plan of the city will remain unbalanced and incomplete. We have, therefore, proposed that land in the vicinity of the Australian-American Memorial should be developed as an office precinct for the Defence Services. As this suggestion extends beyond the scope of Holford's Report we have dealt with it in a separate submission.

As stated in our accompanying Report the principles outlined are closely based upon the Observations of Sir William Holford and we should like to acknowledge our good fortune in having had before us the findings of so eminent a planner.

We recommend that the Government be asked to endorse these principles and to authorise their incorporation in the plans which the Commission is now preparing for the future development of the city; it is particularly important that -

- (a) the Commission be authorised to proceed with its planning on the assumption that a Lakes Scheme will be implemented and to submit specific proposals later in the year; and
- (b) Cabinet be asked to take whatever steps are necessary to endorse the siting of Parliament House on the proposed Lake front; and
- (c) Cabinet be asked to endorse the siting of the Defence Services Precinct in the vicinity of the Australian-American Memorial.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. OVERALL,
Commissioner

30th June, 1958.

INTRODUCTION

1. Both the Senate and the Holford Reports stress the fact that Canberra has so far failed to develop as a National Capital; in our opinion, it would be better to say that it has not yet succeeded. Fifty years have passed since the first survey of the site, forty since Griffin's "final" plan and over thirty since Parliament began its sessions here, yet so far very few public buildings of a permanent nature have been erected, and less than half of the Government Departments or statutory bodies have their headquarters in Canberra. Many reasons have been adduced to explain this slow development - notably, the consequences of two world wars and the depression, together with a certain reluctance to undertake major projects until "normal" conditions have been restored. We are convinced that no more favourable opportunity than the present is likely to occur for a positive approach to the building programme which must be carried out if the capital city is to assume its proper role.

2. The passage of time has necessitated considerable amendment to the original plan. In his report (pp. 5-6) Holford draws attention to this, stressing in particular -

- (i) the serious deficiencies of the existing street-pattern from the standpoint of present-day motor traffic;
- (ii) the difficulty of creating satisfactory visual effects within the central area, particularly along the land axis, because of the huge distances involved.

We fully endorse these observations. We believe also that a further difficulty in the realisation of Griffin's proposals has been the failure to develop the market centre and railway station in the vicinity of Mt. Pleasant, which, with the Civic Centre and the Parliamentary Group of buildings, formed the three points of the Triangle which comprises the basic framework of his Canberra plan. We propose, as a means of overcoming this deficiency, that the Defence Services buildings be located on this site, near to Duntroon and the Australian-American Memorial.

3. Before the Commission can undertake the necessary amendments to the plan, decisions on the following major issues are needed -

- (i) the Lakes Scheme and its effect upon the unification of the city,
- (ii) the nature and siting of government buildings, particularly those within the Parliamentary Triangle, and their relation to the central areas as a whole,
- (iii) the measures necessary to provide for traffic requirements,

The course of action recommended by the Commission on these matters is outlined below. In formulating proposals on these and other items which will be included in the plans to be submitted to the Government later this year, we have borne closely in mind the three important objectives, (garden city, traffic circulation, cultural centre) discussed on pp. 7-10 of the Holford Report, with which we are in complete accord.

concentrations of traffic. In our opinion this site should most appropriately be used for the Legislature, the Judiciary, the head offices of those Departments closely associated with Parliament, and for institutions related to it. We believe this is consistent in principle with the proposals made by Holford we reserve our views, however, on his suggestion that provision should also be made for a hotel within the Triangle.

7. Of all the buildings which should be located in this area, by far the most significant is Parliament House itself and we strongly endorse Holford's proposal that it would best be sited on the north side of the Parliamentary Triangle with a second frontage to the central basin of the proposed Lake. This site would give an excellent opportunity for the construction of what might well become one of the world's most distinguished modern buildings. The location of Parliament House in this key position within the Triangle, where it will have the place of honour, will have the following advantages

- (a) It would permanently establish Parliament as the heart of the Government precinct, with the necessary administrative buildings and secretariats grouped around it.
- (b) The site is the only suitable one in the Parliamentary Triangle unless the present Parliament House were demolished. The retention of the present Parliament House for other purposes would ensure that the precinct would soon take shape as an architectural and functional unit.
- (c) The site is easily accessible to traffic and its association with the Lakes enhances its aspect from most parts of the city.
- (d) It would be a major contribution towards achieving a proper visual relationship between the present Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial and other buildings on the northern side of Canberra and could also bring harmony and coherence to the parliamentary group.

8. We have examined the possibilities of other sites in or near the Triangle, in particular Camp Hill, as originally suggested by Griffin, and Capital Hill, as recommended in the Senate Report. (p. 75, para. 64). We consider the Camp Hill site unsuitable because it is too limited for traffic requirements and because any building on this locality would be obscured by the present Parliament House. A rather misleading impression of the importance of Capital Hill as a building site is given by the paper plan of Canberra and it should be noted that although its visibility is good from the Queanbeyan side, from the Triangle it cannot be seen at all. Capital Hill therefore seems to us inappropriate for the key building of the Parliamentary group, which would not only be dissociated from both the secretariats and the Lakeside but would also be almost invisible from the central areas of the city.

9. Capital Hill is 140 acres in extent and Holford's suggestion of a Royal Pavilion seems to us somewhat out of keeping with a site of this size. We should prefer to see it devoted to a "National Centre", which would have as its theme the development of Australia and its contribution to civilisation, a fitting counterpart to the War Memorial which lies at the opposite end of the axis. The site would be suitably landscaped and have as its central feature an assembly area around which there could be a series of pavilions, each dedicated to some particular aspect of Australian culture, illustrating for example the history, natural resources and economic devel-

es building in the vicinity of the Australian-American Memorial would substantially change this view.

14. We also accept the six requirements listed by Holford on page 9 of his report under the heading of "Traffic Circulation". Provision for the design features mentioned would be incorporated in each case as the need arose. Holford further draws attention to the danger that, in the future, the Parliamentary Triangle might be used by too much traffic passing between the south-eastern suburbs and the Civic Centre. We agree that it will be necessary to provide for the circulation of traffic outside the Parliamentary Triangle, so as not to prejudice its character as a precinct. The whole traffic problem is at present undergoing detailed investigation and specific proposals for improving the road system will be included in the plans which we intend to present to the Government towards the end of the year.

ADDITIONAL ASPECTS

15. Although the main purpose of this report is to indicate our views on Holford's proposals, it seems appropriate also to mention certain additional aspects which we propose to incorporate in the plans now being prepared. Further particulars of the proposal for the Defence Services Buildings, which has already been mentioned, are submitted in a separate memorandum accompanying this report. In addition to the major issues discussed above, the plans intended for presentation at the end of the year will include proposals for -

- (i) the development of the Civic Centre area and Holford's suggestion for a Civic Hall.
- (ii) the Universities Area;
- (iii) the siting of other Government buildings;
- (iv) the provision of community facilities in residential areas;
- (v) the provision of areas for local service industries;
- (vi) the diversification of types of housing (as suggested by Holford on page 7 of his report);
- (vii) landscape development and the provision of parks and other recreational facilities.

CONCLUSION

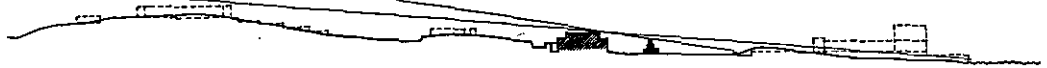
The principles outlined in our report are closely based upon the Observations of Sir William Holford and we should like to acknowledge our good fortune in having had before us the findings of so eminent a planner.

We recommend that the Government be asked to endorse these principles and to authorise their incorporation in the plans which the Commission is now preparing for the future development of the city; it is

CAPITAL HILL

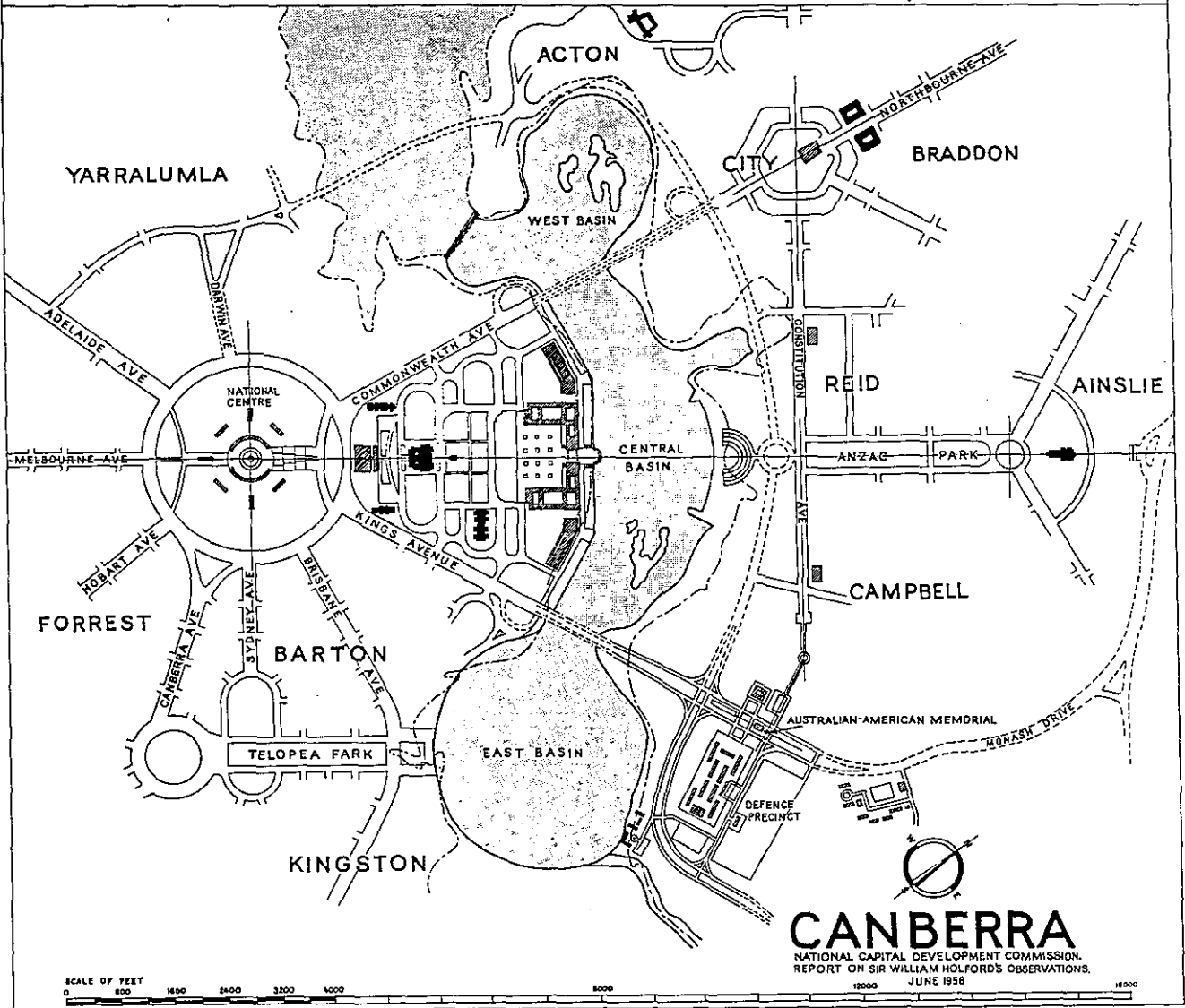
PROVISIONAL G.V. PARLIAM.T.HSE. MEMORIAL

NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE



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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF CANBERRA,
A.C.T.

MADE AT THE REQUEST OF

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

BY

SIR WILLIAM HOLFORD, F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I.

By Authority:

A. J. ARTHUR, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.
(Printed in Australia.)

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF CANBERRA, A.C.T.

THE PAST FORTY YEARS.

Walter Burley Griffin, in his original report (paragraph 4), realized that he was planning a city that would be a long time divided into two. ". . . The most difficult problem" he said, "connected with the water-way through the centre of the site, is to minimize its interference with traffic, and at the same time least cut up areas."

He strove for unity by bridging the gap formed by the Molonglo valley and its lakes, and by establishing three main links—one aerial, the so-called Land Axis from Capital Hill to Ainslie; and two physical, the traffic lines represented by Commonwealth-avenue and Kings-avenue.

On paper he succeeded; his original plan still has the fascination of many of the "Ideal Plans" produced from the 16th century onwards in Europe and America. In practice his idea has so far failed; that is to say, it has failed to create a city, although the *landscape* maintains the unity of the site—a fact which Griffin thoroughly understood and which is clear to anyone who becomes familiar with it. To the average citizen and the visitor, however, this is not easily comprehended. On a recent public holiday I watched the arrival (by car) of an Australian family on top of the Lookout on Mount Pleasant. They drank in the view, and then one of them said "Which is Canberra?"

At some time in the future this question should be resolved. The central features of Canberra will then create the unity of civic design which now is lacking. But in my view this major principle of Griffin's original plan can only be achieved if amendments are made to it.

Griffin visualized the principal means of transport in the city as the railway and a fast tramway service. He proposed a causeway to carry the railway across the river, and a pair of bridges to carry the tramways, along the direct lines between the government centre and the civic and market centres. Chiefly owing to the removal of the railway station, which was to have been the magnet of the market centre, from the north to the south side of the river, Griffin's system of crossings, except for the Commonwealth-avenue bridge, has not materialized. Since the municipal and commercial centres have now coalesced at Civic, his system would not be satisfactory were it in existence. The central Molonglo basin which Griffin proposed to form between the two main crossings has also not materialized. It might have proved to be, as critics of his scheme feared,⁽¹⁾ more of a barrier than a link between the northern and southern parts of the city.

Reference to the geological map of Canberra⁽²⁾ suggests that Griffin's selection of the Commonwealth-avenue and Kings-avenue⁽³⁾ crossings may have been as much due to the practical requirements of bridge-building as to a liking for geometry and vistas.

The bisector of the angle which these two lines make at Capital Hill gives Griffin his Land Axis directed towards Mount Ainslie.

The base of Griffin's triangle—his Municipal Axis—represented now by Constitution-avenue, was a line normal to the Land Axis intersecting the Commonwealth-avenue line at Civic Hill. At the opposite end, the intersection with the Kings-avenue line had no prominent natural feature to mark it, and was in fact in a hollow between two hills. Griffin's proposed railway station made use of this circumstance and provided a *raison d'être* for his third centre.

The theory of Griffin's triangle was that the focus of each angle would generate activity, and that development would spread outwards from each centre along the connecting avenues in which were to run the lines of the fast tramway. It is doubtful if this system could ever have worked because of the distances between the centres. Comparing Canberra with London, it is as though the Civic Centre were at Kingsway, the Market Centre at Marble Arch, and the Capitol on Primrose Hill.

NECESSARY AMENDMENTS.

The more important features of Griffin's plan which need amendment could be summarized as follows:—

- (a) The street pattern was not designed for fast and frequent cars, nor for the peak-hour traffic of office and shopping centres, nor for off-street parking on a constantly increasing scale: for example—Commonwealth-avenue, which is the lifeline between City and Capital Hill, will not always be able to bear intersections with right-hand turns at 500-ft. intervals.

(1) Town Planning Review, Vol. III., 1912, October. Editorial pp. 165-167.

(2) Geological Map, Canberra, A.C.T. Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics, April, 1953.

(3) This line was chosen by the Departmental Board for the railway crossing. The bridge corresponding to the Commonwealth-avenue bridge in their scheme was a little further east. See Town Planning Review, Vol. III., 1913, Jan., p. 224.

- (b) The Land Axis, centrepiece of the whole city composition, is only visually effective from limited viewpoints—the summit of Ainslie, the War Memorial, the roof of Parliament House. Camp Hill and Capital Hill itself are obscured when viewed from Parkes-place, and in the opposite direction, the War Memorial is usually shadowed. There is little definition below Anzac Park, and nothing to heighten the sense of scale between this point and the George V. Memorial, over a mile and a half away. Although the sense of openness is exhilarating, the vista itself does not strike the eye as even lesser distances do in Rome, Paris, Washington, Versailles or Caserta.
- (c) The plan assumed a programme of building and engineering which, for various reasons, could not be realized. For example, public and recreational buildings on the north bank of the Molonglo and bordering what is now Anzac Park, were intended to set the scale for residential buildings—mostly terraces and urban housing types—which would gradually fill the spaces between them. Instead, the residential buildings are there first, and they are mostly small houses. Consequently there is great hesitation about allowing any other building of height or bulk in this area which might overthrow the scale of the Australian War Memorial or distract the eye from the open axis.

The one area which has developed more or less in conformity with Griffin's ideas—the University and Hospital at Acton—has been deprived of the setting for which it was planned by the gazetted decision to eliminate the Western Lake.

- (d) The absolute symmetry of Griffin's Parliamentary triangle, and of the north side of the Central Basin, is no longer feasible. In the first place, City Hill and the proposed market centre at the end of King's-avenue have never balanced. King's-avenue will take traffic which is, in general, unable to get on to Commonwealth-avenue, and is much less important as an artery. The long straight bank of the proposed Central Lake on the south side is too extensive to make symmetry of building on either side of it worth while.

In these and other particulars it seems necessary to amend the formal symmetry of the Griffin plan and to retain it only for those features where it can be really effective, leaving a balanced but not symmetrical development to take its place on either side of the central axis. Further out still, a frankly picturesque treatment would be more in keeping with the beautiful background of hill and valley which the existing suburbs and the wider landscape of the Australian Capital Territory provide.

THE MAIN CHOICE.

Although costs will determine every step of the way, the main choice which will decide the direction that Canberra is to take will not depend on finance but on an effort of will. It was this which brought it into being in the first place. Federal Capitals are political acts of faith, and do not have their roots implanted deep in the facts of economic geography, as other cities do. That is not to say that they cannot grow them.

The alternatives before Canberra, in the light of past history, present possibilities, and amendments that will in any case have to be made to the original plan, seem to me to be broadly these: *either* to remain a divided city, with the flood plain of the Molonglo as an open wedge between the federal town on the south bank and the municipality on the north—a third element in the group being the industrial town of Queanbeyan just outside Capital Territory on the east; *or* to become a unified city, metropolitan in character if not in size, a cultural and administrative centre and a national capital.

The first course is the easier one to take; and might be considered more realistic both by the State Governments and by the Treasury. Most but not necessarily all government offices, and the whole diplomatic corps, would be grouped around Capital Hill which, in course of time, would probably itself be developed with public buildings including a new Parliament House⁽⁴⁾. The Manuka and Kingston shopping centres would develop further, and new centres would be planned to serve the residential districts; one of them at least being near State Circle, probably south-west of the Canberra Hotel.

The flood channel of the Molonglo, about 400 yards wide, would be used for grazing and gravel digging, and in part for playing fields, golf courses and other recreational uses. It could be further planted with Red Gums, which would stand periodic flooding. Two roads would connect the twin towns by means of high level bridges—one at Commonwealth-avenue, one at King's-avenue or east of it—and several, as now, by low-level crossings, usable at all times except during severe floods.

The municipality on the north bank would develop as a residential, commercial and university town, gradually taking over responsibility for its own affairs, just as the New Towns in the United Kingdom are developing as local authorities under the sponsorship of individual development corporations—which may soon be grouped, for purposes of administration, in a central government office.

The Australian War Memorial and Anzac Park would remain as part of the vista from Parkes-place, but Griffin's long terrace and water-gate, at right angles to the Land Axis, would be abandoned.

(4) As recommended in the Statement by the Presiding Officers; *The Case for a Permanent Building*, Canberra, 2nd May, 1957.

Like the twin new towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, in Hertfordshire, England, the two centres could well develop in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence, and derive a certain stimulus from competition. Complete ownership and management by the Federal Government would be maintained on the south bank, with capacity for expansion already planned⁽⁵⁾ to accommodate nearly 60,000 people. On the north bank Government would still be landlords, but would begin to divest themselves of direct responsibility (except in the case of their own establishments) through the medium of a development corporation, a town council, and in certain cases private enterprise.

The second course calls for an all-out combined operation of the kind which is so much more difficult to achieve in peacetime than during war. I do not imagine that Canberra could be transformed suddenly into a monumental symbol of Federation; but I know from experience that the mere acceleration of a building programme, on a scale sufficient to make an impact on people's imagination and create at the end of it a unified design, requires immense effort and considerable administrative courage. In the long run all town development of a reasonably good standard of layout and construction is a profitable investment. A really notable city in Australia, supported as it must be by the great capitals already existing—Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart—but avoiding some of their mistakes, and thus making up in quality and attractive power for what it lacks in size, would be one of the best investments that the Commonwealth could make in this age of urban congestion and depreciation.

In the short term the economics of town development in Canberra, at the expense of improvements or even dire necessities in other towns, is more difficult to justify. There will be plenty of critics asking for half measures, or no measures at all; as there have been at the start of the British New Towns in 1946, and in Brazil at the transfer of the federal capital from Rio de Janeiro. But the lesson appears to be that as soon as interesting results begin to arrive, the criticism is no longer that too much has been done, but not enough. Real quality and imagination in the design of three features of the new city—the Commonwealth-avenue Bridge, the permanent Parliament House, and the Lakes, would lift Canberra at once into the ranks of the significant capital cities of the world. The 300,000 visitors who now come in a year to the Federal Capital would be enormously increased; they would have more to see than they do now, and much more to remember.

My own recommendation is strongly in favour of this second course; but it is obviously not a decision for me to take. I put forward these alternatives because I believe that policy must crystallize before long on a number of issues—the bridges, the flood plain, the Parliament House, the retention of vistas, the development of reserved sites, the location of future housing—its character and density, and even the planting of trees. An indeterminate or compromising attitude on these questions would almost certainly result in having the worst of both worlds. Canberra would be neither a pair of small towns, pleasant, livable and unpretentious, nor a unified capital city with a distinctive architecture and a civic design of its own. It would deserve the gibe that has already been thrown at it, of being a good sheep-station spoiled.

THREE OBJECTIVES.

In deciding whether to go forward or retrench, the Federal Government will probably want to know what characteristics of a capital city the future Canberra might have.

I should say it could aim at achieving three objectives, all of which are compatible: it would remain a garden city; it would develop a modern system of communications by road and air designed for traffic as it will be rather than as it used to be; and it would eventually become a centre for several aspects of Australian culture—the sort of city which people would want to retire *to* rather than *from*.

(i) GARDEN CITY.

Canberra is already a city of gardens, with a fine natural landscape improved by planting. One hopes it will remain so. The growing difficulties of maintaining gardens and the low garden-city densities that go with them are, firstly, shortage of help, secondly, loss of compactness, and thirdly dis-economy of services.

I have noticed that in Canberra the reduction of frontages beyond a certain point also reduces amenity. The car is left on the pavement; trees are cut down because they overshadow the house; and privacy is surrendered, as adjacent houses look into each other. Where the garden can no longer frame each single-storeyed house, it should frame a narrower two-floored house, or a group of houses, or even a group of flats which share the forecourt and open space in common.

My own view is that, in spite of the fact that capital expenditure on footpaths, kerbs and gutters lags behind their planned provision to the extent of more than £500,000, the maintenance of a garden character in the residential parts of the city is more important than raising the density. At the same time there are ways in which more compact housing could be introduced without damage to appearance, i.e.—

- by increasing the proportion of flats and maisonettes (flats on two floors); it is only 3 per cent of the population now;
- by the gradual process of infilling, using some reserved sites (e.g., north of Constitution-avenue) for tall point-blocks of flats spaced widely apart;
- by planning houses round a hollow square or oval, off the road or at right angles to it, so that wide frontages could be used without windows in the end walls, all services and traffic could be located in the hollow square and all gardens open out at the back.⁽⁶⁾

⁽⁵⁾ See Map as Appendix II, to the Senate Committee Report (1955) showing ". . . existing and future areas for development accommodating up to 110,000 population."

⁽⁶⁾ See Baldwin Hills, Los Angeles, and other examples from *New Towns for America* by Clarence Stein.

(ii) TRAFFIC CIRCULATION.

No city has solved its present-day traffic and parking problems in advance. Venice has avoided them; Fort Worth, in Texas, has proposed but not yet created a purely pedestrian centre, nearly a mile across, with radial motorways terminating on an inner ring road, well supplied with multi-storey parking garages and a complete service tunnel at basement level. Welkom, a new town in the Orange Free State (South Africa), is planned as a completely safe town from the traffic point of view, but its population is as yet too small to afford proof of this.

Canberra has been well endowed with avenues and broad streets, but the actual design of its carriageways, and particularly their junctions, is quite unsuited to modern traffic. Thus, in spite of liberal circulation space (potentially about 40 per cent. of the total built-up area), a small peak load in the Government Triangle causes traffic congestion on Commonwealth-avenue.

From the railway station, and from the existing industrial area at Causeway and Kingston, the most direct route to the Commercial centre at Civic lies through the Government triangle. The Causeway area is being cleared, and industry moved further out to the Molonglo industrial area. But the Kingston site is occupied chiefly by Government workshops and depots which can only be transferred in part and over a long period⁽⁷⁾. In any case the removal further east of factories and even of the station, as recommended by the Senate Committee, will not solve the difficulty, because traffic from the new station and the Molonglo area will naturally take the same route⁽⁸⁾. An alternative route will become particularly desirable if the new Parliament House is to be sited in the lower part of the Government Triangle.

The main function of the Commonwealth-avenue Bridge is to be the channel of communication between the Government Triangle and the business and commercial centre at Civic. It is also the way home for those public servants who work in the Government Triangle and live in the central part of the north bank. And it will inevitably be used by residents in Forrest and the immediate neighbourhood of the State Circle as a route to Civic. But it should not be used for that purpose, as it is at present, by residents of Deakin and Yarralumla to the west of the Government Triangle, and residents in Barton, Kingston, Griffith and Narrabundah to the east.

The danger of congestion in Adelaide-avenue and State Circle, by which Yarralumla and Deakin people approach the bridge, is already being felt⁽⁹⁾. The Town Planning Section of the Department of the Interior propose that this should be relieved by the construction of a bridge on a line a little west of Lennox Crossing⁽¹⁰⁾. This bridge, which appears in Griffin's plans, is known as the Hospital Road Bridge; and would also be the line of the dam at Acton, if this were built. But as shown in Appendix H., it will do little to relieve Commonwealth-avenue.

The problem on the east side of the Government Triangle is to find a shorter route to Civic than the Commonwealth-avenue crossing. Proposals for a central bridge on the line of Scott's Crossing were considered by the Public Works Committee and rejected "on the grounds that it would be a serious departure from the Griffin Plan and would create traffic difficulties in the centre of the Government Triangle"⁽¹¹⁾. The Public Works Committee recommended as an alternative a road from the northern bridgehead on King's-avenue to a central point on Constitution-avenue, i.e., cutting off the Duntroon corner. They suggested that Griffin's lakeside boulevard should provide part of the route. The Senate Committee, on the other hand, was strongly opposed to any short cut for traffic across what they considered Griffin's intent to be, namely a pedestrian park.⁽¹²⁾

As a route to Civic, the Kings-avenue Bridge would have all the disadvantages of the Hospital road bridge in an aggravated form. In Griffin's scheme, residents in the south-east quarter of the city would have had to go only to Duntroon to reach the shops; and the Causeway, which was to carry a road as well as a railway, would have provided a direct route. The Town Planning Section's Outline Plan suggests that the Causeway is likely to be replaced by a road further east serving the Molonglo industrial area.⁽¹³⁾

Two further considerations affect the disposition of river crossings. These concern traffic that comes into the city from outside. Firstly, the route through the city of the Federal Highway from Sydney which enters via Northbourne-avenue and leaves via Canberra-avenue to link up with the King's Highway at Queanbeyan, 6 miles south-east of Canberra.⁽¹⁴⁾ And secondly, the approach to the city from the airport.

The significance of the airport traffic is that the portion of it bound for the Government Triangle and suburbs south and west of Capital Hill will enter the city near the American War Memorial and cross by the King's-avenue bridge. This bridge is needed to complete the symmetry of the Government Triangle and will come into its own on ceremonial occasions, but its early construction would hardly be justified.

⁽⁷⁾ Commonwealth of Australia: Report of the Select Committee of the Senate on the Development of Canberra, 1955. Paragraphs 281, *et seq.* and recommendations 43 and 44.

⁽⁸⁾ See the map given as Appendix H. of the above Report. There is also the possibility of a regional industrial centre at Queanbeyan (para. 493), six miles further off in the same direction.

⁽⁹⁾ Commonwealth of Australia; Senate Report 1955, para. 271 and recommendation 41.

⁽¹⁰⁾ *Ibid.* paras. 266-267. See also the map Appendix H.

⁽¹¹⁾ *Ibid.* paras. 260-261.

⁽¹²⁾ *Ibid.* paras. 268-270 and recommendation 40.

⁽¹³⁾ Commonwealth of Australia: Report on the Development of Canberra, 1955, Appendix H.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Topographical Map of A.C.T. and Environs, Department of the Interior, 1953.

Northbourne-avenue is the natural line for the city's main thoroughfare. Griffin, at the time of the competition, was criticised for not making it his main monumental avenue also.⁽¹⁵⁾ As it is, Griffin's treatment of the route, although on the grandest scale, has made it difficult for traffic, and altogether unsuitable for through traffic.

Later in these notes I make some suggestions for amendments to the traffic system which should at least be considered by an expert traffic engineer. At this stage it is only necessary to table the fact that Canberra's present system barely suits its present traffic movements and certainly does not anticipate those which are sure to come. On the other hand the plan can be amended, without great cost in alterations or disturbance, to meet stage by stage some or all of the following requirements before they become critical:—

- (1) intra-city communication; preferably by a route independent of Commonwealth and King's-avenue Bridges;
- (2) quick routes to the airport and its extension;
- (3) a through route for the Federal Highway, by-passing Northbourne-avenue, Commonwealth Bridge, and the two roundabouts (London-circuit, quarter of a mile, and State-circle, half a mile in diameter);
- (4) the establishment of a separated carriageway system for all important roads, adapting Griffin's sections for the purpose;
- (5) elimination of right hand turns on heavily trafficked routes by various methods, including one-way streets and the early establishment of grade separations, which could be completed by connecting spurs at a later date;
- (6) incorporation in the system of additional river crossings, if and when a decision is taken to flood the West and East Lakes, and their construction to provide at least one carriageway in each (with foundations for a second) before the dam at Yarralumla comes into use.

(iii) CULTURAL CENTRE.

Culture is an awkward word to use in describing the essential character of a capital city, but I use it for want of a better, to describe the quality which is already found in Washington and Ottawa and Pretoria, and which is hoped for in the new federal capitals of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (near Salisbury), of the West Indies (in Jamaica) and of Brazil, in the State of Goias.

Town planning history shows that culture (with its associations of administration and the Court, and still later of entertainment and shopping) is a product of surplus wealth, over the mere subsistence level. This used to occur only in cities of size and wealth; as the historic capitals of Rome, Constantinople, Venice, Paris or London exemplify. The 20th Century has seen the rise of the tertiary city, with good climates and landscapes, a high proportion of the employed population in the "service trades" (which include administration and retailing), no heavy industry and little manufacturing industry (Pretoria with its steelworks being an exception among the newer capitals), an increasing number of head-quarter organizations and offices, and more people near or over retiring age.

These cities still depend on a surplus gained from high material productivity elsewhere, but as their name implies, the sources can nowadays be federal and no longer part of the same city.

Canberra has already established a nucleus of federal head-quarters and cultural institutions, and the Senate Committee (Recommendation 11) advocated the addition of—

- (1) The High Court of Australia;
- (2) The Federal Arbitration Court;
- (3) The Commonwealth Bank;
- (4) The Australian Broadcasting Commission;

and (in Recommendation 12) houses for Ministers of the Crown.

They further recommended (72 and 73) the establishment of—

- (1) A National Art Gallery;
- (2) A School of Fine Art;
- (3) A National Theatre;
- (4) A School of Drama;
- (5) A Conservatorium of Music;
- (6) An Opera House;
- (7) A National Museum.

These moves would, of course, all be made easier by the readier availability of houses and flats; but over and above this consideration is the degree of general attraction which would induce people and organizations to come to Canberra by choice. Washington now exercises a considerable pull, partly by reason of its size, partly by its character and cultural assets. These have—at various times and notably after the Conference of American Architects in 1900—been in advance of urgent needs.⁽¹⁶⁾ The question for Canberra is whether the pace can be similarly forced a little, at the present time, to accelerate its attractive power faster than the historical process would be likely to do unaided.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Town Planning Review, Vol. III, 1912, October, Editorial.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See Constance McL. Green *American Cities In the Growth of the Nation* (University of London Press, 1957), Chap. IX., "Washington, the Federal City".

Apart from the appearance and amenities of Canberra itself, such as the landscape and the lakes, two new building groups would, in my opinion, do more than anything else to start this chain reaction working. Their place in the town plan is described later. One is a new Parliament House; the other, a first-rate civic auditorium. Both are buildings that can be given fine architectural expression in the 20th century; socially and culturally they are key structures. What the Capitol is to Washington and the Royal Festival Hall is to the cultural activities of London, these two buildings would be to the same aspects of life in Canberra.

I also think that Her Majesty the Queen, who is also Queen of Australia, should have, with other members of the Royal Family, a house of her own in the Commonwealth Territory. It is true that the periods of residence might not be long, but I am not suggesting a vast empty palace, but a small series of apartments, attached to a really fine garden, which could be used for many other occasions—in other words, a home. Symbolically this Royal Pavilion would be of immense importance. The Chief Ambassador of the Commonwealth would have an official residence in the midst of the embassies and legations and Ministers' houses in the capital. You will see from the succeeding section of these observations that I suggest that the Royal Pavilion should crown Capital Hill.

It would probably consist of wings containing private apartments for the Royal Family and their Household, and a central block of reception rooms which could be used by the Governor-General for official entertaining at ordinary times. The area enclosed by State Circle should be laid out as private grounds with such ancillary buildings in the way of offices and guard-rooms as might be necessary for the Crown's head-quarters in Australia. As a landmark on Capital Hill, visible above the present Parliament House, there should be a flag-staff, an Australian spar of record height, from which the Royal Standard would fly when the Sovereign was in Canberra⁽¹⁷⁾. It would, of course, be floodlit at night.

With these three buildings, their ancillary buildings and their forecourts and gardens, and with the construction of Commonwealth Bridge and the central basins, Canberra would establish itself as a cultural centre and would start, gradually, to exercise a magnetic attraction. Leaving aside schools and housing and local shopping centres for the moment, and assuming that the necessary labour force, the building materials and the contracting industry are all geared up to a higher performance within the next few years, the time will arrive when some principles of selection have to be applied to those enterprises and institutions which may be allowed, or ought to be persuaded, to develop in Canberra.

Against the establishment of heavy industry or the mass production of manufactured goods, there seems to be general agreement; and Recommendations 42-45 of the Senate Committee, relating to Industrial Areas, are not only reasonable but would release more land for housing.

But the standard application of the town planner's "use zones" cannot go very far in the Federal Capital, where the landlord's responsibility is to foster the development of everything useful and valuable to the estate as a whole, on a basis of quality rather than quantity. The accent is bound to be on two qualities in particular—prestige and services. Head-quarter organizations should be encouraged for their prestige value, even though numbers are small, and no matter whether they are classed as sport, entertainment, retail distribution, welfare, commerce, or transport. Branches of famous department stores, research establishments, certain types of broadcasting and recording studios, hotels, championship tennis courts and rowing clubs could all contribute to a richer and more varied social life for Canberra.

* * * * *

In short, I believe that with imagination and effort, backed up by a deliberate and sustained policy of attraction and promotion, such as is now being exercised for the British New Towns and for so many regional and district centres in the United States of America, it is possible to envisage the future of Canberra as a true capital combining the functions of a garden or landscape city, a fully motorised town, and a cultural centre.

It remains to describe some of the ways in which these principles could be applied to the existing plan of Canberra.

LAKES AND BASINS.

Most of the outstanding features of the town plan depend on what final decisions are taken on the future of the Molonglo River flood plain. The gazetted plan assumes a dam or barrage at Acton forming three central basins above it, more or less on the lines that Griffin proposed, and at a level of + 1825. Below it would be, presumably, a rectified river course, referred to as "a ribbon of water".

I have approached this problem as town planner, architect and landscape architect—not as a hydraulic engineer. Nevertheless I have read the Wilson Report of 1953, taken advice, and walked the whole length of the Molonglo River, through Canberra, on 17th June of this year, with Mr. E. M. Birkett, an experienced engineer of G. Maunsell and Partners, and in charge of their Melbourne Office. At the end of it I agree with the Senate Committee (para. 414) that technical decisions must be suspended until definite technical advice is given.

Meanwhile I take the risk of putting forward suggestions of my own, which I hope would be included in the terms of reference of an engineering report.

⁽¹⁷⁾ The flagstaff at Kew Gardens, presented by the Government of British Columbia, is a shaped trunk of Douglas Fir, 214 feet high.

I can think of nothing more attractive or more exciting than the creation of water surfaces in the midst of the city. Washington, London, Paris and Venice all prove this in their different ways; (incidentally, the distance from the quay of the Piazzetta of St. Mark's in Venice to the opposite shore of the Guidecca is almost the same as the distance from the north terrace of the Government Triangle to the margin of the Central or Molonglo Basin in Griffin's Plan). In Canberra, especially, away from the sea, the value of inland water is even greater, as visitors to Lake George and the Cotter Dam bear witness.

Moreover, the strong effects of cold air drainage would be improved by the presence of a body of relatively warm water.

At the same time the proposed basins at Canberra must, in my view, act as a unifying feature and not a disrupting one. The West Lake, on the other hand, magnificently framed by the contours of Black Mountain, the Botanic Gardens Reserve, the National University and Balmain-crescent, would hardly act as a barrier and could be a wonderful recreational and scenic area of relatively free and natural shape.

I am strongly in favour, therefore, of creating both the lake and the basins, but I suggest a slight reduction in the size and formality of the latter by the following methods. Subject to engineering approval, this could be achieved as follows:—

- (1) A dam at Yarralumla would be built, with a sill level of +1810 and 15-ft. gates, some 800 feet across, so as to raise the level to +1825. A stable level for the basins and the West Lake might be reached at some point between +1820 and +1825.
- (2) The south bank of the central basin would be formal, with a wall and parapet supporting an approach road behind; the north bank would be informal, except for a central curved strip, about 600 yards long, which would have a firm margin at a level only a foot or so above the normal level of the basin.
- (3) Earth-moving machinery could be used to ensure that a channel of water would always fill the south margin of the basin; even if this were to be a mere tongue of water in the first instance. This machinery could be used at the same time to fill the curved strip on the north side, and also to form horseshoe shaped islands from the +1815 contour to roughly +1830, both in the Central and the West Basins. Trees planted on these islands would have great reflection value and would carry the eye across to the north bank. (The reflective capacity of the water for distant buildings, or for Mount Ainslie, as propounded by Griffin, would be negligible.)
- (4) The arguments for a dam at Yarralumla rather than at Acton, as set out in the Wilson Report, appear to me convincing. It would ensure a greater expanse of water, less trouble on account of silting, less ground maintenance, and greater opportunities for aquatic recreation. And in that event, alternative sites would have to be found for the racecourse and the Royal Canberra Golf Course. The racecourse, which is not ideal in regard to orientation or car parking, could find a better site near the show ground.

The Golf Course would probably have to move to the East Basin or to part of the former East Lake; although nine holes might be retained between the legations and the West Lake.

Even if the flooding of the West Lake is considered impracticable for technical or other reasons, the Royal Canberra Golf Course would be affected by the dam at Acton and the treatment of the watercourse below it.

- (5) The West Basin, as shown on the diagram which accompanies these observations, would be slightly less extensive than that shown on the Gazetted plan, and would have a mounded island in the centre made up on the basis of equalizing cut and fill.
- (6) The East Basin, which—if my suggestion is followed—would be bisected by a new Causeway, would either be flooded as shown on the Gazetted plan, or held by a barrage underneath the bridge, leaving the natural courses of the river above the bridge to be banked to a level of about +1830. This would be cheaper than filling the whole basin to get above flood level; and would still permit more or less permanent grazing, or recreational use, or both together, in the reclaimed area.

THE INTERNAL LINK ROAD OR PARKWAY.

The traffic framework of Griffin's plan, and of the Gazetted Plan, with the exception of part of Constitution-avenue, is composed of roads with ribbon development on either side, frequent junctions, and roundabouts too big to be unidirectional. The through routes and short cuts are mainly temporary, and include the low-level crossings of the Molonglo. If the lakes are created, an internal road on the lines of an American "freeway" will be urgently required to link the various centres together and to provide a moderately fast arterial route for cars generally, and for through traffic in particular.

A system of ring roads to the east of the city has been proposed⁽¹⁸⁾, as well as to the south-west. The route on the east would make use of sections of road already approved, and provide links to connect the Federal Highway north of the city with the Molonglo industrial area. In the long run, a bold diversion of the Federal Highway would probably be more satisfactory than a piecemeal by-pass. A new river crossing east of the King's-avenue Bridge would be required to complete this route⁽¹⁹⁾.

There is no reason why the crossing required to link the south-eastern suburbs with Civic should not also serve as the Federal Highway crossing; at least until there is enough industry on the Molonglo site⁽²⁰⁾ to justify the construction of the road further east proposed by the Town Planning Section.⁽²¹⁾ The best line for a combined crossing would be from the neighbourhood of the American-Australian War Memorial at Duntroon to Queensland-square at Kingston. Queensland-square would be a convenient taking-off place for all the south-eastern suburbs and can be reached directly from the industrial areas via Wentworth-avenue. On the Duntroon side of the crossing the road would divide. The eastern branch would connect with the Federal Highway and the airport. The western branch would pass under King's-avenue making for Civic. There could be no objection to the use of the Molonglo Boulevard for this part of the route if it ran on the north instead of the south of Central Park as proposed by Griffin.⁽²²⁾

The new crossing east of the Government Triangle, which would replace Griffin's "Causeway", would be approximately in line with Telopea Park, and parallel with the Land Axis. If it could be aligned on the American War Memorial and lean in a few degrees towards Civic, it would be an advantage.

An equivalent line for the new crossing on the west would avoid the defects of the line proposed by Griffin and followed by his successors. The new Hospital Road crossing would take off on the south side at the end of Darwin-avenue, or from Coronation Drive. It would be joined near the quarry by a road from Government House which would pick up the Yarralumla traffic.⁽²³⁾

The actual crossing would be in the neighbourhood of the golf course footbridge.⁽²⁴⁾ As with the eastern crossing, the road would fork on the north bank. The eastern branch would pass west of the Hospital and swing round south of Civic, pass under Commonwealth-avenue, near the Roman Catholic Cathedral, to link up with the Molonglo Boulevard. (This section replaces Griffin's West Basin Boulevard.) The western branch from the bridgehead would follow the line of Griffin's West Beach Drive via the present racecourse, past the University, to link up with the northern suburbs.

Thus, by re-aligning two of Griffin's crossings and varying the position of sections of road already proposed by him or his successors, it is possible to bring into existence a main artery which would run through the city from the Qucanbeyan-road to the Cotter-road. This new thoroughfare would be in three sections: the central section on the north bank, and the end sections on the south bank of the Molonglo River. With proper connexions it would serve, from east to west, the Molonglo industrial area, the railway station, the Kingston industrial area (or whatever in time replaces it), the Kingston and Manuka shopping areas, the airport, the Federal Highway, Central Park, the business centre at Civic, the Hospital, the University, the Botanical and Zoological Gardens, and Government House—in fact all the important features of the city outside the Government triangle. Griffin's basic framework would remain, and the east-west route would simply be threaded through it. The new artery would serve as an interchange system between the northern and southern banks. It would supplement and to some extent replace the Northbourne-avenue-Commonwealth-avenue complex as the city's through-road. And it would provide some insurance against the troubles that tend in time to afflict a town whose main centres are clustered about bridgeheads on opposite sides of a river.

It may be some time before traffic in Canberra would justify the realization of this route in its entirety. Meanwhile each section, as it came into existence, could function independently and be useful in itself. There would, however, be great advantages if the scheme could be designed as a whole. It should be a modern dual motor road with a few well-planned intersections, treated as a parkway linking the botanical reserve with Central Park. The formation of the eastern section which would run through Wentworth-avenue and Canberra-avenue would give an opportunity for tidying up the Causeway and Narrabundah areas.⁽²⁵⁾ Throughout its length, the character of the parkway would gain much from the proximity of the river and lakes.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE AND THE LAND AXIS.

I have given a great deal of thought to the location of the permanent Parliament House, which is likely to be the largest and most monumental building in Canberra. I have considered the views of the Senate Committee and of the Presiding Officers and of many others; and I have walked the whole length of the Land Axis, from the top of Mount Ainslie to the beacon on Capital Hill, noting and photographing the views obtained in both directions at various levels.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Commonwealth of Australia: Senate Committee Report on the Development of Canberra, 1955, paragraph 272.

⁽¹⁹⁾ *Ibid.* Appendix II. In view of the diversion of through traffic, it would be an advantage if the road through the Duntroon section could be the boundary between the city and the R.M.C. as recommended by the Senate Committee, para. 526.

⁽²⁰⁾ Commonwealth of Australia: Senate Committee Report 1955, para. 283. The Molonglo site has an area of 1,000 acres and not much more than 10 per cent. has yet been taken up.

⁽²¹⁾ *Ibid.* Appendix II.

⁽²²⁾ James Birrell—*Capital Blunder*, p. 59—states that Griffin intended the lakeside boulevard to be a dual carriageway vehicular road. He is apparently quoting from Australian Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers, General, 1914-17, vol. IV. This is contrary to the opinion of the Senate Committee given in paragraph 269 of their report.

⁽²³⁾ This road appears in the Town Planning Section's Outline Development Plan, Appendix II. of Senate Committee's Report as a proposed ring road. It may be regarded as an extension in both directions of Griffin's Westlake Esplanade.

⁽²⁴⁾ The main axis of the competition scheme by Alf Agache crossed at approximately this point running N.W.-S.E. See *Town Planning Review*, Vol. XXIII., 1952, July.

⁽²⁵⁾ Commonwealth of Australia: Senate Committee Report on the Development of Canberra, 1955. Recommendation 44.

My own conclusions differ from all the opinions I have heard and read; but they are, of course, based on topography, and on what can only be a personal idea of the unity and integrity of the plan of Canberra as a whole. I can only ask that they should be considered along with the others.

I do not think it is reasonable to expect the present Parliament House to be demolished for a long time to come. Provisional as it is, it enshrines a good deal of history. It has a useful future for library and archive purposes, and for conference and office use. With this building standing, and the East and West Buildings at the level they are, the Camp Hill site is unattractive and too small for Parliament—even though the actual floor space could be easily accommodated on the site.

Capital Hill is the generally preferred location, but to me a Parliament House here would be symbolically and actually out of place. Griffin's republican and utopian "Capitol" was to ". . . symbolise Australian sentiment, achievements and ideals", and to be a place for ". . . popular assembly and festivity more than for deliberation and counsel".

One can agree with Griffin's general idea, while doubting the possibility of giving it adequate architectural expression. It would need a huge building with a marked sculptural feature, either a dome (like the Superga at Turin) or a stepped pyramid (as in Griffin's own sketch) to do justice to this conception. A Parliament seems to me symbolic in a different way; it is an active, democratic building and should be in the forum and not on the hilltop. For Capital Hill the symbolic and the practical advantages of the Royal Pavilion, the reception rooms and gardens, and some accommodation for the Governor-General and the Diplomatic Corps, seems infinitely preferable.

My own choice of site for the permanent Parliament House would be in the centre of the axis rather than at one end of it. As it is, the axis is too long and too uneventful to register any marked impression on the beholder. It is only the fact that the provisional Parliament House stands out white against its background, that establishes it at all in the landscape as compared, for example, with the Administration Building. If the permanent Parliament House were to occupy a central site on the northern terrace of the Government Triangle, where in Griffin's scheme the courts of justice were to be, the whole emphasis of the Land Axis would be altered. Its climax would be in the centre. Paris or Versailles would have replaced Washington as the model—but a democratic Versailles with a public park on the "garden" side beyond the basin of water, and a forecourt in the Government Triangle which every Australian would have the right to enter. This forecourt would lead through a high open portico to the semi-circular terrace overlooking the basin and across to Anzac Park and the War Memorial. This was Griffin's "Water Gate".

The open portico would be the real "lobby" of Parliament. On one side would be the public entrance hall to the Senate group of chambers, and on the other the entrance to the House of Representatives. But it is the essence of this plan that the Members' entrance would be on the lower floor, by a road on the lakeside which has its own access to car parks and cloakrooms, and which passes underneath the terrace of the Water Gate. It would be one building at this level, although it would appear from the forecourt level as two buildings divided by the portico. The division between the two pylons would keep open the axis towards Mount Ainslie in one direction, and in the other the view over the top of the provisional Parliament House to the Royal Pavilion and Mast on Capital Hill.

I suggest that the level of the great forecourt (which is marked F on the Diagram accompanying these notes) should be at approximately +1865—a few feet lower than the base of the George V. Memorial; so as to take advantage of the hump in the Government Terraces at this point. The forecourt would be largely excavated below, to a level corresponding with the ground floor of the main Parliament building, so as to form a very large covered car park. The roof deck, which would carry the paving of the forecourt, would be opened and parapetted in places, so as to permit of occasional decorative trees growing up through the opening from true ground level.

On either side of the forecourt would be sites for further Government buildings with large parking courtyards behind them. Parking at two levels would provide adequate space (something like three times the floor area of the buildings would be required), and at the same time ensure that the main Land Axis was free of parked cars.

At the Mount Ainslie end of the Land Axis the War Memorial provides a termination at a level +1940. The Federal Highway, if diverted, would pass behind it at the foot of Mount Ainslie. At or near the intersection of the Land Axis with the Federal Highway a Commonwealth Gateway could be placed so that visitors might be confronted on arrival with a view of the entire Land Axis. Opposite this gateway, on the other side of the highway, should be a connexion to the path leading to a lookout point at the summit of Mount Ainslie, from which a panorama of the whole city could be obtained.⁽²⁶⁾

Below I add more details about the use of the spaces in the central area of Canberra, and relate them to the Diagram which illustrates these observations. The object of these proposals is to establish an outline plan and a programme, not to determine the form and layout of the buildings.

The Parliament Group would be built in two stages, the first being the accommodation now required, together with its approaches and any monumental features of the scheme which would be incorporated at the same time (such as a clocktower whose height would permit its use as a vent as well). The second stage would comprise the ancillary buildings and courtyards, the Water Gate and Terrace and the road spurs passing under Commonwealth and Kings-avenue Bridges, looping up to meet one of the divided carriageways thus avoiding a right-hand turn across the other.

(*) Commonwealth of Australia; Senate Committee Report 1955, recommendation 67.

This scheme is so important for the future of Canberra and on such a promising site that I think it should excite world-wide interest. It is worthy of some form of open competition, which might include the first buildings in detail and the remainder in outline.

To organize such a competition successfully it would be necessary to have—

A clear programme and firm conditions; an assessor, or board of assessors, in whose judgment competitors would have confidence; and

The agreement of professional bodies, Australian, British and International, to the conditions of competition.

It would also be very desirable to ensure that, as well as Australian architects, the leading firms in the world should enter the competition if they wished to do so. It might be possible to devise a system whereby the designs should be submitted only by or through firms now practising in Australia or prepared to do so. But in the event of collaboration being desired by either party with an individual or firm from overseas, who might act either as designer or consultant (as is fairly common in big architectural projects nowadays), such an association could be registered with the promoters of the competition, who would have the right to accept or decline it.

Another course open to the Government would be to have an open preliminary competition, followed by a final limited competition in which each candidate would be reimbursed a nominal sum for out-of-pocket expenses. (A two-stage competition is now being held for the design of the City Hall and Square in Toronto.)

The alternative would be a limited competition by invitation, such as the American State Department has recently organized for the American Embassy in London.

APPLICATION OF PROPOSALS TO THE PLAN.

In order to show how the various suggestions I have made would hang together in their application to the existing plan of Canberra, and appear as variations to the Gazetted Plan, I have attached a Diagram showing the approximate route of the internal link road or parkway, the contour of the lakes, and the approximate location of certain features. On this Diagram I have lettered certain sites A.-X.; and it might be helpful if I included at this stage an annotated list of references to them and some of their associated problems.

- A. *Royal Pavilion*.—Main reception room in centre with views towards Red Hill and Mount Stromlo; private wings at an angle.
- B. *Reception Garden*.—There would be other residential and public buildings between State circle and Capital-circle.
- C. *Private Garden*.—Open to the public when not so used.
- D. *Camp Hill*.—Sites for archives, libraries and further office buildings.
- E. *Lawn*.—Rising from +1860 level at existing road to +1865 where it joins the covered road and forecourt.
- F. *The Forecourt*.—Mostly paved, but with some planting; about 1,000 feet by 600 feet.
- G. *Loop*.—Connecting one carriageway of Commonwealth-avenue with the northern access road to Parliament House. NOTE.—The other carriageway connects via the approach road on the west side of H.
- H. *West Courtyard*.—Acting as open space and car park for surrounding buildings, which might include a Government hospitality centre or hotel.
- J. *Western Wing* of Parliament House.
- K. *Eastern Wing* of Parliament House.—The roofed portico (about 200 feet square) being between J and K.
- L. *East Courtyard*, as H, but the surrounding buildings need not be symmetrical with those of H.
- M. *Loop*.—For connecting one carriageway of Kings-avenue with the northern access road to Parliament House.
- N. *Anglican Cathedral* site.
- O. *Observation Platform* or Terrace on the site of the Water Gate, at a level of approximately +1850, i.e., 25 feet above high water level of Central Basin. The access road for senators and members passes underneath this platform at approximately +1837.
- P. *Roman Catholic Cathedral* site.
- Q. *Inlet* from Central Basin; possibly bridged at mouth, and used as open-air swimming and diving pool; it is near the enclosed Olympic Swimming Pool.
- R. *Open Air Arena*, which could also be used at night for outdoor projection as part of the central park and sportsground.

- S. *Stadium*.—With championship tennis courts and playing fields. The whole area between the basin and the internal parkway would eventually make a comprehensive athletic and recreation area, the spaces north of the parkway and up to Constitution-avenue being developed on the same lines as the *Prater* in Vienna, with occasional buildings.
- T. *Civic Hall*.—A first class auditorium suitable for concerts, plays, ballet, mass meetings, and exhibitions; flanked later by other municipal buildings or smaller halls and possibly by Australian Broadcasting Commission studios. A telecommunications mast and aerial, with some decorative lighting at night would stand at the centre of Civic Hill. A good deal of the space between Vernon and London Circuits would be used for car parking.
- U. *Site for Museum* or other public or community building visible from the Observation Platform at the Water Gate and from the portico.
- V. *Church Site*.—Also visible, with St. John's Church spire, from the Water Gate and Portico.
- W. *Site for Community Building*.—Similar to U. Apart from these reserved sites and Anzac Park, there is no reason, in my view, why moderately tall blocks of flats, provided they are set in ample garden surroundings, should not be built on the north side of Constitution-avenue.
- X. *Commonwealth Gateway*.—A lay-by from the Federal Highway, with some space for a few cars to park while a view is obtained down the axis, framed by a simple series of arches or lintels in wood or stone.

* * * * *

ORGANIZATION.

I make these final observations with some diffidence, because I am not closely acquainted with Australian conditions and background. But judging from what I have seen and read and from experience of similar developments elsewhere, I should say that the organization of planning and development in Canberra is complicated enough already, and that any further moves should be towards simplifying it.

Any large-scale operation of construction and planning seems to demand three responsible agents: one to initiate and organize and appoint; the second to design and plan and to see the key features carried into execution; the third to act as permanent client and administrator. It is the third agency to whom the works are handed over and who remains responsible for routine construction, management and maintenance.

On the question of Ministerial responsibility at Canberra, I am not competent to express an opinion. It is obvious that a Minister must be responsible at the initial stages and be responsible for the "receiving" Department on behalf of the Federal Government at the conclusion of every stage of the works. As to whether it should be the same Minister in both capacities, and whether it should be a Minister with sole responsibility for Canberra, I am in no position to judge; but I am assuming in these notes that the Minister for the Interior would, in the first instance at any rate, initiate action, and at the same time be responsible for the administrative and managing departments who take over completed works of engineering, landscape and architecture. This has the advantage of simplifying the appointment of new personnel and the secondment or collaboration of existing members of the Departments of the Interior and of Works.

(i) INITIATION OF PROPOSALS.

To organize and unify action at this critical stage in Canberra's growth, I think the Minister should have, and officially appoint, a full-time Commissioner. Unlike the Permanent Secretaries of the Departments, however, his appointment would be for a term of years—perhaps five in the first instance. His essential qualifications would be experience of public affairs in Australia, real energy and enthusiasm for the task of construction, and an understanding of the way to commission technicians, architects and other artists—more than this, to use them, encourage them and make opportunities for them to give of their best. On this account his experience should extend outside Australia.

For this last purpose, and also to satisfy public opinion, the Commissioner should be entitled to have the advice of a Panel of Consultants, and to pay their expenses. Subject, of course, to your own comments on this point, I do not envisage the Panel as sitting regularly under the chairmanship of the Commissioner; but firstly, as being called by him, *ad hoc*, to make a recommendation on any important matter as it arises (not excluding costs of work or the appointment of designers); and, secondly, as a corps of consultants, who might be asked individually or collectively, by correspondence or visits, to assist his Director of Planning.

The Minister should have the right to attend any full meeting of the Panel if he wished to do so by simply informing the Commissioner.

(ii) DESIGN.

I agree with Senator Wood's observations^(*), printed with the report of the Senate Committee, that ". . . the basic requirement for the best development of Canberra is a very good town plan". Design is essentially one man's job (whether it is a job of synthesis or invention) although it requires assistants to help in its presentation; and it is a job for a man on the spot. However valuable the inspiration contributed by Griffin and others, however great the support from his Commissioner, and however extensive the recommendations and advice by consultants, someone has to combine all these ideas and all this expertise in forms which are practical as well as imaginative. Canberra is already on the map, but as yet it makes little impression on the man in the street. Individual designs, including especially those for Commonwealth Bridge, the Parliament House, the landscape of the Lakes and Capital Hill, have to be comprised in a more comprehensive design—that of the city as a whole. And by whatever title it is known, this is a job for a director of planning.

Immediately it will be asked, can a suitable Director be found? This would be an appointment with a limited contract—perhaps three years—during which a good deal of the planning would actually be done; but with the prospect of reappointment by mutual agreement. The relations between the Director and his Commissioner would be somewhat analogous to those between a City Architect and his Town Clerk, or between the Chief Architect and Planner or a New Town Corporation and his General Manager.

The salary for a temporary post would be higher than its permanent pensionable equivalent. But a much more important inducement would be the status of the post (not only in its Australian but in a much wider context) and recognition of the work being done. All good designers are artists, and with artists it is recognition rather than income which counts most.

Some staff for the Director would obviously be necessary; but it should be small, and personal to him. For the most part he would depend on two sources of technical assistance—

- (a) on consultants for specialized and professional services of higher grade or wider experience than can be had locally;
- (b) on the existing Departments for the remainder. It might be necessary for the Commissioner to ask the Departments occasionally for the formal secondment of one or more officers for a period to be agreed; or alternatively for a report or a design to be prepared to terms of reference prescribed by the Director.

The Australian Planning Institute, in its evidence to the Senate Committee said that ". . . the gazetted plan . . . has the grave disadvantage of giving the impression that Canberra is planned for all time, and that no further planning design is necessary . . . There has in fact been no review of the Plan since Griffin's final revision in 1918. That is to say, that after nearly 40 years there is no person or group in a position to take the view and exercise the executive power that was required of Griffin".^(**)

This is the job which the Director, with the backing of his Commissioner, should be called on to do; and I should be surprised if no one in Australia, or well acquainted with it, were able and qualified to accept the challenge.

(iii) ADMINISTRATION.

In the same way as architects and engineers hand over their works to the client authority or individual who is to own and look after them, so I assume would the relevant Government Departments take over the plans, or sections of plans, the layouts and the designs as and when they were carried out. The client function would occur at several levels. The Minister, himself, would be a party to the proposals, and although he would officially receive them, he would already have influenced their direction to some extent. But no doubt there would be a Senate Committee to examine any proposals of substance, and to support and check the grant of monies voted by Parliament. In this connexion it is essential to avoid the endless compromises that arise from a host of strongly held and contradictory opinions which cannot agree on the main objective which everybody wants to attain, because of some significant detail to which they take objection.

The finance should, therefore, be voted over periods sufficiently far ahead for realistic programmes of development to be drawn up and adhered to. Nothing is worse, and ultimately more uneconomic in the construction and allied industries than the alternate turning on and off of the tap.

In the second place, there should not be periodic and detailed scrutinies of expenditure, in the course of the operation, which would give too much of a handle for captious critics to use. Annual estimates must, of course, be made and debated; and it seems likely that there will in any case be a normal budget of the order of £6,000,000 a year. Over and above this there will be additional sums for bridges, lakes, the Parliament House and other developments, which will be spread over a period of five to ten years in each case. It is these additional funds which should be carefully estimated on the basis of the general plan prepared, and thereafter be not subject to alteration and paring down, except in case of a real emergency.

The next level of administration is that by the Departments, and here the position is a little different from normal, because, as I see it, they will be carrying on many forms of standard and routine development themselves, as well as through the agency of the Commissioner: the regular troops in comparison with the flying squad.

(*) Commonwealth of Australia: Senate Committee Report 1955; Separate Report by Senator I. A. C. Wood (pp. 78-82); recommendation 33.

(**) Report of the Senate Committee 1955; Appendix J.: pp. 117-119.

One of the anomalies that at present exists would be partly removed by the new arrangements, namely, the conflict that now arises between street and service layouts and subdivisions, prepared sometimes as much as four or five years ahead by the Department of the Interior, and house designs prepared by the Department of Works. Some of these layouts could be revised or redesigned by the Director of Planning, and some would have to be retained. But wherever possible a clear stage should be defined between planning in its social sense (numbers of people, overall density, character, use and bulk) and planning in the design sense, which should include the layout of the group of houses as well as the individual house plan.

The Departments will also have a responsibility as clients to define standards, particularly standards of maintenance. The cost of a house or a bridge or a garden wall is not only the initial expenditure, but that plus 60 years' maintenance. And it will be basic to the programmes and designs prepared for the development of Canberra to know what scales, methods and materials of building are truly economical or otherwise.

On local administration I have not formed any views that would be of value. It seems clear that in addition to the landlord's responsibilities, there will be a tenant's point of view, which will become more vocal and highly organized as time goes on. The importance of Public Relations will therefore grow; and it should cover householders and building tenants, chambers of trade, labour and commerce (who play a most active role nowadays in many progressive communities in the United States of America), and the citizens as represented in civic and amenity societies and welfare associations of all sorts, including the Australian Capital Territory Progress and Welfare Council.

I am inclined to agree with Senator Wood that this kind of representation should remain unpolitical—in the sense of party politics—as is the case with the oldest local authority in the United Kingdom, the Common Council of the Corporation of London.

It will be of some importance to the development of Canberra that there should be more and more people who care, and care deeply, what it looks like and what it becomes as a town to live in. Therefore it is in the interests of the landlords and of the Commissioner in particular, to foster some form of Council, or to strengthen the existing Australian Capital Territory Advisory Council, so as to reinforce the element of informed and interested public opinion which will gradually acquire valuable training in this branch of voluntary work.

* * * * *

That I am not concluding these observations with a list of acknowledgments to the many individuals and representative bodies in Canberra to whom I have listened and whose ideas I have absorbed, is not due to discourtesy, but to the difficulty of implying that any one of them shares responsibility more than another for the mixture of criticisms, conclusions and proposals that make up this Report.

But I should like to add a word of thanks to Mr. J. B. Redmond, who combined for me the roles of secretary and scout during my last visit. There are many questions which Mr. McLaren and others put to me then which I should need more time to answer.

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28th December, 1957.

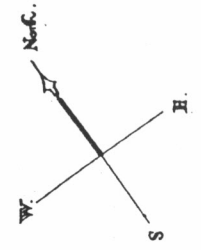
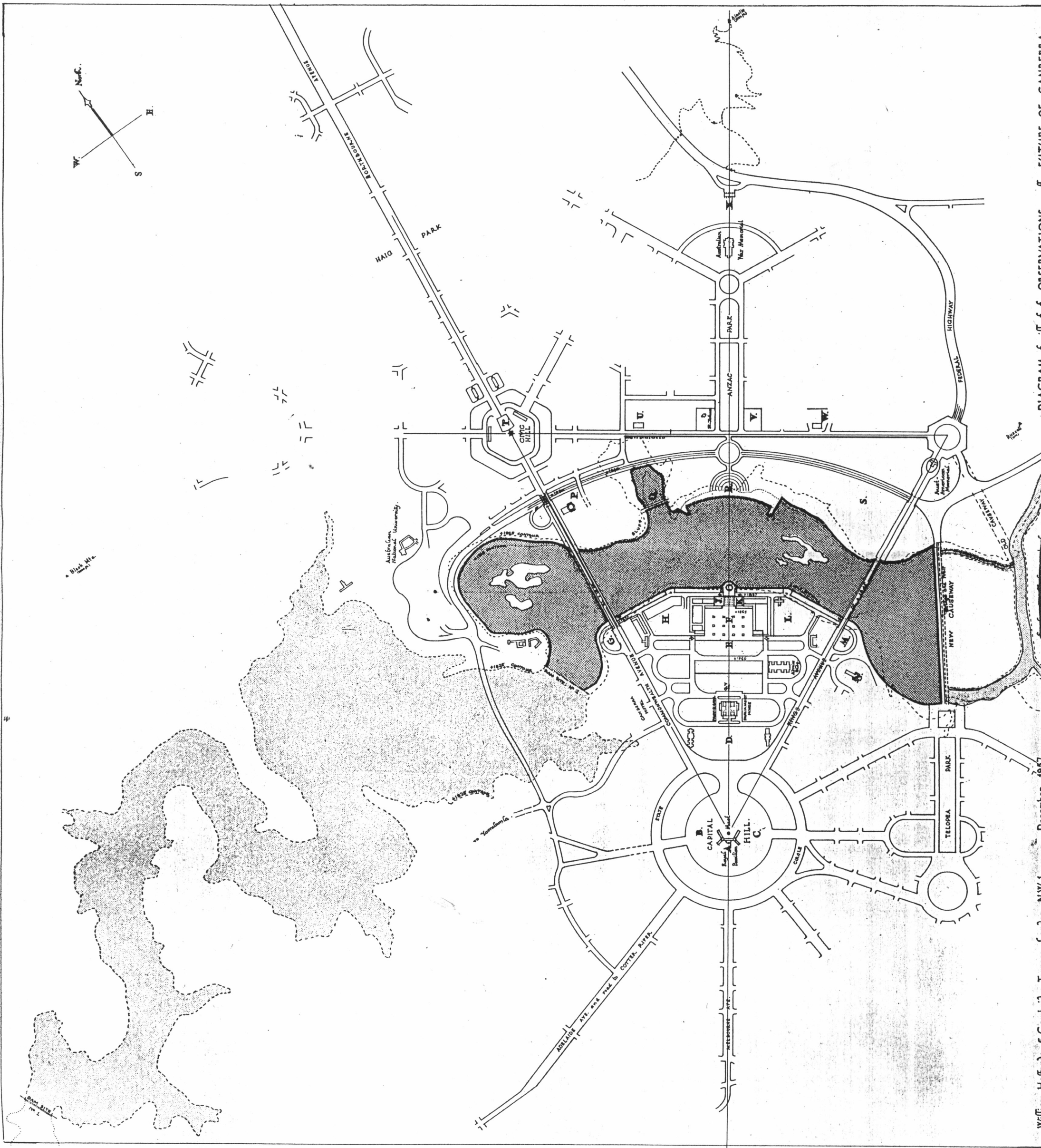


DIAGRAM to illustrate OBSERVATIONS on the FUTURE OF CANBERRA

December 1957

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