



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

R E P O R T

COMMONWEALTH OFFICES, YURONG STREET, (PALLADIUM) SYDNEY,

N. S. W.

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R E P O R T

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, to which His Excellency the Governor-General in Council referred, for investigation and Report thereon to the House of Representatives, the question of the proposed erection of Commonwealth Offices at Palladium site, Yurong Street, Sydney, New South Wales, has the honour to report as follows:-

S E C T I O N I.

History.

1. In January, 1954, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was given a reference to report upon a proposal to erect Commonwealth Offices in Phillip Street, Sydney. In making the investigation the Committee was also desired to have special regard to and report on the accommodation requirements of all Commonwealth departments in Sydney.
2. In April, 1954, the Committee submitted its initial report on the matter. The reference was made in advance of the preparation by the Department of Works of detail studies of designs for the building, and the Committee concerned itself principally with the need for the proposed accommodation, and the suitability of the sites available.
3. Because of the difficulties associated with the re-alignment of Elizabeth Street extension, and the doubt that the new triangle of land between the present Phillip Street and the new Elizabeth Street extension could be made available for building purposes without further protracted delays, the Committee recommended that two buildings should be erected. One of the buildings was to be the main Commonwealth Offices on the Phillip Street site when enlarged to the new Elizabeth Street alignment, and the other, a smaller structure on the Palladium site in Yurong Street.
4. In consideration of the circumstances then existing, and in order to meet the urgent need for space, the Committee further recommended that work should proceed first upon the erection of an office building on the

on the Yurong Street (Palladium) site, and that the plans for the building should be referred to the Committee as soon as they were advanced to the appropriate stage. The plans for the suggested building on the Phillip Street site, and also plans for an office building on the Palladium site were drawn up, and were made the subject of independent references to the Committee. The report concerning the Commonwealth Offices, Phillip Street, has been presented to Parliament, and the report on the Yurong Street, (Palladium) building, made herein, deals with the investigation of this office building proposed as an urgent relief measure.

S E C T I O N II.

THE PRESENT PROPOSAL.

The Building.

5. The proposal provided for an "L" shaped building of reinforced concrete frame construction, comprising a basement, ground, and nine upper floors, with its major axis North and South to suit the shape of the site. The building is planned to accommodate 1,354 people in a usable office space of 106,280 sq.ft. The height of the building will be approximately 100ft, which is the maximum height for this area. The building is estimated to cost £1,300,000.

S E C T I O N III

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS.

General.

6. The Committee studied the plans for the building, and gave consideration to methods of using the site, with its effect upon the neighbouring properties. Evidence was taken from the departmental officials concerned in the project, the City Building Surveyor, the President of the N.S.W. Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the President of the Real Estate Institute of N.S.W., and the Vice Chairman of the Sydney Grammar School.

7. As many of the problems considered in connection with this proposal are also common to the Phillip Street Offices project, the evidence in

connection with both references is kept together, so that the information required in considering the report will be readily available.

The Building.

8. The architects prepared, for the information of the Committee, plans and a model of a building suitable for use on this site. It was of modern appearance, and designed to include Basement, Ground and nine upper floors, while, in addition provision was made for a penthouse to accommodate Caretaker's quarters, equipment rooms, etc.. The particular design was chosen to permit the use of the site outline in a practical and economic manner, and to make maximum use of natural light and working space. The main entrance of the building was planned to lead through a foyer to the service core which contained the vertical communication system of lifts and stairs.

Air-conditioning.

9. The question of air-conditioning was dealt with very fully in connection with the proposal, in the early stages of the inquiry, as the conclusions applied also to the suggested building on the Phillip Street site. The Committee studied the matter and was able to use the evidence in connection with the consideration of the large building in due course.

Use of the Site.

10. Considerable opposition was expressed to the use of the site for the purpose of Commonwealth offices in this section of the city, and it was generally agreed by witnesses that the proposal to build on this site was not a completely happy solution of the urgent problem of accommodation which existed. It was pointed out that Yurong Street is narrow, and it was foreseen that both the Museum and the Sydney Grammar School, on adjacent properties, will need more space soon. It was strongly urged that it would be better to build one really first class Commonwealth centre, particularly as sections of the major building in Phillip Street were planned to be constructed almost at the same time.

The Phillip Street Proposal.

11. At this stage the Committee proceeded concurrently with the reference concerning the Phillip Street building, and studied all the problems bound up in both these projects. The schedule of planning and construction times,

assuming availability of the Phillip Street site without further serious delay, indicated that the advantage in time to be gained by construction of the Palladium building was not as considerable as had been hoped when this alternative was first conceived.

12. The Committee therefore gave further careful consideration to the possibility of an early commencement of the Phillip Street building. After the re-planning of the proposal for the Phillip Street site had been submitted to the Committee, and further evidence had been received regarding developments in that area, there appeared to be a brighter chance of securing the site soon. With this in mind the Committee sought information from the City Council and other witnesses on the matter, and was impressed by the fact that the Qantas building on the opposite side of the street was progressing rapidly. The Committee therefore felt that a concerted effort at this stage could result in definite action by the City Council, and subsequent provision of the new Elizabeth Street extension, with its alignment for the proposed Commonwealth building.

13. In the Committee's Report on the Phillip Street building, recommendations are made with a view to accelerating construction of the complete Commonwealth centre in that area, and further consideration of the Palladium site proposal, which is the subject of this Report, was consequently suspended.

14. It is therefore recommended that the proposed Commonwealth Offices at Yurong Street (Palladium) be not proceeded with at present.

The Architecture.

15. It is pointed out that a great deal of study and work was put into the plans for this building, and a considerable measure of success was achieved in conceiving a building suited to this particular site. Although the Committee is recommending that the project should not proceed further at this juncture, it appears possible that this building might be required at a later date, if the demands of a rapidly increasing population need additional offices in this area, and the plans should be kept for future reference if necessary.

S E C T I O N. IV.

THE COMMITTEE'S CONCLUSIONS.

Summary of Recommendations.

16. The following is a summary of the decisions made by the Committee after study of the subject and the evidence taken in the matter:-

(1.) The proposed Commonwealth Offices, Yurong Street (Palladium),
be not proceeded with at present. (Paragraph 14.)

(2.) A great deal of valuable work has been put into the plans for this building, and they should be kept for future reference if necessary.

(Paragraph 15.)

J. O. Cramer.
Chairman.

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