MEETING AT THE A.B.C. OFFICES : FITT STREET, SYDNEY AT 3.30pm

Present: Mr. J. Overall, Mr. F. E. Yeates, Mr. Jørn Utson, Mr. Lautrep-Larsen

Mr. Overall gave an outline of the aims of the Commission in Canberra and the stage reached in the Commission's investigations on an Auditorium. He emphasized the limitation of funds. A plan of the Civic Centre Area was explained.

Mr. Utson said they had learned a lot on costs in the last three years. They had learned that the cheapest construction work was to excavate, form an amphitheatre.

Mr. Overall mentioned the second problem. Subjugating a stage tower so that it did not dominate the area of Offices and the cultural centre. It was contemplated putting an auditorium to seat say 3,000 on the top of City Hill. This final auditorium should be dominant.

Mr. Utson indicated that it was unwise to do away with the Tower but digging in the auditorium lowered the Tower. He showed by sketch that the Tower could this way stand up no more than 30-40 feet. It was agreed that this would be the height of the Civic Offices.

Various Theatres were discussed in Europe; in Gotenburg, Stuttgart, Mannheim and Malmo. Malmo brought up the question of reducing the auditorium in size for certain performances. Mr. Utson suggested, elaborating his sketch, that if galleries were formed these could be screened off by screens or curtains for more intimate performances, giving say seating for 900 in the orchestra pit.

The elaborate forestage arrangements in the Opera House were explained. It was suggested that nothing so elaborate would be needed in Canberra.

Mr. Utson returned to his sketch and showed that the auditorium could be constructed in the ground with a flat slab over. He referred to some school Auditoria which he had designed at low cost in a similar manner in Denmark. He regretted that he was leaving Australia the next day but that his partner Mr. Larsen would be staying some weeks and would be coming to Canberra to inspect Sandstone.

It was suggested Mr. Larsen might call on the Commission. The meeting was closed after general conversation.

F.E.Y.
F. E. YEATES
Supervising Architect

8th February, 1960
AUDITORIUM AT CIVIC CENTRE

DESIGN BRIEF

1. Introduction

The requirement of this brief is for:

1.1 The preparation of sketch plans, design, estimates of cost and written report describing the proposals for an Auditorium, Rehearsal Hall and Restaurant, including a schedule of the materials proposed to be used; these buildings are titled "Associated buildings" below.

1.2 If approved by the Commission, the Consultant will be required to take full responsibility for preparation of contract documents, and supervision of construction.

1.3 The preparation of sketch plans for the siting only of those other buildings adjacent to the Auditorium which are scheduled in 2.5 below.

2. Requirement

2.1 The Auditorium should be designed as a multi-purpose Hall to serve these purposes:

2.1.1 The presentation of Philharmonic and Choral Concerts, Opera and Ballet.

2.1.2 The presentation of Drama including Shakespearian and Contemporary.

2.1.3 The holding of Conferences, Lectures and Public Meetings.

2.2 Opera and Drama will be presented largely by Companies based on Sydney and Melbourne whose scenery will be designed for Melbourne and Sydney theatres.

2.3 The Rehearsal Hall should be designed for rehearsals, meetings, lectures, and band practices. It may be incorporated as part of the Auditorium structure or as a part of the group.

2.4 The Restaurant should be designed with kitchen facilities to enable dinners and suppers to be served.

2.5 The "other buildings" mentioned in 1.3 above, which should be related to the Auditorium in function and design are:

2.5.1 A space for exhibitions by local Art Groups and travelling collections, and displays showing the functions of Government.

2.5.2 An intimate Repertory Theatre to seat 300-500 patrons.

3. Site

3.1 The site of the Auditorium group is defined on the attached sketch. The Auditorium and the other buildings
should be planned to form a group to relate to the Civic Offices and Square now under construction.

3.2 The car parks for the Auditorium and the Group should be so located as to allow of their use by the business community of Civic Centre during the day. There should be no vehicular entries from or exits to Vernon Circuit.

3.3 The site should be planned to allow vehicular access to a set down point at the Auditorium and pedestrian entrance to the Auditorium through Civic Square. Provision for visiting Personages to be set down at the Auditorium Entrance should be made.

4. Time Schedule

4.1 Preliminary studies including the siting of the other buildings in the group, estimates of cost of site development proposals and first report should be submitted to the Commission not later than 30th May, 1960.

4.2 Final sketch plans draft brochure and a small scale model illustrating the massing and disposition of the buildings to be submitted to the Commission within 6 weeks of instructions to proceed (or by 25th July, whichever is the sooner).

4.3 Within four weeks of approval to proceed with working drawings, and submit final brochures illustrating the works as approved by the Commission.

4.4 Completion and submission to the Commission of tender documents drawings and bill of quantities, ready to call tenders, by not later than 24th February, 1960.

4.5 Call tenders when instructed by the Commission.

5. Costs

5.1 The upper limit of cost of the Auditorium and associated buildings, car parks and landscaping, completely equipped and ready to fulfil its functions, of the order of £200,000. The cost of "other buildings" referred to is not included in this figure.

6. Accommodation

6.1 The Auditorium should seat 1,200 patrons in fixed seating. The Auditorium should be capable of reduction to seat 900, without the unused seats being readily visible to performers. A projection room and control booth should be provided. It can be expected that the usage will be for 16 m.m. sound movie projection to a standard screen, and 35 m.m. slide projection.

6.2 The House Front should include accommodation for the following:

6.2.1 Lobbies.

6.2.2 Foyers combined with lounges and provision for confectionery and soft drinks. Some consideration should be given to the use of open air areas as foyers.
6.2.3 Booking Office facilities.
6.2.4 Public toilets and powder rooms to the standards required by the competent authority.
6.2.5 A Manager's Office of 120 sq.ft.
6.2.6 A typist and reception area attached to the above.
6.2.7 A small visiting Manager's Office.
6.3 Stage House.
6.3.1 Proscenium opening. This should be adaptable having a maximum width of 50'0" and a height of 20'0".
6.3.2 Forestage. A demountable forestage should be provided to accommodate the greater part of an Orchestra of up to 90 pieces.
6.3.3 Orchestra Pit. This should be provided to accommodate an Orchestra of up to thirty pieces.
6.3.4 The stage platform may be trapped. The depth from the proscenium opening to back wall should be 40'0".
6.3.5 The wings should be big enough to accommodate sets to suit the proscenium opening. No workshop is required but room should be provided for the storage in vertical racks of sets not in use. A touring company may want to store complete sets for up to five presentations.
6.3.6 A Cyclorama should be provided. It should fly.
6.3.7 A flyloft should be provided complete with grid iron and sheaves to accommodate a counterweight system of up to 50 sets of ropes.
6.4 Backstage.
6.4.1 Dressing rooms should be provided for 35 players including 5 star players. Dressing rooms should be provided with showers and toilet blocks in a ratio of 1 to every eight players.
6.4.2 Property Store. This should be a small room of 200 sq.ft. to allow sorting and checking of properties by a touring company.
6.4.3 Wardrobe Room. This should be a room with facilities for hanging costumes not in use, and for making running repairs. A table for sewing and pressing should be provided.
6.4.4 A stage door-keeper's cubicle should be provided at the stage door.
6.4.5 A band instrument store of 200 sq.ft. should be provided, preferably under the stage platform.
6.4.6 A small store should be provided for the maintenance electrician and carpenter.
6.4.7 The Rehearsal Hall should accommodate 200 patrons in fixed seating. It should be complete with a small stage. It should have a flat floor. The Hall should be suitable for showing slides to accompany a lecture
7. Materials and Construction

7.1 Materials and methods of construction should be economical and suitable to the climate of the Australian Capital Territory. They should harmonize with the Civic Offices now under construction. The stage house should not exceed the height of the ridge line of the Civic Offices. (Floor level of Civic Offices R.L.1858.5 Ridge Line R.L.1901.5).

8. Engineering Services

8.1 Mechanical Services. The building should be heated throughout. Some degree of ventilation should be considered and recommended for the Hall. Hot Water services should be included. The installation of a plant capable of supplying the source of heat to the Auditorium, associated buildings and to the other buildings should be considered in the plant design.

8.2 Electrical Services. The proposals should be complete with all house lights, stage lights considered necessary for the presentations indicated above, with control consoles. Some form of broadcast system should be considered for conferences and meetings, as well as sound boosters for drama presentations and a call system for the back and front of the house. No complicated electronic systems should be considered for control of stage lifts, traps or scenery movements.

8.3 Services Generally. The proposals should be complete with all supply and drainage services. The design of the Vernon Circuit roadway is complete and levels have been determined.

9. Acoustic Engineering

9.1 The design of the Auditorium should permit comfortable audibility for all types of performances. Adjustments to the Hall for different performances should be simple and avoid the necessity for expert attendance and maintenance.

9.2 The design should protect the audience and players against unwanted noise arising within or without.

10. Landscaping

10.1 Proposals should be made for the landscaping and planting of the site. The theme proposed should harmonise with both the Auditorium group and the proposals for the Civic Square.

11. Liaison

11.1 Liaison should be established with Mr. R. Simpson of Yuncken, Freeman Bros., Griffiths and Simpson, Architects, who are the Commission's consultants for the Civic Offices and Civic Square.

12. Procedure

12.1 Questions arising from this Brief should be directed to the Commission's Co-ordinating Architect, Mr. F. E. Yeates.

4th April, 1960
Distribution:

Department of the Interior (2)
Commissioner
Associate Commissioners (2)
Secretary & Manager
Chief Town Planner (2)
Executive Architect
Executive Engineer (Design)
Executive Engineer (Construction)
Director, Finance & Legal (6)
Technical Adviser
Co-ordinating Architect (3)
Project File
Programme File
AUDITORIUM - ESTIMATES OF COST

A. AREAS
1. Main Auditorium Area = 144 squares
2. Stage " = 48 "
3. Front of House 48 "

240 squares

B. COSTS
1. Building say £ 600 per sq.
2. Electrical services 60 " "
3. Heating & Vent services 100 " "

£ 760 per square is total cost

= £183,000

Add for seating £24,000 (£20 per seat) = £207,000

Add for site work 10% = £24,400

C. ADDITIONAL WORKS
Repertory Hall = 60 squares
Restaurant & Kit. = 20 "
Rehearsal Hall = 24 "

104 squares

D. COSTS
Building say £500 per sq.
Mech. & Elec. £120 " " = £620 per sq. Cost = £65,000
Seating £14,000 + 14,000

+ 10% = £86,900

TOTAL £ 331,100
SITING PROPOSALS FOR CIVIC AUDITORIUM
REPERTORY THEATRE & EXHIBITION BUILDING
APPROVED BY PLANNING COMMITTEE 18-11-60

CIVIC SQUARE WHEN COMPLETED WITH UPPER PLAZA LANDSCAPED.

CIVIC SQUARE WITH AUDITORIUM ONLY

FINAL STAGE WITH AUDITORIUM, REP THEATRE & EXHIBITION BLDG.