

D.C.T. LIBRARY

ARCHIVES

COPY

NOT FOR LOAN

CANBERRA

CITY CENTRE 1980



A CITY CENTRE FOR THE FUTURE

Features which will add to the vitality, compactness and functional efficiency of Canberra's City Centre are envisaged by 1980 in plans now being developed by the National Capital Development Commission, Canberra's planning and development authority. Within the City Centre area, consideration is being given to the inclusion of a tourist hotel and conference centre, a new large retail complex, additional office blocks, a cultural centre, recreation facilities and an urban busway system.

These projects will expand the range of facilities in the City Centre, making it an appropriate focus for the growing metropolitan region.

They will continue the large scale developments begun with Hobart Place and the Monaro Mall providing vitality in the heart of the City.

The aim is to separate the pedestrian from the traffic, make public transport better and more accessible, and make provision for parking structures with landscaped roof gardens, which will enable cars to come closer to the large range of shopping, entertainment, close-to-city-living and recreational facilities.

The Commission prepared two plans during 1969-70 for possible development of City Centre: a broad long-term strategy plan outlining the general directions and principles for growth and a short-term "Development Plan" setting out in more detail, possible proposals for the development of the City Centre in this decade.

The "Development Plan" outlines development policies and proposes broad land use, circulation and design structures. It suggests a sequence of development, outlines policies for re-development and discusses the implementation of the plan, which is a broad and flexible guide to a decade's development.

It does not prescribe future development in detail but it does provide a workable framework which will accommodate and co-ordinate the future development proposals of both public and private enterprise. Ultimately it will be detailed in a series of related local plans for specific development projects.

FOCUS FOR REGION

For the purposes of planning studies, the future City Centre area considered was the area bounded by Parkes Way-Lawson Crescent, Coranderrk, Ballumbir and Cooyong Streets, Barry Drive and the Australian National University. In the long term planning there is provision for two "growth corridors" Northbourne and Constitution Avenues and the adjoining areas of Reid and Braddon extending from this Centre.

For the past 50 years Canberra's City Centre has been headquarters of local administration, commerce and retailing for the Canberra region. By 1980 it will be even more strongly the focus for tourists and organised conventions and an area of importance for the headquarters of national organisations.



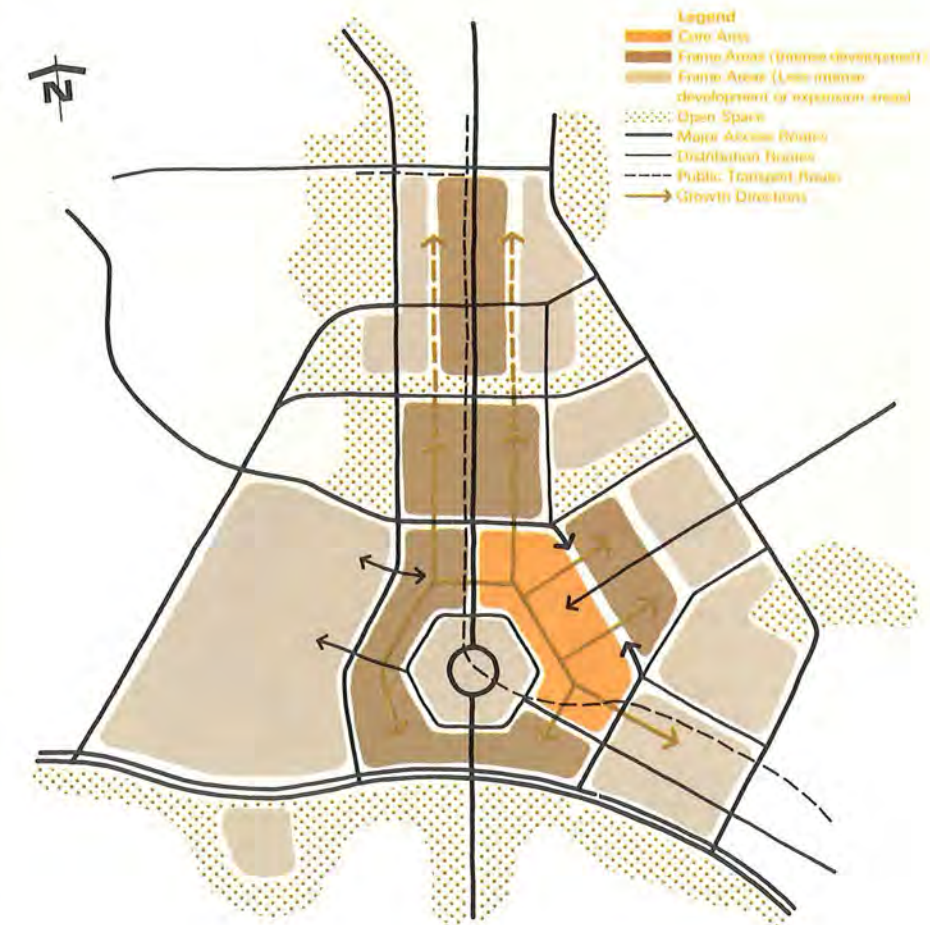
City Centre viewed from the south looking across City Hill

It will be different from the central business districts of other cities because of the unique metropolitan structure of Canberra and the proximity of City Centre to the National Area which is Canberra's major symbolic element.

The facilities which will be accommodated in City Centre are: Canberra's main cultural and recreational facilities; civic institutions; entertainment facilities; hotels and

visitor facilities; commercial offices and shops.

There will also be a proportion of: national institution headquarters; metropolitan administrative offices and high density residences. The City Centre of the 1980's will offer a greater scope of merchandise, better opportunities for comparison shopping and more specialised shops. Although the emphasis will be on quality rather than size, it will continue



A plan indicating the City Centre's long-term growth structure

as the Capital's largest centre, and will grow in balance with the National Area, town centres and inter-town centres.

The location and staging of office and retail development in the centres will be planned in accordance with this objective.

The landscaped form of City Hill, one corner of the central triangle, is the pivot point of the city. Plans envisage that the fully developed centre will lie

between the two growth corridors and centred on Ainslie Avenue which will become the main City Axis to Mt. Ainslie. It is on this axis that the richness and variety of the centre should be most readily perceived, from Civic Square, through the retail core to prestige commercial and residential buildings along the Avenue. (See diagram this page.)

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 1970-80

The aim of the 1970-1980 "Development Plan" is to produce, by 1980, a compact, urban and lively core area (containing shops, offices, etc.) linked to other surrounding activities (such as service trades, institutions, residential, etc.).

The area, extending from University Avenue to Constitution Avenue is planned to contain the retail core, major office concentrations and a diversity of other uses such as civic, cultural, entertainment, hotels, parking and some residential. It will also be closely linked to such uses as:

a tourist hotel and conference area in the south-west adjacent to the lake and centred on Edinburgh Avenue;

a cultural and entertainment area with possibly some residential uses also adjacent to University Avenue to link the University with the City;

a recreation area to the south of Constitution Avenue extending into passive recreation in Commonwealth Park.

City Hill, one corner of the triangular design of the Central Area, will be a city park and together with other landscaped areas located in conjunction with parking structures, will provide a central landscape element to the core and inner areas—a pleasant breathing space in a busy city. One important aim is to have the main vehicular and pedestrian movements separated from each other by 1980. It is currently envisaged that an urban busway system serving the metro-

politan regions will be introduced by 1980 within the City Centre section.

The route would be used largely by express services from the towns, but local inner Canberra buses could use it as well.

It is planned that the outer areas, with varying degrees of linkage to the core and inner area will be:

a service trades, minor office and hotel-motel area north of City and east of Northbourne Avenue;

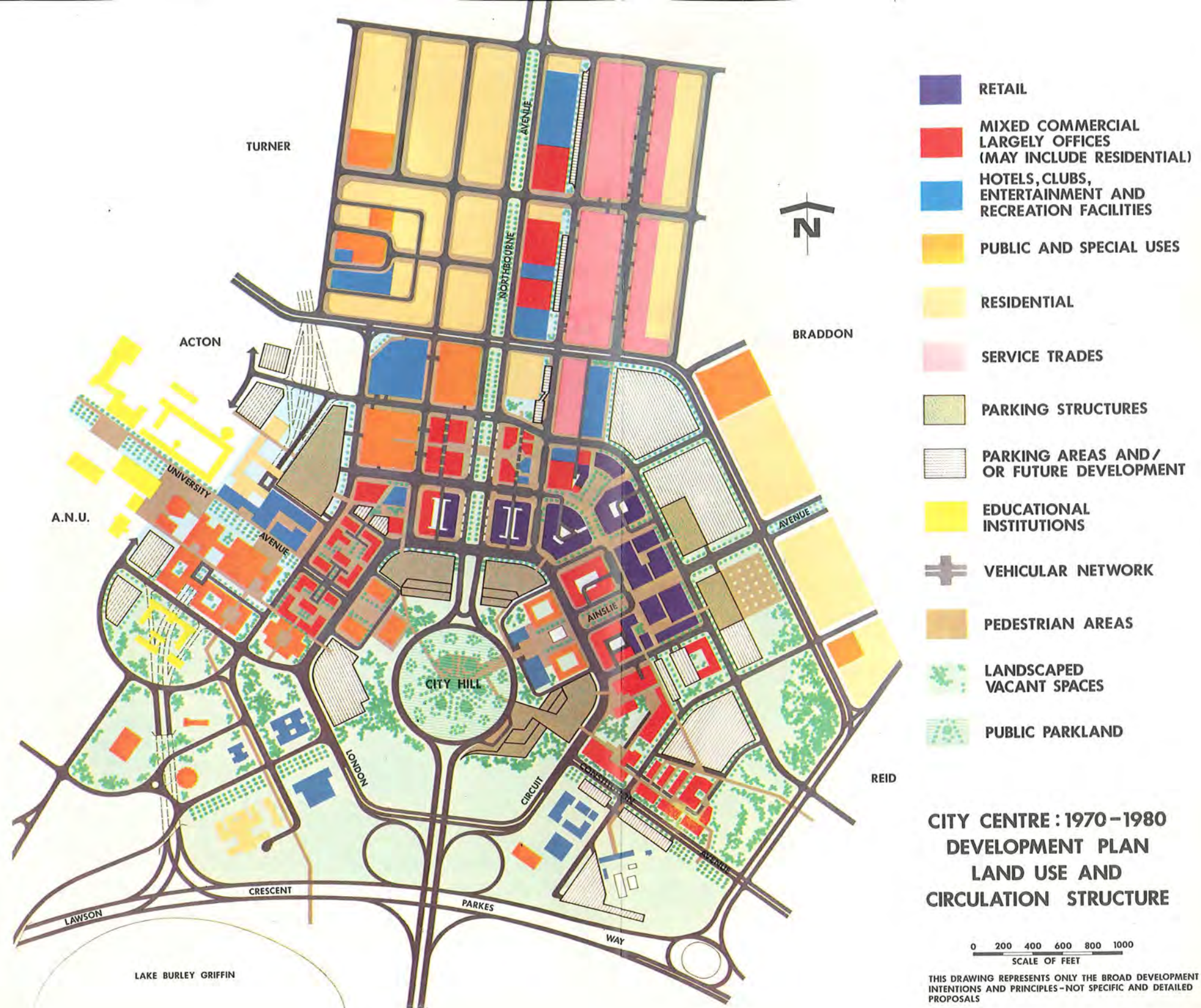
the A.N.U., the Technical College and possibly Commonwealth offices east of Coranderrk Street;

high density residential areas to the north, on the western side of Northbourne Avenue and to the east centred on Ainslie Avenue;

Institution concentrations in the area north of Haig Park along Northbourne Avenue. This same area could also contain hotels and high density residential use.

This structure is not a radical departure from the present one but it does realign development in directions most appropriate for efficient long-term growth.

The most important factor in all this is that development should be concentrated in the core and inner areas during the next 10 years, leaving the growth corridors of Northbourne Avenue and Constitution Avenue available for subsequent long-term extensions of City Centre.





A sketch of the existing development in the south-east area of City Centre, showing Electricity House, London Circuit



A view of the same area illustrating possible development by 1980. The exact form of design will be determined during development

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

To achieve an early consolidation of the City Centre core, several opportunities exist for improvements. These amount to strategic "packages" of action in limited areas, but added together, they will achieve the aims of the Development Plan. The packages occur where opportunities for new development or redevelopment can be combined with improvements to the traffic pattern. To make the most of these opportunities, comprehensive design and development is necessary as well as co-operation between public authority

and private interests. The design and development context of each package has been established and outline designs will be prepared.

The proposed development in the south-east area will be among the earliest undertaken. Sites planned for release for private enterprise development will be largely for office uses but will allow and encourage inclusion of other commercial uses such as shops, hotels, cinemas, etc. Furthermore, they could include provision for community and residential uses as well.

Special care will also be taken to ensure a good environment for pedestrians in the areas between the buildings. It is envisaged that initially, pedestrians will be able to walk in safety throughout the new development, on pedestrian ways raised above the traffic level and ultimately, via bridges across surrounding streets to other areas.

The sketches illustrate a proposal for the staged development of the area during the next decade.

The other main proposals being considered are to:

1. Progressively improve the pedestrian environment of the City Centre core, segregate pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the City area and link the pedestrian system to the future urban busway stops.

The pedestrian plazas will be sheltered from the wind by continuous buildings of a suitable scale, generally two storeys. High buildings will be positioned to allow maximum sunshine to the plazas and to permit a variety of views from upper storeys.

2. Introduce a large, enclosed, air-conditioned retail complex south of the Monaro Mall which will provide a multi-level pedestrian system.
3. Encourage re-development of close-in underused sites in the Northbourne Avenue sector for mixed commercial development including a new general Post Office, a transport and tourist centre and link them by a pedestrian concourse under Northbourne Avenue and, eventually, to the future urban busway stop. Public transport stops would be connected directly to the City Centre pedestrian system. The existing North-

bourne Avenue stop would have to be extended north to cater for increased local bus services and a new stop of similar size would have to be developed in the south-eastern area. A terminal would have to be provided for tourist and long distance transport services, as well as local tour and airline buses.

4. Create pedestrian connections from landscaped decks and parking structures inside London Circuit above and/or below London Circuit into City Centre development.

It is felt that existing surface parking areas should not be extended much further. The increased demand should be met by structures built on existing parking areas. These would be essential at least near Ainslie Avenue and inside London Circuit.

Service access, visitor parking for offices, hotel and other residential uses should be provided on-site by each developer. Limited amounts of other parking may also be required or allowed on-site in particular circumstances.

In general, full parking provision should be made for those who have business in the centre—visitors, shoppers, tourists—but parking areas for City Centre employees would decrease gradually and proportionately

as public transport services improve, to encourage more use of public transport for the journey to work.

5. Link City Hill to the core by pedestrian underpasses and better integrate it when parking structures with landscaped roof decks are built around it.

In recognition of the size of City Hill, its form and its role as a visual focus for the avenues that make it one of the most important landscape elements in City, it will remain permanently as a city park and viewing place.

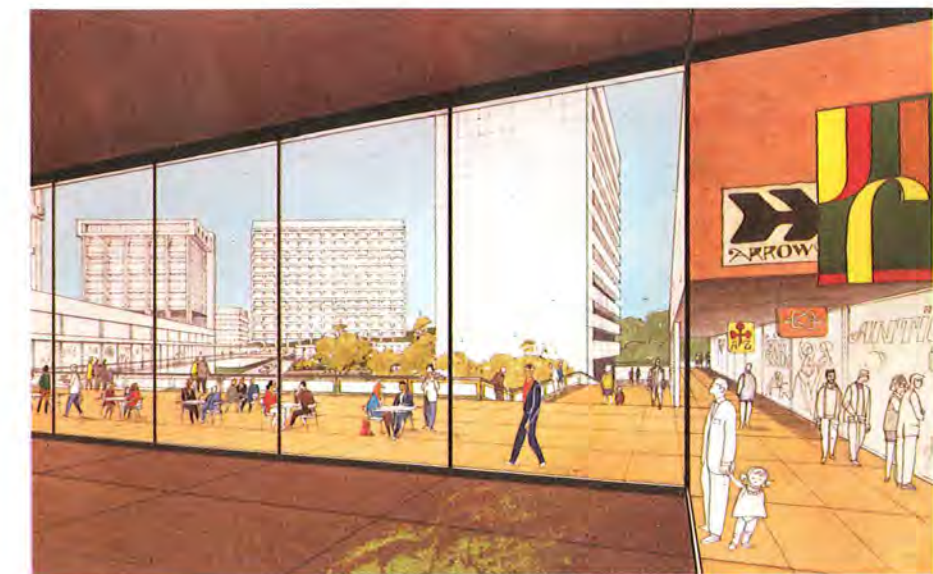
6. Establish links with the A.N.U. by developing appropriate uses along University Avenue, integrating these with the University's own development.

7. Encourage residential development in mixed packages and specific residential areas to introduce more variety and sustained life in City Centre.

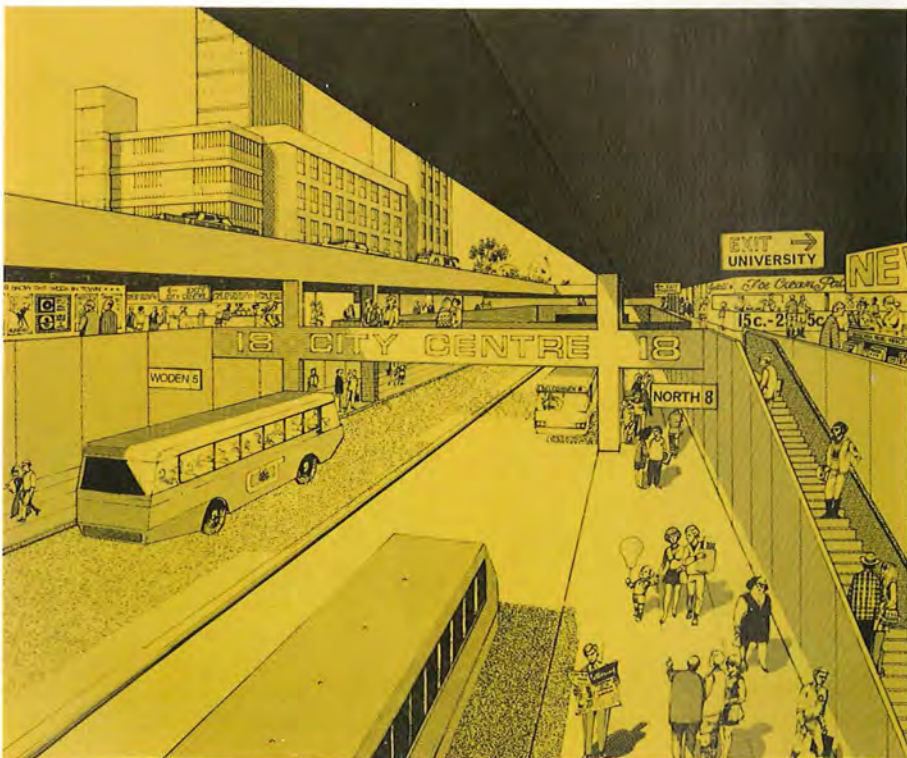
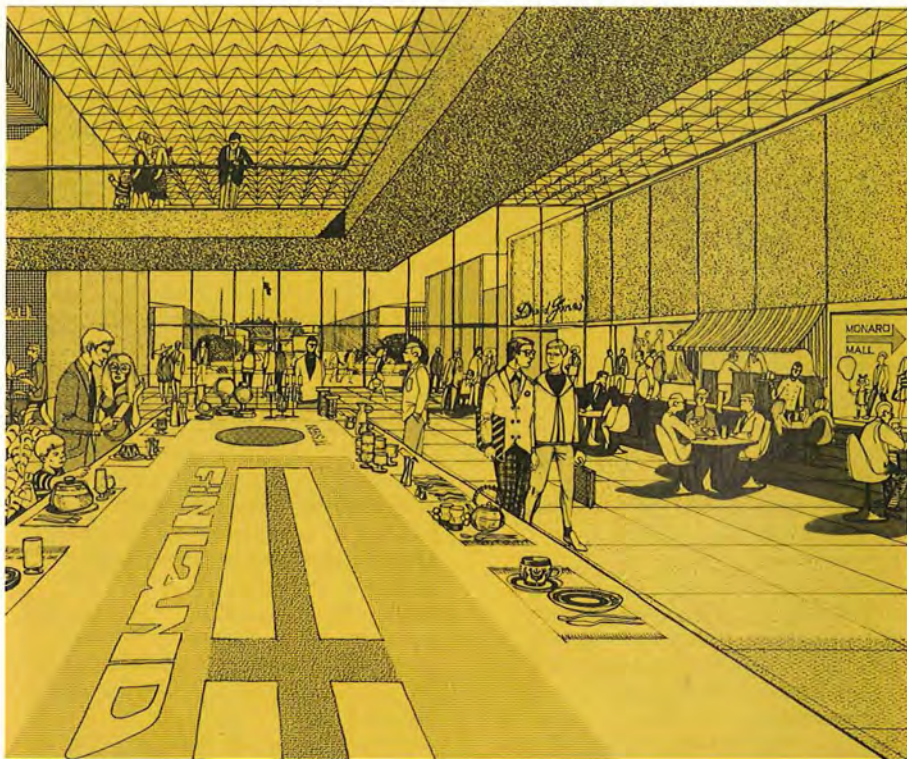
8. Develop a separate route for public transport in City Centre which will ultimately form part of a metropolitan urban transport system and improve the road network as required.

9. Develop new urban spaces and improve existing ones.

10. Balance development and re-development opportunities and ensure that total development becomes a coherent design.



View of pedestrian spaces proposed for the south-east area.



The City Centre of today . . . a centre which will become more attractive and convenient for pedestrians in the future with increased emphasis on separating the pedestrian from the car.



Features which will add to the vitality of the City and expand the range of activities and interests consistent with Canberra's unique role and setting are envisaged by 1980.



The National Capital Development Commission Canberra A.C.T.
November, 1970

Top: The retail area in the future will be developed into a pedestrian precinct as shown here
Above: A perspective of an urban busway station proposed for the heart of the City