This is George Lewkowicz for the Don Dunstan Foundation Don Dunstan Oral History Project interviewing Mr, soon to be ‘Dr’, Michael Llewellyn-Smith. Michael was the City Planner in the early ’70s and then became City Manager later on, and has got a very good background on city planning and the importance of the City for the State. Michael has also done a PhD on that area and has interviewed a lot of people, so hopefully there will be a link between this transcript and those interviews as well.

Michael, thanks very much for doing this interview for the Don Dunstan Foundation Don Dunstan Oral History Project. Can you just talk a bit about yourself: your background, some of your educational qualifications and early employment, so people have an idea of who you are?

Thanks, George. I actually read Architecture at Cambridge and after qualifying as an architect worked in London, initially in the private sector. But I got quite interested in town planning, so started the part-time course in Town Planning at the University College, London. Then, in the late ’60s, I was offered a teaching fellowship at Sydney University to teach Architecture, but the advantage of being on faculty was that I was able to enrol for the Master’s degree in City Planning at the same time, which seemed an attractive way of getting another qualification to me. So I came out to Sydney in January 1970 and it was a two-year contract. I was fully intending to go back to Britain at the end of that contract, but I got quite involved in city planning in Sydney as well as teaching architecture, and worked for a firm called McConnel Smith & Johnson, who were architects, as part of the consortium doing the first City of Sydney Strategic Plan. The Project Director was George Clarke of Urban Systems, but there was a consortium of George himself with McConnel Smith & Johnson and WD Scott, who were management consultants. I only did that quite part-time, but my thesis for my planning degree was on pedestrian movement in the City, and George found that a useful topic to be involved in the first City Plan. So I was quite involved with planning the City.

At the end of 1971, the first Strategic Plan was submitted to the Sydney Council, and one of the recommendations was to set up a new Strategic Planning Branch within what was to become the Department of Planning and Building. Rather naively I applied for the position to head up the new Branch. I’d literally just finished my Master’s degree in City Planning, and my only planning experience,
really, was working on the Strategic Plan. But I had got to know some of the key Aldermen in the City Council, namely Andrew Briger, who was an architect; Leo Port, who was an engineer; and Nicholas Shehadie, who was quite a famous character, having captained the Australian Wallabies [rugby team] in his youth, and he was a very interesting political player in the Sydney Council in those days. And I, somewhat surprisingly, got offered the new job of Chief Planning Officer, so I decided to stay in Sydney for a couple of years and got involved in planning.

After a couple of months, I became the Deputy City Planner. The Deputy City Planner had been headhunted to go to the Land and Environment Court, so from a fairly early age I was the Deputy City Planner of Sydney and was responsible for the Action Planning Projects. George Clarke had seen these as the positive side of the Strategic Plan being implemented – as well as the traditional development control measures. He saw that planning was also about Councils being quite active in getting things done – and there was quite an extensive program of actions which became my responsibility. The key one was Woolloomooloo, which was a major change in the planning of Sydney.

The old State Planning Authority had zoned the whole of Woolloomooloo as commercial, as an extension of the CBD. There were still about 4,000 residents there, but they were all being moved out progressively as developers bought up land. The SPA had done something pretty stupid, in that they’d offered enormous bonuses for consolidation of land, not, I think, expecting that people would be able to put together large parcels, but particular developers had. So there were enormous proposals for office buildings, but there was no way the transport system would ever have supported that sort of level of commercial development. And that’s when Jack Mundey got involved with the Black Bans, so the Woolloomooloo Residents’ Action Group got formed and I got quite involved with them. In fact, I got to know Mundey quite well – and it was clear to me that there was no way that it would ever get implemented as a commercial development. With a lot of persuasion the Sydney City Council actually decided to embark on a major change, which had enormous repercussions for the developers and the State Government, who were keen to see it all happening.
One of the key developers was a guy called Sid Londish, and he actually also came to the view that it was never going to work in terms of that number of people being off-centre from the city, and that something different needed to happen. Round about that time, Tom Uren was the Shadow Minister for Urban Planning and Regional Development, and when Whitlam came to power in ’72 Uren became the Minister and he’d made promises about doing something for Woolloomooloo. And that started a three-way discourse between the new Federal Government, the State Government of New South Wales and the Sydney City Council. I got to be the chairman of a tri-partite working group and we basically recommended a major rezoning back to residential. That was only able to be brought about because the Federal Government put in $23 million to effectively give money to the New South Wales Housing Commission to compulsorily acquire the land, which was a fairly major change. But Woolloomooloo did become primarily a residential development, so it’s one of my planning achievements at a fairly early age, which I was quite proud of.

But during that time George Clarke had been successful in getting the City of Adelaide Planning Study. Talking about Dunstan I first came across him at a planning congress in Brisbane back in February 1973, when he gave one of the keynote papers, and it was a really impressive presentation about what was happening in Adelaide and change of attitude about planning the City of Adelaide. But what was quite interesting was that George Clarke was then in the business of trying to get the planning study, which had been announced but not awarded. He invited me, as the Deputy City Planner, to go along to a meeting with Dunstan to, I think, try and persuade Dunstan that George was the right man for the job because he had done the Sydney work. It was an interesting discussion, I probably just said a few words about George and that he was able to do that sort of stuff; but I’m sure it was one of many factors which was impacting on Dunstan’s mind about the planning study.

What did you know about Dunstan at that time?

At that time, nothing at all –

Nothing; right.
– to be honest.

So he wasn’t featuring in the eastern states.

He wasn’t very featuring at that time, it was February ’73. I really hadn’t come across much outside Sydney, I’d have to say.

Right. So you’d come across him in the conference, and his paper.

As we started talking, so I then did take an interest in what was happening; but, more particularly, George was successful in getting the planning study for Adelaide, and what emerged out of that study was quite a major shift in the way the Adelaide City Council saw things and set up a whole new Department of City Planning.

Right.

At the time there were just a few planners working out of the City Engineer’s Department – a very interesting character called Hugh Bubb was the City Engineer, and he had – and he followed on some of the tradition of Bill Veale, who was also the City Engineer and became the Town Clerk, and there was a really strong policy about building car parks, putting in new roads. The MATS\(^1\) Plan had been developed, which had an amazing American solution to traffic with cloverleaves at basically every intersection of the roads around the Park Lands. And the City Council, having accepted George’s planning study recommendations, set about setting up a whole new Department of City Planning, obviously with a new City Planner to head it up. And I really got tapped on the shoulder. George said that I really ought to apply, as not only had I worked in strategic planning in Sydney but understood about action projects, and this was really an opportunity to do something quite major in Adelaide. So, again, I was fortunate at a reasonably young age to get offered that job.

But there was a bit of a problem with timing. Woolloomooloo was still going on, and it was at a fairly key stage, so I was – we’re talking about April 1974 when I was interviewed, and I remember coming to the Town Hall, and I got met at the airport and driven straight to the Town Hall and walked along the long corridor into

---

\(^1\) MATS – Metropolitan Adelaide Transport Study.
what was then the Colonel Light Room, and there was an interview panel of 10. It was unbelievable. (laughter)

Ten!

I mean, they had a Chairman’s Committee, and because they obviously had a lot of interest in how they operated between the committees of council, so they decided the whole of the Chairman’s Committee would be the interviewing panel, with the Lord Mayor as Chairman, and the Town Clerk, and I forget who the consultants were. So it was a fairly daunting prospect, walking in a room and being faced with this number of people to have an interview.

Interesting.

Anyway, I got offered the job. But because of Woolloomooloo I couldn’t actually start straight away. In fact, there was some negotiation between the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, who was then Bob Clampett, and the Lord Mayor of Sydney, who had then become Sir Nicholas Shehadie, and they agreed that I could stay in Sydney until early September to sign off on the Woolloomooloo Action Project. So I arrived in Adelaide as the City Planner in September of 1974. George’s planning study had been received by the Council in late June, so there was some concern as to what happened next after the planning study and there was a bit of a wait until I arrived and got my head around what needed to be done. So that’s how I arrived in Adelaide as the City Planner.

When you met Dunstan that first time, what sort of impression did you have?

He was clearly very enthusiastic about the City of Adelaide. He really spoke passionately about that. And in the speech he was actually quite critical of the State Planning Authority, that their plans for the City were obviously heading in the wrong direction – although, when I did come and found out a bit more about it, he’d, I think, had a bit of insight himself after there was some development proposed for his own electorate in St Peters. There was quite a backlash about some quite major high-rise buildings, and so there was obviously some concern about – and I think he might even have been the Planning Minister early on in his career – so he’d obviously seen that this was not the way to go. He was also, I mean, just
incredibly good at presenting. I think he hardly looked at his notes at all; he just spoke and it was just a very impressive presentation, so a really impressive man to deal with.

**Did you check out the Adelaide scene before you agreed to come here?**

I did, actually. My wife and I came over for a long weekend. We’d bought an apartment in Sydney. We were living in Elizabeth Bay, which was terrific in terms of the harbour view, and I could walk to work in the Queen Victoria Building – in fact, walked through Woolloomooloo every day where I could see what was happening; and Kings Cross was two minutes’ walk away. So we were a bit concerned about moving to Adelaide, I’d have to say, in terms of the lifestyle we were enjoying in Sydney. But we thought, ‘Well, maybe five years. Test it and see.’

**Right.**

One of those things. Here we are, many years later. So yes, so we came as it was an opportunity for me, obviously, career-wise. While it was useful to be the deputy at a fairly young age, the City Planner in Sydney was only about 10 years older than I was, so in terms of careers in Sydney there was probably limited choices staying in Sydney. So being the City Planner in Adelaide was, career-wise, a good thing to do.

**And had you checked out how the council operated and its interests?**

No, I actually didn’t. I didn’t go into that sort of level of detail, to be honest. George assured me that there were key people on the Council who were keen to bring about the changes he’d recommended. Clearly, the Dunstan pressure on the Council was quite significant. People understood all that. So I was aware of the politics between the City and the State, but not actually how the Council itself operated. In fact, that’s interesting. There was a bit of a surprise, because Sydney was highly political, so I could talk to the Aldermen – as I mentioned earlier, Briger and Porter and Chehadie – and I could tell you what the Council decision would be in a month’s time, assuming that they agreed with what I put forward, because they would carry caucus, the caucus would carry the committee, and the committee recommendation would be carried in Council because of the numbers game. So it
was a bit of a shock to come to Adelaide and discover that (a) there were 19 councillors, which was a lot, and (b) you could never know what the Council was going to decide till they actually voted in the Council chamber. There was no politics – certainly no party politics – and quite often people would change their vote on the quality of the debate, which is very democratic but very hard to manage from a bureaucrat’s point of view; you just didn’t know how the Council might be going to vote. So that was quite a difference in the politics of Sydney and Adelaide.

**When you arrived, who actually took you aside and explained how things worked or didn’t work?**

Well, the Town Clerk was obviously influential in terms of the bureaucracy, and it was a fairly important change. I mean, Hugh Bubb, having had the planning responsibility, was not impressed that there was this young whippersnapper from Sydney as the new City Planner. He had all this power and support within the Council for his engineering approach to planning. On the political side, probably John Roche was the most important. He certainly took me aside and explained that there were some key people on Council I needed to be aware of. The CADC had been set up by Dunstan, which was the joint City/State body, and the key people on that were the Lord Mayor of the day, so initially Bill Hayes. Hayes was no longer the Lord Mayor when I came; that had become Clampett; but Hayes was still an Alderman on the Council, so he was still behind the scenes. But the key people were Jim Bowen, John Roche and John Chappell, so those three were the Councillors, plus the Lord Mayor on the CADC. And on the State side there were some really important people: there was Hugh Stretton, who I certainly got to know well and was really a powerhouse in terms of the intellectual debate that he brought forward; Bob Bakewell was head of the Premier’s Department, and that had some significance as well, which I discovered later; and Newell Platten, who was an architect and the chief planner of the Housing Trust. So the State had some really key people involved in that body.

Dunstan had put in place Interim Development Control from 1972 so that a planning study of the City could be carried out. The operation of the CADC effectively froze things. The CADC actually had two very strong policies which prohibited anything in residential use being changed to any other use, and it
prohibited any demolition. What had been happening under the Stuart Hart’s zoning, which was the whole of South Adelaide was zoned Light Industrial/Commercial – which was an amazing bit of planning, but anyway, that’s what it was, that was the statutory scheme – so people were legitimately buying up old houses and knocking them down, putting in open-lot car parks, putting up light industrial/commercial buildings all over the place. It was particularly serious in southeast and southwest Adelaide, and ultimately, if Dunstan hadn’t stepped in and brought about the Interim Development Control, it was very likely that the whole of South Adelaide would simply have had no residences whatsoever.

What was the idea of that? Was it just money opportunity, or –

That’s a very good question.

– myopia?

As far as I’ve been able to – yes. I mean, I interviewed Stuart Hart for the thesis and tried to find out why he had zoned the City that way in the planning study that the State had carried out. He said that, well, the City Council didn’t oppose it – which I found an interesting comment. This is late ’60s – and I did discover that Bill Veale was actually one of the committee which Hart reported to. And one of the comments from Jim Bowen was he thought that one of the key players had been Sir Norman Young, who was one of the leaders of the private sector – he was a Director of things like the SA Brewing Company and a whole range of other things, and he was the chairman of the Council’s Finance Committee. Bowen was strongly suspicious that that side of the Council had wanted the whole of South Adelaide to be commercial in terms of rate income, but also getting rid of pesky residents who were there. Councillors wanted people living in North Adelaide; that was fine; but (laughter) they really didn’t want any of these low-income workers living in the south of the city.

So – I’m just trying to get clear the role of the City, then. You have, really, two sections in Adelaide: one’s the highly-residential North Adelaide, and then there’s what we call the CBD, and there are bits of that, what were residential, up for a renewal.

Well, there was a population in South Adelaide of about 40,000 after the War.
40,000, right.

I mean there was a lot of people living in the basically what were workers’ cottages. But, there were some grand mansions on East Terrace and on South Terrace.

That’s true, yes.

Otherwise, once outside the central business district, there were a lot of low-income family housing.

Right.

And the population was quite high, because obviously they did have large families – I mean, you can look at the stats and people were living in quite small properties. Five, six people was not uncommon. But what had happened, because of the zoning and – quite legitimately – people were buying up and converting the use and getting rid of residents, the population had got down to just over 11,000 at its bottom.

Dunstan and particularly people like Roche and Bowen understood how cities operated, and they took the view that the inner city needed to have a residential population to be alive, otherwise it would follow the American doughnut model where you just had daytime uses –

Los Angeles.

– and then nobody living there, and it was going to be a nightmare. So I think that was just an interesting convergence of views from people like Dunstan and Stretton, and I think Dunstan was significantly influenced by Stretton in all this thinking.

So you mentioned Stretton was the intellectual force; what sort of intellectual arguments and what sort of debate were there?

Well, it’s an interesting story. His famous book Ideas for Australian cities actually arose because of his interest in town planning. From my interview of him for my thesis, he learnt that his neighbours had discovered that Mr Bubb was buying up all sorts of properties.

Oh, really?

And he just thought, ‘Well, that’s interesting; I wonder what – – –.’

For the Council?
Yes, for the Council.

Right, okay.

So Stretton wondered why, what was happening. So he went and had a meeting with Hugh Bubb, and Mr Bubb said: “Oh, there are plans afoot that, traffic needed to be sorted out”. And it does go back to Veale before Hugh Bubb’s time, that there was a plan, which is sort of part of the MATS Plan, but also just a City initiative, to have this road, almost a freeway, on the eastern side of the City. So the Council had been buying up properties in Margaret Street in North Adelaide; and Frome Street/Frome Road existed, but only as far as Wakefield Street. And so the plan was to create a new north/south bypass. So all the way from Main North Road in the north it would go down Margaret Street, and there was actually an overpass designed over Melbourne Street, which was quite amazing; the historic Albert Bridge by the Zoo was going to be demolished so that the road would be straightened out – you didn’t want a little kink in it – and then Frome Road was going to be expanded and all the way through the eastern side of the City to South Terrace, through the Park Lands, and then link up with Glen Osmond Road. So it was a major six-lane highway planned for the eastern side of the city. So Mr Bubb had this discussion with Hugh Stretton, and Stretton had become aware that some of the Elder workers’ cottages in Carrington Street, had already been bought and demolished. He was concerned about the loss of low cost residences – because that was basically where the workers who serviced the City lived. And he discovered, from this discussion with Bubb, that his plan was to buy all this land, and in North Adelaide it would have created a peculiar island to the east of Margaret Street, which would have been isolated from the rest of North Adelaide. And so he thought, ‘This sort of planning is absolutely outrageous in this day and age,’ and that’s how his interest in city planning got going. So he had a very strong view about Frome Road, for example, and about providing appropriate accommodation in the City for low-income earners so that the people who serviced the City – the cleaners, the dustmen, all those people – needed to be close in to service the City centre, otherwise they could only live in the outskirts and then they had a transport
problem. So it was a very strong view about the nature of mixed residential use to ensure the City was alive and well.

Right. There wasn’t this notion of the ‘creative economy’ at that time? Or it’s come later – – –?

I think that was later, yes. I think it was really a question of who lives in the City, where they should live. And, I mean, that was a very strong influence on George Clarke’s planning study, the views of Stretton about, really, reactivating the southeast and southwest as residential areas, not zoned as what they currently were; but also having some mixed-use areas in what was the Frame District. I mean, it certainly didn’t envisage people living in the core itself, but certainly in the areas outside the core there were quite significant bonuses proposed to put residential with other uses, which is fairly common overseas but was unheard-of in Adelaide.

And where was the Commissioner of Highways in all of this?

Well, that’s interesting. There was a committee which Bakewell set up to review the planning study in terms of the State’s interest in all that. I think he was a member of that. The one thing that he was keen on was what became known as the ‘one-way pair’ at the end of Melbourne Street so that traffic could flow. It’s a peculiar traffic layout, and it became part of the O-Bahn some years later. But Johinke was very keen on that solution, and I think was very supportive of the idea of a ring route round the outside of the Park Lands. As far as I could see, he was a bit ambivalent about Mr Bubb’s freeway plan in the city, because of course he had no control over it.

Yes. Yes, I was just curious.

The City Engineer controlled all the traffic inside the Park Lands. It was one of those interesting City Council views that they didn’t want the State interfering in their own affairs, so keep the traffic under Council control. So the Commissioner had no role over any roads in the city.

Yes. And you mentioned you studied – I’ll call it ‘town planning’. How did your ideas from that link up with Hugh Stretton’s and what was going on at the time?
I was very supportive of George’s planning study in Adelaide. One of the reasons that I did decide to apply for the job was it seemed to me a really innovative bit of work in terms of how the City was planned and I did do some reading about Colonel Light’s design. It was, in fact, part of my planning course in Sydney. Professor Dennis Winston gave a whole lecture about Colonel Light and the layout of a City within a Park Lands - it is unique. And that whole idea of planning in Adelaide was clearly of appeal to me. I could see that there was opportunities of bringing about some quite major change, because if what George was suggesting could be brought about, then it would make a big difference to the nature of the City of Adelaide.

Right. You mentioned these influential councillors. Can we just get a picture of some of them, like Jim Bowen?

Yes. Well, first probably still worth talking about, one of the key people was Bill Hayes.

Bill Hayes, yes.

Bill Hayes was a self-made businessman. The Adelaide City Council was traditionally the home of the Liberal élite and the businessmen. There were classic stories that you’d have lunch at the Adelaide Club, then you’d come and be an Adelaide City Councillor in the afternoon, and then you’d go and be a Legislative Councillor at night. So the same people would just change hats, and the City was basically operated by quite a small group of people who had the power and influence and were in positions to bring about change. In fact, I found a lovely quote which I used in my thesis, that there were probably more decisions made about the future of South Australia in the dining room of the Adelaide Club than there were in State Parliament, which basically sums it up. There was also another bit of story, which I think is true, that if you wanted to be a Lord Mayor you had to go and be interviewed by the Liberal Party to make sure you had the right credentials, that even though there was no party politics it was all behind-the-scenes stuff.

Hayes decided to run against the incumbent Lord Mayor – it was a guy called Porter, Sir Evelyn Porter – and he actually lost that election, only by a small number of votes, but the Establishment came out and supported Porter. But the next time
that happened Hayes was actually elected unopposed, so I think people had realised that the winds of change were blowing. He had basically made his money out of selling used cars; but he was a wealthy man, and very smart, and understood also that the City needed people living in it and he was really opposed to Mr Bubb and the whole traffic approach to planning cities. And he really hit it off with Dunstan. I mean, just at a personal level they really were on the same wavelength about what needed to be done. So we had a reformist Premier and a reformist Lord Mayor in place at the same time, and that’s really what brought about the planning study. Hayes organised, in fact, my Professor of Planning at Sydney, and a guy called Peter Harrison from Canberra, to write, effectively, the brief for the planning study. And what was very interesting about that: he did it without the Town Clerk or the City Engineer knowing. It was all sort of done behind the scenes and all done politically.

**Sorry – the mayors were in for how long?**

Two-year terms.

**Two years.**

Yes. It was one term of two years, which was interesting in itself. So Hayes was the Lord Mayor, so he was the key player in setting up the City of Adelaide Development Committee with Dunstan in the first place. But then he got replaced by Bob Clampett. Bob Clampett was a wine merchant, and a very famous army figure. He had a really prestigious army career; he was a colonel and achieved some quite major things, I think, in Papua New Guinea. In fact, I think there’s a hill still named after him, an Australian army base. But the really three key players were John Roche, who was a property developer with the Adelaide Development Company, and he owned a lot of property in the City but also had interests in Perth and New South Wales, and he understood the real estate, what was going on, and that you needed people living in the city, so that was fairly important. Jim Bowen was a real estate agent, and obviously therefore understood the property market as well. And John Chappell was an architect and also saw the advantage of people living in the city. So you had three different skills, but – and they were very powerful within the Council. I think the rest of the Council just gave due deference to the views that they were putting forward. So they were the Council members for
the CADC from October 1972, when Interim Development Control came in, and they actually were there for the whole period of time until the City Act came in in 1st March 1977. And I will say on the government side Dunstan organised Stretton, Peter Ward organised for Newell Platten to be a member, and Dunstan himself I think wanted Bakewell there to make sure that he knew what was going on. And I’m certainly aware from my interview with Bakewell he was pretty much across things happening in Adelaide. Bakewell, advised the CADC met on the Monday night. What they used to do, (laughs) they’d have Council meetings in the day – it was quite civilised in those days. You’d have drinks in the Lord Mayor’s room, then you’d have a fairly slap-up lunch, then you’d have a fairly short Council meeting, then you’d have afternoon tea and that would be it. But the members of the CADC would then go on and have dinner at a restaurant, in the basement of Quelltaler House building which was owned by Bill Hayes.

Right.

Anyway, so they used to have dinner there, and then they’d come to the CADC in the Colonel Light Room, which used to meet at 8 o’clock, so every Monday night the CADC would have a meeting and all the key decisions were really made there; but then Tuesday mornings Bakewell would tell Dunstan what was happening from the night before. So Dunstan kept his finger very much on what the CADC was up to, and its role was really to guide the planning study and to provide a short gap measure until that planning study was completed and then see what came out of that.

Did Bakewell relay any messages from Dunstan, or – – –?

I’ve got a nice quote from Bowen that basically says Bakewell had this very nice way of providing some advice to the CADC, which was clearly from Dunstan but was done in a nice way that it wasn’t perceived as a direction, but it really was. So there was certainly influence exercised through Bakewell, and certainly Stretton and Dunstan spent a lot of time together. In fact, they did with George as well, and I have another – and this is a true story, because George talked to me about it – and Stephen Hains, who became the project director some time later of the planning study, said that quite often on a Sunday morning Dunstan and Hugh Stretton and George would sit on the swings in Glover Playground in North Adelaide and discuss
affairs of the City and State. That was a fairly interesting way of dealing with major issues.

And what were the dynamics? You were at the meetings, weren’t you, these – – –.

The CADC started in ’72 but I didn’t come till ’74, and by that time they had provided the oversight for George’s planning study. Initially, I think there was quite some suspicion between the State and the City, but, over time, they, I think, came to respect each other but also realise they were on the same wavelength about what they wanted to achieve for the City. So there was really no real arguments between the City and State. In fact, after I came, the only time that I can actually remember a vote – it was all pretty much consensus; well, it was consensus except for very rare occasions – the only time I can remember there was some disagreement was actually over the Rundle Mall Car Park. Dunstan basically said to Clampett that unless the City got its act together and did something about converting the street into Rundle Mall he was going to organise 44-gallon drums at either end and shut the Mall that way. So Clampett did a good job of persuading the major traders, which was pretty much David Jones and John Martin’s, that they had to realise this was going to happen and they’d better do something about it.

But, again, Mr Bubb’s influence was still pretty strong and says. He said ‘Well, if the Government is going to take the cars out of Rundle Street, we’ve got to have a car park somewhere.’ So the Council acquired the old Foy & Gibson building just on the corner of Pulteney and Rundle Street East. There was an application, as the Council couldn’t approve its own buildings, to the CADC for the Council to build a car park on the Foy & Gibson building site. From both Bakewell and Stretton there was a very strong view that we didn’t need car parks, there shouldn’t be any more car parks in the City regardless of what the traders and the City Council were saying, and they actually voted against it. They said no, that they shouldn’t approve the car park. Fortunately the end result was perhaps a bit of a compromise but it’s actually a demountable structure.

I see.

Designed by Hassell’s – it’s a steel building, but all bolted together. It actually would be quite easy to dismantle the car park if required. There was a condition of
approval that it basically had to be a demountable car park. No-one’s ever tested that, but that was the outcome.

**Interesting. And in these – I guess, earlier on, and with George Clarke’s study, was the role of the city actually defined or agreed upon?**

It was certainly seen in terms of the hierarchy of centres. Stuart Hart’s metropolitan plan had recognised the City as, you know, the major centre in a string of centres. Apart from the zoning, I always thought Sturt Hart’s Metropolitan Development Plan was actually quite a forward-thinking document for the planning in the ’60s, with a hierarchy of centres being defined on a sort of linear spine. But the City was clearly going to be the dominant and continued to be so as it is the hub of all the transport networks. It all goes back to Colonel Light, really, that, by putting the City where it is, it’s always going to remain geographically the centre of the metropolitan area. So that’s its underlying sort of strength, that wherever you go it’s the centre of the metropolitan area – unlike Sydney or Melbourne, for example. The geographic centre of Sydney is now Parramatta, and Melbourne it’s way inland. But in Adelaide’s case, the City will always be geographically the centre of metropolitan Adelaide.

**And what about the role of the City in terms of the State’s development?**

Well, the State did actually own quite a lot of land, in terms of its various buildings, and I think the State saw some certainty in having a plan that they could know where they could build and have some clarity about what was needed. Obviously, there were some concerns about how the City would deal with applications, but the end result coming out of George’s report was basically the same sort of animal as a joint body like the CADC. But it was called the ‘City of Adelaide Planning Commission’, and there were four State and four Council representatives. That body had the authority to approve applications from both the City and the State, so that there was really quite a strong joint approach to City/State planning.

The other interesting thing was the housing question, and Alex Ramsay was a key player in this as well, because Stretton had figured out that in the early ’70s the Housing Trust had never owned a property in the City, which was a bit surprising. But it was set up to develop on green fields and then the whole model that they used
was cheap land, reasonably cheap building and housing people. So Alex was actually quite concerned about having to have the Housing Trust provide accommodation in the City, so they did buy existing properties. But the deal that we basically managed to work through was to subsidise some of the land sales. We had all this land for Mr Bubb’s car parking and road expansions, which was no longer going to be needed, and so the arrangement between the City and the State was to provide the land effectively at a subsidised cost, so that the Housing Trust could actually afford to build, but the trade-off was the quality of design, and that’s where Platten came in. But I still defy people today to drive around the City of Adelaide and say, ‘Well, that’s public housing.’ You actually don’t know, but it’s because of the quality of the design and it looks like private sector housing. So that was a key. Stretton was very influential in saying the Housing Trust average is 10 per cent of public housing in Metropolitan Adelaide; there’s no reason why there couldn’t be 10 per cent of housing in the City. So that started a fairly significant change in terms of housing. It was also part of Stretton’s philosophy about being able to house the workers in the City, not just the élite, and that was a very strong policy push which the Council supported. And, in fact, the Council itself took on a sort of development role, initially in Angas Court. We bought some land, it was all designed within my department, the building surveyors did the specifications and we got it built, and they actually sold at a profit. So we demonstrated that residential housing was actually a viable proposition in south-eastern Adelaide. The real estate market was saying it wasn’t viable as there was quite a strong reaction against George’s plan about the rezoning, obviously. People who’d bought land quite legitimately said, ‘Well, hang on, we’re going to lose value here, and housing in the City will never work. It’s all too late.’ But the Council itself demonstrated that you could actually make it viable, so that was an important aspect.

Yes, interesting. I was going to ask this later on, but I’ll do it now: when the – was it the final draft legislation was sorted out, there was this toing and froing between the State and the City about the State having to pick up certain financial implications of the legislation.

Yes.
The reason why I was asking about the role of the City and the State was what was presumably good for the City would be good for the State. So what was the problem there?

The problem was that George had recommended that there be a new Act which would authorise the whole of the City plan. So George’s City plan had all the zoning changes, which were fine, but they also had some transport implications about building the underground along King William Street, putting in this one-way pair at the end of Melbourne Street and a whole lot of implications for state agencies that would become law by statute. And the issue for the State, and particularly the review which Bakewell’s committee set up, was to say, ‘We really can’t live with this. If that became law, then there are significant financial implications for state agencies, particularly public transport; particularly housing.’ And so the argument became, ‘Well, what do you need legislation for and what will be an ongoing policy debate between the City and State?’ And that’s basically what John Mant and I sorted out some time later. But initially the argument was – and it was seriously promoted – that the City wanted legislation to authorise the whole of George’s plan. There were objectives and policies, which were the front bit, if you like, and then there was a whole lot of development control stuff. But the interesting thing or the innovative aspect was what was called ‘Desired Future Character Statements’. Instead of just colours on the map, which was the old zoning, you also had a written description of what you want that zone to be like in the future. So that was a very innovative approach to planning, actually.

Is that one of – I know he did his study in Sydney, but there was strategic and corporate planning starting to – people were becoming aware of these processes.

The strategic planning in Sydney certainly had the ideas of the positive actions coming out of it, but it didn’t go to the “Desired Future Character” question. There were still precincts proposed for Sydney, but they were still within the primary statutory approach. The advantage in Adelaide was to, really, have quite a multi-pronged approach so that you had some clear objectives as to what you wanted for the City, and then that got broken down by various policies under those objectives, and then a whole range of diagrams which showed things like plot ratios, heights, traffic and parking – even bicycles. This was a really early approach to how you
went about planning the City, and the framework which came out of that provided the development controls but also a very clear indication of what sort of City was wanted.

**And what were the links with the State Plan, if you like?**

Well, there weren’t any. It was completely taken out. And that was one of Stuart Hart’s criticisms, that this was going to create a doughnut: that you have Adelaide in the middle of the Metropolitan Plan, but the Metropolitan Plan didn’t apply to Adelaide. And that was quite deliberate, initially. I think, in fairness, when the separate system was put in place, it was seen as a bit of a model that if it could work in the City, which was obviously a complicated animal, then it could be applied to other councils, progressively; and so the fact that it went from ’77 to ’93 was probably a bit optimistic. It could have been brought about earlier.

Probably jumping ahead here, but the criticism I had when that was brought about in 1993 and that was way after Dunstan; it was John Bannon who was the Premier when that review was done – was that it was really a bit of a dumbing down. Because of the lowest common denominator, I think the City did miss out because it no longer had its own *City of Adelaide Development Control Act*. It became part of the State system so Stuart Hart finally got his way in ’93.

**Yes. I’m just trying to work out whether the value-added comes in, or the opportunities for value-adding – that is, there’s this thinking going on in the City, which presumably contributes to the State, and obviously the thinking about the State, but they seem to get – – –.**

There were certainly some elements in the *Development Act 1993* which picked up some of the City aspects. In fact, the key one about separating policy from development control can be tracked through to setting up the Development Policy Advisory Committee and the Development Assessment Commission. Those two state bodies which, by their very name, separated out planning into two ways of looking at things certainly resulted from the City’s approach. But that wasn’t George’s approach; George had it all in one. Mant and I separated them out and said you only needed legislation for development control, and policy would still be an ongoing discussion between the City and State – indeed, as it always has been.
Right. And I guess Mant and his department, Housing and Urban and Regional Affairs, were having their input. So I think you mentioned this – – –.

This was before that department was set up. John Mant was appointed after Whitlam was sacked and a whole lot of federal people came to South Australia as state advisers and bureaucrats.

Okay.

So John Mant came to Adelaide as an adviser to Hugh Hudson, who was then the Minister for Planning. There was a key meeting between Roche, as Lord Mayor, and Dunstan. The state was concerned about the report of the committee Bob Bakewell set up, influenced by Stuart Hart and Johnke and Ramsay. They really didn’t want to have the Plan authorised and what Dunstan organised was to actually give, in a sense, delegated authority to Hudson to go and have political discussions with Roche. So what happened was Roche and Hudson met regularly at a political level and John Mant and I basically started meeting weekly to sort out what we could actually put in place. There was this amazing study from George and it was just sitting there. People were worried about what was going to happen next and how it was going to be promoted, so that did take some time to get through the City/State political system. But the key thing was to say, ‘Okay. What we need legislation for is the things that control development, and everything else can be an ongoing City/State discussion, but there will be a joint body where that can be pursued.’ So that was a fairly key change.

Yes. And what was happening in the community at the time?

There was a lot of support for George’s proposals. I mean, he’d done a really good job of public consultation. He’d had a planning centre set up just along here in Pirie Street, so there was a lot of input from the public. I think bodies like the Planning Institute and Institute of Architects realised that the way the City was heading was just not right. And fortunately it was before freeways were actually built, so Adelaide, by being a bit behind in that sense, was actually in a good position. There was nothing to unravel, apart from Frome Road. Frome Road now comes to a grinding halt in Carrington Street, which has always been interesting to people.

Yes. And there was the Urban Development Institute, too. Were they – – –?
I think development industry, particularly because of John Roche’s influence in the development side of things, they understood what was planned previously was simply not going to work. You could not have a City with such a large area zoned Commercial/Industrial. It was just out of scale, if you looked at the size of CBDs of London, Paris, wherever, the actual area taken up by the CBD is really basically the size we now have in Adelaide’s CBD. So to have the whole of the area within the four Terraces zoned that way was really an amazing bit of not good planning, one would have to say.

Yes. And was the Council aware of these – like I’ll call them ‘green’ pressures – say from Sydney and didn’t want to get into any big stoushes with any potential lobby groups?

It was interesting. I don’t know the pressures which were exercised on Dunstan in St Peters, but there were residents involved. I don’t think there were things like Black Bans in Adelaide, ever. Although I remember a discussion with Jack Mundey who was quite concerned that I was leaving Sydney because work on Woolloomooloo still had a couple of months work to go. When I accepted the Adelaide job he said there was a gas fitters’ union in South Australia which was going to take up the cudgels if anybody needed to do anything about stopping development. There were some peculiar things going on, like someone was going to knock down Edmund Wright House, and Dunstan certainly personally got involved in saving that. There were some other heritage issues, like Ayers House was prone to be demolished at one time. So heritage was beginning to be a bit of an issue, and certainly Dunstan himself realised – I think probably Peter Ward, his adviser, was quite a key player in a lot of the design stuff, and thinking about urban issues behind the scenes, as well as Stretton. But Dunstan certainly personally got involved in those sorts of issues.

It’s worth reading his speech in reply to the initial planning legislation, which really sums up his views about planning and more particularly about the City. So that’s a good reference to look at in terms of Dunstan’s record. He also gave a really good address when George Clarke started the planning study. So, you know, there was a State imprimatur on the fact that the City was doing a study. And he
certainly kept his finger on the pulse through Bakewell during the years that the CADC was operating, there’s no doubt about that.

Yes. And was there any specific debate about Dunstan’s broad ideas about – you know, you mentioned Rundle Mall – pedestrian access, cultural life – – –?

Yes. I think not so much in direct discussions, because until I became Town Clerk I wasn’t involved in those. There was always a bit of a tradition that the Lord Mayor and the Premier would meet fairly regularly, and certainly Roche did meet with Dunstan. But Russell Arland was the Town Clerk in those days, so he was privy to those discussions. I think it’s probably more through Bakewell that Dunstan’s ideas were, I think, progressed in the CADC. That was the way in which there was an oversight of the planning study initially, the important things in that study about residential renewal, pedestrianisation, public transport, all those key issues were certainly enforced through that process.

Yes. And the sidewalk cafés, was that part of that as well?

It was. Dunstan had an interest in what was called the Coalyard Restaurant in Hindmarsh Square, which was about the first outdoor dining café. I mean, Adelaide in the ’70s was unbelievably boring in that sense, and in fact it was partly the Council’s fault. I remember the health inspectors had this concern that people carrying food across the public footpath to tables and chairs would somehow get polluted. The fact it had been going on in Europe for many years didn’t seem to count.

Yes. And there was something about signs not being in the middle of or even near footpaths and things like that.

There was a whole range of peculiar things. But Dunstan said, ‘Well, I’m going to change all that, and I’ll show you how you can do it.’ So again it was sort of personal interest in getting the Coalyard up and running and getting it approved, and that really did start people thinking about outdoor eating.

Yes. And then I remember the Greek one – the Iliad, I think that was –

In Whitmore Square?

– in Whitmore Square, yes.
That’s right. Not so much outdoor dining, but certainly a cultural thing in itself to even get people out and dining in a different attitude.

I want to get into the – we talked about the legislation, the draft legislation, and the sorting out and the obligations on the State and things like that; that was finally sorted out, and particularly your work with John Mant, who did a lot. Was there anything you wanted to add about that?

It was done in ’76 and obviously Dunstan had the numbers in the Lower House, so it was easily got through the Lower House. But in terms of the Upper House there was some concerns by the Liberal Party because obviously people who owned a lot of land which they bought legitimately could see the zoning changed and didn’t know how that was going to affect their values. There was quite a lot of pressure on the Liberal Party not to support the new City Plan, as effectively it was a rezoning.

Who was putting that pressure on?

Some of the property owners in the south-east and the in the south-west, particularly. There was one in particular, a company called Tonkin’s Radiators, who [had] bought some houses next to their existing business and they could see all that going down the gurgler, as it were. And so there was some pressure on the Liberal Party. But John Roche and I sat in the Speakers Gallery in the Upper House as all the clauses were being debated. Murray Hill was then the Leader of the Government in the Upper House; the Minister for Local Government and an ex-Adelaide City councillor. So basically Roche used his influence in the Upper House to make sure that they voted for the legislation the City wanted. The only thing that did get changed, which the City supported at the end of the day, was the appeal system. There was going to be a slightly odd, almost a political set of appeals, because Hudson was concerned about a case, which I think was in Marion, which had had gone all the way to the Privy Council in Britain. He’d got some advice from Brian Hayes QC about how to overcome that. And so the draft bill which was prepared and was in Parliament had a particular way of dealing with appeals against planning decisions. The Liberal Party in the Upper House didn’t like that, so they came up with a compromise, which was to set up a separate Planning Appeals Tribunal, which was a judge of the then State planning system. But that was really
the only compromise. And the City didn’t have any problem with that. But that was
the only thing. Everything else got through as planned.

So what was the final upshot of all that?

Well, the upshot was to have a City of Adelaide Development Control Act, quite
deliberately called ‘development control’, not ‘planning’. That authorised the
statutory side of the City Plan, so we basically rejigged George’s City Plan – after
quite a few amendments into three components. The first component was the policy
document, so it had objectives, policies and concept diagrams. It was clearly a
City/State joint approach to the City but in a policy sense. The second book was the
Principles and Regulations which were the development controls. But they also
included these “Desired Future Character Statements” for precincts. So every
precinct of the City had a word description of the future, how they were authorised.
And the third book was the action projects, which were the positive things which the
City – and the State, in some cases – would undertake to implement the Plan. So,
basically, George’s study survived in a different, reformatted way and it was only
the second book, the development controls, which were authorised in law.

The important aspect was setting up a joint commission. So there was the
establishment of a City of Adelaide Planning Commission, which had four State and
four Council representatives, and that was seen as the coordinating body. But it was
also the body which was responsible for assessing applications by the Crown and
applications by the City Council itself, so that was a very powerful group of people.

And what were the obligations on the other levels of government, the State and
Federal?

Interestingly Roche actually wrote to Fraser because, you know, state legislation
doesn’t control the Federal Government. Roche actually managed to get a letter
from Fraser which basically said the Commonwealth would submit any applications
by the Commonwealth in the City to the Commission, but for comment, not for a
formal approval, and he obviously didn’t want to get into any constitutional
arguments about that. But the State said they would undertake to submit
applications to the Commission for a tick of approval. Any applications by the City
would go to the Commission. But it also had a really good role about what we
called ‘management by exception’. If an application came in and didn’t quite meet the provisions of the City Plan but the Council felt it had some merit and there were some bonus provisions for things like public art or public open space, if those were provided then the Council could actually go to the Commission and seek a waiver. Formally such an application would require the ‘concurrence’ of the City of Adelaide Planning Commission, so it was a very sophisticated way of getting some good-quality developments. Developers were saying, ‘Okay, if I do this and that, which is exceeding what the City Plan says, can I get approval?’ And the answer was yes, you could, if you actually did something which was over and above what was expected.

Was there a review requirement?

It was a part of the review system, so every City Plan was reviewed. So the first Plan was 1976–1981 and we had a sequence of City Plans from then on, so 1981–1986, 1986–1991. The 1991–1996 Plan got repealed in 1993, and the City then became part of the State system. The last City Plan was converted to become just another part of the State’s planning system the Development Act.

The 1981 review, can you recall what that concluded, if you like?

It was pretty much a consolidation that we were heading in the right direction; that there needed to be some ongoing incentives for housing, because that was still early days to get housing – though the Trust had started doing some work. There was certainly some reinforcement of promoting public transport and a pedestrianised core. There were some positive actions, like the idea of the Citicom development on the eastern side of Hindmarsh Square. The City was quite concerned about losing offices to the fringe, particularly Burnside and Unley, and there was quite an argument that those councils had rezoned property facing those roads to allow commercial offices. A lot of people wanted cars under the buildings and with much cheaper land than the CBD. The whole of the Greenhill/Fullarton Road office development really occurred because people decanted, and the City was concerned about that. So we thought we could demonstrate that it would be possible to have that sort of office in the City itself without too much difficulty. So we consolidated the whole of that site, which was in Council ownership, and demolished the
buildings. This caused a bit of strife – one of the buildings on the corner, which we did not own was the Aurora Hotel, and that caused an interest in heritage and the starting of the Aurora Heritage Action Group. But we did demonstrate that there could be some development in a commercial sense which supported the City’s core. So that was probably the main things coming out in the ’81–’86 review, but it was pretty much a consolidation of the direction we were heading in.

**And the heritage area, that was one of the desirable characteristics, I guess.**

George had actually produced a list, I think it was 112, in the first book of items which he called ‘items of environmental significance’, which was an early title. That was one of the major issues of all the public consultation, which probably caused the most strife. The private sector did not like the idea that the State, or the City and State, could legislate to have a heritage listing of their property. So the way that that got resolved was to establish a separate City of Adelaide Heritage Study and we engaged Paul Stark, Marsden and Donovan. That was supported by the State; not financially, but the approach to heritage. So that was taken out of the first City Plan and became an action project rather than a schedule of buildings, and that took some time to work through. Every City Plan looked at extending the list and did some more work. The schedule which is in the current Plan, I think didn’t actually get adopted until it was part of the 1991–1996 City Plan.

**Oh, yes – right.**

So it did take some time to get that through the system.

**And you mentioned in your thesis Ruthven Mansions and Marine & Harbours Building.**

Yes.

**Can you talk about them?**

Yes. Ruthven Mansions was owned by the State, and I think the Education Department from memory. They wanted to demolish it to build a new building. So they lodged the application with the CADC, which it still was in those days. Bill Hayes, who was no longer Lord Mayor but still on the Council, actually came and made a presentation to the CADC saying, “This really has some historic value as a
1912 building in the City”. Ruthven Mansions was an unusual form of residential development at five and six storeys in the middle of the City. The CADC refused the demolition, which caused a bit of strife with the state agency. It clearly went all the way to Dunstan and Dunstan said, “No, you have to do what the CADC said and come up with something else.” And I’m not quite sure how Joe Emmanuel got involved – I think through John Chappell, the architect. I think Chappell saw some advantage in using Joe as he had started doing some developments in the City at that time. So Joe Emmanuel did a renovation scheme and Chappell was the architect. So he had to declare an interest when it went before the CADC. It was really an initiative from Bill Hayes, and clearly some pressure from Dunstan, that we have residential uses in Ruthven Mansions today.

The other one was the Marine & Harbours. It’s a fairly interesting story. This is when the Commission was in place, so this was after 1977. The SGIC had engaged Eric von Schramek to do a major commercial development on the site. Unfortunately, right in the middle of the site was the old Marine & Harbours Building, and this was before it was listed. But it was certainly of value and people saw it as of some heritage value. It was part of the argument that we were losing too many heritage buildings. So Dunstan engaged Platten, who was still the architect and planner at the Housing Trust, to do some schemes to show what might be possible to be done. The Commission, and Alan Faunt who was then the Secretary of the Commission, were invited to the Premier’s office early one morning. It wasn’t quite clear why we were going; we were just told we had to go, so the eight commissioners, including me, turned up. There were two models: one which had the new office building designed by von Schramek with the Marine & Harbours Board moved to the north of the site; and the other model had the Marine & Harbours Board staying where it was and new building designed around it. This did look rather strange, I’d have to say, but, you know, the façade was retained. But in most façades there’s usually some sort of setback and some change of the building, and clearly that hadn’t worked well. Anyway, we were just standing looking at these models, wondering what was going on, and Dunstan comes into the room and just looks at the two models and basically said, ‘Well, I’m sure you’ve had the opportunity of looking at these two solutions. I think you’ll agree with me the one
that moves the Marine & Harbours Board to the north is the best solution. Thank you, gentlemen,’ and he walked out.

Right.

Alan Faunt said he was then directed to formally record this as a meeting of the Commission and to record that we’d granted approval for the SGIC Building with the Marine & Harbours Building façade moved to the north. So if you look at Victoria Square these days, that’s how it happened. So Dunstan had a key role. He could see the new building across the Square from his office, and he obviously had some interest in the outcome personally.

Just thinking about the operations of the Commission at the time, did you see it as improving decision-making processes? Was it a positive – – –?

It depended a lot on the individual members. I mean, the initial Commission had both John Mant and me on it, which was fairly interesting; but it also had Stuart Hart. In terms of involving the State in this new body which, as I said, Stuart thought was a doughnut, (how do you possibly operate without the City being involved in the Metropolitan Plan?) so Stuart’s involvement was interesting. Only Newell Platten was appointed to the Commission from the old CADC, so Stretton and Bakewell weren’t there. But Derek Scrafton was, and we’d lobbied for that. The importance of transport, I think, was reflected in the fact that we had Derek Scrafton as a commissioner. On the City side, apart from me and the Lord Mayor of the day (Roche) the other two commissioners were Bowen and Hayes. So Chappell was the only councillor who didn’t get transferred across. But then Roche’s term of office as Lord Mayor finished and George Joseph became Lord Mayor, and then Chappell refilled the vacancy. And when I became Town Clerk I resigned. I didn’t continue after I became Town Clerk, so in 1982 there was a different group.

To answer your question I think it was a good body. I mean, some key people were there and initially, Dunstan still kept his view on things. Although Bakewell wasn’t there to have a direct line, Mant was. Mant had become head of a new department that Hudson had set up. So Mant clearly was able to provide that sort of ongoing advice.

And he had his person in Town Hall area, didn’t he?
We did. That was really interesting. The Secretary of the Commission was a state employee but was located in the Town Hall. So, at a practical level, it operated by Initially it was Gwyn Jarrett, who’d actually worked for George on the planning study, so he had a secretary who knew what the Plan was all about and could see how the joint body could operate. So that was useful, and certainly it helped having him in the Town Hall. I think some of the decline started when Lord Mayor Condous became Chairman of the Commission, because he didn’t really have a background in planning. But this was obviously way after Dunstan; it was back in 1987. And Ian McPhail was then head of the planning agency. He moved his officer out. Helen Hele was then the secretary as a state employee. She should be in the state department – so there was a bit of a fuss about that. You know, these things work if you’ve got the right people in place. I think the system could have continued to work if there’d been ongoing City/State dialogue. But the City/State divide was, I think, beginning to occur at that point.

Occur again.

Certainly the heritage debate was beginning to divide the Council and there were beginning to be factions in the Council, which was unfortunate, so there was a pro-development and pro-heritage faction. State Cabinet was really quite concerned about that – again, a quote from my thesis – Lynn Arnold saying that Cabinet was thinking that the City was going to be ‘in aspic’ if the heritage faction became the dominant faction in the Council.

And did you interview George Clark in your thesis?

No; he was dead.

Oh, he died. Right.

He was deceased by the time I had started my thesis, unfortunately. But his widow, who lives in Sydney, has got all his private documents. She very kindly gave me a CD, so I’ve got all George’s personal papers from his Sydney work and his Adelaide work, which I did use in my thesis quite extensively.

Right. But did you ever pick up what he thought about what had happened to his work?
He did come back – he kept his office going for a year or so after the planning study. But he was really doing more work back in Sydney and in Perth. He did come over, I’d say infrequently. We used to catch up and have lunch when he was about. I think he was genuinely pleased that a lot of the work he’d done got converted into a statutory set of controls. I think he was quite proud of the innovation that he’d used in “Design Future Character Statements” as being part of the statutory controls. I’m sure he thought that there could have been more in the statutory control side of things. It was a bit blurry, and the City hadn’t been as bold as it might have been in terms of some of his thinking on the strategic side, particularly the public transport side of things. But, you know, there was clearly a cost factor from the State. The whole idea of putting the tram underground along King William Street and bringing it up at the Festival Centre was all very well, but it was a costly exercise putting trams underground. But if they had done it in those days, it probably would have been a fairly major impact on the City. If you think about the tramline it now goes through the Square and down King William Street. If the tramline had been underground (and there’d been ways down at the various intersections), and if it had come out at Victor Richardson Drive at the Oval, it could have worked. It worked in terms of the slopes. George had done quite a lot of work looking at getting it underground before it hit South Terrace. It went underground in the tram right-of-way in the Park Lands and then it would have gone all the way through to the Oval. It would have been fairly interesting.

And was there any interest from the other states in what was happening here?

When Hopgood became Planning Minister, he was very proud of the fact the City had separate legislation. I think people in other states did look at the way of having a joint City/State approach to things. I really can’t comment beyond that; I don’t know the extent to which other states started looking at things. I have given a couple of papers at some planning conferences, and there’s always been interest in the City of Adelaide Development Control Act.

Right, okay. I think we’ve covered most – well, all of the things I wanted to talk about –

Right.
– apart from Don Dunstan’s legacy and what your view, thinking about the time, is.

There’s no doubt that the City of Adelaide today would not have been the place it is if Dunstan hadn’t bought into it in 1972 under some influence from Hugh Stretton and Peter Ward. But his approach to making it a more urbane city and a livable city were absolutely critical in terms of getting the support for a planning study. Then the choice of Clarke was certainly an inspired one, based on his Sydney work. I think Dunstan was supportive of the arts; the Festival Centre was already in place. He saw the cultural growth of Adelaide as being the sort of ‘jewel in the crown of South Australia’. This was a phrase he certainly used, and I think he genuinely believed that if the things were right in the City, then the State was in good shape also. He had a fundamental view of the City/State relationship: he needed the City to be working well and being supportive of a whole range of things which the City wanted to do. If the City and State could work together, that was by far the best solution.

Right, good. And did you have the sense that things were happening in South Australia when he was Premier, or – – –?

Absolutely. You asked me, why did I come to South Australia. We had a really interesting lifestyle in Sydney, but there was certainly a view that things were happening in South Australia in the ’70s, that there was a reformist Premier, that it was alive and new initiatives being taken in a whole range of areas, and it was an exciting place to be. And it was; there was a lot going on in Adelaide in the early 1970s, and it was a really fascinating time to come here.

Good. Well, thanks very much, Michael. Good.

Pleasure, George. I really enjoyed it. Thank you so much.

Great.

END OF INTERVIEW