

TOWN PLANNING.

Mayor W. Curtis was aware in July 1916 of the problems for landscaping which emerged from the narrow chain wide streets laid out in the original town plan. At a council meeting he commented: 'Town Planning entirely favors my views- broad tree planted avenues for the principal streets and narrow streets for the less important ones'.¹ He outlined his plans for a greater Armidale which included: the extension of boundaries and the development of the racecourse as a suburban residential area. Ald. Hawke also believed that the land below Soudan Hill should be aligned and made a model suburb. The correspondent in the *Armidale Express* endorsed the aldermen's comments and also suggested the racecourse site presents 'a magnificent chance for the adoption of Ald. Curtis' views'.

Government authorities realised the need for a legislative framework to assist town planning. In 1918 a Town Planning Advisory Board was appointed by the N.S.W. Government. This board lasted until 1929 and was designed:

to advise the Government and local authorities on questions of town planning, town planning legislation and investigate specific town planning schemes for development and redevelopment at the request of either the Government or individual council'.²

Councils were given certain limited planning powers by the Local Government Act 1919 including the control of land to prevent industrial and other undesirable developments in residential areas and the placement of industrial, commercial and businesses in specific areas. A major provision enabled councils to proclaim residential districts.

The provisions relating to the control of subdivisions included the number of houses per acre, marking of street alignments, road drainage, reserves, the proper construction of new roads, size and shape of allotments, means of access and the amount of recreation space to be provided in subdivisions'.³

As a part of the University of Sydney Extension Division, D.L. Davidson presented an illuminated lecture on town planning and hydro-electric power in northern N.S.W. in the Armidale town hall on Thursday 31 August 1922. He did not support the establishment of a model suburb on the present racecourse but believed that at Zion Hill (now known as Drummond Park), there was 'a magnificent opportunity is open to plan one of the prettiest and best laid out pieces of town settlement in the north'.⁴

¹ *Armidale Express*, 28 July 1916, p.2.

² H.E. Maiden, *The History of Local Government in New South Wales*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1966, p.155.

³ Maiden, op. cit., pp.125-126.

⁴ *Armidale Express*, 6 September 1922, p.3.

In July 1927 the N.S.W. Town Planning Association appealed to councils to develop tree planting and other beautification schemes.⁵ Aldermen accepted the recommendations in principle but there was some agreement that problems would emerge in Armidale because of the narrow streets.

A major town planning issue emerged in 1931. The full decision of the Armidale Lands Board concerning the New England Rugby League's application to purchase part of undesignated Allingham Street between Dumaresq and Donnelly street was published in the *Armidale Express*, 2 December 1931. At that stage, council had worked an apparently unauthorised quarry for many years to the north of Kirkwood street. Council intended to extend Allingham Street by removing the entire hill as well as forming a road from Dumaresq to Kirkwood Streets by constructing a substantial bridge. The Land Board believed that council only intended to develop a road 'to secure it, as adjunct to the existing quarry' and ruled 'there is no objection to the public interest to its closing'.

The Mayor, Ald. Watson expressed concern because the decision would effect town planning and interfere with the development of the town on north hill. He stated: 'We have a lot of other streets which have not been dedicated and it appears that all of them are classed by the Lands Board as Crown Land, and, are open to purchase by anybody'.⁶ Believing that the Land Board had failed to consider the future of the city, the council appointed a special committee two weeks later to prepare a ministerial report on the issue. At the same time, council applied for the dedication of all public thoroughfares in Armidale.

A.J. Brown, a member of the Housing Council of N.S.W. and chairman of the advisory committee of the Housing Improvement Board spoke at a public meeting held in Armidale in August 1937 on town planning and better housing. There was a good attendance including 'the Mayor, several aldermen and the town clerk'.⁷

Council approved 'the proposal to establish residential areas at Armidale'⁸ in July 1938. An invitation was then extended to the N.S.W. Town Planning Association by council to visit Armidale. In August Bertram W. Ford, president of the association sought plans of Armidale and Uralla 'for inspection by members of the association prior to making the proposed visit'.⁹ Accompanied by A.H. Edmonds, a member of the council of the association, he addressed a public meeting at the town hall in November 1938. Mr Ford referred to the need for a wider Beardy Street to eliminate traffic congestion as well as the need for improvements in Dumaresq Creek and Drummond Park. He promised a number of issues including the main road approaches to the town, the approaches to the railway station, a bridge over Faulkner Street, residential areas, a lay-out for grounds in front of the

⁵ *Armidale Chronicle*, 20 July 1927, p.3.

⁶ *Armidale Express*, 2 December 1931, p.7.

⁷ *Armidale Express*, 20 August 1937, p.4.

⁸ *Armidale Express*, 20 July 1938, p.4.

⁹ *Armidale Express*, 31 August 1938, p.7.

hospital and the splaying of street corners would be dealt with in a report to be presented to council. In support the editor of the *Armidale Express*, 23 November 1938 commented: 'With a city that is showing ever-increasing interest in the beautification of the city, we are justified in looking forward to the report receiving earnest and mature thought'.

Council had rejected a proposal from the building and health committee in March 1935 that special residential areas be established in north and south Armidale. Council decided in principle to adopt residential areas on 5 June 1939 and a proposal for residential areas for South and North Armidale was approved by council in March 1940. Council then advertised a list of prohibited buildings and trades within these areas. The Department of Public works rejected the proposed areas by council in April and requested a map be forwarded. Council was also informed of the need for prohibited trades to be mentioned specifically and not generally. Dissension arose in council over the issue and the decision was taken in May not to proceed with the plan.

The question of declaring residential areas was again raised in August 1946 and in the discussions the Town Clerk, F.W. Milner said the matter 'was first considered in 1918'.¹⁰ It had been discussed on other occasions but the present question was based on the health surveyor's report in July. A week later north and south Armidale were declared as residential areas on the casting vote of Mayor, D.D.H. Fayle. In September council was advised to specifically define the trades prohibited within the proposed areas by the Department of Local Government. Then in March, council surveyed all businesses 'as a further step towards the proclamation of residential areas in North and South Armidale'.¹¹

In May 1943 the West Armidale Progress Association asked council to extend the tree planting scheme and replace trees which had failed to grow. Council referred the matter to the general purposes committee for report. Council also advised the association that it 'favoured an approach to the New England University College, in the planning of a beautification scheme for Armidale'.¹² The Armidale and District Progress Association asked council in October to take immediate action to plan a beautification scheme, children's playgrounds, and an industrial site. Council agreed to meet with the association and on Monday 29 November a series of recommendations from the general purposes committee was prepared and tabled to council. Council accepted the recommendations and called a special meeting to consider the proposals.

An Armidale beautification scheme developed by a select committee was presented by Progress Association representatives, G.H. Yalland and A. Jones at a special meeting of council on Friday 3 December 1943. This plan involved the adoption of cultural and aesthetic features as well as essential services; the adoption of a vigorous policy of town planning and beautification and the

¹⁰ *Armidale Express*, 7 August 1946, p.6.

¹¹ *Armidale Express*, 19 March 1947, p.8.

¹² *Armidale Express*, 5 May 1943, p.8.

adoption of long term plans. Two weeks later, council accepted as a basis the plan for a beautification scheme and co-operation of citizens in a tree planting plan.

In November 1944 the Deputy Prime Minister suggested a Commonwealth-wide town planning scheme to create advisory bodies to assist town councils in planning their towns.¹³ At the State Government level, unsuccessful attempts were made by the State Government to introduce Town Planning Bills in 1919 and 1922. A draft of a Town and Country Planning Bill was prepared and submitted to the Minister in 1934 by the Town and Country Planning Institute of New South Wales. Four years later, a draft Town and Regional Planning Bill was created but never acted upon and it was not until 1945 that the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. J.J. Cahill, successfully introduced the Town and Country Planning Amendment Bill 1945. Prior to this Act, municipal planning depended mainly on the Local Government Act. The new Act provided for the declaration and planning of residential districts and planning areas. To develop planning schemes, each Council was to appoint a planning committee and employ professional qualified experts to assist in the drafting of a scheme. This was the first move to give councils control over land use within their boundaries.

Council objected in August 1948 to the news from the Department of Local Government that Armidale could not be included in the tour by the British Town Planning Exhibition. At a council meeting held in September 1948, the building, health and general purposes committee had recommended that a meeting with the shire over the extension of city boundaries be 'held over pending Council's decision on the adoption of Town Planning provisions'.¹⁴ Following an appeal from the mayor, B.N. Weekes a senior planning officer from the Department of Local Government, visited Armidale on 15 and 16 September 1948 to discuss town planning matters. 'He felt that the Town Planning Act would give the council more effective powers for controlling the city's' development but 'any long range plan for Armidale's development must include areas beyond existing municipal boundaries'.¹⁵ The council's town planning and beautification committee was asked to consider aspects of the Act as outlined during the officer's visit. In discussions between the city engineer and Weekes it was suggested 'that boundaries should be extended to embrace the tops of hills surrounding Armidale'.¹⁶

When Mr Haviland, Under Secretary of the Department of Local Government, arrived in Armidale to attend the inaugural meeting of the New England County Council held on Friday 20 August 1948, he advised council to consider the Town Planning Act before they developed a scheme for residential areas. Council adopted the provisions of the Town Planning Act on Monday 8 November 1948 and in April 1949 council advertised that the Resolution Map for the City Of Armidale prepared for the town plan was on public exhibition at the council

¹³ *Armidale Express*, 20 November 1944, p.4.

¹⁴ Council Minutes, 13 September 1948.

¹⁵ *Armidale Express*, 17 September 1948, p.3.

¹⁶ *Armidale Express*, 29 September 1948, p.5

chambers. The Minister of Local Government gazetted council's resolution to prepare a town planning scheme on 26 May 1949. Engineer J.D. Brown was appointed as town planner at an additional annual salary of £100 but he was not charged with the preparation of town plan. Council was given two years from 29 July to prepare the plan.

The council notice gazetted on 8 August made it clear that council now had interim control over the use of all land within its boundaries. That month council also announced the town planning committee will have five aldermen and four citizens together with council officers. The committee was formed in October 1949 and included: Dr R.B. Madgwick, Warden of the New England University College; Dr G.W. Bassett, Principal of the Armidale Teachers' College; Mr P. Knudson, builder and R.N. Hickson, architect. The five aldermen included: Mayor Dawson, D.D.H. Fayle, W.H. McBean, D. Hughes and K. Jones. The city engineer and town clerk were appointed as advisors to the committee. The committee was instructed to draw up a planning scheme.

Dr G.W. Bassett, Principal of the Armidale Teacher's College was elected as chairman of the committee in February 1950 and the first report was presented to the Council on Monday 27 February. The preliminary suggestions included the recommendations that: all lanes have a minimum of 40 feet in future developments; the area of residential lots should be increased and a plan of development is essential to the City of Armidale. A second report was presented in April.

E.C. Ferrier, assistant chief planner in N.S.W. visited Armidale in May and met with the committee. He presented a detailed report on town planning and commented: 'Here you have, more or less, the nucleus of a university city somewhat comparable with Oxford. There is only one Oxford, and I put it to you that there is likely to be only one Armidale'. He added:

'The job of the committee was town planning- not the detailed administrative work. Its objects were (1) to draw up a skeleton plan; (2) to determine the amount of area outside the city that was to be taken into the plan, to guard against indiscriminate development; (3) to assess what the population might be in 20 years'.¹⁷

An interesting feature of the talk was the comment that there was an opportunity for the development of a green belt along Dumaresq Creek. Following the address, the committee recommended to council that the shire 'be invited to co-operate in the preparation of a plan for the city of Armidale and for an area outside the city to enable the plan to operate successfully'.¹⁸ Future development on the outskirts of the city would influence development of a future Armidale plan.

¹⁷ *Armidale Express*, 31 May 1950, p.8.

¹⁸ *Armidale Express*, 31 May 1950, p.8.

In June 1950 North Armidale Progress Association asked whether the association could be represented on the committee. Council informed 'the association that the town planning committee was an elected body and that representation was not due for review'.¹⁹

The uncertainty of the relationship between the town planning committee and the building and health and general purposes committee meant that change of use of land and subdivision were often part of the same application. This was evident in the application by the Cara Building Company case which applied for a combined dwelling shop and coffee house in Kentucky Street. The town planning committee determined in July that the building should be set back a further 10 feet (total 25 ft.) from Kentucky street and 15 ft. from Markham street.²⁰

The town planning committee decided in May 1950 to ask council to invite the shire 'to co-operate in the preparation of a plan for the city of Armidale and for area outside the city to enable the plan to operate successfully'.²¹ The shire decided to approach the council in July to discuss the formation of a joint town planning authority. The town planning committee was prepared to meet with representatives of the shire and there was subsequent discussion in council concerning joint planning at meetings held in July, August and September. That December, Dumaresq Shire agreed in principle on the question of joint town planning.

At a meeting of trade unionists on Friday 3 February 1950, 'the Armidale Industrial Council of Trade Unionists was formed to promote cooperation between employers and employees'.²² In June the Industrial Council asked Dumaresq Shire to seek the extension of gas, water, sewerage and lighting facilities into the shire, particularly to the west of the Armidale municipal boundary. Following the shire's reply, the organisation then took action 'to seek the views of progress associations in extending town amenities outside existing city boundaries'.²³

In July 1950 the town planning committee determined that in all new subdivisions the minimum frontage be 50 feet with 6600 square feet the minimum area for residential lots.

The matter of service extension was reinforced in July 1951 when the mayor and president of the shire met with Mr Ferrier, Deputy Chief Town Planner of the Department of Local Government.. Armidale City Council initiated the first meeting with Dumaresq Shire in August 1951 to consider the issue of town planning. At that stage the shire had not adopted the Town Planning Act but 'the City Council offered the Shire Council every co-operation'²⁴. No apparent

¹⁹ *Armidale Express*, 5 July 1950, p.12.

²⁰ *Armidale Express*, 5 July 1950, p.5.

²¹ *Armidale Express*, 31 May 1950, p.8.

²² *Armidale Express*, 6 February 1950, p.3.

²³ *Armidale Express*, 30 June 1950, p.3.

²⁴ *Armidale Express*, 29 August 1951, p.6.

progress took place between the council and the shire and at the time the town planning committee was not meeting.

Consequently Dr. R.B. Madgwick resigned in protest from the town planning committee in March 1952 because 'the committee had not met for 12 months, and ... the Council had taken decisions affecting town planning without reference to the committee'.²⁵ Because the committee was not a standing committee, its reports could be received for information but could not be adopted as council decisions. By March a civic survey of Armidale had been completed; reports compiled and estimates were 'now being prepared'.²⁶

The town planning committee again expressed the hope in June 1952 of operating conjointly with a committee appointed by the shire. An issue arose when a garage was built on the street alignment opposite Ben Venue School on the Rockvale Road.²⁷ In reply to the council, the shire stated that it had adopted the Town Planning Act and the building had been constructed illegally; all buildings must be constructed 15 feet from the alignment.

At that stage the planning committee also suggested the brick area should be extended to include the area bounded by Barney, Jessie, Dumaresq and Marsh Streets.²⁸

The new chairman Dr G.W. Bassett outlined the major features of the town plan to council in June 1953. These features included: the setting up of minimum size building blocks; the opening up of existing city blocks; the setting aside of children's playground; the diversion of the present highway through the city; the expansion of the present civic centre in Rusden Street and the development of the Dumaresq Creek area. The town plan was adopted by council on Monday 13 July. Surveys and maps were presented to the Local Government Minister and following his amendments, council passed the scheme back to the town planning committee.

In March 1954 district surveyor P.E. Raymond forwarded a letter signed by the president of the Armidale sub-branch of the R.S.L. and president of the Armidale Legacy Club applying to have an area of 70 feet by 165 feet alienated for a club. This area had been alienated to the CWA in 1939 but the area reverted to council's control when the CWA acquired premises in Beardy Street. Council referred the proposal to the town planning committee.

Council re-appointed the city engineer, J.D. Brown to the position of town planner at a salary of £100 per year in August. By that month the town plan prepared by J.D. Brown over a three year period was in Sydney for consideration by the Minister for Local Government. At that stage Armidale was 2112 acres and the

²⁵ *Armidale Express*, 9 April 1952, p.3.

²⁶ *Armidale Express*, 12 March 1952, p.8 and 9 April 1952, p.3.

²⁷ *Armidale Express*, 13 June 1952, p.4.

²⁸ *ibid.*

'whole area within the scheme boundaries' was 'regarded as predominately residential'.²⁹ The city engineer in his capacity of town planner, proposed the further subdivision of the ten chain blocks. 'By this means alone there would be an increase of 60 per cent in the number of sites in the city'.³⁰ The town plan also envisaged a civic centre which stretched from the Post Office corner to the opposite corner in Rusden and Dangar Streets. Town planner, J.D. Brown commented: 'The main Post Office building could be re-erected in a more modern architectural style to assist in making the intersection, in conjunction with the Court House and Bank Buildings, one of the main central features of Armidale'.³¹ That year council was given authority by the Department of Local Government to observe the requirements of an interim town plan.

The town planning committee recommended in August 1954 that the 20 acres Police Padock be re-allocated to include 14 acres for Teacher's College purposes; 5 acres for police purposes and 1 acre for a soil conservation depot.

Early in 1955 the minister returned the town plan and an audience of about sixty people attended a public meeting at the council chambers on Wednesday 22 May to hear outlines of the Armidale plan. Dr G.W. Bassett, chairman of the town planning committee outlined the basic principles of the plan. E.R. Woolmington, lecturer of the Geography at the University of New England spoke on the reasons for a town plan and N.A.W. Ashton, Chief Town Planning Officer of the Dept of Local Government spoke on how to implement the plan.

A redrawn plan prepared for public exhibition was discussed by C.E. Ferrier (Town Planning Officer of the Department) and the town planning committee in October 1955. An important alteration of the plans was the enclosure of the hospital by residential neighbourhoods to prevent industrial noise and the showing of the land to be used for specific purposes; that is, churches, schools, colleges and other land from which Council drew no rates.. But it still contained the controversial widening of Rusden Street at the expense of church property. Bishop of Armidale Dr J.S. Moyes protested in November against 'the proposal to widen Rusden Street at the expense of the church property on the southern side of the street'.³² In January 1956, the Armidale Methodists supported the stand taken by Dr Moyes. The proposal to widen Rusden Street from 66 feet to 96 feet was described 'as a half baked scheme' at a meeting of the town planning committee on Tuesday 24 April 1956. Despite the concern, the proposal was kept in the plan for public exhibition and comment. That month, the Armidale Synod again registered their objection to the proposed widening of Rusden Street. The proposal was intended to provide an open concourse and provide a city oblong in the centre of Armidale. Following the receipt of 968 objections, council finally withdrew the proposal in August 1958.

²⁹ *Armidale Express*, 27 August 1954, p.3.

³⁰ *Armidale Express*, 1 September 1954, p.4.

³¹ *Armidale Express*, 3 September 1954, p.3.

³² *Armidale Express*, 30 November 1955, p.12.

Apart from the controversial proposal concerning Rusden Street, the town plan also included thirty new streets. This involved the splitting up of big blocks for residential development.

Because of a ruling by the Minister of Local Government that meetings of the town planning committee must be opened to the public, the planning committee declined to deal with several matters in April 1956. The committee felt that it was an advisory body and it was concerned only with the preparation of the town plan. The appointment of a new town clerk in March 1955 and engineer in November led to a special report presented to council on Monday 30 April 1956. This report did much to eliminate confusion and helped to clarify the administration of town planning. The report stressed the need for a consistent policy and proposed that a standing committee of development be established to consider applications for interim development. This left the town planning committee to prepare the town plan for submission to council. Council appointed a development committee in May to handle matters related to the town plan. Its members were the vice-chairmen of the five existing committees, namely finance, works, water and sewerage, beautification and building, health and general purposes.

Early in November 1956 details of the town plan were released to the public. 'The proposal raised the question of extending the city boundaries but the Committee agreed to make no recommendation on this subject'.³³ The plan for Armidale was presented to a special meeting of council on 19 November. Chairman of the committee Dr G.W. Bassett, outlined details of the plan which included: the development of Armidale as a pleasant residential city with good amenities; the development of the creek lands as a green belt and the re-routing of the highway outside the city.

The Armidale town plan was placed on exhibition in the municipal offices, Rusden Street on Friday 15 March 1957. Initially objections to the scheme could be made up to Saturday 15 June but the time on display was held over until Monday 15 July. A public meeting to discuss the plan was held on Wednesday 22 May at the Council Chambers and N. Ashton, chief town planner of the Department of Local Government was part of the panel. A special meeting of the committee was held on 30 May 1957 to consider the plan.

All the representations to the provisional Armidale town plan were summarised by the town planner and presented to council with reports in June 1958. Apart from the Rusden street proposal forty two objections were received from private property owners, the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Lands and other interested bodies. A special meeting was held in July to consider the interim plan and a special sub-committee was formed to further consider these reports.

Mr J.H. Shaw, Senior Lecturer in Town Planning at the University of New South Wales visited Armidale in August 1959. He commented 'Properly planned,

³³ *Armidale Express*, 7 November 1956, p.3.

Armidale could become the Cambridge of Australia'.³⁴ A representative of the British Council, the Hon Lionel Brett and a leading town planner visited Armidale in October and stated 'Armidale appeared as a city which could be greatly improved'.³⁵

Apart from comments about the planning of Armidale expressed by visiting planning experts, issues were also arising in conjunction with community development. By September 1959 a standing committee of Armidale residents interested in community development had been formed. This committee was established 'to study the problems of organising an appropriate body to plan for the development of Armidale and district'.³⁶ In October, Miss Evelyn Bates, A Fullbright scholar from New England, U.S.A. and temporarily attached to the university addressed council on 'Community Development- in relation to Local Government'.

Early in October 1959 a sub-committee met and presented reports to council but council instructed the town planner to prepare further reports. In January 1960 the Department of Local Government requested information on reasons for the delay and the approximate date when it was anticipated that the town plan will be submitted to the Minister. In reply the town clerk said the delay had been brought about by the need for the city engineer and town planner to concentrate on the Armidale water supply during the drought; the preparation of a Boundaries Extension Inquiry in July 1958 and the resignation of engineering staff. He sought advice on resubmission of the interim town plan and the possible visit to Armidale by an officer to discuss this.

In February 1960 the city engineer and town planner expressed the need for council to reconsider 'the Interim Town Plan, in conjunction with the planning of the area to be added to the City, so that the new boundaries can be planned as a single unit'.³⁷ Council decided it needed further reports and further meetings were held on 22 February, 23 March and 16 May. At each meeting council called for further extensive reports from the town planner.

At the same time as the extensive council meetings were being held, a weekend school on town planning was held in Armidale in May 1960 conducted by John Shaw, Senior Town Planning Officer at the University of N.S.W. In an opening address, the Mayor P.G. Love commented: 'Armidale had almost reached the stage where the money needed for development was beyond the capacity of landholders to pay in rates, and some outside assistance was needed'.³⁸ At the school, expressed the opinion that Armidale could be developed as a regional capital, a university centre and tourist centre.

³⁴ *Armidale Express*, 26 August 1959, p.8.

³⁵ *Armidale Express*, 4 November 1959, p.4.

³⁶ *Armidale Express*, 30 September 1959, p.12.

³⁷ Report presented to the Development Committee, 22 February 1960. Town Planning Committee, No 3590, Box 148C, T1.

³⁸ *Armidale Express*, 16 May 1960, p.6.

A proposal to plan Moore Street and Cinders Lane to the widest possible extent was rejected by council in June 1960. But at the same meeting Alderman A.R. Monley proposed the 'possibility of Beardy Street eventually becoming a City Square for use by pedestrians only'.³⁹

In July 1960 council rejected a proposal by town planner P.G. Agnew to bring the Chief Town Planning Officer to Armidale. However the Chief Planning Officer, N. Ashton addressed a public meeting chaired by the Mayor Ald. P.G. Love on Tuesday 13 September. He suggested 'a parkway through the Dumaresq Creek area serving as a third entrance into the city'.⁴⁰ At the same time Ashton presented a special report to council which referred the report for later consideration.

The extension of Armidale's boundaries in 1961 had complicated matters a little and it was not until 5 November 1962 that the town planner's report was ready for council's consideration. This report was based on the matters referred to him by the council and on a report of the Local Government's Chief Town Planner. Decisions were deferred until further time was available for study of the report.

The 1962 Amending Act simplified the procedures for town planning. Council informed the Minister of its resolution to prepare a scheme and the Minister then gazetted an interim development order. The 1962 amendment also exempted councils from employing a certificated town planner or appointing a town planning committee. In 1964 these functions were performed by the State Planning Authority (S.P.A.).

It was at weekend town planning seminar held in Armidale in September 1963 that the council city engineer and town planner, P.G. Agnew outlined the history of town planning in Armidale. He said the town plan for Armidale was prepared before the boundary extension in 1961 by a committee of local citizens. These citizens had been appointed by aldermen to advise council and carry out much of the technical work. It was also revealed that in August 1963 council 'was told by the Minister for Local Government, Mr Hills that it must finalise the scheme and submit it to him "without further delay"'.⁴¹

At a special meeting on 30 September 1963 council considered the plan for north Armidale, the business centre and the Dumaresq Creek land. Several more meetings were necessary to consider the town plan including land taken from Dumaresq Shire. But Armidale's interim town plan was provisionally declared.

The creation of the State Planning Authority in 1964 meant that council could now seek advice and assistance from skilled planning officers. The Town Planning Branch of the Department of Local Government could not provide

³⁹ *Armidale Express*, 10 June 1960, p.6.

⁴⁰ *Armidale Express*, 14 September 1960, p.2.

⁴¹ *Armidale Express*, 30 September 1963, p.2.

assistance to the same extent in the 1950s. The Minister or Authority could also assume control when a council defaulted in the preparation of a scheme.

The city engineer and town planner Mr Agnew urged council in March 1964 to meet with Dumaresq Shire to prevent residential sprawl on Armidale's outskirts. He suggested 'that existing streets should be developed as a scenic drive to the university of New England instead of a special Dumaresq Creek side road'⁴² because of the positioning of the New England by-pass. A Dumaresq Creek scenic drive from Markham Street to Golgotha Street was also included in Armidale's town plan in April.

A development committee was formed which consisted of all aldermen. Following a recommendation of the town planner P.G. Agnew, the development committee adopted the creation of special residential areas where flat buildings will be prohibited in April 1964. The committee also adopted a motion 'that plans of the Interim Town plan be prepared ... for submission to the Local Government Minister'.⁴³

An application to sub-divide 121 acres in North Armidale into 400 residential blocks was received by council in May 1965. It was the biggest sub-division application and in the area was zoned non-urban in the interim town plan. Named Delroy, the area was bounded by Niagara, Erskine and Markham Streets. A further large subdivision proposal was presented to council in March 1966. It involved the development of 114 building blocks in North Armidale bounded by Chestnut Avenue, Gordon Street and Filtration Plant Road. It was approved in principle in April. At the same time the development committee decided that building block on the fringes of the city should have a minimum frontage of 75 feet and an area of 8250 square feet. The present building block in Armidale was a 50 foot frontage and an area of 6600 square feet.

Council's development committee considered a preliminary interim development plan submitted by the S.P.A. in February 1967. City engineer, K.O. Gentle recommended 'that the Town Plan be prepared by consultant town planners'.⁴⁴ Aldermen asked the authority why Armidale still had only an interim Town Plan in June after two and half years. The issue of zoning change had arisen from council's approval of a motel project near Stephen's Bridge in Marsh Street on land zoned open space in the town plan.

Ald. P. Poggioli tabled a notice of motion in August 1967 concerning council's policy on applications for building on land zoned open space. He was concerned about the number of applications being made. To that stage, procedure involved rejection of development applications by council but when applicants appealed to the S.P.A., council offered no objection. Such objections were raised by the

⁴² *Armidale Express*, 25 March 1964, p.4.

⁴³ *Armidale Express*, 20 April 1964, p.5.

⁴⁴ *Armidale Express*, 3 February 1967, p.3.

Armidale I.B.C. In September council agreed to reject applications for buildings on open space and announced its intention to oppose future appeals to the S.P.A.

An Interim Development Order was gazetted on 26 January 1968 so that some measure of control could be established over development. This effectively controlled development in an orderly manner and allowed council to require water and sewerage mains prior to the subdivision being approved. Cliff Wright of Cliff Wright Motors applied to build a motor showroom and workshop on the Dumaresq creeklands. The area was open space on the town plan and council rejected the proposal but took action in August 1968 to support the appeal on the casting vote of the mayor Ald. Piddington. Wright appealed to the S.P.A. and council supported the appeal 'in view of the shortages of the general business area in the centre of Armidale'.⁴⁵ The S.P.A. rejected the proposal in March 1969.

In his 1969 annual report Mayor Failes indicated that the town plan was finalised and it was submitted to the State Planning Authority in 1970. In June council rejected a request by eleven Armidale residents for the draft town plan to be recalled from the S.P.A. to provide for parkways along the proposed Dumaresq Creek greenbelt. The parkways were proposed as roads to link the parks in Faulkner and Dangar Streets and the University with parks and playing fields along the creek.

In commenting on the new town plan which provided for more industrial land to the west of Armidale's residential area, Peter Metcalfe a lecturer in Science at Armidale Teacher's College, said 'one of the first things to be done should be to ensure that no more pollution-causing industries go west of the city'.⁴⁶ Council formed an environmental committee in February 1972 to comment on the location of industry in the city. Apart from council representatives, Professor J. Burton, head of the U.N.E. School of Natural Resources and P. Metcalfe were appointed to the committee.

A Sydney firm of consultants, Edwards Madigan Torzillo and Briggs Pty. Ltd. was appointed by council in February 1972 to revise the Armidale draft town plan. It was asked to define areas for flat zoning; prepare a residential flat code; define areas for residential and industrial development; comment on traffic movement and advise on open space areas. In 1972 the State Planning Authority rejected council's plan to develop an industrial park on the waste water treatment works site. That October, council announced its intention to meet with Dumaresq Shire, the chief opponent of the plan and the local member and Minister for Public Works, Davis Hughes.

In March 1976 council advertised for the first head of council's newly created town planning committee. Following the appointment, town planning was to be separated from the City Engineer's Department. This department was to consist of

⁴⁵ *Armidale Express*, 14 March 1969, p.1.

⁴⁶ *Armidale Express*, 24 August 1970, p.1.

two other staff, one technical and one administrative. At that stage the city was under the control of an Interim Development Order. Anthony Towers, the first appointment to the position of town planner in charge of the new department, was appointed in June 1976 and commenced duties on 3 August. He was formerly employed by the State Planning Authority and the Nowra Shoalhaven Shire.

The second biggest subdivision ever to come before council was discussed in July 1976. The subdivision created ninety residential allotments on the northern side of Gordon Street between Chestnut Avenue and Arundel Avenue.

The removal of trees by a developer in Acacia Industrial Park without council's knowledge, led to a recommendation in November 1976 by the town planner, Tony Towers that a tree preservation order be imposed within the city boundaries. Council deferred the order until 1977 but in January council over ruled his recommendation. That month, council 'again deferred consideration of a review of its open space and parkland contribution required from subdividers and flat developers'.⁴⁷

All the town planning staff resigned in 1981 and the work was 'carried out by the city engineer, city health and building surveyor and town clerk by a joint management effort'.⁴⁸ Frank C. Duffy, the national vice-president of the Royal Australian Planning Institute for the past two years, took up duties as town planner at Armidale in July 1982.

Council resolved on 8 October 1984 to carry out a City Urban Review and it was included as part of the 1986 budget. A report written by council's planning consultants Cameron McNamara, entitled *City of Armidale Strategic Plan 2001* set down broad principle strategies for the long term growth of Armidale. It was adopted by council in 1985.

In early 1985 council voted to amalgamate planning and engineering functions as part of one department.

The new comprehensive plan which superseded the Interim Development Control Plan No. 2 was formally gazetted on 5 August 1988. The plan provided a more flexible set of planning controls for the city and identified key issues such as land use zoning and their objectives designed to encourage development while also providing for environment protection and enhancement including a tree preservation order. Most of the study was completed by Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey in conjunction with council's town planning staff.

The R.A.P.I. Award for Excellence in Planning for 1991 was awarded to council 'for its initiative in introducing the Heritage awards, Town Planning Policy

⁴⁷ *Armidale Express*, 26 January 1977, p.11.

⁴⁸ Armidale City Council, *City of Armidale*, 1981 Annual report.

Subscription Service, Development Control 1991, Heritage Study and Town Planning Procedures Manual'.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Armidale City Council, Annual Report and Community Directory, 1991/1992, p. 27.