City of Adelaide

Oral History (Extension) Project 2011/2012

OH 114

Interview with

Councillor Michael Llewellyn-Smith

Former City Planner and

Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer

Conducted by Madeleine Regan

9 March 2012

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*A timed summary provides an outline of the content of an Oral History interview, and keywords that make it possible to navigate the recording of the interview.

The City of Adelaide Oral History Project

As part of its concern to preserve evidence of Adelaide's past, the Adelaide City Council established an Oral History Project in 1984 to conduct recorded interviews with persons who had made a notable contribution to the City of Adelaide. This included former Lord Mayors, Councillors and long serving former Corporation staff, as well as long-time City residents, business and community identities.

The project coincided with the lead up to the State's 150 Jubilee in 1986, the national Bicentennial in 1988, and the Corporation's own 150th birthday celebrations in 1990.

The Oral History Project concluded in 2000, but was revived in 2011 at the time of the State's 175th celebrations in order to capture the experiences and memories of more people closely associated with the City. This interview forms part of what is known as the Oral History (Extension) Project.

The oral history interviews provide a record of the City and its Council's past that complements the historic documents held by the City Archives.

Biographical note

Michael Llewellyn-Smith was born in South Wales on 28 November 1942. His father was a Methodist Minister who had three-year appointments at different churches before the family moved to London when Michael was 14 years. After secondary school he studied Architecture at Cambridge, and opted to spend a year in the office of Sir Roy Grounds in Melbourne as part of his practicum year. His interest in Town Planning developed in his first job in a private firm in a London Borough, and he experienced the significance of development control. After winning a Commonwealth Scholarship in 1970, he studied a Masters Degree at Sydney University, where he also lectured in first year Architecture. His thesis on pedestrian movement in Sydney provided a foundation for his work on the City of Sydney Strategic Plan. He was appointed as Chief Planning Officer then Deputy City Planner with the City of Sydney Council, and worked closely with George Clarke, the Planner who developed the City of Adelaide Planning Study 1973 - 1974.

Michael was appointed as the first City Planner in the Adelaide City Council, 1974 – 1982, and during this time worked closely with the Government on planning and development issues for the City of Adelaide, and was a Commissioner on the City of Adelaide Planning Commission 1977 – 1982. Michael was subsequently appointed as Town Clerk/City Manager 1982 – 1994. After his resignation he took on other roles in local government, worked in his own consultancy and was City Manager at the Prospect Council 1995 - 2002. He was Deputy Presiding Member the State Government Development Assessment Commission 1998 - 2001, and the Presiding Member of the Major Developments Panel and Development Assessment Commission 2001 – 2008. In 2010 he completed a PhD and his thesis focused on planning from 1972 – 1993 in the context of City/State relations in the City of Adelaide. In 2010 Michael was elected Area Councillor in the Adelaide City Council.

In this interview Michael describes early family life; study and opportunities to gain work experience in Australia as part of his degree; his working life in London and Sydney; appointment as the first City Planner in the Adelaide City Council; and the steps involved in the implementation of the first City of Adelaide Plan. He explains the development and benefits of City/State relationships and the significance of strategic planning in the Council. Michael provides details about issues related to planning in Adelaide: the vision of Colonel William Light; the Park Lands; and the need to balance business and residential populations and activities in the City. Michael reflects on issues that were significant for his roles as both City Planner and Town Clerk/City Manager during the 1970s, ‘80s and early ‘90s. These include: initiatives to increase the number of people living in the City including public housing accommodation; heritage and development debates; leadership of the Lord Mayors under whom he served and Government personnel; the profile of Council in the community. He outlines his achievements in the context of the Adelaide City Council; his working life post the Adelaide City Council; his PhD; changes in the City; his current role as Area Councillor; and his close relationship to the City of Adelaide.

Photographs

Michael, with his parents, c1952/1953

Town Clerk, January 1982

Area Councillor, 2010

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL LLEWELLYN-SMITH
RECORDED BY MADELEINE REGAN

in the Adelaide City Council, Adelaide
on Friday 9th March 2012

Transcript of first interview (9 March 2012)

Oral Historian (OH): Michael, thank you very much for agreeing to this interview, and also for agreeing to the copyright conditions. We're going to start with a bit of an overview of your background. Could you give me your full name and date of birth?

Michael Llewellyn-Smith (ML-S): Michael John Llewellyn-Smith – 28 November 1942.

OH: And where were you born?

ML-S: I was born within a stone's throw of Tintern Abbey in Monmouth, South Wales.

OH: And your name, were you given your name for any significance in your family?

ML-S: Not that I'm aware of actually, no, no I don't think so.

OH: And what were your parents'names?

ML-S: My father was Raymond, and my mother was Nesta.

OH: And can you give me just a little bit of background about your parents?

ML-S: My father was from a long line of Welsh Methodist Ministers, born and brought up in South Wales themselves. My mother is also from a long line of Welsh farmers actually from mid-Wales, and they met in a place called Bridgend in South Wales, and lived there until my father got moved to Tintern where I was born.

OH: And did you grow up entirely in Wales?

ML-S: Until I was about 14 or so, but we did move around because the Methodist Ministers basically had a three-year time at a particular church, and so we did spend time, I think I was in Tintern for about 18 months. So I really don't remember Tintern at all, but the next posting was to Tenby and I do remember Tenby. My first memories are actually the bonfires on Tenby beach at the cessation of the war. And after Tenby spent time in Cardiff and

Neath, and I was at Neath Grammar School, and then went to school in London when my father got transferred to London.

OH: And what was that experience like of moving to a very large city?

ML-S: It was really quite traumatic in lots of ways. I'm an only child but I have lots of first cousins, and growing up in Wales really felt like a close extended family. And so, going to London with quite a different network, both family and indeed even in the church connections, and going to an English public school was quite a shock to my system at that age. It was very different.

OH: And in terms of influences in your family as you grew up, who would have been the major influences?

ML-S: Certainly my father in terms of the sort of values which I inherited, just his whole approach to how he was bringing me up I suppose, was really important, and so he'd certainly be the most important influence.

OH: And what were those values?

ML-S: Well certainly the importance of family I think, being true to yourself, working hard, the importance of education. They were really quite important factors in the way in which I approached life.

OH: What kinds of organisations were your family involved with? I suppose the church?

ML-S: Well, I was just thinking, outside of that I think very little to be honest. I mean it really was, although wives of Ministers didn't get paid, there was an expectation that my mother sort of ran the Housewives' Guild and various Sunday School teachings, so church was really a fulltime situation for both my parents, and although my father used to try and take Mondays off to relax, we did spend time on Saturdays going to sporting events or the cinemas, but Sunday was clearly a really heavy day for him – morning service, Sunday afternoon school, evening service – so Sundays were a full day. But he did make the effort to try and get out on Saturdays, particularly when I was at school in London because a Public school in London, included Saturdays, so school on Saturday morning but then sport Saturday afternoon. He would certainly, if we were playing at home, either cricket or rugby, he'd try and get along and watch that, which I appreciated, and on other weekends we would actually go and follow the Glamorgan, Cricket County team, quite often Cardiff, Neath, Swansea, so we'd travel around and watch cricket on Saturdays.

OH: In terms of your education, by the time you went to London you were in secondary school, and what kind of aspirations would you have had as a school student?

ML-S: I suppose going to school in London was quite different from the grammar school in Neath. But I really wasn't thinking much longer term and my father, although he'd been trained in a Methodist College, there was no university background in my family otherwise, so there was no level of expectation about going to university initially. But I think as soon as that sort of emerged

in the English public school that there was certainly an expectation that the senior levels of the school would be going on to university. In quite a few cases, Oxbridge was the goal, so that became not so much embedded but certainly an aspiration as I got older, that was a possibility.

OH: What kind of specialisation were you studying by the time you were towards finishing school?

ML-S: Initially I was very much involved in Maths/Science sort of subjects, and I actually had a total of about ten O Levels of various sorts, but my A Level subjects initially were Double Maths, Physics, and then surprisingly Art, and the reason for that was I decided after a work study example through an engineering firm, that I really wasn't sure I wanted to be an engineer. I'd always done some drawings privately and I liked drawing as a hobby almost, but decided that engineering may not have been the right calling, and so I looked at – we had a very good Careers Master at school – so I talked to him after coming back from this engineering workshop type experience, and he said: *Well perhaps you ought to think about Architecture because that has a combination of your strong scientific mathematical skills but also you do Art.* And so I took that seriously and then actually started, I hadn't done it as an O Level, but I immediately started doing it as another A Level, so I actually ended up with four A Levels, which was a bit unusual, people usually had three. So I had the Double Maths because I'd been in that stream, but was able to add on Art, which gave me a good basis to then apply as an Architecture student at Cambridge.

OH: How old were you when you went to Cambridge?

ML-S: I was 19. I was quite old, well older than usual, because I took time off after school. I was awarded a Rhodes Travel Scholarship to go to Canada, and so I spent time in Canada. That was really interesting actually because there was a group of us who all had the scholarships, but you had fixed times and places in Canada, so we all travelled together from Britain to Quebec. And so we had the first function together in Quebec, but then you planned your own itinerary in terms of what you were going to study at university, and the majority were going to Oxbridge and you know were basically School Captains from English public schools throughout the UK. So you decided a lot on your own, where to go and what to see, but then there were also fixed times during the period you were away when you met up again as a group, like we had a reception at Parliament House in Ottawa, and there were civic functions in Toronto and Vancouver, so you had to plan your itinerary around some fixed times, but otherwise you were on your own, so I had a really interesting time travelling in Canada, primarily visiting architects' offices, because I knew I was going to study in Architecture.

OH: An interesting kind of period for a young man?

ML-S: It was. It wasn't the first time I'd been overseas, I'd done some travelling in Europe during school holidays, but it was probably the first time I'd had the opportunity of travelling in North America, and certainly seeing a very different style of architecture in those Canadian cities.

OH: So you began Architecture at Cambridge, and what was the kind of set-up there in terms of studying?

ML-S: Cambridge is a college system. There were 25 of us in the first year of Architecture, so we're now talking about 1962, but I got accepted at Pembroke College, so there was a close group of friends. There was only one other fellow from Pembroke reading Architecture, so two of us from the same college in the school, but I got friendly with a range of people and am still in touch with a lot of them today. We actually became a very close-knit year. We had a really interesting Studio Master called Peter Eisenman, who was at the time doing a PhD himself, who went on to be quite a famous North American architect, and he's still in fact a Visiting Professor at Yale, and that group of architects has regular reunions back in Cambridge. Unfortunately two of our number have passed away, so there are still 23 of us and regular reunions, there's quite often 20 or so with our partners turn up for those reunions, which is great.

OH: What was the influence in the study of Architecture at that time through your class?

ML-S: I think actually the most important thing that I realised, which is perhaps why I went on to Town Planning later, it's not just the individual buildings which is what architects were trained to look at, but the context within which that building sits, and the impact to the sort of broader community, so I got quite interested in the spaces between buildings, as well as the actual design of individual buildings, and indeed the whole question of the public realm, how people sort of in the streets related to buildings. Although I did qualify, I mean I worked all the way through and qualified as an architect, but that had started me thinking about the broader context of buildings in space, and that I think is what led me into Town Planning.

OH: And, Michael, I understand that you had a year as part of that whole study, where you did something different?

ML-S: Yes. The professor, Leslie Martin, was very keen on the students taking a year off between Years 4 and 5, so the architectural program to qualify was basically a total of seven years, of which five were at Cambridge and two were in practice. But he had the view that you got your undergraduate degree after three years, and then you had a two-year graduate program, but rather than going Years 4 and 5 one after the other, he really encouraged people to take a year off between Years 4 and 5. And because of the length of the long vacation it effectively gave you a 16-month break, and his argument about that was to give you a much better appreciation in your final academic year, of the realities of building, so by spending a year in an architect's office, that provided that. And this was the mid '60s, it was actually quite difficult to get a job in Britain, and so quite a lot of my year went overseas.

But the Institute of British Architects were quite rigid about this end it had to be a Commonwealth country to be able to count towards your qualification, which always struck me as a bit odd. Some of my colleagues said: *Well, too*

bad, we won't worry, and went to some really good Scandinavian architects, or indeed some American architects to work. But I was a bit more practical I suppose in the sense: *Well, if I've got to do it, I may as well go somewhere that is going to be counted,* so the options were really Canada, New Zealand, Australia, or possibly India. Having been to Canada I didn't want to go back there.

Well it would have been interesting but I had seen Canada, so I thought about New Zealand or Australia, I didn't fancy India. And because I had a friend initially, who was a PhD student at Cambridge, from Sydney, I talked to him about the possibility of work in Australia, and he gave me several firms to write to, including Jorn Utzon who was then, and still, the architect of the Opera House, and I wrote off, somewhat naively I suppose, to about 12 firms and said: *Please employ me for a year.* And most of them wrote back and said *Sorry.* One in Sydney did say: *Well, if you come for an interview we'll probably give you a job,* which I thought was rather strange, coming 12,000 miles and no guarantee of a job, but one in Melbourne, a guy called *Sir Roy Grounds* offered me a job for 12 months, so I decided I'd take that, so I booked myself a round-the-world ship passage.

I went to Sydney from Southampton via the Suez Canal – one of the last boats through the Suez Canal before it got closed – got off the boat in Perth, took the train from Perth to Adelaide, had a holiday in Adelaide, and then arrived in Melbourne, spent the year working in Melbourne, but also managed to visit Sydney quite a lot, including to the Opera House then under construction and up to Brisbane. I actually saw a lot of Australia during that year, as well as working in Melbourne, but did go back to Britain and finished my qualification, and worked in London.

OH: When you were in Melbourne you were working on some very interesting parts of projects, weren't you?

ML-S: The National Gallery was under construction, the famous building on St Kilda Road, mainly bluestone, and there's an Art Gallery at the back of the school, which I did some work on, as well as some residential projects in Collins Street, and some lecture theatres at LaTrobe University, but I suppose one of the interesting things was to do the working drawings for the Victorian Coat of Arms, which sits above the major archway entrance to the National Gallery, which is still there. So every time I go to Melbourne I still see my work put into practice in the Victorian Coat of Arms.

OH: That's great! So you went back to complete your study in Cambridge?

ML-S: Yes, I did the final year at Cambridge, and then I had a year working in London as an architect, but during that year I had already decided that I did want to get into Town Planning, for a variety of reasons, one of which was actually realising how that system did operate in practice, and so I enrolled part-time at London University, but that was actually quite a hard road to hoe because having been used to studying fulltime, to then try and practice as an architect during the day and study at night, as well as trying to enjoy living in

London was quite hard, and so … Well I started but was then, I suppose, looking for other ways in which I might get qualified as a Town Planner.

OH: Michael, I remember you telling me that you had a memorable encounter with the world of planning when you were working A Borough in London. Can you tell a little about that?

ML-S: Yes, I was working for a private firm in London, and they were architects for the London Borough of Barnet Education Department, so we were designing a comprehensive school, and that school was basically on the old Hendon Aerodrome, so it was really a large flat site, so there were no sort of design constraints really. But the principals of the firm said: *Well you actually need to go along and talk to the local planning authority about getting approval for this building.* And that was something which I really hadn't figured out. I mean, we weren't taught that in Architecture that you actually dealt within the scheme of developmental control which is, I think, still a failure of architectural schools that you don't really understand the legal framework within which you actually operate. It's probably changed now but in those days it was really something that people weren't taught about at all.

So I had this model made of the school, which we had and I was leading the team, but we all decided that we would basically go and talk to the local planner about the scheme. So we had this model made, had all the drawings done, we turned up to this meeting with the local planner from the Borough of Barnet wearing its Planning Authority hat, as opposed to the other side of the Borough of Barnet which was the client through the Education Department.

So we sat down and I just ran through: *Well, here's the model and this is the school, and this is how we're going to progress.* And the person sitting the other side was a young female planner, and she was quite critical of various things. And I thought: *Mm …* and really just asking naively: *What are your design skills, where were you trained?* And she said: *Well, I'm actually a geographer planner but I write the reports on planning applications, and usually the Council accepts my recommendations.* And I found that really strange, I'd have to say, that this person who had no training as an architect, was in a position to affect the detailed design of a building which an architect had designed. And if that's how the system worked, I decided: *If you can't beat them, join them.* So that was actually one of the reasons why I enrolled in a Planning course at London University, to actually see what planning was all about from that perspective, as well as having an interest in the broader context. But the whole question of development control being exercised by people aren't trained in design - it's still one of the issues I have today actually, and I still find it really quite annoying that – and I'm sure other architects do – architects can turn up and have their building discussed in a design sense, by people are not trained in architecture.

OH: And, Michael, in terms of the next steps in your professional trajectory, what were they?

ML-S: Well, I think I was fortunate to be offered a Commonwealth Scholarship to Sydney University. It was actually to teach Architecture, and it was a two-year contract funded entirely by the Australian Government. But the advantage I saw in that was that as a member of the faculty I could in fact undertake a Masters Degree in Town Planning, and what was nice about it was the fact that the university gave me credits for the work I had already done at London University on the part-time course, so it was actually a reasonable way to achieve a formal qualification in City Planning.

At the end of the two years I was supposed to go back to Britain with a Masters Degree in Planning. I also taught as a tutor at Wesley College. They had residential colleges at Sydney University, and so I was really quite busy. I'd been a tutor in the college, I was a first year lecturer in Architecture. I'd also done some work for the consultants working on the first City of Sydney Strategic Plan, so it was a fairly busy two years.

OH: And what years were those?

ML-S: I came out in January 1970 and was supposed to go back to Britain in December 1971.

OH: And what happened?

ML-S: As I said, it was a residential college, and Wesley College was co-ed, and it also had some family flats as well as tutors' flats, so I had a tutor's flat in the college, and it was still based on Oxbridge lines actually. So there was a senior common room, and all the members of the senior common room would put on their gowns and parade through the dining hall and sit at high table. So it was very familiar territory to me, although sitting on high table as opposed to a student was different.

In the second year, so this was January 1971, this American professor and his wife and two daughters arrived, and he was on a year's sabbatical from Tulane University in New Orleans, where he was a professor of Chemical Engineering, and I'd already got to know him and his wife through the senior common room quite well. And I think it was about April, his elder daughter had finished at Bryn Mawr and was going to go to Berkeley to do a PhD. So her father had persuaded her to take a year off and come to Australia with him. The younger daughter was at school so she'd just taken a year off school and was enrolled in one of the schools in Sydney. And so I think it was April, maybe a bit later, I started going out with the elder daughter, and we fell in love and got engaged in September, and married on 1 December, and the Professor, his wife and one daughter went home the day after the wedding, so it was a fairly interesting and fairy tale experience in that sense.

OH: How old were you when you and Ida married?

ML-S: I was 28 and she was 23, and we actually celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary last December.

OH: Just to complete the family story, you have children?

ML-S: I have a son and a daughter. My son also married an American, which is interesting, and now has a daughter himself, so I have one grandchild. He lives in London, but he also went to, well graduated as a civil engineer at Adelaide University, and worked for Wallbridge and Gilbert, so he's a qualified engineer, but then he got a scholarship to Cambridge to do a postgraduate course in real estate, or Land Economy technically. He got interested in real estate as a result of that, and works for a firm in London.

My daughter also went to Cambridge to do graduate degree. She was at UniSA, we thought she was going to be a perpetual student. She's actually got three undergraduate degrees, and then went to Cambridge to do her Masters, which she got, so I'm very proud that both my children went to my old college, which is fairly unusual but very nice. But she now lives in New York, so she works in New York.

OH: So far-flung children?

ML-S: Yeah, it's an excuse to travel. Skype is terrific actually, we keep in touch through Skype regularly. We do use it as an excuse to travel to the UK and USA.

OH: Michael, going back to your Masters when you were in Sydney, what did you do your Masters on?

ML-S: The topic was Pedestrian Movement in the City, and that came about because the work I'd done through this consulting firm on the First Strategic Plan, was based on the centre of Sydney could become more pedestrian friendly. It was one of the early studies about that, so my thesis was about pedestrian movement in the City of Sydney.

OH: I understand that you were working as a planner in Sydney, a well-known professional body?

ML-S: George Clarke was the Project Director, and the consortium which he put together for the Sydney plan was based on his own company called Urban Systems, but also an architectural firm, McConnell, Smith and Johnson, and a management firm of W D Scott. I was actually working for McConnell, Smith and Johnson, because of the architectural connection, and in fact that came about because the Professor of Architecture at Sydney was Peter Johnson, who was also one of the principals for that private company, so it was the great tradition of practising architects being academics as well, so I was part of that mould, which I'd followed from Cambridge, so you just don't get academic architects, you have practitioners who are academics, and so he was very helpful in, as well as through the teaching Architecture which I was doing, to actually enable me to work for his private company as part of this consulting group, working on the first Sydney Plan, so my thesis was very relevant to some of the pedestrian policies which emerged out of the City of Sydney Strategic Plan, and this was 1971.

OH: How was the concept of strategic planning viewed at that time?

ML-S: That was certainly cutting edge in Australia. It had certainly emerged in America, particularly San Francisco was a good example, where they had an early City Planner who had recognised the importance of what was viewed at strategic planning, as opposed to the traditional town planning model, which effectively is coloured zones on a map. George Clarke had been trained in America, so he was familiar with this approach, or new approach to city planning, so the first City of Sydney Strategic planning really was cutting edge stuff at that time in Australia, and so I found that very exciting actually, and although I was still studying City Planning myself, being part of that consortium, working in the City of Sydney, was certainly a really interesting thing to be doing at the time.

OH: Michael, the next job that you went to was quite an interesting position?

ML-S: Yes, that relates to us getting married, and what we decided to do was have at least a year living in Sydney, it was neutral territory in a sense, rather than me going back to the UK with an American wife, or her going to the States with a Welsh husband, we thought we'd stay in Sydney for a year. So I had managed to get authority from the Commonwealth Government to stay for a year, and I had a job lined up with the State Planning Authority, so it was just a 12-month approval in that sense. But then as a result of George Clarke's Planning Study, one of the recommendations was to initially have a separate City Planning Department – planning was pretty much controlled by the engineers in those days in most capital cities in Australia – but the Sydney City Council decided what they would do is set up a new Strategic Planning Branch, and graft that onto a Building Surveying component.

So there was going to be a new Department of Planning and Building, but within that there'd be a City Planner, a Deputy City Planner, then a range of Chief Officers, and there'd be a new position of Chief Officer for Strategic Planning, and that was advertised quite extensively. Really, sort of tongue in cheek, I put in an application for that, although I didn't take it seriously, and I'd literally just finished my Masters Degree and didn't expect anything to come of it. We actually went to Fiji on our honeymoon, and we came back to discover a telegram saying – we got back on a Friday I recall. And the telegram said: *Please come in to the Town Hall on Saturday morning for an interview of this position. S*o that was a bit of a shock to the system.

Anyway, I went in and had the interview on the Saturday morning, didn't think anymore about it until the Monday morning when one of my colleagues, who I was going to work with at the State Planning Authority, rang up and said he's got an application for Pitt Street in Sydney and could I approve it. And I thought: *What on earth are you talking about?* And he said: *Don't you know?* I said: *Don't I know what?* He said: *Well, you look at column 8 in the Sydney Morning Herald, the Sydney Council is going to appoint you as the new Chief Planning Officer.* That was an interesting way to discover. What happened apparently is that the interviewing committee on the Saturday morning decided to offer me the job. But to get it to the Council on the Monday night they had to put out an agenda and the *Sydney Morning Herald*

that picked that up, so they were aware of what was being recommended, so that was quite a shock to the system.

So my wife and I decided that if I was going to take up that job, which was a significant position obviously, that we needed to think about staying in Sydney for a longer period than just the 12 months.

OH: And what did Ida do then at that time?

ML-S: It was very fortunate that she was able to transfer her PhD from Berkeley to Sydney University, so she actually was doing the same research. I mean she'd already taken a year off and was working in a laboratory, so she knew some people in the field. But it had just been as a 12-month fill in for her, but given that we decided to stay, so she was able to work in Sydney for three years doing her PhD.

OH: And Michael, what was it like taking on a role like that, Chief Planning Officer in the City of Sydney?

ML-S: In a sense it was a bit of a shock to the system, but I think the Methodist background makes you quite organised, so I mean I approached it … I mean I think the main advantage was I knew three of the key Aldermen because of working on the Strategic Plan, so it wasn't sort of completely unfamiliar territory, and the main task was actually to convert that Strategic Plan into sort of reality on the ground, so I had a good background in terms of what was being intended. I mean, there was some staff I inherited, but I also had a reasonable budget to bring on board some new people. So, the advantage of that was, I had a say over the sorts of people I wanted to engage to form this new Planning Branch, and developed a really good working relationship with three of the City Aldermen, particularly one of the Aldermen called Andrew Briger**,** who by chance was also an architect, so we related in that sense. Leo Port was an engineer, so also relevant in that field. And the third, was really interesting, Nicholas Shehadie, who was a businessman but also the former Captain of the Wallabies, so we had big arguments about rugby because he claims that one of the tries that Australia scored at Cardiff Arms Park against Wales, was disallowed, and so Wales won. So we had an interesting ongoing debate about the value of Wales and Australia playing rugby. But he became a really good friend, and later became Lord Mayor of Sydney at the critical time when Woolloomooloo was an issue, and so it was a really good relationship I had with Sir Nicholas.

OH: It seems like that the City of Sydney was quite progressive at that time?

ML-S: It was, I mean that Strategic Plan, as I say was leading edge, and a lot of people realised that something different had to happen to Sydney, although one of the other problems at the time was that the State Government still had the reins in terms of the statutory planning process, so a lot of the Council had this new job commitment which set a different direction for Sydney, and some different policies, and thought it would be a good thing to do. At the end of the day, the State could control what did happen in a real sense, on the ground, and so that was always going to be an issue, but we did do some

really innovative things. Paddington is a good example, where roads were closed and Heritage listing came in. A scheme of Transferable Floor Areas was introduced to help retain heritage buildings, so it was an interesting time in Sydney.

OH: What was the influence of George Clarke at that time?

ML-S: Well George was still around in that his company was then doing quite a number of the Action Projects, which were the physical means in which some of the policies were then going to get converted into things on the ground. So I think George, I must admit, was expecting to get the majority of the work, but the Council and I said: *Well we really ought to split it around a bit more.* So although he was the principal consultant on a number of the Action projects, we did engage other Planning firms and architectural firms to do some of the other work, so there was a range of people which I had reporting to me. Effectively, all the Action projects were my responsibility, so it was a slightly strange turnaround that rather than me working for George in one sense, as part of his consortium on the Strategic Plan, he was now working for me in terms of some of the Action projects for the City.

OH: It must have been an exciting time with those Action plans being manifested?

ML-S: It was, Sydney in those days was really alive. I mean because we were going to stay longer than we thought, we bought an apartment in Elizabeth Bay, which was two minutes walk from Kings Cross, which was still, even in those early days, a 24-hour operation, and if you ran out of milk in the middle of the night, you could go and buy something at Kings Cross. We had fantastic views of the Harbour, I could walk to work in the City. My office was actually in the Queen Victoria Building. It was still then owned by the Council, and it was in a pretty rundown state before they decided to renovate it, so I actually have fond memories of the Queen Victoria Building as an office building. And I could walk there from, I used to walk down, well up to King Cross, through Woolloomooloo, and up through the domain to the Queen Victoria Building, so it was a very pleasant existence and exciting times.

But one of the most interesting Action projects was then Woolloomooloo. What had happened in Woolloomooloo is the State Planning Authority had produced a plan, really as an extension of the CBD, but no one had really thought the scale of operation would ever work, and there were about 4,500-5,000 residents. At a similar time there'd been a major proposal to completely redevelop the Rocks area, the whole of the Rocks was going to be demolished and five office blocks were going to be built on the Rocks, and people had begun to question that, that that was not the way cities ought to develop. So Residents' Action Groups had got formed, and the builders' labourers, particularly a fellow called Jack Mundey got involved, and effectively introduced a black ban, and in Woolloomooloo the same thing started to happen. The Residents' Action Group started saying: *Well, hang on, we don't want all these office buildings.* And indeed, we'd done some initial work through George Clarke, that basically said: *We should query this, we don't*

think it's the right thing for Woolloomooloo to be, in terms of more office buildings and no people living in close to the City. But that was the statutory scheme, so one of the interesting issues was how we were going to bring about a change, and it was certainly aided by Jack Mundey and the black bans, which eventually got renamed as green bans, and the developers I think, particularly one who was smart enough to figure out that although he put together all these sites and paid a lot of money, that with the black bans in place it was never going to get built. And so there had to be a different solution, and so we were engaged by the Council to look at alternatives to Woolloomooloo.

It was interesting because at the time Whitlam had come to power in 1972, and Tom Uren was part of the policy platform that said they would take an interest in inner cities, which was unusual for the Federal Government up to that time. The Commonwealth Government had always viewed cities as the State's responsibilities, and there was no Federal interest, but Whitlam, and particularly Uren, had an interest in cities and had made promises to look at Woolloomooloo, so we got them on board in terms of looking at the issue.

So, the end result was actually the first three-level government arrangement, between the City Council, State Government, and Federal Government, to bring about change to Woolloomooloo. And effectively, that was the Commonwealth Government putting in a lot of money to the State, and the Housing Commission of the State was the agent, which then compulsorily acquired all this land that some developers sold, but others were resisting, but it became a compulsory situation, and the zoning got changed to primarily residential, which was how Woolloomooloo got saved as primarily a residential suburb as opposed to being completely obliterated by office buildings, so I felt quite some credit for that.

I became the Chair of the Woolloomooloo Steering Committee, which involved the representatives for the three levels of government. It got signed off by, initially, Nicholas Shehadie, who was then Lord Mayor, and the Planning Minister, Sir John Fuller, who was New South Wales Minister, and Tom Uren from the Federal Government. So it was a really interesting time to have meetings between those three individuals themselves with all the staffs, but we managed to work our way through all that, so it was a fascinating time.

OH: And Michael, what sort of skills were you acquiring at that time?

ML-S: I suppose the recognition primarily that planning is a political process although I'd sort of trained in all the technical stuff and could understand that. At the end of the day, all those decisions actually went through a political mill, and figuring out how to use the politics in terms of that process certainly stood me in good stead I think.

OH: How long did you stay in that role?

ML-S: From Chief Planning Officer I actually became Deputy City Planner quite quickly, because the Deputy City Planner got headhunted off to the Land & Environment Court. So at quite an early age, I was the Deputy City Planner of Sydney and saw that as being quite a longer term role. But then what happened was George Clarke, based on his work in Sydney, got the job in Adelaide to do a similar sort of strategic planning approach for the City of Adelaide.

As a result of that, there was a strong recommendation from George to set up a new City Planning Department in Adelaide. Adelaide had a few Planners but they were all part of the Engineer's Department. And so one of the recommendations out of the study was for the City Council of Adelaide to establish a whole new Department of City Planning with a new position of City Planner. And George said to me that I really ought to apply for that, that that would be an ideal appointment for me in terms of having been the Deputy City Planner of another city, and given my architectural background, as well as the planning expertise of working through a capital city, and when I was, to say the least reluctant, I mean I didn't think three years initially was going to be long enough to develop some skills in Sydney, and I'd have to say my image of Adelaide was pretty much everything closed at 6 o'clock. And that was based on my time I'd spent during the mid-60s on the way through to Melbourne from Perth. So I really had to be convinced that Adelaide was the place to go to.

But on the other hand, Colonel Light's plan for Adelaide has always been part of the Town Planning courses, a great example of cities within a park, and the site of a capital city relevant to its metropolitan area. So there was some real positives about that, plus the fact that George's plan really did seem quite a step forward from the Strategic Plan in Sydney, because the lesson he learned from Sydney was the difference between what the Council could do itself and what the State needed to control. And what happened in Adelaide was a really good working relationship between a reformist Lord Mayor called Bill Hayes and the well-known reformist Premier Don Dunstan, who saw the City as a joint operation between the City and the State, and they were prepared to look at legislation which would be really cutting edge, and give the City some much greater powers than any other city would have had, and so there was a real challenge to pick that up and see what could be done with that. So I was persuaded to apply for the Adelaide job, which I'm sure George had a lot of influence behind the scenes, which I got. I was basically tapped on the shoulder and said: *You're it!* [Laughs]

OH: And by this time had you and Ida decided that Australia was your future?

ML-S: Not really. I think we'd certainly seen Sydney as being a place for sort of five years or so. I mean, I'd had two years in Sydney before I got married so another three years being married, but we gave Adelaide, I think, from memory, five or seven years would be a good time to spend in Adelaide career wise, and then I'd think about something other**.** I mean I'd actually also thought seriously about going to Canada. I mean I really had liked Canada

and there were opportunities, and in fact I think I did apply for one position in Toronto, just didn't pursue it, so that was an option. So we arrived in Adelaide, I think, with a timeframe of about five or seven years, and that was in late 1974.

OH: Just on a personal note, what did your parents think of you making your life as it was in Australia?

ML-S: Yes, I think they were, certainly my mother was, as I said I'm an only child, and so the thought of me not going back to Britain and being on the other side of the world with an American wife, I think was rather a shock to them. I mean, obviously they came to terms with it, and we made a conscious choice that we would travel frequently to see them. They had hoped to travel to Australia for a holiday, they'd actually got a holiday booked. Unfortunately my father had to go into hospital for an unexpected operation, and this was way after he'd retired, and I think that really dissuaded him to ever think about making plans again, which was unfortunate.

So my wife and I decided that what we would do is basically take no holiday one year and take a decent bank of time every two years, and do the world trip so that we could go and see both Ida's parents in New Orleans, and my parents who by this time had retired back to Wales, so that our children growing up could see both sets of grandparents, and travel widely. So we actually made a conscious choice to do that, and are still doing it, although I said both our kids … now we're still doing the travelling, which seems a bit unfair, but anyway!

OH: Well, I think it would be good to do that travel.

ML-S: It's a nice experience, yes.

OH: We're looking at your arriving in Adelaide with Ida in 1974?

ML-S: Mm.

OH: And what was that like, your experience of arriving and starting the job?

ML-S: It was quite a shock to start with because Sydney operated, the Council operated on a highly political system, so there was a Civic Reform Party, which these three Aldermen I knew well, were part of it, and it was genuinely non-Party political in the sense that the individuals were there as individuals who formed a group called Civic Reform, but there was a Labor Opposition, but it was a Party system. The advantage of that was that if I could persuade, particularly Andrew Briger and Leo Port to a particular course of action, then I could tell you a month in advance what the Council decision would be, because they would go into Caucus and carry Civic Reform. Then when it went to committee, Civic Reform would have the numbers, and when the committee report went to Council, Civic Reform would have the numbers, so it was a guaranteed process. The disadvantage of that system was that if there was something which I wanted to raise or put on an agenda, if they didn't like it then there was no way it would see the light of day, so I mean there was a downside to that process as well, but I was used to that process.

So I arrived in Adelaide to discover that there were 19 Councillors, who were actually technically a Lord Mayor, six Aldermen, and 12 Councillors, and they were all Independents, there was no Party system, and the process was very much the quality of debate, which is terrific from a democratic point of view, but you never knew which way the Council would vote, literally until the last minute. And in fact, there were some instances where the committee might come to a conclusion and a recommendation to Council, but then in Council other members who may not have been party to that discussion, or indeed people who had changed their minds, could argue strongly in the Council Chamber for a different course of action, and the Council would actually take a different decision. So that made life quite interesting in terms of the process of how that all worked, and so I had to get used to quite a different form of process.

Again, there were some key people involved in Adelaide at the time, and what Dunstan and Hayes had set up was an independent authority called of Adelaide Development Committee, which was Chaired by the Lord Mayor of the day, and there were Council members and three State members, and that was an incredibly powerful committee. The State members were Hugh Stretton, a well-known author and Adelaide academic, who had written a very influential book called *Ideas for Australian Cities,* which certainly had an influence on Dunstan and his thinking about Adelaide; Bob Bakewell who was Head of the Premier's Department and therefore a very senior public servant, and had the ear of Dunstan in that sense; and Newell Platten, who was the Chief Architect and Planner of the Housing Trust. So some very key people, and on the Council's side it was Jim Bowen, who had a background in real estate; John Chappel who was an architect, and more importantly John Roche who had a really good background in real estate development, and understanding of how things worked. And he became Lord Mayor at a critical period in 1975 when we were in active discussions between the City and State, converting George Clarke's Planning Study into the first City Plan. I mean that's really what my key role was to come to Adelaide as the City Planner, was to actually produce for the Council the first City Plan based on George's Planning Study.

OH: Did you attend those meetings, Michael?

ML-S: Yes, I did, and some of my Planning staff as well. It's interesting, the Council would meet during the day and then that group would go off and have dinner in Queltaler House**,** there was a restaurant in the basement, and the six of them and sometimes the Lord Mayor as well, would go and have dinner after the Council meeting. And then the CADC meetings were at 8 o'clock every Monday night in the Colonel Light Room, and a lot of the discussion clearly had already occurred over dinner, but there was a formal meeting, which was in private, it wasn't open to the public.

So I would attend those meetings at 8 o'clock every Monday night, and they had a role of controlling development during the interim development phase,

but also being the, if you like, Steering Committee for the City. That had been in place for the Planning Study, but also on the City Plan. So it was a really a very interesting set of discussions which went on, and there were always drinks in the Lord Mayor's Room afterward, and again a lot of discussion was quite informal, as to where we were going and what we were doing. So I got, from the political point of view, obviously got to know those three Aldermen quite well, as well as some of the other Councillors. But they were the key movers and shakers in terms of how the planning was being dealt with within the City.

OH: And was there a sense that it was a time for change in terms of the planning?

ML-S: Absolutely. I think Hayes had been very far sighted in realising that the way in which the City was developing through what I might call the Engineering model of roads and car parks, was not really in terms of the best way that cities should develop, and Dunstan had certainly been dissuaded of that, partly through Stretton's influence, but I think his own thinking. There'd been a major argument in St Peter's, which was his own backyard in terms of the State Seat, where there'd been proposals for demolishing whole areas, and high-rise buildings being proposed instead, and that had resulted in the formation of the St Peter's Residents' Society, which was the first Residents' Group in South Australia, to actually take that head on. And Dunstan had learnt from that, that planning was much more about actually involving the public upfront, and a much more human scale of development.

One of the worst things on record, one understands how it came about, but the MATS Plan, and they were a typical engineering, American company, where you had clover leaves to solve traffic problems, but they completely overestimated the demand. And so if you look at the plans they produced for Adelaide, there was effectively one of those terrible four-leaf clover intersections at each junction around the Park Lands. Every road leading into the City was going to have a complete freeway design around it, plus, and the worst one of all, I think, was probably the plan to link up North East Road through Margaret Street in North Adelaide, an overpass over Melbourne Street, straightening out the road through the Park Lands, getting rid of the historic Alfred Bridge, by the Zoo, linking up with Frome Road, going all the way through South Adelaide, and then linking up with Glen Osmond Road.

Now that would have had a completely disastrous effect on how the City operated. I mean it was purely a traffic solution to moving traffic through, basically through the City and not in to the City.

OH: And Michael, that plan was already public at the time that you came?

ML-S: Yeah, there'd been quite a reaction against the MATS Plan, and particularly by Stretton. One of his drivers was actually to stop that in the City, and in fact that's exactly what happened. So people would drive down Frome Road, basically six lanes, suddenly it comes to a grinding halt in Carrington Street, and there's houses opposite. People wondered why that happened, and that was because the CADC drew the line in the sand and said … and the Council

had been buying up the land to be able to do that, so there was a lot of land available, and there was a very clear policy decision that South East and South West Adelaide should revert to residential uses, not commercial industrial uses, and Frome Road had to stop and *it did.*

OH: Michael, taking you back to when you first arrived in, what month of 1974 was it?

ML-S: It was late-September.

OH: September?

ML-S: Mm.

OH: So what were the other things that you were observing in terms of planning issues for the Council, at that time?

ML-S: I think the fact that the Council had begun to change in terms of the nature of the Elected Members, and a recognition that the community needed to be involved in the planning process. Now that had started in Sydney but it certainly came to the fore in Adelaide, so George had introduced quite significant community consultation in the Planning Study, and the Council wanted to pursue that, or continue that approach through the first City Plan, so there was certainly a view that we should change direction in terms of not having the whole emphasis on roads and car parks, that it was much more important to look at some urban design issues, and particularly reintroduce residential into the City. That was probably the key factor of that.

Under the State Statutory Zoning, the whole of the square mile within the terraces, could contain commercial, light industrial, other uses, but effectively no residential – residential would only be in North Adelaide. Now, in any town planning scale that's a crazy position to have arrived at, but that was the State Statutory Plan. So George had radically suggested that the whole of the South East and South West of Adelaide should be changed in its zoning. And to bring that about was quite a major task obviously, but that's what the planning study has recommended, so our job was to try and see how we could work through in terms of new statutory control which is what happened, that the way in which the City Plan was formulated, came up with the idea of a core district, frame districts, and then residential districts. And it did reintroduce residential zoning to South East and South West Adelaide, and that caused a lot of strife with some owners who had legitimately bought properties to develop as commercial, or expand automotive. For some reason, a lot of automotive uses emerged under the old scheme, and so you were finding crash repair shops amongst little old cottages, and a lot of petrol stations, and a whole variety of auto users for some reason. I never quite understood why that was the case, but there were a lot of those sorts of uses, which were adversely impacting on a residential environment. So a lot of the Council work was to try and mitigate that and to indeed, through the Housing Trust, buy some of those properties to provide a mix of residential, and that was an interesting statistic which I hadn't realised.

In 1972 when all this started, before my time, there was not one Housing Trust property in the whole of the City, it was all outside the metropolitan area, and the argument was they were set up to develop greenfield sites by Playford, particularly in Elizabeth, so if you had X dollars you could build a house for that amount of money, but in the City, because of the land value, there was no way that the Housing Trust could afford to do that, so one of the early … and Stretton got on the books that there was no reason why the City of Adelaide shouldn't have the same percentage of public housing as metropolitan average, which was about 8%-9% in those days.

So the Trust was unlike any other public housing body, if you look at the Housing Commission flats in Melbourne or Sydney, I mean that's the solution that those public housing came up with, based on the British model really, and some of the American models, but the Trust was much more sophisticated through Hugh Stretton's influence, and indeed through Newell Platten himself, the Architect Planner, that they actually bought up existing cottages and their design of quite major redevelopments was of human scale and of a design quality, and that was the trade-off.

The Council said: *Look, we understand the problem of the value, that the Housing Trust can only develop a certain amount of stock for Y dollars, but if the land value component could be subsided, then we could get a better outcome.* And so the argument was to say *Alright, we will accept some Housing Trust developments which are of a high quality design, but we, the Council, will sell you the land at a subsidised value.* And we were fortunate that the land had been bought for this motorway, effectively, so we did have a lot of land for roads, and that's why there is so much housing, particularly in the South East, of a public nature.

But I defy anybody, and I still think it's one of the achievements, if you just here a visitor and you just drive around, and you're asked to say: *Where's the public housing in Adelaide?* You actually couldn't tell, because there's no high-rise commission-type buildings, a lot of them are still private cottages, and the design of the major redevelopments were of a high quality so that they could easily be a private sector development, but in fact were the Housing Trust. And so that's where Platten was really important, that he was able to use his skills to provide some, for the value of the money which the Trust had in the value of the land which we subsidised, to end up with a scheme which was acceptable. So that's how it was all done.

OH: And that was happening alongside all the processes for the City of Adelaide Plan implementation?

ML-S: Yes, that was in parallel, that started before the first City Plan was actually adopted, which did take some time. It was quite a long, involved effort of negotiation between the City and the State to achieve that.

OH: And we'll talk about that a bit later in the interview. What I was very interested to know about was the infrastructure for supporting your role when

you came to the City Council, because I understand that it was part of a new department, or a new section?

ML-S: Yes. The planners that were engaged were then part of the City Engineer's Department, so as part of this new creation of the role of City Planner, there were funds available to set up a proper City Planning Department, and indeed they'd allocated some space in the Heritage Building, which was an appropriate home, which was the Queen's Chambers at the back of the Town Hall.

So there was a new department established with some funds to bring on board some new staff, so I had the advantage again of picking the majority of staff. I mean, I did inherit some from the Engineer, but they were few in number, and the Council had a budget so that I could actually influence who I brought on board, to set up the new department, and the sort of skills involved. And that was important because, as I mentioned earlier, I was keen about the nature of the joint architectural planning approach. So planners are available from different backgrounds, geographers, economists, etc, but in terms of dealing with buildings, it's really an advantage if you're qualified in both architecture and planning, so one of my sections was entirely staffed by qualified architect planners, which was a big plus for me, and indeed dealing with the Adelaide community.

OH: What did you inherit that might have challenged your progress?

ML-S: Well I suppose the argument that the engineer had lost his ability to be the sort of *quasi* planner, and so there were certainly issues between Mr Bubb and I, and he was still very much of the view that traffic was what was needed, or the easy flow of traffic specifically, but I did support his intent of the car parking stations as a ring around the inner City. What he had in mind was a more pedestrianised central area, but to get to that there was this massive infrastructure of roads, but the idea of central city parking stations was an important one, but it needed to be viewed as short-term parking, not so much as providing for the all-day commuters, so there was a philosophic … I mean, I saw the advantage of them as being if you could have a really cheap sort of first or second hour in these parking stations, then people would use them for the right reasons, and you shouldn't be encouraging all-day parkers to use them. I mean, that's the debate about the public transport. So there was value in the concept, but the way in which it operated, there was some philosophical disagreement. And he still had a lot of influence within the Council, but I think the Council was changing and recognised that while he was a really good engineer, I mean all the quality of our roads and all the engineering advice, was of a high quality, but that didn't translate into planning anymore, that that was the 1950 -1960s type thinking about planning, and that had moved on, and so there needed to be a change in that philosophy.

To be honest I suppose it became a numbers game. I mean that's how Councils work, *Have you got the numbers?* And I suppose by that time the

reformists' side of the Council, starting by Hayes, followed by Clampett and then Roche was Lord Mayor, I could have enough votes to pursue the planning approach to Adelaide, as opposed to an engineering approach. That was an interesting exercise, making sure you had the numbers.

OH: And Michael, what was your relationship to the Town Clerk?

ML-S: Russell Arland was very supportive. I mean I think he recognised the way the political wind was blowing, and obviously it was difficult for him to have to have someone like Hugh Bubb who'd been responsible for a particular function, than having another function, but the way he operated the Management Team was to effectively say: *Look, we'll have our arguments within the Management Team, so if there's disagreements, and if I need to arbitrate I will, but what I don't want is the City Engineer giving one set of advice and the City Planner giving another set of advice to the Elected Members.* So there were some knockdown, dragged out arguments within the Management Team, and other people of influence in that were a guy called Val Ellis who was Director of Parks and Recreation.

OH: What was his name?

ML-S: Val Ellis. In fact, Ellis Park is named after him. He understood also obviously the importance of the Park Lands, but also where the planning system was leading in terms of a much more sort of human pedestrian-scaled operation, rather than cars everywhere. So there were some really interesting debates within the Management Team, but at the end of the day Arland recognised the political reality that the direction the City was taking needed to be quite a different one that it had been up until then, so he was quite supportive of that role which I'd been brought in to play.

OH: And were you directly accountable to him as the Town Clerk?

ML-S: Yeah, all the Heads of Departments reported directly to the Town Clerk. It was quite a large organisation structure, which seemed a bit odd. I think there were 12 or 13 Heads of Departments, all reported directly to the Town Clerk, so it was a large Management Team.

OH: And would it have been a large workforce already at that time?

ML-S: Oh yes, the Council was employing over 1,000 people, yeah.

OH: And in your section, how many were employed?

ML-S: I think I inherited, well I know I inherited three qualified Planners, and I think two admin staff, one technical person, so there were six people transferred across from the then City Engineer's Department, and I think I ended up with a City Planning Department, at the end of a couple of years, of just over 30, from memory, so that was the sort of size of the Planning Department in those days.

OH: What was the position of Heritage at that time when you came in?

ML-S: Yeah. George had recommended …

OH: This is George Clarke?

ML-S: George Clarke. Part of the Planning Study a limited number of buildings to be seen as Heritage, and I forget, he used a particular name and it wasn't Heritage, how to describe them, and so in the Planning Study there were certain buildings listed as being important. At that time Dunstan had also started thinking about State Heritage, mainly because of the Edmund Wright House**.**

OH: And previously the demolition of the South Australian Hotel?

ML-S: And the South Australian Hotel.

OH: Did you hear stories about that?

ML-S: Indeed. Well I went to the meetings of the CADC, and one of the very early meetings in 1974, they were actually dealing with the application, which was then from Ansett, of all things, to have an office building on the site. I mean the South had gone already, so it was a vacant site, but they were dealing with the development application for the building which was going to replace the South, and so there were a lot of wringing of hands and stories about: *Why have we got this terrible new building when we should have kept the South?* So yes, that was certainly an important influence in the Heritage debate, but Edmund Wright House was another significant one. I mean the public rose up and said … because there was an application to demolish it and put up another bland office building, and that was the nature of planning. Then Dunstan recognised that, so stepped in and actually bought Edmund Wright House. I mean that's how it was saved, by buying it, not by turning in the controls, and so that did start in parallel, a State process, and as well as a City processes. So there was an early attempt at somewhere in which to protect Heritage listing, and that did take time to work through and draft Heritage studies were done, lots of consultants brought on board. We had an Heritage architect on the staff who liaised with Heritage consultants and with the emerging State Heritage approach, so Heritage was certainly an important issue through all of the stages of the Planning Study, and then the first City Plan as well.

OH: What about the role of groups like the North Adelaide Society and the City Residents'?

ML-S: Well they'd certainly been important during … and I mean they were formed effectively for the same reasons, about the MATS Plan and about the Engineer's approach to planning. I mean North Adelaide wasn't just the fact that this major road would be cutting off bits of North Adelaide, the City Engineer had also proposed a major redevelopment for the North Adelaide Village Centre for a sort of commercial centre. Now the idea in one sense was fine, but the scale of that and again the destruction of residential property was a factor in the formation of the North Adelaide Society. And the North Adelaide Society started putting up candidates for the Council, so that was an important consideration.

Similarly in the South East, not quite so strong, but there was an Adelaide Residents' Society formed. They, from memory, only got one Councillor up,

who was Alistair Fischer. But in North Adelaide it became quite then common for the endorsed candidates for the Wards in North Adelaide to be members of the society. One of the earlier ones was Dr John Watson. He got elected early on and was pushing for the Planning Study to recognise the value of Heritage and the value of residences in the City, so they were important influences.

They were also taking on board … when John Roche got to be Lord Mayor, what we did was to, and this was way before it became a legal requirement, was to any planning application in the system, we would invite in representatives of the North Adelaide Society and the Adelaide Residents' Society to provide comment on those applications, so when my department, which wrote the reports on development applications that went to the Committee of Council, not only did you get the professional City Planner's Report on them, you would get comments from the society, which could often be different. And they had some really good people who took the time and effort voluntarily to come in and look at those applications and write comments on behalf of the Society.

One particular influential guy was Peter Stephens from the North Adelaide Society. I mean I'd see him every month, he'd come in and work his way through applications in North Adelaide, and Alex Ramsay … no, excuse me, wrong name, I forget the name of the representative from the South East Residents I'm afraid, but … Hamish, he also would come in, not quite so frequently because there weren't that many applications in the South East. But the advantage of that was that the Elected Members, when looking at the Planning Department's report, would also see the views of the residents, so that was way before what we now call Third Party Consultation, which is a requirement unde the Act. So this was early days of involving the public in the ability to comment on development applications.

OH: And as you say, a serious commitment from those residents who were doing it voluntarily.

ML-S: Absolutely, yeah, highly regarded by the Councillors as well, so they'd certainly take on board the comments of the societies in relation to applications, although as the City Plan got firmed up and became clearer, then the views, obviously the Planning Department would recommend in terms of the formal statutory stuff, and so it actually became rare for the societies' comments to be at odds with what my department staff were recommending.

OH: That's interesting.

ML-S: Mm …

OH: Michael, I'd like to turn now to the processes of the conversion of George Clarke's City of Adelaide Planning Study to the City of Adelaide Plan, and then the consequential legislation, and during the first years of your appointment, and I note that the plan was presented to the Council in June 1974, and you arrived in, did you say August? September?

ML-S: Mm …

OH: So the steps that were involved were quite complex and intense.

ML-S: Yes, one of the reasons, I mean I was I think appointed in April/May, but because I was chairing the Woolloomooloo Steering Committee in Sydney, and that was at a fairly critical stage of getting that to a point where something would happen, but the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, who was then Bob Clampett, and the then Lord Mayor of Sydney, Nicholas Shehadie, actually negotiated that I could stay in Sydney to see through Woolloomooloo, and so Clampett had to persuade the Adelaide Council that I wouldn't be arriving, although the plan had been received in June, nothing was going to happen to it until I arrived in September, so there was a period of months where nothing much was happening, but the CADC was still in power, so in terms of anything going wrong, I mean nothing was happening of any significance, because that interim body was in place, but yes, as soon as I arrived in late-September, then the task was: *How are we going to look at that plan, the Planning Study being converted into a document which would be workable?*

George's advice was that there ought to be a separate City Act to simply endorse the City Plan, and that was the strong position, because he'd learned his lesson from Sydney about the difference between strategic and statutory planning, so that made a lot of sense. But a lot of the things in the Planning Study were really of a policy level, and had implications for the State, particularly in the transport field, and … so what was interesting I found was that Bakewell, as I said he was the Head of the Premier's Department, had actually set up a State Government Review Committee, to go through George's recommendations, from the State's perspective. So while I had charge of it from the City Council's point of view and could see the advantages of what George was saying, I mean the political reality, it became clear that it would be hard to have legislation which authorised the whole City Plan. However, we went through a number of stages. First of all there was a public consultation process on George's Planning Study, so the study as it was, was put out for further consultation.

OH: And was that unusual?

ML-S: Oh yeah, absolutely. I mean to involve the public was, although we'd done a bit in Sydney …

OH: And how did you manage that?

ML-S: Well there were a variety of tools used. There was a major Planning Centre, which was just along the road here in Pirie Street, which George persuaded the Council to set up, so that centre existed as somewhere where people could just drop in. There were a lot of articles presented through the media, and we used the societies. I mean there would be briefings of groups of the North Adelaide Society or Adelaide Residents, but also on the other side, the Building Owners and Managers, Property Council, just a significant range of discussions with various interest groups. But at the end of the day clearly the

major problem, and there wasn't much argument about preserving North Adelaide sort of the way that it was, but a bit of argument about the nature of O'Connell Street and Melbourne Street, but primarily recognition that North Adelaide really wasn't going to change very much.

The major arguments were for South East and South West Adelaide where the significant rezoning was proposed, and by that time, or one of the steps in that process was a lot of representations, which basically said: *The Council has gone too far, or rather we're committed, we've bought all this land for commercial purposes, how can we possibly change it around?* One of the real estate advice was saying to … by this time the Council population had gone down to about 11,000. At its heyday after the war it was up at 40,000 – there's various figures – but the general accepted view it was about 45,000 residents of the City at its heyday. Now a lot of those were large families and small dwellings, and that's a fact, but there was a sizeable population which kept the City alive. So one of the arguments about living in the City was to have a sizeable residential population, and the argument is still going on right now, and so the issue was how do you provide that residential population, so the zoning was an important argument, to stop anymore existing residences being demolished or changed in use, and that was important.

There were two important decisions the CADC made, which drew the line in the sand, one of which was that any building in residential use could not have its use changed to any other use, and no building could be demolished without a replacement building being approved. Now those two decisions absolutely changed the nature of what was happening in Adelaide in the early 70s.

OH: And this is while the Planning Study was developing?

ML-S: That was the interim control which allowed the Planning Study to occur, so basically you've got to put a blanket on anything going astray while you allowed the Planning Study, and that continued, however, when I arrived. So the interim control run by this group of seven City/State jointly, was the important factor which allowed that to occur, and they were still also providing some oversight onto the Planning Study and into the first City Plan. But Bakewell had this separate process of all the Heads of State Departments being involved in a Review Committee to look at the implications for the State, particularly public transport. I mean, key people like Derek Scrafton, people like Keith Lewis the E&WS Department, particularly Alex Ramsay from the Housing Trust, so it was a very important group of people, and Keith Johinke was the Highways Commissioner, except strangely enough in those days the Commissioner had no control over any road within the City. It was deliberately excluded under legislation that the City was in charge of its roads, which is why Hugh Bubb had been so powerful. The Commissioner had no rights with any control of any road within the City of Adelaide, but anyway he was on the Review Committee.

And so the way the Council progressed was to do this extensive public

consultation, and we actually had people coming in as deputations, so we invited anybody who wanted to, and the way the Council dealt with that was to set up committees on a Ward-by-Ward basis, so in each Ward there were the two Ward Councillors, plus an Alderman, plus the Lord Mayor, who actually sat as a Review Committee, and anyone could come in and make a presentation about their beefs or support, whatever, on the City Plan, so there was a lot of work done in involving the public in the ability for them to provide feedback on the draft.

OH: And were they individual residents as well as organisations?

ML-S: Absolutely, we had quite a few individuals, particularly in the property owners' side in the South East and South West. So there were some really quite emotive arguments, one I remember in particular. He bought or had developed an automotive business, and he'd bought a lot of cottages either side to expand his business, quite legitimately, but this blanket control meant that he couldn't remove the residences and that use had to remain as residential, so he couldn't expand his business, so he was saying: *Look, you've destroyed my business. I mean I've got all this money invested and you're going to say you can't do that anymore.*

OH: What was the answer?

ML-S: The Council I think said: *Well we recognise your problem, you've got existing use rights for your building, but the other buildings we're not going to approve.* And that's the overall argument about the community good against the individual private good, I'm afraid. And because they had the legislation in place, and there were no appeal rights … I mean it was a very powerful bit of legislation. I mean they were rare, but they were so black and white as that, but that was the case.

So what the Council also decided then to do, because of this advice that residential is never going to work, it's too far gone was the argument, we actually looked at ways in which we could demonstrate that residential development was a viable proposition, and the first scheme was in Angas Street, a place called Angas Court, which I'm not quite sure how we owned that land, it wouldn't have been for road widening, but it was a bit of land the Council owned. So we used people from my department, again using the section of architect planners, but also some support from the Building Surveyor's Department and some engineering input about the roads, so we actually did a scheme of housing development, which we designed, built, and then sold, and made a profit, so we actually demonstrated as the Council that residential living in the South East was a viable … and that was quite an important sort of nailing colours to the mast, you know: *We're not doing this and it's crazy, it actually does work, that the value of residential is there if you actually go about it in the right way.*

OH: Michael, did that occur at the time of all this consultation?

ML-S: This was just part of the process almost that we saw that as an important demonstration that … and it was to the end of that process, but it was an

important demonstration, as well at the time with the Housing Trust work. So that the State was saying: *Yes, we also believe in residential back in the City,* so Manitoba and Playford, those developments, were actively being negotiated at that time.

OH: And I note that there were changes made to the Planning Study.

ML-S: Yes, there were some quite important policy changes made. Some of the policies were clearly of what we call a guiding nature, as opposed to being what we thought would be statutory, so there was an important change there. There were certainly some changes to some of the diagrams George had proposed, and there was certainly input from the State in terms of the way in which they could relate to, particularly the public transport stuff. So what emerged out of that, this was also at the time the Feds were still in power, I mean, the Labor Party was still in power, but in 1975 Whitlam lost, as we all know. And that meant a lot of public servants were out of a job, and one key person was a fellow called John Mant. He was at the time Whitlam's private secretary, so when Whitlam was dismissed John Mant was the one Whitlam told first actually, which is an interesting bit of information.

John had also been doing some work with a guy called Hugh Hudson, who was the South Australian Education Minister, but Dunstan had reappointed him as Minister for Planning, so Hudson offered John Mant a job as an advisor on our Planning. And by that stage, Bakewell's committee had basically said: *Look, we have some real problems with the City Plan as proposed by George Clark, and we need to find a way through that.* Now the Council is still saying: *No, no, we want the whole plan authorised and here are our reasons.* Well, I could see some difficulties. I mean, that was the political direction taken. So the end result was that John Roche, as then Lord Mayor, Town Clerk, Arland and I went to see the Premier and said that we were really concerned about this advice from the State Government, that we shouldn't go down this route, like we've done all this work and we need to find a way of progressing. So Dunstan basically said: *Well look, I'm going to delegate to Hugh Hudson and the Council will delegate to John Roche, to sit down and negotiate a way forward, which will be acceptable to City and State, and that effectively John Mant, and you, Michael, will be the people at the administrative level which will have to do the legwork and sort this out.*

So John Mant and I became really good friends actually, different backgrounds, he was a lawyer by training, but he understood planning, he'd worked at the National Capital Development Committee (NCDC) in Canberra before he joined the Ministerial staff, so he had some quite strong views about planning being a political process, but understanding how it all came together actually. In fact, I used a quote in my thesis from John about this. We tried to figure out the way in which we could move forward in a document which would satisfy the Council, but also not commit the State, because it was all about this investment, and the answer was to separate out what we call *strategic from statutory.* And that was a really key decision that all the things which we needed to legislate for would become the statutory

component of the plan, but the other side of the plan, which was the strategic stuff, would be, as it always has been in effect, the policy discussions between the City and State, but would not be legislated for, and that was the key decision. So you'd have a document which had components, a strategic component which was the Council's own direction, but endorsed by the State, but didn't commit the State, whereas the statutory stuff, the State would legislate for, and would provide the controls going forward in whatever form that entailed.

And the important decision George had come up with this really clever idea of Desired Future Character Statements for the precinct, so the City Plan was a whole range of different precincts, so it wasn't a flat zoning, it was a combination of controls as to how you could look at development and the built form of the City, and for each of those precincts there was a set of words which was called *The Desired Future Character Statement,* and the main thing which John Mant and I agreed on, was that those should actually become part of the statutory controls, which was really unusual for the time, that got fed up to Roche and Hudson politically.

So the agreement was to have, and it was deliberately called the City *of Adelaide Development Control Act,* as opposed to the City of Adelaide Planning Act, because planning was still seen as the policy framework between the City and State, which could change on changing government and changing Council, but there'd always been an endorsement for that. But the Act would actually bring in the statutory controls, which then the Council would actually be the authority for, so it was giving power back to the Council in terms of its day-to-day management. But the other clever thing was to set up the City of Adelaide Planning Commission based on the previous model of the CADC, and if you think about it, with the Lord Mayor and three Council and three State, the Council would always have the 4/3 majority, but it never actually operated like that, well only once.

There's one example where it did, but it was very much a consensus type model, whereas we recognised that that was probably not going to work in the new scheme of things. So the Commission was four Council and four State representatives, and if there did happen to be a tied vote then it would actually go to the Minister to have a casting vote, so that the Chairman, who was the Lord Mayor, would not have a casting vote, so it was a genuine and equal body. And that body was set up to provide that strategic coordination between City and State, but also as part of the planning system it was a very neat idea that if there was a particular planning application which didn't quite meet the statutory controls of the plan but was seen to have merit for whatever reasons, then the Council couldn't approve it itself. But it could go to the Commission to get a concurrence, so that if the Commission was convinced that particular application, perhaps it was over height or more dense, or didn't quite meet some other controls, there was a way in which that could be approved if it was of sufficient merit. And that was a very innovative approach to the

planning, but it also provided this body of a joint City/State body with a really importance influence.

And the other part of the system which was really important was it was a five-year cycle, so there'd be a fixed commitment for three years, and in years four and five you'd review the statutory document, and that review would be under the auspices of this joint body, so that the State had an input into how the City was reviewing its policy position. Then you'd adopt a new plan at the end of that five-year process for the next five years. And everybody knew that for three years the rules were fixed, and if the rules proved by experience to be in need of finetuning, or even radical change, then you knew that in two years' time you'd have the opportunity to provide that input into the review process, and that was again a very effective way, so we actually had a suite of plans, 1976-1981 was the first one, 1981-1986, 1986-1991, and 1991-1996 was in place, but in 1993 that got repealed by the State when the whole separate system was decided to be got rid of, and the City got absorbed back into a new State system.

OH: Quite a history of those plans. Michael, I'm just looking at my notes and I see that after the changes the Planning Study was submitted to the government of March of 1976, and then the legislation was in December, I think 23 December 1976. Between March and December, was that when all those negotiations were taking place at that level, between the Lord Mayor and Hugh Hudson and you and John Mant?

ML-S: It was really earlier than that.

OH: Oh, OK.

ML-S: Yes. The final agreement was in December of 1976, and the Act came in 1 March 1977. That was just the government process in terms of how legislation got enacted, so the deals were done by, maybe earlier than September 1976. I can't recall the exact date. No, there was a specific Council Resolution to adopt the plan, which was the totality of the strategic stuff and the statutory stuff, and at the same time the government signed off on the statutory stuff, so Hudson and Roche actually signed a document which says: *These are the principles of development control, which will apply in the City.* But then legally that didn't come into effect until 1 March 1977.

OH: Right. And in terms of George Clark's vision, what do you think was lost in the eventual plan?

ML-S: In terms of the overall vision of where the City was heading, I don't think it was lost. Perhaps in some of the details there were some changes, but the political realities of that came into play. I think George's view about locking in the State in terms of its transport decision was very commendable, but politically was never going to be realistic. I mean there was no way that the State, for example, would sign up to a document that said that it must build so much new public transport. I mean that's clearly going to be something which they'd take on board politically and budget-wise, so while that was, in a sense, a clever tactic to try and get the State to commit to some improvements

to the City in a variety of ways, political reality was that that was never going to happen. So that was just, I suppose, being a bit more pragmatic about George's vision without losing sight of it. I mean it was still in the strategic stuff, some of those policies, and they still are now, I mean it's sort of flowed on.

In fact, the meeting I was at this morning is still looking at, for example, the route that the tram should take around the City. I mean the government has said: *Well we don't have any money for it.* But there's still a commitment to actually having an inner city tram route. Now the location for that route is still important. I mean that could be traced back to the improvement of public transport in the City. It actually as it happens, included Fred Hanson, the Thinker-in-Residence's report, to actually make sure that that tram route be put in place, because there's certainly studies in Portland and just about everywhere who've done it, that there's an uplift in density and value along, and within about two or three blocks of a tram route, so that would have a real impact in terms of the City, so there's a lot of investment money upfront. The long-term or medium and long-term benefits are significant, but that's … I mean we can suggest to the government, but we can't control how that's done, and that was the argument, that if George got his way, I mean the State would have been committed to it, and there's no way that was going to happen.

OH: And what about the Heritage issues?

ML-S: Heritage became a difficult one. The State said: *We will endorse the approach to Heritage.* But it took a lot of work through a Planning Study to get to the point where individual buildings, buildings on the State list, didn't become … the State introduced State Heritage legislation. There was a lot of agreement about which buildings were on that, so that was no longer an issue. I mean those were done and dusted. A lot of the work then became, well the agreement was that we would undertake a quite significant City of Adelaide Heritage Study, which consultants undertook. And coming out of that there were then buildings which didn't actually appear in the City Plan as a list until, I think it was 1991, no, 1986, that although there was a list of actions in the first plan, the actions were only to carry out the Heritage study, so there was no local listening initially.

I suppose you could say that was a failure but it was practical. I mean the number of owners that actually lodged objections, and the Council had no statutory powers to do anything about that, so the argument was we should work more closely with the State, and we should also carry out the study, which was done by Marsden, Stark and Donovan – the DMS Study became quite famous, and was very comprehensive, and coming out of that there was then a Heritage Scheme.

We also introduced a Transferable Floor Area scheme was part of that, which was …

OH: What do you call that, Transferable …?

ML-S: If you have a Heritage site, let's say it's a four-storey building, but the development potential is for eight storeys, then if it's Heritage and couldn't be demolished, then theoretically you've lost four stories of development, so TFA schemes are those where the owner of a Heritage building can actually sell development rights for the four storeys which you can't use yourself, to another site, which could use them, and it was actually part of the Sydney scheme as well, so Transferable Floor Area is a financial way that people who have their buildings listed, don't lose the development potential by actually selling that development potential to other sites who could use it. That did operate for a number of years in Adelaide, but it was, I think, disbanded in the early-2000s. I mean there are difficulties with it but it was an early attempt and it was based on, I think the San Francisco model, that it was just another way of trying to retain some Heritage.

OH: What was George Clarke's response to the way that the City of Adelaide Plan became legislation?

ML-S: I think he was disappointed in some ways. I mean he did have this grand vision of locking in State things as well as the City. He did do some work for me in some of the Action projects, although again he was primarily based in Sydney so it was difficult for him personally. He did have an Adelaide office, which continued for a bit of time. I mean they got some work outside of the City, not a lot but they were doing some of the Local Government stuff, but eventually he decided there wasn't enough to justify it, so he closed his Adelaide office and went back to Sydney. I think he recognised the practicalities of getting something on the books, compared to not. I mean, there was a real risk that if we hadn't made the changes it would all have gone back to a State statutory scheme, so that would have been a pity. So I think he was pragmatic about realising that the changes were necessary from his grand vision to the realities of City/State relations.

OH: And what about you, Michael, how did it feel at the completion of that cycle on 1 March 1977?

ML-S: The 1 March was an interesting date. It happens to be St David's Day, which I why I subtly suggested it might be an appropriate day to have the legislation come into effect, and John Roche kindly flew the Red Dragon of Wales outside the Town Hall that day. The people never realised the significance of that because no one else had ever flown other flags but anyway that's what happened. It certainly was a great relief I'd have to say. There'd been a lot of work and effort getting into the Planning Department set up, negotiating with State bureaucrats, dealing with the politics within the Council, which did change. I mean there were new members coming, not a great turnover but there were some new members which had to be brought up to speed at different elections.

One of the interesting outcomes of that was that John Mant and I became Commissioners, so I was one of the four City Council Commissioners, which

was highly unusual, and Mant, by that time was no longer an advisor to Hudson, he actually became a Chief Executive of Hudson's' new Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Stuart Hart was also a Commissioner, who was the former, well still the State Planning Authority, but that's really what got subsumed into John's new department, so for an initial couple of years I was wearing two hats. Not only was I was the City Planner, I was one of the Council Commissioners, and that was unusual.

OH: The first round, who were the Commissioners?

ML-S: From the City it was John Roche and Jim Bowen and John Chappel and me, so the original members of the CADC got transferred across. From the State's view it was a new group of people, the only one that was common was Newell Platten, so Newell was one of the first Commissioners, and John Mant himself, and Stuart Hart. The other one was Alan Wayte. We were arguing strongly for Derek Scrafton because of the public transport input to it which we'd seen and we'd talked about, but Derek decided … I think the Minister for Transport was concerned about the amount of time that we'd put on Derek personally, so Derek's Assistant Director of Transport was one of the first Commissioners, but actually later on when it clearly became important, Derek in fact did become a Commissioner, so we never actually overlapped, because when I became Town Clerk in 1982, I actually had to give up being the Commissioner, I mean that wouldn't have been appropriate, but as the City Planner it was an unusual situation where I was the Commissioner.

OH: It must have been a very exciting time having got the legislation through, and I understand that already there was some interest, well quite a lot of interest outside. I note that with Mayor Clampett, you gave a paper at an international conference in The Hague earlier, about the City of Adelaide Planning Study.

ML-S: John Roche was Lord Mayor at the time, not Clampett, in The Hague.

OH: I thought it was 1974. I might have my dates wrong.

ML-S: No, it was Roche and I went and gave the joint paper. I'm not sure how that invitation arrived. Somebody somewhere had obviously found something of interest in what Adelaide was doing. So an invitation arrived to actually give a paper to the international conference in The Hague, and what was interesting about that was it was a conference deliberately structured to give planning professional and political advice about planning. So someone had recognised early on about that important overlap, so what we found interesting was for Roche and I to give a joint paper, so we wrote it together. So he looked at it from a political perspective and I was looking at it from a planning professional perspective.

I think the invitation arrived when Clampett was Lord Mayor, I think that's true, but the actual delivery of the paper was by Roche and I. And so yes, it was before the legislation had been enacted so we were still actually at the state of negotiating with the State at the time the paper was delivered. But it was an interesting conference, and actually what came out of that was Roche invited the International Federation to come to Adelaide for its International

Conference in 1986, because that would have been 150th anniversary of Light, and we talked about Light's background and the whole history of the City planning, going back to Colonel Light. And so we used that as a hook to hang the invite on, and in fact it came to pass, there was a Congress held in Adelaide by the international body in 1986.

OH: That's interesting. I think at this point it might be a good time to bring Interview No 1 to a close. Thank you very much, Michael, for your contribution. And I think that we'll begin the next interview, with the sorts of Action Plans that were then part of your role in carrying out the City of Adelaide Plan in the Council, so thank you.

ML-S: I look forward to that, thank you.

End of recording

SECOND INTERVIEW WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL LLEWELLYN-SMITH
RECORDED BY MADELEINE REGAN

in the Adelaide City Council, Adelaide
on Friday 30th March 2012

Transcript of second interview (30 March 2012)

Oral Historian (OH): Thank you, Michael, for agreeing to a second interview.

We completed the last interview talking about the City of Adelaide Plan, and the legislation that was put in place, and the impact of new directions for planning for the City of Adelaide, and we'll begin this interview by looking at the subsequent work that you undertook in relation to putting the Plan into operation. I'm interested to ask you about the action plans of the City of Adelaide Plan. Could you explain the function of those action plans?

Michael Llewellyn-Smith (ML-S:): Yes. George Clarke had already seen it, there were really three elements to planning. The forward looking policies of the strategic plan which we talked about, and the conversion of that into some statutory documents which is the means to control developments, but then there was a third and important element, which was how you actually achieve some of the positive outcomes from what the Council wanted to achieve. And he used the terminology in Sydney of action plans or projects, and he'd continued that in his Planning Study. So in the Red Book, which was the Planning Study, there were 26 separate action plans identified, and he always saw those as a means for ongoing engagement with the community, to actually bring about change, but in a positive way, so the key work was to look at them as the other side of the coin from development controls. Once you got a new plan in place the negative, and he liked using that word, set of development controls, control the nature of buildings, but there was no means to provide some positive action in terms of the Council itself taking some initiatives and beginning on the ground, unless that was clearly spelt out, so what he did was to say: *Here's 26 projects.* And he gave little suggestions as to how they might be used and what they would achieve, and they ranged from things like looking up the details of the City squares or the overall residential program, or even a scheme for the back of Government House. So he had a list of suggestions is probably how best to describe them, but then the Council was quite enthused about that approach. But as part of the ongoing discussions, partly with the State Government, partly through the community's input into the Planning Study, that list got slightly changed and added to, and the priorities got changed politically by the Council.

So from the point of view of the City Planning Department, we had some strong workshops with the elected members to try and decide on what was actually important, and indeed what resources my department had available to manage those action projects, and the first round which would have been the end of 1976, beginning of 1977, when all this was changing, there would have been 10, so George's initial list of 26 got increased to 37, and of those 37 priority was given in the first round to 10 of those.

OH: I've got a list of some of the priorities there and I'm just wondering if you might be able to comment on a few of them, like for example street furniture and graphics.

ML-S: Yes. At the time I suppose there was a pretty non-descript set of items the Council put in place for seats and lamp posts and signage, and it was quite a strong view that it was, if you like, an early win that we could come up with a standardised set of drawings, which would then provide something of a brand for the Council's image. So it was to try and improve how the Council was perceived, and rather than having a whole range of different designs for seats, which was very simple, or even litter bins, simple like that, so the idea was to try and have a standardised approach which would be clearly Adelaide City Council, and that was seen as quite an easy one. It was something we were doing anyway, it just needed some design input.

The other one which I think was very important, which George had identified as the first one, and we maintained that priority, which was streetscape improvements. What that meant was to look at the streets themselves. The Engineer had a really large budget to basically resurface roads and footpaths. We took the view that you could actually use that money which the Engineer's budget had, but actually look at some landscaping and footpath widening, and changing the emphasis of some roads, particularly in the residential areas.

The first one was actually in Angas Street, in the south east off Hutt Street, so if you look there now there's … and there was actually, there was quite an argument within the Council. Some of the Councillors said: *We're actually changing the layout of Colonel Light's original plans, and should we really be doing that?* So that was an interesting philosophical debate.

OH: And was it changing that fundamental design?

ML-S: No, it wasn't changing the fundamental design, but if you look, in terms of having just straight edges between streets and footpaths, and quite narrow footpaths in most cases, Colonel Light had a hierarchy of streets, as you're aware, and they're not all the same width, there's two sorts, in the generals like Pirie/Waymouth and then there's the wide King William and Grote-Wakefield. But to the east of Hutt Street where quite a lot of the residential streets are. What we basically did was some simple traffic engineering, which was to put in what we call throats.

It was a one way island in and another island out, so it wasn't just a standard junction, and that allowed you to increase the widths of the old footpaths and effectively put in quite a wide verge, and allow a second line of tree planting, so it was a landscaped solution to improve the physical environment, which was seen as an important element to provide the framework for some of the residential development we wished to encourage. So it was seen as improving the public realm but using the facilities of the Engineer's Department and the Parks and Recreation Department, to actually achieve those improvements, rather than just the Engineer going and doing what he always did, which was just to replace the footpath and resurface the road, so that was quite a major argument within the Council itself.

Well, it was certainly a different way of expanding his budget. I mean I argued with the Engineer that to have a more expensive solution like that, then obviously the overall amount of works I can do is not likely to change, so in terms of street by street, I might only get to do 10 streets instead of 11 streets, but they will be a higher quality street with no argument. The Council eventually went along with that, it wasn't an easy win, but it did bring about quite a few early wins in terms of some of the residential streets of the City.

OH: And was Angas Street changing in terms of its housing, at that time?

ML-S: Well the reason why we chose it, we did have a site there which from a residential point of view we decided to, as a Council, use as a bit of a catalyst site. A lot of the real estate people were saying that this rezoning back to residential will never work, and people simply don't want to live in the City, and that had grown out of the rezoning which had occurred by the State Government and the Council's own policies about traffic and roads. I mean it was a serious argument and there was a lot of suspicion that it was ever going to change. I'm not quite sure why the Council owned this particular bit of land, but I don't think it was for road widening, it was actually set off Angas Street, but anyway it was in Council ownership and basically vacant. I think it might even have been an open lot car park of some sort.

I had some architect planners in my department, and there was a very cooperative Building Surveyor's Department, so we actually designed a scheme of townhouses, a total of 13, some on the street, then a courtyard, and some at the back. The Building Surveyors did some of the work in drawings, and we engaged a builder and actually built them and put them out to tender or for sale, and they all sold really well, so we actually took a very keen interest in that whole process because it demonstrated that a developer, in this case the Council itself, could actually make money out of residential development. But it was important that it was in a street where we were also demonstrating that we were improving the public realm, that buying a townhouse in that street gave you more trees and wider footpaths, and buying a town house, so it was all part of an integrated way of showing this was a new system in place and we were actually heading in a particular direction to get more residents living in the City.

OH: An interesting project. One of the other priorities, the Frome Street South housing and environment was similar?

ML-S: That was, again, a partly deliberate one, yes it was. Frome Street was the way in which, going back to Bill Veale's time, the North East Road was going to cut this way through the City and link up with Glen Osmond Road, so a lot of land had been bought to provide this road widening, and a whole new north/south route through the City, and that had caused an enormous amount of strife, not only in North Adelaide because it would have isolated a pocket of North Adelaide from the rest of North Adelaide.

There would have been this amazing overpass over Melbourne Street. The historic bridge in front of the zoo would have gone and the road would have been straightened out, and it would have come up the existing Frome Road, which was slightly widened anyway, and then they started buying property from North Terrace southwards. And if you look there now there was vacant land on the corner for a long time, and there's quite a narrow strip of what's Budget Rent-a-Car, and people wonder why it's so narrow. It's because that was the extent of the width of the land which they'd bought to widen it, and that width was going to go all the way through the City, so it's basically a six-lane highway would have gone north/south all the way through the City to South Terrace, and then wended its way through the Park Lands and linked up with Glen Osmond Road. So there was a major scheme to have a major east/west traffic grid.

Now when Dunstan brought about interim control, the houses had been bought, and some demolished, as far, certainly as far as Wakefield Street and going further south, so Frome Street was gradually creeping southwards. It started at the northern end of North Terrace and it was moving its way southward, and it came as far as Carrington Street. And on the western side of Carrington Street there were some old workers' cottages which were very early in terms of public housing in a sense, private sector funding in the early days. It was quite an important way of providing for working people to live in the City. The ones on the eastern side are still there, one storey red brick, but on the western side they were demolished.

It was a critical junction where Hugh Stretton got involved, and he had persuaded Dunstan about interim control and the whole direction of the City was wrong and needed to be changed, and one of the first things that the CADC decided at its early meeting, was to stop Frome Road – this was 1972. 1973. So the Engineer had the land available south of Carrington Street all the way through to South Terrace, but the CADC decided that no, there was going to be no more extension of Frome Road, so they really did draw the line in the sand at Carrington Street.

So the Council had land available from Carrington going south to Halifax and through to the south, and so what we decided to do was to hold that land and have an architectural competition for housing on that land, because that

would then, for all time, be an absolutely clear way of not allowing anymore of Frome Road to go further south.

So the whole of Frome Street South was a project to look at how we could bring that about, and to ensure that indeed there was more residential, but also as a very clear expression of stopping the traffic engineering approach to Frome Road.

OH: Was the housing built by the Council?

ML-S: No, not in this case. We actually went to an architectural competition, so there were a number of schemes submitted by architects, it was run through the Institute of Architects as a proper architectural competition. Guy Maron was the winning architect, and then we were the developer, but we didn't actually do it ourselves. No, we got contracts, and I forget who the builder was, but they were built and that's where a lot of interstate people driving around the City find it quite odd this really quite wide road suddenly comes to a T-junction and there's housing there. That's why it was done.

OH: Was that unusual to have an architectural competition?

ML-S: Yeah, not common at the time. John Chappel was one of the architects on the Council, and a member of the CADC, and he persuaded the others it would be a different solution than the Council doing it itself.

OH: That's interesting. One other priority that was set with the City of Adelaide Plan Action Plans, was planning information systems for internal administration. That was interesting.

ML-S: It was in early days of people realising that there was a lot of data around and just how you could actually use that, because George had collected an enormous amount during the Planning Study, and in Sydney I remember they just collected from all different agencies, really an enormous amount of intelligence about how the City was used and operated, and who moved where, but it was not really easily usable in the sense of being a document you could simply say: *We know what's going on,* and so we decided that what we ought to try and do is provide some integrated approach to all the data which people liked to have, such as land use, land ownership.

I mean, obviously the Council had good records in terms of land ownership because that's how the rate notices get sent out, so we knew about the ownership. But the other elements like land use, like how the property was being used, involved quite often physically going out and inspecting them, and then recording that data, and then we may not know when it was used or changed its use, although the planning system theoretically says that you have to apply for a change of use. There's a whole lot of things which are in the same categories of use, and so no one ever bothers, and so from year to year you don't quite know what is going on in the City. So that sort of information is a very valuable source if you can track it. Really, it was an early attempt to think about using computers, to be honest. I mean computers were sort of coming in to Local Government in the early-1970s, and so we saw that as a

way in which we can not only access a whole lot of data, but manipulate it much easier as well.

OH: I noted in my research that in 1979 you had meeting with the Perth City Council about the City of Adelaide Plan and the use of computers in Local Government. Was the City of Adelaide seen then as being a lighthouse in that kind of way?

ML-S: I think it's fair to say it was, I think most of the other capital cities were only interested in how Council had managed to get its own legislation. I mean they were quite envious of the fact that the City had separate legislation from the rest of the State. As I said Sydney had tried that in George's early days, but the New South Wales Government had retained the underlying control of planning the City, even though the Council wanted to do X and Y, and so the other capital Cities were just curious as to how the Adelaide City Council had managed to persuade the State Government to bring in legislation which was purely for the City, and didn't apply to the rest of the State. I mean it was just something which they were very keen on.

In fact, I actually had a quote from Don Hopgood, who was the Minister for Planning in the Bannon Government, that he used to go to Planning Ministers' conferences and he was constantly grilled by the other Planning Ministers as to how it had come about and was it working, so there was a lot of City/State interest in the fact that Adelaide was doing something quite different.

OH: Just to finish off the focus on the priorities, I'm interested in the Registered Places list, because the priority was that a list would be created. Can you say something about that?

ML-S: It's probably one of the most divisive things within the Council. George started off with quite a meagre list, and at that time there was really no State Heritage listing and heritage was still a bit of an emerging thing for most people. Dunstan had brought into it because of the proposal to demolish Edmund Wright House and Ayers House, and so Dunstan himself was recognising that something needed to be done about heritage.

So in George's Red Book, I think from memory there were, the figure of 79 comes to mind, I'm not sure, but he came up with this view, and used the words *of environmental significance,* didn't use the word *heritage.* But that probably caused one of the most interesting public responses that most of the owners, not all but most of the owners were concerned that their property is being listed because the implications of listing it wasn't quite clear.

So one of the important things by moving from George's Planning Study into the first of the Blue Books, the first City Plan, was to actually put in place this project which was to work through the heritage of the City. And it soon became clear that it was going to be a major issue, particularly in North Adelaide. There was really quite a divided view about: *We want to preserve North Adelaide exactly as it is. It should be a conservation area as of day*

one, and we don't want any new development because that's what makes Adelaide important. And then those more, not so much in the south east and south west, but certainly people who thought they had interesting buildings … but if they agreed to them being listed, would lose all the development potential, so it was an economic factor.

By this time Jim Bowen had become Lord Mayor, this is late 1970s, and he thought one way of resolving this would be to have a very thorough study to come up with a definitive statement of what buildings were worthy of preservation, and by implication what weren't, and so his motivation was an interesting one. It was to really say at the end of the study: *If you're not on the list then you can demolish*. So it was actually to try and identify potential development sites by not having your building listed.

The Council actually sent me on an overseas study tour to look at how Heritage had been dealt with in other major cities where Heritage was a bit of an issue, and I certainly went to places like Oxford and Cambridge and Edinburgh in the UK, and New Orleans because of the French Quarter, and New York obviously, San Francisco, and wrote quite a detailed report on the process, really on how best to do it, and I'd come to the conclusion that one way of doing it was to do a two-step approach. So people, planners, engineers, some professionals, could do a very quick skim of the whole city and come up with buildings which potentially might be worthy of some further investigation. So that was done, and used a couple of consultants to do that process, so there was a very draft list published.

And then the Lord Mayor appointed a Lord Mayor's Heritage Advisory Committee, which was made up of real experts from a range of fields, like historians, Professors of Architecture, the Lord Mayor himself, a couple of other Councillors, and we came up with a standardised form of the sorts of criteria you might want to use, and the weighting you might give to things. And that committee put in an enormous amount of work, and worked through this draft list of buildings using this set of criteria which had been established, and then recommended that list to the Council as being the first official City Heritage List.

That caused quite some concern within the Council in terms of, obviously, the public being aware of that. But during all this time the attitude of the Council was to involve the public, not do it secretly, so we would put on public display the proposals so people knew that they were going to be, or potentially could be listed. And then we also put in place an enormous number of public hearings, so everybody who owned a building which was proposed to be listed, were given the opportunity to come in and argue before a committee of Council, with support from my Planning staff, how that might affect them and whether they were violently opposed or whether they wanted to know more about it.

We also then were given direction by the Council to work on the other side of

the coin, which said: *If your building is listed, what does that mean in terms of incentives which the Council might be able to offer?* And that initially was quite an important factor, based on what had happened in Sydney, called Transferable Floor Area. Now that meant that if your building was listed, in simple terms let's say it was a three-storey building, that the site that you owned was capable to develop to six storeys, then there were three storeys you were not able to develop, but you could sell that floor space to somebody else who wanted to develop on another site where there were no constraints, and because it was a system which basically had minimum and maximum controls, you might be able to get a nine-storey building on your site with really not doing much about it, just putting up any old thing and you'd get nine storeys, but if you bought these three storeys from this heritage site, you could add those three storeys on to your building, so instead of just getting nine you'd get 12, so it was a win/win situation, and quite a clever way of actually … I mean, it wasn't unique to Adelaide, it had been started in Sydney, certainly been operating in San Francisco for quite some time, but it does involve some good registering and good information. And it also depends on the market, so that there is a market for people to buy that floor space because development pressures are on other sites. That was just one.

There were other incentives like we did try reduction in rates. We did try to put a lot of pressure on the Commonwealth Government to have expenditure on heritage as a tax deduction from an individual. We never won that battle with Treasury but a lot of people tried very hard on that particular front with the Commonwealth. By that time the State was also very much more interested in heritage, and had put in place a State Heritage List, and we also then engaged a much more detailed study called Donovan, Master and Stark, and they actually produced a quite well-illustrated book of all the work which they'd done which really took it to the next level.

So this was all still outside of any legislative controls actually, and while all this was going through buildings not listed were still capable of being demolished, so there was a lot of community concern about this. The Heritage debate had been going on really a long time within the community. I'm trying to think of the year. There was one year for the first time the Councillors … the Council were very happy to come to be divided into a Heritage and Development Lobby, and in 1991 although Steve Condous was re-elected as Lord Mayor, the majority of Councillors were actually from the heritage side of things rather than development, so there was a majority of the Council actually pro Heritage as opposed to pro development, and that was an unusual situation from 1991-1993. That's when Mark Hamilton, who's now back on the Council, became Deputy Lord Mayor, and he was leader of that faction, and they had the numbers to control things, so they produced a much more extensive list of other buildings, and raised the issue of what they called *Townscape*. That is that individual buildings may not be worthy of a listing, but if you're in a street of similar buildings then there was some context and importance the streetscape, and you shouldn't be able to knock out one building like it lost a tooth, and put up a terrible modern building in that

because you destroy the character. But the individual buildings couldn't be justified as heritage, and that became a very major debate in the Council because whole streets could be listed, and the owners of those would say: *Hang on, it's not a Heritage building and yet I'm being constrained as to what I might be able to do in the street.* And that became really quite a nasty political debate within the Council. Not a pleasant time to be around I'd have to say.

As a result of that, for the first time in the 1986-1991 Plan, there was a list of buildings which became local heritage places, so really from George Clarke's original list going through various combinations of City Plans, and every time there'd be a new action project for Heritage, I mean that kept rolling on because it was still rolling on, but finally there was a determined list which the government had us sign off on so it could go in the statutory controls for the plan.

It's really interesting given today that this week we've actually had yet another, and hopefully final, development, interim Development Plan of listing buildings in the City. Before my time on Council, the last Council, they had a final go at getting another 251 listed, and that really is at the end of this process, going back to 1972 – it is remarkable – and that list has been sitting on the Minister of Planning's desk for two and a half years without any action, and as part of the negotiations on the new City Plan, he has agreed to 77 of the 251 being immediately listed, and they are now available for people to comment on and to argue for merits of one way or the other, and he's also agreed that the Council can continue its work on the balance, whatever 251 minus 77 is. We've got 12 months as a Council to work through those buildings to see whether any of those now … hopefully the end of that process, in 12 months time, the Heritage Development divide within the Council and the community, as far as the City of Adelaide is concerned, will hopefully come to an end.

OH: A long process, as you say, from 1972.

ML-S: I was involved for 20 years with that, and here I am back on the Council and it's still an issue.

OH: I'm interested that you said George Clarke spoke about buildings of environmental significance rather than of heritage. How was he differentiating?

ML-S: I think he just didn't like the word *heritage,* because of the connotations in the community. It was just a device really to, once you start saying *heritage,* that term in those days would immediately get people upset because there wasn't the feeling about how important Heritage was, and so for anybody to say *You've got a Heritage building,* would immediately cause them to be opposed to what was being planned. I don't think it was any more significant than that.

OH: I'm really interested to know about how the introduction of the action plans changed the way that the Council worked, both the elected officers and in the departments.

ML-S: There used to be pretty much a standard works program which the Engineer ran, and in terms of the Council doing things, it was basically called a Works Program, and that was replacing drains, resealing streets, laying down pavers. And in the Park Lands, the Director of Parks had a budget to plant more trees, keep the grass growing, I mean all that sort of stuff.

What the impact of the action projects was to really give some focus to how the money was spent overall, so it wasn't just accepted that it was rolling on what we'd always done in the past, it was a means of trying to say: *This is how we are going to allocate our resources to actually achieve some, perhaps slightly different objectives than just maintaining a City.* So the important political front was that the project managers came out of my department, so the Planning Department was seen as the sort of lead agency to pull them together. Whereas, the other departments were seen as the implementers, they had the dollars in the budget for implementation, but we were in a position to determine some policy direction, and I must say we … I must say it wasn't done in isolation, I mean there would be members from the other departments as part of the team, so they were always looked at. And the Town Clerk, particularly Russell Arland was always very keen on making sure that we did operate together so we didn't end up with our arguments in committee. Well, occasionally it did get to that point, when the size of the City Engineer's budget might be questioned for maintenance as opposed to asset enhancement, so we were arguing: *You need to put more into doing things better and differently, as opposed to what you've always done.* So sometimes that argument would bubble over a bit into the political arena. But by and large, we tried to sort it out at the admin level, and so the key people who were my principal planners who led the project teams, had a major task to try and bring on board their sort of opposite numbers from, particularly the Engineer's, but also the Parks and Recreation Department.

OH: So it must have been an interesting and energetic time?

ML-S: It was very frantic, it was, it was a whole new way of doing things, and a lot of hours, and really quite a change of culture, and also the elected members. I mean, as I say, the key elected members who were supportive of the planning approach, had to take on board some of their colleagues to persuade them in the political arena that it was the right way to go, but we also maintained good working relationships with the State to involve them in things.

For example, the major Plane trees down in King William Street, which was quite an initiative, that was a lot of work with the underground services. I mean to be able to plant trees like that, we actually had to change the regulations of the E&WS Department, as it then was, Telstra was not exactly helpful, so all those service organisations had to be brought on board.

OH: Michael, you were coordinating all of these projects?

ML-S: Yes, the Council gave the City Planner's Department the overall responsibility for putting them up to committee in the first place to agree that that's what we wanted to do, and giving them the priority. I mean clearly the resources weren't there to do everything all at once, it did involve rolling them over from year to year, and as predictable things changed and some of the priorities might have changed, but some of the key ones kept going. I mean the streetscape technically is still alive today. It might have another name but it's still how the Council does work in residential streets, it's now perhaps a public realm might be a better description, but that approach to how the Council does things on the ground is still an important element coming out of what we used to call Action Projects.

Some of the other ones were interesting. The North Adelaide Village Centre was one I recall, because again the Council had bought land from the, or the City Engineer had bought land for traffic and parking reasons, and had planned a major supermarket there, which the North Adelaide community were sort of saying: *over our dead bodies.* And: *We don't want suburban shopping in the middle of North Adelaide.* But there was a scheme to actually build what was called a village centre, so it was a much smaller scale and was intended to provide other uses, as well as some improved shopping. And we actually did put that one out to tender. We did some desired guidelines for how the site might be developed, and called registrations of interest, and someone was awarded the contract. I mean it's gone through a couple of variations since, but it was another means of getting something actually on the ground.

OH: I notice that there were some actions plans added, like for example the Community Needs Survey and the Community Development Program, and I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about the Community Needs Survey.

ML-S: Well it's very interesting actually. It was actually something that the Town Clerk, Russell Arland was very keen on personally. He recognised the shift of politics away from the City Engineer into a more design-orientated and public involvement approach to planning in the City, but he was concerned as to what was actually going to happen in terms of the existing residential population, and also in what sort of population we might be attracting into the City. So he was actually the driver of that in terms of the politics. He persuaded the elected members that we should put resources into getting a better handle on what was then the current population of the City. I mean, who were the residents of the City, not just the fact that we had knowledge about the numbers and where they lived, but what sort of people were they, and how were they using the City, and what might we do in terms of services for them, and that was really far sighted at that time, it was unusual, and so we brought on board, initially on contract, some people with some skills in that area who really did go out there and identify community groups, and through the community groups got further into the network of places.

I particularly remember one Janet Mead, the 'Singing Nun' in the centre, which got established in Moore Street, and in Hutt Street, the Sisters of Charity. So there were a lot of different elements as to getting to know what was going on in the City at the time, and coming out of that, and that was probably a two or three year study altogether in terms of providing the data and getting a better feel for it.

It also was certainly used to recognise what was beginning to happen, is that there was obviously a bit of an aging population, and there were some young professionals moving into the City, but very little in terms of the middle demographics. I mean, the couples with a family were still buying their suburban blocks, when you can live in Rose Park and Unley, just the other side of the Park Lands, so why would you live in the City? So that sort of issue became prominent as to what we were doing, and it also did feed into the recognition that there were people who could benefit from some services being delivered to them at home, rather than them going into …

That was really an early day of thinking about home health and community nurses, and we then did, I think it became known as Health Community Services as a division, which gave it more status, and that was unusual in a capital city. I mean, most people thought Local Councils shouldn't be in that, it was private sector or State or Federal, but not a Local Council initiative. That was a very early initiative by the Council to get involved in that side of things and that it should be supported.

I mean there were certainly some Councillors who vehemently opposed spending ratepayer dollar on doing such things, they just didn't see it as a Local Council responsibility, and in that sense technically they were probably right, but the Local Government back in those days, it was pretty bland, it didn't have such words like *community services* anywhere near it, so it was unusual, and to give him his credit it was Russell Arland who initiated that.

OH: And I think out of that was the appointment of a first Community Development Officer?

ML-S: That's right, Paul was our first Development Officer. He'd been one of the contractors, and when we had enough justification we actually made it a permanent position, called applications, and he got the job, so he was based in the Planning Department for a long time.

OH: Which is an interesting feature as well?

ML-S: Yes. I mean there was no separate community area. I mean there were Health Inspectors, and there was obviously a relation, and over time that's what happened, it moved out of Planning and became more broadly based in Health, but yes, initially it was seen as a function of the Planning Department.

OH: You spoke earlier about going overseas and the research that you undertook in City Planning Departments in various cities. And it was in relation, I think,

to Action Plan No 31, about planning information systems. You provided a report and there were three main areas of focus that you thought were important for the Council to consider, and I'm wondering if I can just refresh your memory with each of those, and whether you could comment?

One was the relationship between land use and transport, and the need to coordinate policy decisions between Transport and Roads.

ML-S: I think if you go back to the most early Planning lectures, it's almost like Planning 101. You need to be aware that you can't plan for the uses in isolation. You need to have a transport system which is integrated with that. I mean even just as the last 30 Year Plan by the Government, they've been talking about transit-orientated development. It's the same argument, you can have high densities along public transport corridors, so this emphasises the fact that … and so many studies have shown that it works, that you'll get an uplift in development within … and it starts tailoring off after about three blocks, so along a transport line, whether it's trams or trains or whatever, you will get more people happy to live because they can easily access that higher-speed access public transport to, usually the City centre, not always.

So the way in which you operate land use and transport is really quite critical, and that's quite often been hard at the government level because it tended to be Minister of Planning and Minister of Transport into separate portfolios, and they tend not to talk to each other. For the Local Council, you can actually make sure that they are integrated in terms of at least talking to each other, because both the City Engineer and City Planner report to the Town Clerk. Then you can knock heads together and make sure that there is some integration between what you're thinking about land use and what you're thinking about transport.

It's really interesting actually that just this last Cabinet reshuffle under Jay Weatherill, he has actually brought together Planning and Transport and Infrastructure in one portfolio, so Premier Weatherill actually gets the importance of integrating land uses with transport, so you don't go out and rezone, I mean like Mount Barker, everything is now suburban residential. But there's no public transport being provided, understandably. [Laughs]Which is why they're in strife. I mean people need to think about the implications of a whole lot of housing and if it is going to be a 2-car family with no public transport, or how it's all going to function.

So that's a fairly basic sort of importance of understanding how cities work to integrate land use planning and transportation planning.

OH: And there it is in 1976. The second one is very interesting. You had a proposal for a Think Unit about levels of planning to coordinate planning from day to day to long term.

ML-S: Yes. I mean, in a sense what came out of that was an ongoing Planning Commission from 1977. Planning has always been about the day-to-day stuff

and using the phrases from earlier about the negative approach to a statutory set of rules which people have to interpret to get an approval to do a building, but that context needs to be in *Where are we going as a City?* And that longer-term strategic plan is really a political document. You need the planning advice and the clear thinkers to say: *Yes, that's the sort of City we want, and we should be able to get that.* But how do you actually bring that about?

The 30-year Plan is actually quite a remarkable document for a State Government to have that. Most cynics say the future for most politicians is the date of the next election, because they always argue that unless they're re-elected it's no good to them, so what's the point of putting things down for way ahead if you don't know you're going to be there, so it was actually quite a forward thinking move of the State to have a 30-year Plan.

Go back into these books, we took quite deliberately a view of about five years, but we would have argued, or I would have argued certainly, that that context did have a longer horizon than just five years. I mean, the strategic stuff was to have longer-term goals and aspirations, and what sort of city you wanted, but to translate that into how that can work really gets back to the City/State relations in terms of Adelaide, and indeed most capital cities. How State capitals relate to those State Governments is a critical issue for Australians, not so much other countries, because you can go to one little town of 500,000 down the road, and then you're in another. It's all much more dense.

I mean Europe is classically different in the sense of how that all works, but Australia is really quite unique, perhaps not so much Brisbane because there are other quite major centres outside Brisbane, but if you look at all the other, and possibly Perth, but capital cities have always been so dominate in the State arenas that you really need to get them to work together, so the idea of actually having a sort of thinking tank group of people who might actually be able to do all that, in a sense got converted into the Joint Planning Commission.

I mean George Clarke had had a CADC to inherit from Dunstan, and that had quite a deliberate and short-term focus to be in place during the Planning Study, and was interim. So the issue was, what do we do come the ongoing planning stuff, and the solution, or at least a suggestion, which perhaps was not the best solution but certainly it was put in place, was to have a body of City Council and State Government representatives in one room with a common name, and they were all Commissioners, so that there were eight Commissioners. There was a protocol that the Lord Mayor would be Chairman, but that was never legislated, it was simply an absolute gentleman's agreement that if the Lord Mayor was one of the four Council reps, he or she would chair the Commission. And initially I was a Commissioner, as was John Mant which was also very unusual in terms of some bureaucrats being appointed to that sort of body.

Hudson, who was Minister of Planning, I think it was useful looking at some of the speeches he used when he talked about that in Parliament when the legislation was introduced, did see it as a means of providing that framework for longer-term planning for the City by incorporating City and State members into it. I mean, it started declining, in my view, probably the late '80s, and by 1993 the Government decided to repeal that, so it went out the window. But that was a genuine attempt to look at how the future might pan out through City/State eyes.

OH: And that idea of the thinking - creating new possibilities?

ML-S: Well, I think you need to be able to get out of the day-to-day hurly-burly and be able to put your feet up and actually just think about where things are going, and so you could have a body which could do that. Although it always had a regular agenda, there was always the bit out here that you could say: *Let's have a topic on …* Well, we did used to do actually was actually bring in some experts to talk to us so that there would be, you know, you might get in a visiting … it was almost a precursor to the Thinker in Residence. So if we knew that there were people in town with expertise or some interest in particular things to the City, they'd get them to come and address the Planning Commission.

OH: That's interesting. And the third one I think we've talked a little bit about, it was the need for flexible approach to work teams to set them up with a 'job captain'.

ML-S: Yes, well that actually is what happened. The planners usually provided a project, although I think there were a couple of occasions where a Project Manager came from a different department, but yes, the idea was to have teams which came across. So it was a horizontal cut rather than the silo mentality of the Engineering team would go off and do what they did, and the Planning team would go off and do what they did, so that was a different approach to pulling people together.

It took a bit of time, particularly in that the practical difficulty was if you had a middle manager from the Engineer's Department in a project team, and the team was asked to sign off on something. Then he really wasn't given that authority to say yes, he had to go back up the line of command so that the City Engineer was effectively having to sign off. Some departments were much more flexible, they said: *Yes, OK, if our people know what they're doing, it's a team decision, we can sign off on that.* But the engineers have always been a bit loathe to do that, so there was always a sort of checking back, which delayed the time. But effectively meant that if the Engineer didn't like what was going on, then he would not allow his middle manager to sign off. And then that became a bit of an argument at a high level, which was unfortunate. But I think it did improve over time, I think people understood that it was the way to go.

OH: And as you said earlier, a cultural change?

ML-S: Absolutely. It partly was helped by the way in which the projects were reported on, so rather than having all the reports going to the City Planning Committee, we took the view that there were some of those functions of other committees of the Council which could be the responsible committee. So, in effect we not only spread around the workload, we spread around the responsibility politically so that the Chairs of different committees would have on their bailiwick they were responsible for X and Y, and that was actually quite a clever way of getting the elected members across the board involved, so that there was a division between some of the projects going to Committee X as opposed to some projects going to Committee Y, from a reporting point of view. So the teams would do the work, would come up through the Project Manager, and would be reported to whatever the relevant committee had responsibility for that particular project.

OH: Do you think that Councillors and Aldermen were working harder at this point?

ML-S: From what they'd been used to, I think that's true. I mean there was a lot more work coming up for them to consider than there would have been previously. But we did have 19 members in those days so there was a fair resource to spread it around, and some of them were more involved than others I think it's fair to say. It was still quite hard to get them to turn up to meetings outside of the normal cycle, because most of them were still fulltime businessmen. It was rare to have people who had just retired, but it was pretty much an effective working Council.

OH: For you in those years of implementing the City of Adelaide Plan, what were the major challenges?

ML-S: I suppose the main one was in fact bringing about that sort of culture change that instead of having other departments being able to do what they'd been used to doing for years and years and just getting on and doing it. They were having to think in new ways and have this new group of people who were clearly seen to have some influence, but had a different approach to things, so to bring about that change was important.

It was also important to establish some good working relationships with the State Government agencies which were relevant to the City. I mentioned E&WS and their regulations about sewers and trees was a major issue.

The Transport Department was interesting because I personally got on very well with Derek Scrafton who was the Director-General of Transport, but the way in which the State was still really not funding public transport as well as it might, and there was still a really strong car lobby. So there were ongoing discussions about the transport implications for the City, which is again common today, still the issue about the tram link from where that's going to go, I think it's sorted out, pretty much sorted out in terms of the route. But there's no commitment from the government to funding it for the foreseeable future, so how you get that brought about is, to say the least, interesting.

OH: What about when the leadership in terms of Lord Mayors who changed? How did that affect the kind of work that was going on with the implementation?

ML-S: Generally in my City Planner's days I think I was really lucky. Bob Clampett was the Lord Mayor when I came. I personally got on very well with Bob, he was a real gentleman, the old school. The best work was probably then with John Roche, because Roche understood the whole Development Planning System. And he and I were effectively working as a team with a political and admin arm. And it would not have come about as easily as it did if it hadn't been for Roche being the right person in the right place at the right time, I'd have to say. He was very influential in getting all that done.

The next Lord Mayor was George Joseph. That was actually, I won't say difficult, but it was harder because George had not come up through planning. George was a lawyer and a very independent individual, not part of the old Adelaide Establishment. He had a lot of friends in the Development community, and so they were basically on side about the way in which the Plan was going to work. But in terms of running the Council and the Committee Meetings, and I got on well with him, but it was a different, it wasn't such a decisive leadership I think it's probably fair to say.

He was then followed by Jim Bowen, who had been one of the movers and shakers on the CADC, and I mentioned earlier Jim was very keen on trying to resolve the Heritage debate and put that to bed. So he was really quite influential in terms of setting up the Heritage Committee to work through the buildings which should be listed, but as I said earlier his motivation was then: *If you're not on the list then that meant to the Development community you didn't have to worry about getting it through the system, because it could be demolished.* That was clearly the intent, but it was important from our point of view because it started off the whole philosophical debate about that.

Jim Bowen was followed by John Watson. And at that time I became the Town Clerk, so I changed hats from being the City Planner to the Town Clerk, and I got on extremely well with John Watson who was, again, a gentleman. He was a medico from North Adelaide. He'd been actively involved in the City planning, was one of the first Councillors put up from the North Adelaide Residents' Society, so he had all the background and understood the importance of planning in North Adelaide, and the importance of working through with the community, where we were going. But the main advantage that occurred at the time, he was a personal friend with David Tonkin, who was then the Liberal Premier. They'd been at school together, at medical school together at Adelaide University, and were personal friends, so after a couple of weeks Lord Mayor Watson suggested that it would be a good idea to have a meeting with the Premier.

That's actually what started the monthly meetings between the Premier and Lord Mayor, and was only supported by Heads of the Premier's Department and the Town Clerk. So four of us used to meet monthly, and rotate between

the Lord Mayor's office or the Premier's office, sometimes in Victoria Square, sometimes were sitting down at Parliament House, but it was always very nice when it was the Lord Mayor's turn. The Lord Mayor would make sure that the appropriate orderly with white gloves came in with silver service cups of tea, and showed the Premier how we could entertain.

OH: It sounds like it was a good experience.

ML-S: Yeah! Just to round it off, just talking about the Lord Mayors, so that was who I met with as the City Planner, but then after Watson, it became Wendy Chapman, so she was the first Lady Mayoress, or rather the first female Lord Mayor. (Get the terminology right!) And then it was Jim Jarvis, and then Steve Condous, and then finally Henry Ninio, so those were all the Lord Mayors.

OH: And we can talk a little bit about your role with them when we talk about your appointment as Town Clerk.

To come back to finish off about the City Planner, what would you say in those seven or so years were your finest achievements?

ML-S: I suppose, actually getting the City Plan in place from the Planning Study. It did take a lot of hard work and effort, both politically and administratively to convert what was known as the *Red Book* into the *Blue Book,* and put in place a whole new different set of planning rules for the City of Adelaide, and setting its long-term direction. Within that it was certainly the importance of re-establishing a residential population, having a drawn line in the sand about stopping the declining residential, to then put in place some projects like Angas Street, which we did ourselves, like running architectural competitions for housing, like working with Newell Platten who was the Chief Architect of the Housing Trust, and that was an important element. Stretton had made the important point that the Housing Trust had owned no property in the City in 1972, because they were set up to develop greenfield sites, like Elizabeth and wherever, and Alex Ramsay was a player as Head of the Housing Trust at the time. And basically he said: *Look, we can't afford to build in the City because for X dollars I can build you two houses in Elizabeth and only one in the City, my budget-wise doesn't do that.* So that was an important aspect of what we were able to achieve by the Council using the land subsidies from all that land we bought from the car parks, to actually say: *Well yes, if you develop the housing on those sites, we will subsidy the land value so it's economic for you as a Housing Trust.* But the trade-off was the design issue, and that's when Newell Platten and I worked really closely together to make sure that what the Trust was building was of a design which didn't stand out as traditional public housing. I mean, they'd never built tower blocks like New South Wales and Victoria. And they did buy up individual cottages, so they spread the Housing Trust tenants through the community, and the ones which they did build, Playford and Manitoba were excellent. Today I'd still defy people to drive around and say: *Well yes, that's obviously public housing.* It's not, I mean, it's good quality designed housing which just happens to be Housing Trust tenants.

So I think to be able to re-establish that residential population, perhaps not as fast as we'd liked, but at least the ground work was put in place for that to happen, and to put in place a planning system which I think was viewed with really quite some innovation and as being different, but the intellectual solution of having a set of rules which you could deliver a particular building, that if you as a developer, wanted to go above that and do something extra, then there was a very sophisticated system whereby the Council could go to this new Planning Commission and get a concurrence to waive the rules, which is effective or something, so: *We've got a set of rules, if you just want to tick a box you can get your approval. If you want to go beyond that and the Council thinks it's of merit ...* Then there was a system in place which allowed you to get a building, and so the argument was to get the public benefits from that, a developer would get a different sort of building, or a bigger building and more floor space, but it was a trade-off, but it was a really clever way of achieving some public benefits to the City by allowing bigger developments on particular sites, and that's still viewed, I think, as quite a sophisticated planning system.

Unfortunately, I mean it all changed in 1993. I mean I just think it was really sad – I understand all the reasons – but Adelaide became part of the lowest common denominator approach to the planning by the State in 1993, and all of those sorts of differences, and the argument was: *Why is the City different?* Well I think that fundamentally it is different, because it is the CBD, but the other Councils never liked that being treated separately. I mean you can understand the Local Government's view and you can understand developers' views saying: *Hang on, I've got to learn two rules, one in the City, and another set of rules outside the City. Why is that?* And so the government caved in and said: *Yes, we will have a common system.*

OH: Going back to your achievements as the first City Planner for the Adelaide City Council, would it be true to say that the City Council was playing a different kind of role within the community because of the City of Adelaide Plan?

ML-S: I think that's a fair comment. I think the community, because they'd been actively involved in the Planning Study and putting the Plan together, they understood that the Council was playing a different role than it had previously. I think that Councils previously had been, certainly the establishment when the sort of people who were the Council, but it was pretty much roads, rates and rubbish, the old standard three which they did well. But the City was in decline and the whole of the south east and south west had been rezoned for light industrial commercial, the automotive repairers, the offices, were taking over from the residents, and that was going to lead to the old classic American donut city, there would have been no residence in the square mile if that course of action had been followed. North Adelaide would have always remained residential but the square mile would have been completely denuded of any residents, and you can't have vibrant cities. People aren't going to go into the City at night and do things, so you need a

daytime population who are living there at night to have all these cafes and vibrancy, which is what central cities should be all about, so that was the City I think recognised that that was, all the public recognised the City Council was going to have a role in that to make sure the City was alive. Otherwise we would have all packed up and gone home at that time.

OH: I'm interested to know whether you think that the amendments to the Local Government Act, which extended the franchise and the entitlement to vote for everybody, was a coincidence that it happened at that time?

ML-S: I don't think so. The community generally throughout the world I think was getting concerned about representation generally and how it was being perceived. I think the Labor Government saw it as really an acronym that there was such a preponderance to property owners being able to cast so many votes as individuals, so if they had a lot of people therefore it was not a very democratic system.

It also changed in the Upper House. From Playford's time there'd been an amazing gerrymander about the size of rural versus metropolitan electorates, and I think there was a whole lot of things came together. Steele Hall at the State level was really quite important in that. He was a man of principle who stood up for the change which brought about the change to the Upper House. Following on from Dunstan they'd always had it on their agenda to change the nature of the Adelaide City Council. It was perceived as *the Establishment* by any other name, and linkages to the Upper House, which they resented, and so I think there was quite a deliberate move, and by 1984 it was obvious how they were going to do it, change to the nature of the Local Government Act and the Legislative Council, so that it was inevitable that change would flow through eventually.

OH: To finish off the interview on a less professional point, you had been in Adelaide with Ida and children for seven years. How did you find living in Adelaide after your experience of Sydney, by that time?

ML-S: Well, when we came we hadn't got any children. We got married in 1971, came to Adelaide in 1974. It was a bit of a shock I suppose after Sydney, to be honest. We had this really nice apartment in Elizabeth Bay with views of the Harbour, 24/7 King's Cross up the road, two minutes walk, a nice walk every morning through the City and Domain to work in the Queen Victoria Building. So Adelaide was clearly a different sort of city altogether.

We did make a conscious decision not to live in the City, even though the residential push was in the City, and that was deliberate. I mean I think it can be too close to home if a resident and the City Planner is in a position to change things, so there was always a perceived conflict of interest in that. So we thought if we couldn't live in the City we'd live just outside, so we looked around all the inner city suburbs and saw what we thought was a really nice old sandstone house in Rose Park. So we bought that and decided we'd start some renovations, alterations, which we started, I think in 1976, so we'd been there about two years and then started some changes.

Our first son was born in 1979. And at that time we decided we needed to make some more space available, rather than selling and moving, we really liked the location, so at that point we put our second storey on the house. And my daughter was born in 1982, just after I'd become the Town Clerk, so that was time to put in the swimming pool. By that time, I think we'd decided that the five or seven year timeframe in Adelaide had changed to being a much longer term: *this was where we were going to have the family and bring up the kids.* So we certainly made a lot of changes to Rose Park over the years until both kids left home. And then we never went upstairs and never used the swimming pool, which is why we then moved into the City.

OH: Thank you, Michael, thanks for the interview today, and I look forward to the next one.

End of recording

THIRD INTERVIEW WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL LLEWELLYN-SMITH
RECORDED BY MADELEINE REGAN

in the Adelaide City Council, Adelaide
on Friday 20 April 2012

Transcript of third interview (20 April 2012)

This is an edited transcript. Two sections on pages 75 and 76 have been withdrawn in agreement with the interviewee. The original and complete transcript will be available in September 2022.

Oral Historian (OH): Thank you, Michael, for agreeing again to the interview.

At the end of the previous interview, you talked about the completion of your role as City Planner, and then also the decision that you and Ida made to remain in Adelaide, but I wanted to take you back to two issues regarding the City of Adelaide Planning Study.

The first one is about the use of Park Lands, and in particular the focus on what George Clarke called the Torrens Valley, and he had a notion that that was the most 'magnetically attractive' part of the City. And by the time that the City of Adelaide Planning Study had been completed, the Festival Theatre had already been built there. And I'm just wondering if you might make some reflections about the use of Park Lands in terms of the controls that the Adelaide City Council was able to have at that time.

Michael Llewellyn-Smith (ML-S): Sure! Overall the Park Lands are under the care control and management of the Adelaide City Council, that's the legislative position. However, almost from the very beginning the Council saw that the State Government viewed the Park Lands as effectively free land for them to develop various functions. In the early days there was a significant inroad through the railway being established, and obviously the railway station as well as the track, so quite a large chunk of the western side of the Park Lands were taken up for that. But then there were institutional uses proposed along North Terrace, and I think it's interesting in the way in which the Council of the day dealt with that.

They were supportive of legislation, for example, to establish the university and the museum and the art gallery, and ultimately Parliament House itself, because they viewed those as public institutions, so when legislation was introduced by the Parliament to exercise their prerogative to take land away from the Council, then that legislation was supported by the Council through the Parliament, through the contacts they had in the Upper House. That was

the political reality which the Council used.

However, over time the Government also viewed the Park Lands as being available for other functions, and they were things like an E&WS Depot on Dequetteville Terrace, and the most controversial during my time was certainly the ASER development, which was the casino and the hotel and an office building. The Council vehemently opposed that because they saw those uses as being commercial, and therefore should be more appropriately located in the commercial areas of the City, that is south of North Terrace, rather than the institutional areas of north of North Terrace. But ultimately the Government won the battle because they got the legislation through the Parliament, and so those buildings existed.

Going back to Playford's time there was the establishment of the Adelaide High School in Park Lands, and the Council opposed that even though it was an educational use they saw schools as not being something that should be in Park Lands but should be in the City proper, and just recently there's been an extension of that, but agreed to by the Council, just in he last couple of weeks, that it's a relatively minor extension but it is an alienation of some Park Lands.

Going back to Dunstan's time, he actually introduced a report by Ken Tomkinson to actually identify areas of the Park Lands which had been alienated by the State Government, and which could potentially be returned to the care control of the Council, and that was a very forward thinking thing to do at the time. Some in particular were identified which were regularly available, which was this E&WS Depot in Dequetteville Terrace. There was something like 2,000 workers there, it was really a light industrial complex in the Park Lands. And it was agreed that that would be moved out into other locations, and the Government did revert that area to Park Lands, but simply retained the Valve House, so the heritage Valve House is still there and visible from North Terrace, but the rest of the area was reverted.

In more recent times also some E&WS up the northern edge of the Park Lands near the police barracks, has been reverted to Park Lands, so the government, in fairness, has taken some of its functions out of the Park Lands and reverted them to Park Lands use, but in other cases it's proceeded with specific legislation to take more land away from the Park Lands and it's a constant battle between the Council and the Government over the nature of the issue, the nature of the land use which is proposed for the Park Lands.

There's certainly going to be some ongoing debate about the Riverbank project I suspect. I mean that is the part of the Torrens Valley we talked about, and the one at the moment which is obviously very current, is the bridge being proposed to link the Adelaide Oval to the southern side of the Torrens. Now, the Council has been very supportive of the Adelaide Oval redevelopment, and certainly it's recognised that to solve part of the movement … all the pedestrians needing to leave the ground after a match or

a function of some sort, there does need to be an additional crossing of the Torrens. But that still will require Council's approval because it's taking off and landing in public Park Lands. So it will be an ongoing debate between the Council and the Government about the design of the pedestrian bridge and the impact on the Park Lands. And that really is a design issue because obviously the big bridge is there all the time, it's only going to be essentially in use for some limited periods when all those people are trying to leave the ground after a function.

So there has been a long history of what's easily called the alienation of the Park Lands by the State Government but the Council, as I said, has taken different views depending on the nature of the use proposed in the Park Lands as to whether or not it will support it or oppose it.

OH: It's interesting, isn't it, because I was thinking as you talked about Parliament House itself being built there, the City Baths had also been there? Would that have been considered a public amenity for the Council?

ML-S: Yes, I think that's fair to say that the Council viewed the City Baths as a public amenity, a sort of sporting activity in the Park Lands, which it's always supported as various sporting uses for the public, and that was lost when the proposals for the Festival Centre were put in place.

The Festival Centre in itself is interesting. The original site for the Festival Centre was up in Carclew in North Adelaide, and the Council was actually acquiring a lot of land in North Adelaide to put the Festival Centre in that location. And quite a lot of the land had been acquired and was already being demolished when there was a change of heart by Steele Hall actually, who was Premier before Dunstan, and the beginnings of opposition in North Adelaide about the traffic implications of having such a major use in North Adelaide. And that's one of the reasons that Carclew is in State ownership, that that was transferred by the Council to the State. They'd actually bought it off the Bonython family, so the Carclew Art Centre was actually the original home of the established family of Bonython's, and it was going to be demolished, which is amazing when you think about it, but that's where the Festival Centre was going to go, and then Dunstan, interestingly, originally opposed the Festival Centre in the site that it's currently situated, but Steele Hall had taken some advice from, let me think, there was a committee of three, certainly Russell Arland, the then Town Clerk, Stuart Hart, the Director of Planning, and Colin Hassell, the architect. They'd gone on an overseas study trip paid for by the Council and the Government to look at Festival Centres. And when they came back they had a much broader view about location and the size of the building that was needed, and it certainly wouldn't work in North Adelaide, and that was the preferred site, and Steele Hall pushed that with legislation, but then with the Council support, and even though Dunstan had opposed it when he came to be Premier after that next election, he decided that he would then support it, but it was already, so much work had already progressed to put the Festival Centre where it is, so that he

became a big supporter then. So it's been an interesting history of legislation to remove items from Park Lands.

OH: With lasting kind of impacts.

ML-S: Sure, and once the land has gone and something is built on it, it's very hard to revert it, but not impossible.

OH: Like the grandstand in the Adelaide Oval. Thank you, Michael.

The second item that I wanted to ask you about in relation to the City of Adelaide Planning Study was about the Hutt Street redevelopment. I noted that for George Clarke, the Hutt Street precinct, as he called it, was to be quite an important focus, and I wonder if you can comment on that.

ML-S: Yes, he saw it as the means of getting a neighbourhood centre and it was related to the redevelopment of the South East as a residential area, that if the residents were going to be encouraged to come back to that location, then there needed to be a focus in Hutt Street of a neighbourhood centre in whatever way that was going to be developed. To be honest, not much happened in terms of the street itself for a couple of years, but then in the early-80s or mid-80s actually, a local Councillor got elected, who was both a resident and businesswoman, and she put together a reference group as to what actually might be done to Hutt Street itself, and persuaded the Council to carry out a major redevelopment of the street itself in terms of the brick paving and the planting of trees and the whole way in which the street itself was structured, that is the public realm. But the Council never took any action in terms of the private sector uses either side of the road itself, but certainly was encouraging appropriate uses to continue. And there was a Hutt Street Precinct Association formed as a result of that, and they've been quite active over time, but the actual changes to the street didn't occur until around 1990, when we did put in Plane trees and all the traffic calming situations. George identified it as an early priority but nothing much happened for quite a few years, and then a particular Councillor took the initiative.

OH: Thank you. We're going to now switch focus to your role as Town Clerk, City Manager, CEO, from 1982, and I'm wondering if you can tell me about that appointment and how that came to be.

ML-S: [Laughs] I said earlier my wife and I decided that we might look at Adelaide as a longer term future than just the five or seven years which we'd originally envisaged when I came as City Planner, and so I'd started looking at opportunities for other employment, to be honest, because I didn't think being City Planner ad infinitum would be all that satisfactory. Obviously there would be a time when I'd really be thinking about what else to do. So I started looking at other options, which were either reverting to academia or working for the State Government, or as a private consultant, or just what the options are.

One of them which occurred to me was Russell Arland who was the Town Clerk, was approaching retirement, so I thought I'd at least put myself really

just as an option to be in a position to apply for that job when the opportunity arose sometime down the track. In those days it was actually a closed shop. The government had a system of registrations for Town and District Clerks, which you actually had to hold to be able to be appointed, so it was a formal qualification to be able to hold the office, and that was in the Local Government Act.

OH: Was that something that was in other States as well?

ML-S: Not all States, but most States did have a limitation on who they could appoint to be the … I mean it's the old English system which primarily were lawyers, which is why they still wear wigs and was a legal position in Britain which got transferred to the Australian system.

To get this certificate I think from memory there were 13 individual topics and there were courses run by the Local Government Department, and most people would do them obviously part-time. I mean the traditional is you join a Council and you work your way up through the sort of Clerks positions, and take these exams when you could and there was quite a movement between different Councils. It was quite common for a Deputy Town Clerk to be appointed as a Town Clerk with another Council. I mean that was the almost traditional system.

So I looked at those options and I think of the 13 topics – I mean by that time I'd got two Masters Degrees and a lot of other qualifications – so I sought a whole range of exemptions which they said no. I think in fairness they gave me exemptions from 4 of the 13 topics, so I decided I'll struggle along, and was basically doing 1 topic every 6 months, which is what you could do. And then Russell Arland did retire, but they appointed a fellow called Jack Measday, and so I thought: *Oh well, that's it.* And I didn't apply for that position at the time because I hadn't got this qualification, so it seemed to me pointless applying when I wasn't qualified for the job, but then Measday really only was here less than two years – he was not a well man – and I did keep studying. And when Measday decided to retire early I decided I do now do need to apply because otherwise who they appointed next is likely to be there for a long time, and by that time I'd then completed nine of the 13 topics, which was a bit more than I'd got when Arland retired, so I thought: *Well I'll put my hat in the ring.*

There was a long debate, the Council set up a committee to look at all the applications obviously, and I think it got down to, well I know that there were a total of four internal applicants and I honestly don't know how many external ones there were. The other internal ones were the City Treasurer, the Deputy Town Clerk, and someone called the Commercial Director. So there were four internal applicants, and over really quite a couple of months there was a long process of the Council of deciding who to appoint, and ultimately they decided that they'd choose me, but I still hadn't got the certificate. So the process was they actually had to reply to the Minister for Local Government to get a specific exemption from the legislation to be able to

appoint me, so that was a fairly interesting position to be in, but the Minister who was then Murray Hill, he agreed to the appointment. But he had a condition on it, which was that I had to complete the Town Clerk Certificate within two years, which was an interesting position. So I actually kept going and did these four remaining subjects, one every six months, for the two years, which fortunately I passed.

It's always been an interesting question, if I'd actually failed that whether then they would have thrown me out at the end of the two years, but a couple of years later that restriction was taken out of the Local Government Act, and it was at that time where they really got rid of the titles Town Clerk and District Clerk, and just left it as Chief Executive Officer, but with the Councils having the ability to choose what it wanted to call its Chief Executive, and that's still the case.

So my appointment as Town Clerk was somewhat controversial because obviously there were applicants, including the Deputy Town Clerk, who did have a certificate to be able to practice. I didn't have one so that caused a stir amongst the Local Government community, and the other more interesting thing was that Town Clerks had traditionally been appointed for life. I mean once you were there, that was it, but because I was, well at the time I wasn't quite 40, and so I think one of the concerns of the Council was I could be there 25 years, and that was something which they had a problem sort of coming to terms with.

That issue got sort of fed back to me by some political route and so: *Well, I really don't think I want to be there 25 years anyway.* So what we negotiated was effectively a five-year contract with two rights of renewal, so it was effectively a 15-year appointment, and when the politicians were aware that I'd be happy with that sort of approach, that seemed to clinch the decision in terms of me compared to anybody else, but that also caused an enormous stir amongst the other Town Clerks then in existence, the whole idea of being appointed on a five-year contract as opposed to being appointed permanently, because they obviously became quite fearful that that would become the trend, which in fact it has. And so I was not the most popular new Town Clerk on the block when I started because all these other fellows viewed me quite suspiciously. I had come from a city planning background rather than the more traditional one coming up through the ranks, or a legal background, and someone not having the certificate to say I could practice, and being on a five-year contract, so it was a fairly controversial beginning to my position.

OH: Your appointment was from the end of 1981, I think, December?

ML-S: Technically from the 1st January 1982 … but I was appointed in early-December [1981] but from the.

OH: How did you manage that situation with the controversy?

ML-S: I think the first thing I did was to actually invite in to lunch all the metropolitan Town Clerks, and just introduced myself. I took them out to

lunch, I think we went to *Chessers Cellars* actually, so all the, I forget how many there were at the time, probably 19 or so metropolitan Councils, and just introduced myself and said: *Well, you may not like it but I'm here, and this is who I am, and I intend to be a good Town Clerk, and I'd appreciate any advice.* And in fact that worked quite well, in particular a guy called Graham Diamond from Prospect became a bit of a mentor in terms of being a Town Clerk.

I mean there was a Local Government organisation. It was called the Institute of Municipal Administration in those days, and there was actually a secretary, it was a guy called George Payne, who had been the Town Clerk of Unley, and he also began to take me under his wing in terms of knowing how that side of the system operated, and in fairness, the Deputy Town Clerk here, who was John Williams, that was the unsuccessful applicant, but became quite a strong supporter. I mean he came to terms with the fact that he hadn't got the job which had been his life's ambition, so recognised that. But he became a very good resource to have within the management team. I restructured the organisation and had him actually heading up the Office of the Lord Mayor and Town Clerk, but when I went on leave it was actually interesting.

There was a split between the statutory functions which he automatically did, and the management functions which the former City Treasurer, who had been one of the other applicants and he became, as part of the new structure, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, so under me it was split into a Deputy Town Clerk Statutory, and a Deputy Chief Executive Management, so when I went on leave they shared the load in terms of which aspect, so whether it was a statutory position or a management type position, and that actually worked quite well. And that went on for quite a few years until John retired. I mean, I changed the structure regularly every couple of years actually as a matter of course.

OH: In my research I've found a copy of a letter that you wrote to employees at the Adelaide City Council, just as you were appointed, and there were a couple of things that I think are really interesting. You say that you think that at that time that the corporation needs to have a simple Statement of its objectives, and this was the Statement: *The aim of the Adelaide City Council is to serve the needs of the community, to make the City a better place in which to live, do business, and enjoy leisure through the effective and efficient use of its human and financial resources.* In creating a Statement like that, how were you moving away from what had been?

ML-S: That's a good question. I think what I inherited was a fairly rigid hierarchy of departments and absolute control by the Town Clerk of how that was put in place, little contact with certainly the blue-collar workers down the line, and I mean I just took the view that as an organisation there were efficiencies which could be achieved by a restructuring into a lesser number of departments. Arland's position I think was almost sort of *divide and rule* because there was such a large Executive Committee, and I actually made that

point as part of my application to be appointed, that if I was appointed the Council could expect there'd be a significant change to the administrative structure, and a different approach to dealing with resources, so they knew what they were getting when they appointed me, so it wasn't sort of out of left field. And coming out of that from my Planning background, I think using the nature of the City was obviously from the Planning background. I mean, it's really a succinct summary of what the City Plan was all about, to make it a better place for all of those things, so that wasn't sort of original in that sense. It was a development out of the original Planning Study of George's, and the other City Plan which I'd been responsible for first of all putting in place, and then the next version. So it was probably a combination of my sort of philosophy about the City itself and the management stuff which I had developed in the Planning Department, and earlier in Sydney's Planning Department, a different approach to dealing with not the autocratic decision making from above, a much more sort of consultative approach to how to do things.

OH: So the previous image and model of a Town Clerk had been very authoritarian?

ML-S: Absolutely. In fact had some interesting stories that Brigadier Veale was a fairly obviously high-powered army officer ruled, and I've got quotes from other people that he really ruled this place with a rod of iron. He was a very dominant figure. He used to go to Council meetings and there was very little put in writing. He'd actually tell the Councillors what to vote for. He'd just stand up in the Council meeting and say: *Well, this is the issue, and this is what you need to vote on.* It was very hard to take on Brigadier Veale I understand.

OH: Was he the predecessor to Arland?

ML-S: Yeah, and a very influential person. He was previously the City Engineer, then went off to war and had a distinguished war record, and came back to be the City Engineer, and then became the Town Clerk. And a lot of the early planning about the freeway and car parking can be attributed to Brigadier Veale's views about the City, which were understandable at that point in time, but something of a disaster in terms of the MATS plan and freeways all spreading around Adelaide, but that's another story.

OH: In that letter you say to the employees that if this can be achieved, that the changes will be needed within the corporation, and you talk about the full discussion and agreement so that consultation that would take place. One of the things that I find interesting in the letter is that you express an intention of being able to get around and meet people, and followed Jack Measday's example, and you'd like everyone to call you Michael. Was that a shift?

ML-S: Oh certainly. As I say it was very hierarchical up to Russell Arland's time. Measday did try and … I mean he was interesting character, although he was also an engineer. [Laughs] But not a well man. I mean, he probably should not have taken the job. On the other hand, from my point of view, it was probably good that he did because if I'd applied after Arland I probably

wouldn't have had any hope because of the certificate issue. So by him being there for two years enabled me to progress that, and then him leaving earlier put me in a good position to apply at the time. I mean Arland not only sort of left his office, you know, he didn't go walking around the troops, so I saw that as a real issue in terms of getting out and about. So I mean, I'd go down to the Depot regularly and sort of meet guys, not on my own so much initially but with the Head of Departments, so I'd actually use that as a means of them to introduce their staff to me. And all the meetings I had with Heads of Departments, I mean I'd go to their office rather than have them come to mine. I mean, we used to have meetings with Arland on a one-to-one basis, but always the Heads of Departments would go to sit in his office, whereas I took a different view because just walking there you had to go and say *Hello* to people as you walked past, and what have you.

I mean I also did interesting things, like I'd go and spend a day with the parking inspectors, and put on a jacket so people didn't know who I was, and be allocated to a parking inspector, and spend the day with him or her just walking around the City and seeing what it was like to be a parking inspector, and appreciate first hand the frustrations of the job, so yes, I had a rather different view of how to do the job.

OH: And informed somewhat by your Planning background and that notion of that social planning?

ML-S: I think that's probably true. I mean the background through planning and understanding of the City really are about people, not just people working for you but the way in which a City operates, just to get out there and see those things happening, simple things like loading zones and streets in need of upgrading. I used to take a little recorder with me and other days I would just walk around the City by myself, literally walk, and take notes, and say: *This street needs fixing … something has gone wrong here or something wrong there.* And so I'd dictate all this back when I came back, and there would be a whole series of actions going out to Heads of Departments. I used to do that I think once a quarter, so they'd know when I'd been out and about because all these little requests for things would suddenly hit their desks.

OH: If you were doing that as Town Clerk, that wouldn't have had to go through processes of Council, if you were suggesting small …?

ML-S: No, no, no, they were things which I had powers to get done myself. Well, occasionally there might have been some more major things which would have converted in to a report to the Council to suggest some changes or something, yes, but on balance they were the little things which were noticeable and could be easily fixed by the Administration.

OH: Michael, when you took up your role, having had those previous six or so years as the City Planner, what was on your agenda apart from that really big question of the restructuring?

ML-S: Just to make sure that the City Planning process would continue in the five-yearly cycle, so that was an important consideration, although I deliberately

probably pulled back. I mean, there was a new City Planner appointed, but the first structure was to create some three directorates, so there were three Directors and then there were, in each of the directorates, there were three departments, so the City Planner reported to a Director of Planning and Development, along with the City Building Surveyor, and I think the Controllor of Health Services. So it was structured on the basis of a much smaller executive team, so it was me, the Deputy Town Clerk, who ran the Office of the Lord Mayor, and my three Directors, so that was a major structural change which meant that in my view there could be better coordination at that Executive level, rather than having meetings of 13 people trying to coordinate all that.

OH: So previously there'd been …?

ML-S: Yeah. I mean as City Planner I was one of 13 Heads of Departments, so that was a very, I just found that not a good management model, and so that was, as I say, I'd actually done a draft which I'd included in the ongoing discussions, and there were a lot of interviews with the Chairman's Committee, so I actually tabled that as part of my application. I said: *I'm making it perfectly clear that if you do appoint me, this is the sort of structure I'd want to put in place.* And in those days that did require the Council approval.

Nowadays it doesn't actually, the Act was changed in, I think, the late-80s, which gives the Chief Executive the power to organise the structure as he or she wants to, so it's not a Council decision anymore, and it also changed in as far as the Council appointed Heads of Departments, which was, I found quite a strange position to be in, and that's been changed as well. The only person the Council now employs is the CEO, and the CEO is responsible for all the other appointments and all the structure under him or her, so that was a significant change. But I inherited that position where the Council or the Chairman's Committee at least would appoint the people that were reporting to me, and I found that quite strange, but it was the system.

I mean, it was put in place and it did have some hiccups obviously. Some of the Heads of Departments were then not all that happy because they were effectively reporting to a Director. They were all internal appointments, and my three Directors were, in fact the former City Engineer became Director of Works and Operations; the City Treasurer became Director of Finance and Administration, and the Commercial Director became Director of Planning and Development, so they were all internal appointments, so three Heads of Departments got elevated to Director level and the others got restructured in that context. I mean that for the first, I think it was three or four years, it began to work effectively, but I've always taken a view that those sort of structural changes need to be regularly reviewed themselves and seeing how it's working, and it related to how the committee structures of the Council were operating.

I mean it went through various cycles over my time as CEO, different structures, and before I left we had got rid of the directorate system but we were down to six Heads of Departments. And I always had a view just how many people you can have sitting around a table where you can have sort of argument. I mean it's a group dynamic thing to be honest. I find that number quite useful, I mean seven people, but more than that I was beginning to find a bit of a problem.

OH: When you became Town Clerk, Lord Mayor Watson was in office?

ML-S: Mm, that's right.

OH: How did you report to him? What were the structures?

ML-S: We had a daily meeting.

OH: A daily meeting?

ML-S: Yes, first thing every morning I'd go and see him. There's an interconnecting door between the Town Clerk and the Lord Mayor, which has obviously been a useful arrangement since day 1 of the way the Town Hall was set up, because that relationship is fairly critical. And obviously the political leader of the Council and the leader of the Administration need to work together closely.

John Watson was a real gentleman, a doctor from North Adelaide, and in fact he was responsible for instigating the monthly meetings with the Premier, because he and David Tonkin were fellow students at Adelaide University in the medical field. Tonkin went on to become an eye specialist and John had his practice in North Adelaide, so they were personal friends, they were both members of the Adelaide Club, and so when I became Town Clerk he thought that we should start a more regular City/State relationship, so he instigated those monthly meetings between the Lord Mayor and Premier**.** But in terms of how he and I related, usually first thing every morning, and quite often we'd just have a coffee together and discuss what was going on, on both sides of the fence, and what was likely to be coming up politically and what were issues I'd need to alert him to, so that was really quite a close working relationship from day one.

OH: Following on about the City/State relations and the regular meetings, you also as Town Clerk had a regular meeting with the Head of the Premier's Department. Is that right?

ML-S: That was part of this meeting, there were four of us would turn up, so the Premier with his Head of Department, and the Lord Mayor with the Town Clerk, so there were just four people at these meetings, and they rotated between the Premier's Office and the Lord Mayor's Office, so the Premier's would either be in Parliament House or in the State Admin Centre, depending on the occasion, but the Lord Mayor's was always, when it was our turn to have it, it was always in the Lord Mayor's Room, which was I always thought quite interesting because the Lord Mayor in those days had an orderly, so the orderly would come in with a silver tray and white gloves and serve proper

tea, whereas you went to the Premier's Office and it was not exactly so structured. [Laughs]

OH: Were there other rituals that belonged to the role of Lord Mayor that you observed at that time?

ML-S: It was still very formal in those days. I mean it was seen as the figurehead and the civic leader in terms of the range of civic receptions and the patronage of a whole range of organisations which went with being Lord Mayor, so it was a much more formal and image situation as the Civic Leader of the Council in those days, sure, and we still wore gowns to Council meetings. I mean the Lord Mayor would wear the full regalia for each Council meeting.

OH: And you as Town Clerk wore?

ML-S: Wore my wig and a morning suit. Yes, wig and morning suit and a gown. That was what Town Clerks wore.

OH: How interesting!

Michael is showing a photograph of himself in the wig and the formal attire.

ML-S: It's quite something, isn't it?

OH: I was going to ask you a little bit about the areas of responsibility in your role, and how you divided your focus because you obviously were looking at the internal restructuring, but your role would have also been a very public external role.

ML-S: Yes, I suppose that was something a bit new to me. The position of Town Clerk in the broader community was obviously something which was different from being the City Planner, although I'd established a lot of networks in terms of real estate and planning consultants and architects around town in that sort of professional sense. But as the Town Clerk there was a much broader expectation to be in the community, and that got off and just involved going to particular functions and addressing meetings of a various sort, and I suppose dealing with the media more.

As I said Watson and I used to have daily meetings and there's a long history of some antagonism between the Adelaide City Council and *The Advertiser* going back to the 1930s when Bonython was both a member of the Council and Chair of The Advertiser Board, and I never figured out what it was but it's always been a fairly difficult relationship, and in those days *The News* was operating, the afternoon paper. So quite often if there'd be adverse stories or some media issue in the morning, Watson and I would decide whether it was political or administrative, so who was going to run with it, and that was a useful device to decide, and quite often then we'd use the, there was a particular reporter called Garth Rawlings who I'd known quite well from Russell Arland's time, and we would give him the stories, because most of the Council business was still in-confidence in those days, none of the sort of public meetings, particularly all the committees were all had in-confidence.

I mean the public could come to the Council meetings but by that time all the

decisions had effectively been made, but the Town Clerk had authority to release information sort of *in the public interest* I think was the phrase used, and depending on how Watson and I had decided we'd deal with it, I'd quite often provide Garth Rawlings with a story to run in *The News,* to counter what had appeared in the *'Tiser* in the morning. That quite often made the *'Tiser* even more annoyed of course because [laughs] and *The News* would be given scoops and exclusives, and anything we wanted to get out we'd use *The News,* so that was an interesting little exercise. And we also instigated what we called in those days actually a press conference after committee meetings because there was literally no knowledge, and they'd come in to the Town Clerk's Office and initially, I mean a whole lot of people, I mean with tape recorders and even some TV cameras would just come in and I'd just sit and talk about what the Council was up to, so that was a new role.

I did do some media training as to how to deal with all that, and was constantly being rung up by people to give instant feedback on radio. Jeremy Cordeaux quite often on his program would be a regular ringer-upper and wanted to know what was going on, so that was certainly a change for me in terms of dealing with the broader media.

OH: You mentioned the committees of the Council, how was there a structure for you as Town Clerk to know what was the discussion and decisions in committees?

ML-S: I would go to each committee even though the particular Head of Department or one of the Directors would have the carriage of the reports going to the committee, but I would always be there as an advisor if necessary, and to provide some political input.

What I found useful, and it was certainly a skill developed over time, that if there was quite a lot of political debate and not supporting a particular direct recommendation from the staff, was to get a feel for what they might support. So I actually became quite cluey at providing a form of words which had picked up the essence of the discussion, which could then get adopted as the committee's view to be adopted to go to Council, but that was really a skill developed over certainly the initial few years to get that feel for how the politics were working around the table, and in those days there were elections every two years, so there was a constant new source of members coming in, and that always changed the dynamics, and the Lord Mayor changed every two years as well, so after Watson it was Wendy Chapman, so the first lady Lord Mayor was interesting.

OH: The continuation of your close relationship was a feature with each Lord Mayor?

ML-S: Absolutely. I certainly took the view that it was important for that to work, and to recognise that individual Lord Mayors had different styles, but at the end of the day the Lord Mayor doesn't have any executive power, I mean they couldn't tell me what to do but obviously if they put their mind to it they could orchestrate enough numbers on the Council to do that, so it was

important to understand all that. But yes, I had a really good working relationship obviously, initially, with Watson, who was very supportive of settling me down into the role.

I did get on with Wendy and her husband Tom particularly. We had a lot of interesting discussions on a variety of things. The fact that she was the first Lady Lord Mayor was certainly different from the organisation's point of view. In one sense, obviously we didn't have a Lady Mayoress so [laughs] that was never quite clear what she called Tom, her husband. But I think actually she did appoint one of the Councillors as the sort of honorary Lady Mayoress, Rosemary Boucaut. She, as one of the Councillors fulfilled that role because in those days there was quite an important Lady Mayoress's Committee, which was a charity raising, I mean they actually raised a lot of money through that committee for various charities, and so that was interesting.

The next Lord Mayor was Jim Jarvis, I got on very well with him because he was a, in his own field, was a media relations, public relations consultant, so he particularly knew how to pull strings and use the media to the Council's advantage, and again a very close working relationship with him. He had a major role in sort of opening up the Town Hall, provided the first of the Town Hall Open Days, to have booths in the Town Hall proper to invite the public in, and by that time there was a beginning of a change about the Council having to be more open in its dealings, so the committee meetings were actually open to the public, as opposed to being in-confidence.

OH: And how did that change come about?

ML-S: There was a legislative change in 1984 to the Local Government Act, which brought about a lot of significant changes. It changed the property franchise in voting; it changed the requirement to meet in public unless there were reasons to go into confidence, so it reversed the onus on that system. It got rid of the title Town Clerk; it got rid of the certificate questions. There were a lot of issues which arose from that legislative change.

OH: Would that have been just in South Australia?

ML-S: Or yes, the Local Government Act of South Australia, yeah.

OH: And was it mirrored in other States, that kind of change to openness?

ML-S: I think it was fairly general across Australia. I forget the different dates but different State bodies had different approaches to how the Local Government Act tended to operate. South Australia has always been a bit different because of the sort of clout of the Adelaide City Council versus the State and its dominance in that. I mean Brisbane is a different example because it's a metropolitan government, but in terms of the other capital cities, Adelaide probably did better in terms of that relationship with the State than Melbourne or Sydney did, but each of the States has their own Local Government Act and there are certainly differences between the States.

OH: And then the next Lord Mayor was Steve Condous, and I understand that there was quite a controversy about his second term?

ML-S: Yes. I mean that, the agreement which actually goes back to Bill Hayes's time was, and it was an important agreement, that everyone would do a two-year term and then gracefully retire or at least go back and be in one of the Aldermanic positions. So that was what … he established himself so that Hayes did the two years and then did come back as an Alderman, and Clampett followed that. Clampett was the Mayor after. In fact, Clampett was the Mayor when I was appointed City Planner, and I got on very well with him in that sort of capaCity. And then after Clampett it was John Roche, who was particularly important in terms of the City Planning arena, and then someone called George Joseph.

Now what was interesting about George Joseph is, although they were two-year terms, they were technically two times one year, it was a one-year appointment, which was quite odd, but that's what the system had in those days. So George Joseph decided, because he liked being Lord Mayor, he said he wanted to do one extra year, and the tradition was that the senior Alderman would be the next Lord Mayor, so it was all very hierarchical. I mean, you started as a Ward Councillor and then you became an Alderman, and you became the Senior Alderman, and it was then your turn to be the next Lord Mayor, so it was a progression, you could see your way going through, and that's what Hayes had put in place.

Now, the advantage of that system was that the Lord Mayor of the day could pretty much call on the support of the Council for what he wanted to do, because the rest of the Council knew that he was only there for two years and it was their turn coming up, so you didn't have a lot of friction within the Council itself for any initiatives that the Lord Mayor wanted to carry out, so that was the positive to that sort of system, so it was all very gentlemanly, but it worked.

So George Joseph decided he wanted to do a third year, and the next Senior Alderman was Jim Bowen, and Bowen said: *No, I'm going to run because we've got this agreement of two years.* And that was a very interesting election because Jim Bowen beat George Joseph, so the incumbent Lord Mayor was beaten, and the reason primarily was that the rest of the Council came out strongly and supported Bowen as the Senior Alderman because they saw the advantages of the limited terms for their own batons in their knapsacks, you know, once you've broken the system then who knew what was going to happen.

So that became relevant to the next time around, but then Wendy Chapman … well after Bowen it was Watson who did the two years and retired, then Wendy who did the two years and retired; Jarvis who did the two years and retired.

Condous came in unopposed after Jarvis, and by that time the government had made it two-year term, not one-year term, so it was a bit more sensible, but then Condous decided he wanted to have another term. Now that was controversial because the rest of the system had kept going for all this period of time that you did your two years and then left, but it did depend on the Senior Alderman actually being in a position to carry the day on behalf of the rest of the Council. In the first case, without wanting to comment on the merits of that particular individual, it was not such a strong candidate, and so Condous actually got re-elected as Lord Mayor for another term, and that did cause some real difficulty with the rest of the Council because he had broken the mould and broken the system, so all the other Councillors who had aspirations for Lord Mayor could see that this was going to affect their chances, because instead of having to wait two years and move up the system, who knew how long incumbents then might remain.

The first two years of Steve were fine, but then the second two years, and there was quite a change on the Council floor as well, so that then became quite a an issue and so it was more difficult for me because there wasn't the harmony between the rest of the Council and the Lord Mayor, certainly initially. I mean it died away a bit, but it also saw the beginnings, and I think coincidentally, and not because of Steve personally, the beginnings of factions in the Council on what became heritage and development factions. So you really were as a Councillor, getting on the Council to be part of one team or the other, and that did cause some difficulties for the Administration because we were really being caught in the middle, one side or the other would always blame us for something going wrong, so it became a bit of a no-win for the Administration unfortunately.

OH: And was that played out in very major ways?

ML-S: It was, and Steve then ran for a third term, so another two years, and during that period that was really difficult because for the first time the heritage faction had the numbers on the Council, so of the last two years of Condous's Lord Mayoralty, it was a particularly difficult situation for the whole Council and for the Administration, particularly the Planning Department, because it evolved out of the Heritage Study and more buildings wanting to be put on the list.

And there were some very important new Councillors like Jane Lomax-Smith, for example, she got in on that bandwagon, and others like Jacqui Gillam and Mark Hamilton became the Deputy Lord Mayor and perceived as leader of the heritage faction. So you had a situation where you had a Lord Mayor who was offside with the majority of his Council. And they made life quite difficult for him as Lord Mayor, but also for the Administration, because any reports, as I say, one side of the other would perceive that we were favouring that particular cause, which was very difficult to manage, and it became quite difficult in the Council Chamber, and quite vicious. I mean, there were even some Councillors who would immediately after the Council meeting, get on to their lawyers and say: *Could they sue Joe Blogs* for what

had been said. I mean it was really difficult, and there was a particular controversy between Henry Ninio and Mark Hamilton. I mean they were really very difficult times. And Ninio started a campaign to get himself elected as the next Lord Mayor, because by this time Condous had decided he wanted to go into State Parliament, so finally there'd be a vacancy at the Lord Mayoral level. But Ninio was then perceived as the leader of the development faction, and they ran a serious campaign against the heritage listing, and the whole election in 1993 was really going to be about the future of the City and heritage, and the State Government was beginning to buy into that.

There were views in Cabinet that if the Heritage faction continued the way it was going, the City would be in aspic. It would just be preserved as it was, and they didn't want to see that, so there was a lot of politics involved in the heritage/development debate at the beginning of 1992. And there were classic things like the House of Chow being demolished, and I mean those things had led to different views about the future of the City. Even the Aurora earlier on, I mean, that had caused some disquiet obviously, and led to the formation of the Aurora Heritage Action Group, so heritage and development were really quite major topics for a long period of time.

OH: In terms of your role as Town Clerk, I was wanting to explore that a little more about your attendance at Council meetings, because I understand that in your term it changed a little.

ML-S: Yes, as I said basically Brigadier Veale and certainly Russell Arland and Measday, they were the only officers of the Council meeting. It was very structured, and so as the Town Clerk you really had to be across all the issues because you were the only person there. And that seemed to me that was a very difficult to be across all the quite detailed issue. Particularly if some, and there were almost a different sort of breed of Councillors who could be quite difficult at asking sort of questions, so I certainly thought it would be valuable to have my Heads of Departments attend Council meetings. I mean, they always were in the committee meetings but we were beginning to get situations where committee reports weren't automatically going to be adopted by the Council, it could be another debate in the Council. So for me to be across all that detail, across all committees, all reports, just seemed to me unrealistic. So by having Heads of Departments attend, I mean I'd still run the Council meeting, sitting next to the Lord Mayor, and provide that high-level policy advice, but if there were detailed questions about something coming out of a committee report then I had my Heads of Departments in attendance at the Council meeting, to be able to answer those detailed things, so that was a change.

OH: And was that accepted easily?

ML-S: Oh yes, I think the elected Members recognised that it was unrealistic to expect one individual to be across all that sort of detailed stuff, because if I didn't know the answer I'd have to say: *Well I'm sorry, I'll have to take that on notice.* Which would delay it, whereas if the City Engineer was there and could provide the answer then it would solve the problem. So I think it was

recognised it was actually a sensible thing to do to have the Heads of Departments at least present in the Council Chamber.

OH: Another strand that you talked about in terms of the City/State relationships … at what point did that begin to change in your term?

ML-S: Probably the last term of Condous, his last two years. The City of Adelaide Planning Commission had been set up in the 1976 legislation, so it started in 1977 in practice, and I was actually a Commissioner when I was still the City Planner. But then I resigned when I became Town Clerk, so didn't attend any of the Planning Commissions. So there was a parallel stream between City/State and the Planning Commission, as well as the ongoing meetings between the Premier and the Lord Mayor.

It worked particularly well with Jarvis. Jarvis got on personally with John Bannon very well, and for the review of that City Plan there was a really high-level Review Committee established outside of the Planning Commission, which involved the leading members of Council and Jarvis and co-chaired by Bannon, and with the Minister for Planning, Minister for Transport, and Minister for Local Government.

OH: Why had that been set up at that time?

ML-S: Because Jarvis saw that the review of the City Plan really needed to be at a high level so although we had a five-year rolling policy, 10 years was probably more fundamental review than a five-year one. And so he persuaded Bannon that the State should be more actively involved at a higher political level in the review of that Plan, and those meetings were all held in the Queen Adelaide Room. So the Lord Mayor sort of hosted key members of Cabinet on a regular basis, to provide political input, and staff from both levels of government would be in attendance. But it was a really important role for the Government to be seen to be playing in the review of the City Plan, and that was unusual for that to occur.

I don't think it has ever occurred in any other capital City, that level of interaction between City and State, and it was about the personalities. Bannon and Jarvis and me, and the Head of Premier's continued to meet regularly, but this was a specific task for a sub-committee of Cabinet effectively.

OH: And do you think that the outcome for that Review was different because of the input?

ML-S: It certainly was recognised by the State as being of a different quality, and it had a lot to do with the urban design as well, so this goes back to the early '80s, well mid-80s actually, and so the plan coming out of that, which was the 1986-1991 Plan had a lot more urban design issues in it as examples, but also a recognition about the importance of public transport. So yes, there were, I think, some important initiatives taken for the 1986-1991 Plan as a result of a high-level State involvement than had been the case previously.

OH: Was the George Clarke Planning Study still seen as being a foundational document?

ML-S: Sure, yeah, they were all built on, it was a very logical suite of documents coming out of that. And they were all known by their colours, which was interesting in itself, so we had George Clarke Planning Study was the *Red Book*, and the 1976-1981 Plan was the *Blue Book*, and then 1981-1986 was the *Green Book*, and then we had, I think, it was actually grey, and the last one was 1991-1996 which was the *White Book*. So you can actually see them all lined up, and they're all different colours deliberately. Every five years there was a major review, but the format was based on George's, even to the extent of a square size format was repeated, which was interesting, so we actually deliberately used them as a suite of documents to show the evolution of how they were structured was all consistent. So that was quite important.

OH: Michael, I don't know where this fits in your years as Town Clerk, but I've been told that you developed a City of Adelaide logo.

ML-S: Yes. [Laughs] Everything was originally just the Coat of Arms which was the sort of crest, but for use by the Administration, I mean it was all very grand and we retained it for the members and the Lord Mayor, but I thought there needed to be something different for just the standard letters going out by the Administration. And we'd also discovered strangely enough that the flag that was sort of flown outside the Town Hall was initially just the Coat of Arms on a white background, there was no Coat of Arms for the City. And so John Williams, the Deputy Town Clerk, and I had a discussion about that. We actually went off to the College of Heralds in London, and they authorised the sort of standardised flag which we still have, which is the four quarters on blue and red, and so there is a document which says this is the Coat of Arms of the City. So I thought that could be stylised into a simple logo, so that's where that came from.

OH: Can you just describe what makes up those four areas?

ML-S: Goodness!

ML-S: Yes, the Coat of Arms has the kangaroo and the lion supporting a shield, and above the shield is a crown, and then an arm holding almost an axe of some sort. But there are four elements to the shield which is a sailing ship, a sheep being sort of held in almost a hammock, a wheat sheaf, and a cow's head. And those four elements really reflected the original agricultural foundations what the State prosperity was built on, and the ship obviously has importance in terms of the First Fleet arriving here, etc. But I was effectively to use that in a way which just made it a square, four squares in an abstracted form really, and just put the City *of Adelaide* under it. So it was really not very [laughs] imaginative, but a much simpler logo than using the whole coloured device, and that continued for many years until I think Susan Law changed the logo to what we still currently use, which is the big A with the dots around it. Yeah, it was just a sort of simple thing to bring about a change.

OH: I guess about accessibility of an image for the Council?

ML-S: I suppose, partly a change of image in that while the Coat of Arms clearly has some really important historic significance, and is seen in that way, but a slightly different, not quite so formal perhaps, an informal way of looking at

what the City was, so it was, yeah, it had some of those connotations. I mean it is also, Jarvis, going back to when he was Lord Mayor, he also used it when it was the State's Jubilee. He added some sort of flowery additions to it, and we had a special Coat of Arms just for that anniversary year, so that was something which he added to, but that was only in place for a short period of time.

OH: So you were obviously involved in some quite large public events then as Town Clerk?

ML-S: Yes. I mean there were significant celebrations for 1986. Kym Bonython was Chair of the State's Sesquicentenary Committee, but obviously the Council was actively involved in a whole lot of those. But then it was the subsequent year, which was 1990, because that was the Sesquicentenary of the Council itself from the 1840 celebration of local government in Australia. And so there were a lot of activities in 1990 during Condous's Lord Mayoralty, so yeah, that always involved Lord Mayors and Town Clerks doing things together. Civic Receptions, I mean if the Royals came to town, the Reception was jointly hosted by the Lord Mayor and the Premier, because the State doesn't actually have a large reception hall of any sort. So the Town Hall was always seen as the venue for that, which meant there was a joint reception, so you'd get lined up to meet the Queen or the Pope or various dignitaries coming through South Australia would come to the Town Hall for the Reception. Prince Charles and Di, so yes, I met a lot of interesting people in that context.

OH: And returning to another aspect of your role about the restructuring, and I guess the human resources aspects that you were responsible for, can you tell me about some of the trends that were occurring in your period as Town Clerk?

ML-S: I suppose it was a recognition that there needed to be much more consultation with employees, and involvement in decision making so it wasn't all top/down and by directive. Certainly that was the case that I inherited, and worked quite hard to change that, although initially when I did take some fairly strong measures, like saying: *Well, I'm going to restructure and I'm not consulting about that because that's what I need to do.* But when it was in place, from thereon in, it was seen as a means of communication and team building too, across departments.

I mean, there was quite a bit of a silo mentality. And so, one way of breaking that down was to establish teams from different departments with a Project Leader from not necessarily the Planning Department. And I also used to have quarterly meetings with the next level down, the sort of Divisional Heads sitting under them, so you'd have Directors, Heads of Departments, and then Divisional Heads, and that hadn't been done before. So once a quarter that whole extended management group would meet and we'd have an open agenda, I mean they could raise anything they'd want so that, you know, there was feedback from different levels. I mean there were significant changes in the workplace as to how decisions were made and who did what.

Obviously change of command are important and responsibilities and accountabilities were still in place, but I think it was a different attitude to how places were structured and the old hierarchy was not so important.

OH: Were you managing large numbers of staff in that time?

ML-S: I think we got up to about 1,000 actually. It was a large workforce because we had a large external workforce under the Engineer's Department. In fact, it became a bit of an issue in terms of when we moved the Depot. It was a political debate on our advice to take the Depot out of the Halifax Street area, because that was part of the City Planning renewal of the residential area. But it had been the Council's Depot for years and years, and the chimney was part of the furnace which was used for all of those sort of functions. So building a new depot meant we acquired some land in another Council area, which was an interesting decision in itself. So we moved the Depot out on the basis of creating a large space to provide some residential renewal, which was an important policy position, but going back to the Depot there were some concerns, and certainly the Council area into which we moved, some of the Councillors thought that that was a bit of an unjustified expense, or is an expensive way of solving our residential problem, so there was some criticism about that, but I think on reflection we probably could have looked at us providing more of a service to the other Councils in terms of that workforce, sort of contracting out or even adding a joint operation for the Depot to service a larger area, so it was seen as a bit of an overkill in terms of the size of the Depot, but it was the land which we bought, it just happened to be useful and converted. I mean it's still there, it still is the Council Depot.

OH: And that's at Mile End?

ML-S: At Mile End, mm … But that certainly was an issue about how many people we employed out of there and the efficiencies of the Depot operating *for* the City, but not from within the City.

OH: In your term I understand that there was a focus on reducing numbers as a cost saving measure?

ML-S: Towards the end of the term that was one of the more interesting issues when Ninio became Lord Mayor. Going back just a stage for a moment. The 1993 election was going to be a major confrontation between the heritage and development factions. At the end of the day, for a variety of personal reasons, Mark Hamilton, who was perceived, as I said, to have been leader of the Heritage faction, would have been standing as Lord Mayor, and Ninio as the leader who evolved from the development faction, would have been the two candidates. And so there would have been a really interesting election about heritage versus development at that time, and Ninio put together a group of Councillors on his ticket, as it were. But at the last minute Hamilton, for personal reasons, decided not to stand, and it did surprise me that nobody else on that side of the equation came forward.

I mean, there were some of the other Councillors who could easily have decided to run for Lord Mayor, but for whatever reason chose not to, and

probably it was a bit late in the piece. I mean, Mark really did decide not that far before calling for nominations for the position. But Ninio put in place a team, and they'd run a very aggressive campaign about the City and development, and so they had a whole range of candidates running in all the Wards, and at the Aldermanic level, so Ninio got in unopposed because Hamilton didn't run. Ninio became Lord Mayor in 1993, but his team had the numbers, I mean, he had enough new Councillors and some existing Councillors to have control of the Council.

And so, you know, I attempted to start working with the Lord Mayor.

[… sentence deleted]

… I was having trouble establishing a sort of workable relationship with Lord Mayor Ninio. I mean, personally he was fine but it was just his sort of style, and he had the numbers on the floor of the Chamber so he could orchestrate the Council's position. So fairly early on, and as part of this push of the development community, it was about saving rates and changing the nature of the Council, and some quite aggressive Councillors were on that particular – new Councillors elected – were on that bandwagon. And so they said they wanted to save I think roughly in terms of figures $5 million out of the administrative budget, that was the sort of policy position which they put to me. So we engaged some consultants to work through a major review of the workforce, and I mean it had grown over time and the usual, there was a problem and you'd find some money to put on some more staff to solve that, and we'd also started moving in the sort of Community Services area, which had not been common to Councils. And so there was certainly not a large department, but there was a Director of Community Services and there were Health and Community people working for the Council, and some of the Councillors didn't think we should have got into that. I mean, they just didn't think that was Council's core business, and so were quite aggressive about not employing such people. And it was done with the agreement of the unions so it was, you know, a fairly difficult time. But everybody knew that there was a political end result of reducing some money and the only way we could do that was by reducing staff, so the end result was quite dramatic. I mean, the consultants worked hard and I put together an internal team of people to actually work with the consultants and with the unions to go basically a review of all functions, operations, staff, from all levels. And coming out of that there was roughly 100 positions we identified, and we'd done the deal with the unions about redundancy pay so that if a position was targeted that would be clear. So there was an agreement about what the payouts would be … so it was all understood. But I think it was a bit of a shock to the staff generally to think that 100 positions would go, and so it was actually quite difficult dealing with that size reduction. But my position and the consultants' recommendation was that they were targeted redundancies. So there was a particular job that could be absorbed or got rid of, there were individuals who were targeted.

It was a bit like Toyota at the moment, but for these reasons they were done for the position not the individual. But the position would go, and obviously we had policy positions about retraining or absorbing, people could feel when other people retired for other reasons so there were a whole lot of strategies in place, which to me made a lot of sense. But they were definitely targeted because that was the whole point of the exercise from my perspective.

[Section deleted]

So actually the Council made a decision that there would be an open invitation to accept redundancy packages.

Now, I fought very hard about that because my whole position was they were targeted for quite constructive reasons. I mean we'd been through a whole process to arrive at that. The problem about having an open redundancy policy is that the good people will take the package because they know they can get another job, and the positions we were trying to get removed and moved on would stay because they wouldn't feel they would. And I had a major disagreement with the Council, which was one of the reasons I decided to retire myself because I just saw that as not being a smart thing to do for the Corporation. I just couldn't understand the politics of it. I mean we would have achieved the $5 million or whatever it was saving, by going down that route.

[Section deleted]

But even so to then revert from a targeted position to an open: *Let's see how many people we can get rid of,* was just politically understandable. But from my point of view of the CEO, not acceptable. I mean I just found that it was not a smart position for the Council itself to be putting the City in.

OH: And like for the culture of the organisation, is that what you mean?

ML-S: Well yes, the ongoing workforce. I mean, the people that really should have been moved on because of the result of an objective assessment of the roles would not leave. And more to the point, we would lose some really talented individuals because they would take the money and run because they would get other jobs. So it was about the nature of the workforce that would remain if that approached continued.

OH: A very critical kind of time in an organisation?

ML-S: Yeah, yeah. I mean it was a difficult time anyway. It was a difficult Council to deal with, who were very pro-Development, almost Development at any cost, so there were issues about the planning scheme. And we'd actually had the State Planning Review, that was the other factor which was relevant. In 1993 our separate legislation had been repealed, and so the City Plan was just part of the State system again. And that was the lowest common denominator

and I was concerned about that from my former Planning point of view. I think it was a dumbing down of the City's approach to planning because it had to fit in with a system which applied throughout South Australia, so it really was lowest common denominator. And I mean I understood the reasons. I mean, Bannon had put in place a major review, and a lot of developers had said: *Why do we have to learn two rules? Why do we have a different set of rules in the City as opposed to, particularly the inner suburbs? What is so different about the City?* I mean, I think there are arguments as to why the City is different but the government hadn't accepted that and by that time the Council had certainly lost its clout in the Upper House, so it had no means of opposing the legislation. But in any event Ninio and the Development faction were actually happy to lose the separate system because they were pro-Development and the development lobby was saying: *No, no, let's get rid of all that.* And so there was a whole combination of factors in 1993 which I think the City has never recovered from quite frankly. I mean it's only now that we've re-established a better working relationship with the government over the City Plan. So there's been a different sort of approach to things since Ninio was Lord Mayor and the City legislation was repealed.

OH: Michael, that seems like a good point at which to complete this interview. In the next interview there are many issues that I think are on a list for raising, but thank you very much for today's interview.

ML-S: A pleasure, thank you.

End of recording

FOURTH INTERVIEW WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL LLEWELLYN-SMITH
RECORDED BY MADELEINE REGAN

in the Adelaide City Council, Adelaide
on Thursday 3rd May 2012

Transcript of fourth interview (3 May 2012)

Oral Historian (OH): Thanks, Michael, for agreeing again to another interview.

We completed the previous interview talking about a number of issues that were relevant in your role as City Manager, Chief Executive Officer. And I thought that we could begin this interview by focusing on some more of those, in different contexts.

So, the first one is just to ask you to make some perhaps final comments about the five-yearly reviews of the City of Adelaide Plan. Perhaps if you could just describe how that review schedule worked.

Michael Llewellyn-Smith (ML-S): Certainly. Part of the negotiation with the State Government to convert the first Planning Study, which George Clarke had done, into the first City Plan, was an arrangement whereby there was a clear recognition that you had to have a balance between certainty and flexibility. So the negotiations centred around an appropriate timeframe, and five years was a reasonably standard way of looking at plan reviews, and John Mant and I thought that that would be appropriate to continue.

So the first City Plan was dated 1976-1981, and the theory was that for the first three years of that Plan the rules would remain constant, and in the fourth year there would be the beginning of a review process, taking into account anything which had occurred during the first three years which required some change. And then in the fifth year there'd be an extensive public consultation process about those changes based on professional advice or community input, or whatever the circumstances might have changed, and then that would go through and be adopted as the next Plan, so you then got 1981-1986.

I think it was also recognition that the first review was really quite a minor one because the major work had been done in the Planning Study, so that the first review was not that extensive. But then the one five years later was really quite a major piece of work because then clearly the City is changing and developers were saying: *Well this hasn't worked.* Or the community was

saying: *There's something wrong here,* or *Some land uses might need some changes.* And the other major input, was any court decisions which might have required some updating of the planning rules and regulations, so it became quite an established pattern. So there was a suite of plans every five years.

They all went by, in a sense, nicknames. They all had a different colour, quite deliberately, for the cover, and so the Planning Study was always familiarly known as the *Red Book*, and the first City Plan, the *Blue Book*, and then it was a *Green Book*, etc, so every five years there was a new City Plan adopted by the Council. The process was obviously integrated with the State through the Planning Commission, so the State's input was through the joint body, so it was very much a cooperative approach. And I suppose the major one was when Jarvis was Lord Mayor, and John Bannon was the Premier, because that actually brought about a major reference group on which there were Cabinet Ministers; the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Planning, and Minister of Transport, as well as the Premier himself. And so that did bring about quite a major change to the next version of Plan. But it was an accepted five-yearly practice, so three years of quite stable rules and regulations, different issues arising during that three years to bring about some reasons for change, and then a consultation process requiring the Council, at the end of that period, to have a new Plan adopted.

OH: And were Action Plans still part of that way of understanding the Plan?

ML-S: Oh yes, the overall Plan was always in, in a sense, three distinct bits. There was the legislation itself, so there was still the strategic approach which was the Objectives and Policies of where the City was going and what was to be achieved. And then the Principles of Development Control and Regulations, which were the statutory ways in which those could be implemented. And then the identification of projects which would be Action Plans or Action Programs – went by a variety of names – as the positive means of actually bringing about some implementation.

What was quite interesting in that was that quite a few of those were actually taken on board through the Planning Commission by State agencies, so they weren't all necessarily being run by the City Council. There were quite a few joint projects where the lead was actually a State agency.

OH: And an unusual way for a City to be managing its development?

ML-S: It was unusual, the City/State relationship was really very good during that whole period through the joint body and through a working relationship between the Lord Mayor and Premier of the day. So it was a very … I mean Adelaide is a City/State, I think it's generally recognised, so it's a bit unfortunate if the City and State relationship isn't working, and that really had come about because of the influence that the City Council had historically been able to exercise through the Legislative Council, in terms of legislation affecting the City. And it just had been a really strong relationship over the years, certainly emphasised in 1972 between Lord Mayor Hayes and

Premier Don Dunstan, and then really carried through to the early '90s when it certainly disintegrated. [Laughs]

OH: So it obviously was an effective way of managing the planning for the City of Adelaide, and for the work of the Adelaide City Council?

ML-S: I think so. It provided a very strong framework within which to operate, but it was always an overlap to the internal corporate plan for the City, so clearly there were a whole range of things which the City did not covered by the City Plan. But there was an internal recognition of how that sort of overlapped between corporate planning and City planning. And that was understood by the Heads of Departments, and flowed through to the departmental structures and the project teams which were appointed to carry them out, but also the relationship between that and the State.

OH: And what was the workload like towards the end of say the five-year cycle?

ML-S: As I said, the first review wasn't too bad, but we would build in quite an extensive consultant budget to help, so it wasn't all done in house. The first review was done pretty much internally, from memory, but at the end of the second review, that was the 10-year time program, we did have quite a sizable consultant budget to bring in specialist advisors to assist the internal planning staff to carry that out.

OH: I imagine that would have been quite important?

ML-S: Well, it's always useful to get some external advice, it can get a bit too close to things just doing it all internally, but the large input was always the way in which we went about involving the public in the general sense, people like the Property Council, the State Department of Transport. All those sort of external bodies had a view as to what had happened over the three years, and so during the fourth year when the review was started and inputs were put together, that became quite an important way of dealing with the way in which the City could move forward in its next Plan, so it was a constant renewal. It's really a sort of cyclical approach, but building on what had happened, not just starting afresh. I mean you didn't have a blank canvas, you built on what had been achieved and how we could move forward.

OH: How were residents then involved in that review process in the ongoing cycle?

ML-S: In a formal sense, we used the resident groups quite extensively, but there were a lot of public meetings, advertisements, and public exhibitions. We always had an area, either in the Town Hall, or in some cases rented premises, to have an ongoing exhibition so that people could actually come in and see what was being proposed, so an extensive media campaign to advise people, advertisements in the local press. I think it's changed these days with the sort of social media and people being online. I mean, this was all before the online ability to do things, so it was very much hard copy and images that were able to be presented, and discussion papers written which could be promoted through small working groups or large public meetings, so a variety of devices to ensure that we were sort of covering all bases.

OH: It sounds like it was very comprehensive?

ML-S: Yes, I think that's fair. I mean the elected body of Councillors also used their networks. I mean they worked, I think most Councillors had a support base of some sort, whether they were Aldermen representing the whole City. Particularly the Ward Councillors, they would have different groups they'd be aware of, so it was used through a political network as well as the administration doing things formally.

OH: Talking about residents, we'll move to what I understand has been a chestnut of an issue about attracting more residents to the City. In your time as Town Clerk, Chief Executive Officer, how was that approached?

ML-S: A variety of ways really. The major change I suppose was George Clarke's proposal to rezone the whole of south east and south west Adelaide back to residential precincts from what was in the Metropolitan Development Plan, which was having the whole central area zoned for commercial, light industrial, which was, I mean it's easy to say in hindsight, that was a big mistake. But it is a really large piece of land to have been zoned for that single central purpose use. And I could never understand how that had come about or why that was the case.

OH: Can you define that area?

ML-S: It's between the four Terraces, so not North Adelaide but the rest of the City. And that was a major change in the Planning Study to say we need to revert to have residents living in the City, that there needs to be an active residential population. There's some argument as to what the population was at the end of the second World War, it certainly was between 40,000 and 50,000. There's no doubt about that, but a lot of that was quite large families in small cottages.

What happened when the zoning changed in the 60s was, quite legitimately, businesses started buying up old cottages, simply demolishing them for open lot car parks quite often, or putting up commercial buildings, a lot of motor trades moved into the south west in particular. And so there was a real mixture of some residents hanging on, but in a sense being forced out because of the environmental changes, but also people just buying the cottages, and there was never any Housing Trust property in the City, so there was no housing provided by the State public agency. So that really changed in 1972 in terms of the process, but it didn't come into effect until the CADC effectively drew the line in the sand and said: *We are not going to approve any change from a residential use to some other use.* And then the zoning was changed as part of the first City Plan.

Now, about that time the population was certainly down to about 11,000, so there'd been a decline of over, at least 30,000 people who had left the City from its hay day, and so there was a strong push by the City and the State to get residents back in the City. There was a lot of opposition, particularly from the Real Estate Institute, and agents simply saying: *Well it's gone too far,*

you're never going to get people back.

Two things happened. The Council first of all decided to do a demonstration project, which was Angas Court. We owned the land as a Council, and the scheme was developed by my department and the City Building Surveyor did all the working drawings, and it was promoted and sold, and the Council actually made a profit. It was small scale, we're talking about 13, 14 townhouses, but it did actually demonstrate that townhouses were a viable proposition.

Secondly the Housing Trust, through the influence of Hugh Stretton, was persuaded that they should start being a landlord in the City itself. As I said there was no Housing Trust property in the whole of the City in 1972. Hugh Stretton persuaded the CADC and the Council that the metropolitan average, which was about 8% or 9% of housing in the whole metropolitan area was then the SA Housing Trust, and that that sort of figure should be the same in the City. But how that was implemented was an interesting argument in that they started buying individual cottages so that it was spread throughout the City. Also the Council did deals to subsidise the land values so that the Trust could develop in the City.

Part of the problem was, and Alex Ramsay was the General Manager, to say: *Look, if I've got $100,000 in Elizabeth I could probably build three houses because the land value is so low, whereas in the City for $100,000 I could probably only build one and a half, and so why should I develop in the City?* So the only way we could see around that was to subsidise the land value and sell our land as the City to the Trust. And the trade-off was the quality of design, so that became an important negotiating point between the City and State, and it was a way in which we could get housing for all those people who need to work in the City, I mean the cleaners and the drivers. Because they were being, as Hugh Stretton said: *If they were being forced out, then how did they themselves get into the City to work?* And so it was really important to have a working population in the City itself through the Housing Trust.

So that was done through major schemes like Playford and Manitoba, as well as buying up individual cottages scattered throughout the City, and I used to defy people coming from interstate to drive around Adelaide and say that's public housing. I mean you really would not know that it wasn't a private sector development, and that was all about the quality of the design, and that was the trade-off between the Council and the State, to have a quality design but a subsidised land value.

OH: So that was an effective scheme to attract residents.

ML-S: Well then we started trying to get the private sector involved in some private … I mean, it's been a long process and it's still going on. I mean the population today is up around about 22,000, but certainly the capacity is there to get back up to the 40,000 and 50,000, and the recent City Plan is actually

providing those sort of incentives by increasing the heights and densities. And that's part of the government's overall push about a more vibrant City by having more people living in the City. That can only be achieved not just in the residential zones, but by having residences in the mixed use zones, which also adds to the vibrancy anywhere. So it's been a long process from bottoming out in about 1972, and it's been on a steady increase ever since, but certainly a long way to go.

OH: Michael, we've talked quite a lot in previous interviews about planning and the environment and heritage and conservation, but does anything stand out in your time as Town Clerk, City Manager, Chief Executive, in that area?

ML-S: Heritage was always a major concern from George Clarke's plan, where something like 70 buildings were identified, and he had a peculiar name for them, Listings of Environmental Significance, which was slightly odd, and the Council recognised that there were buildings which really should be preserved, and the State was also getting involved through Dunstan himself, and there were classic cases like the distress in the public over the loss of the old hotel on North Terrace. Edmund Wright House was another one which became an issue, which Dunstan actually stepped in and bought. Ayers House was another, so there were some classic buildings around where people were saying: *Hang on, we are actually losing something here, the City needs to be able to retain those.* So they were beginning at the State level of some mechanisms to protect heritage items of real significance. At the Council level it was more the importance of the sort of local issues.

The steps forward were probably, in a major way, done when Jim Bowen became Lord Mayor. He actually set up a Lord Mayor's Heritage Advisory Committee, although his motive was to actually have a definitive list. And then the flip side of the definitive list was to really say to developers: *Well you're safe buying all the properties not on the list, because there is no control over those.* So in a funny sort of way that was an interesting different approach from a Lord Mayor, but he did set up a quite powerful committee, although it was advisory.

Coming out of that, and again extensive public consultation about the sorts of buildings that ought to be retained and why, and that went through a whole range of different planning reviews, and the legislation I think it's fair to say was lagging behind, so the Council introduced an incentive scheme so that the trade-off if you were listed, then we would provide advice as to what could also be available, such as transferable floor ratio, some direct grants. Council did put a sizable amount of money into its Heritage Scheme, which could be drawn on by people affected.

OH: And how effective were those sorts of incentives for people?

ML-S: I think initially it was viewed with a bit of suspicion, to be honest. I mean there were some done, the Observatory in Flinders Street was certainly a case where floor space was transferred to another site but that, for various reasons it was never a particularly successful scheme. But the legislation became the

important in which that could be progressed. And it actually wasn't until the 1991-1996 Plan, where there was actually a regulation, which for the first time did actually list, all the local heritage items.

In parallel with that, North Adelaide was looking at really conservation over the whole of North Adelaide, that was sort of being treated separately. And the whole debate is still not finalised. I mean, there are still discussions at this moment with the Minister for Planning about the last Development Plan Amendment, which the Council has sent to him for Local Heritage Listing. So Heritage has been an important aspect of the Council.

Its operation indeed resulted in the only time there were sort of factions within the Council, during the end of Lord Mayor Condous' time, and the beginning of Lord Mayor Ninio's time. There were distinct factions on the Council, sort of pro-Heritage or pro-Development. It was a bit simplistic I always thought because there were some people who were in the middle and voted on the benefits of the issues. But there were two distinct factions.

OH: And I imagine there would have been in the population of the City and North Adelaide as well?

ML-S: Sure, the residents were mainly pro-heritage, and the Property Council and various developers saying *Well the City will stagnate.* There was a classic phrase used by some of the Cabinet Ministers that they were concerned that Adelaide, or the way the Adelaide City Council was moving, was *to put the City in aspic*, which was fairly interesting. What they wanted to see were cranes on the skyline, and it got quite a nasty political debate within the Council Chamber actually. And that was unfortunate, people became very personal about the other people's attitudes, as opposed to dealing with the issue. So that was not the best way to go at all, politically.

OH: It obviously was, and as you say, continues to be, an emotional issue for a lot of people?

ML-S: Yeah, it is. I mean it's understandable if suddenly you're finding your building is listed and you need to understand what that means. In most cases, particularly at the local level, it really relates to what's visible from the façade. I mean, I live in a Local Heritage Listed house, and the listing was really the front and side façade so what I did internally, and what I could do at the back of the house was not really an issue, so I was able to develop quite extensively on my own property. But some people get quite concerned about it, understandably, so one of the ways which we tried to do that was to provide a sort of an advisory service from the staff. Architect planners said: *OK, if you are listed then this is still what you could do on the balance of the site.* Or *This is what needs to be retained, it isn't a blanket listing for the whole site.*

On the other hand, if it's a State heritage item, then that's a whole different set of controls and not within the Council's purview, that's then dealt with by

the State Heritage Committee. And there's a whole different process if the building is listed at the State level compared to the local level.

OH: Was that then a kind of educational role that the City Council was taking on?

ML-S: I think that's fair to say. We certainly promoted it as an important aspect of the City's character, that the heritage buildings were an important element of what Adelaide was all about. It certainly was seen to be an important element of where the planning system was going to be able to retain buildings within that system, but allow appropriate development as well.

Part of the issue was always what you could do next door, the implications if you had a site which was next to a heritage site, because then the implications about size, scale, overshadowing, became important. And that was a more difficult one to deal with because you are dealing with somebody else's property, not the particular building that's listed, and so there was quite some thought given to the how to try and promote the overall situation.

The Council came in, in 1989, they were concerned more with the Townscape issue, and that was a difficult debate because they were arguing about the character of the whole street, not the individual buildings. But that's actually quite a hard one to control legislatively, and there was a long debate about the importance of Townscape. I mean there was a whole exhibition called Townscape – but what came out of that was a clear message from the Government that they weren't prepared to legislate in that way, but the only way that they would legislate was for Local Heritage Listing, which was individual buildings where you could write into your Desired Future Character Statements for particular Precincts, the importance of character for a whole street. You couldn't actually list the whole street in a sort of nebulous way. It had to be specific buildings, which overall obviously contributed.

So that was a major policy debate between the City and the State as to actually how to control that form of listing, and the Government had a very strong view, based on some sound legal advice I might say, that it's actually quite hard to legislate for character unless you go to the whole conservation zone, which North Adelaide is. I mean that's quite a different process.

OH: Talking about heritage buildings, I understand that in your time the Town Hall was restored?

ML-S: Yes, that was also an initiative of Lord Mayor Bowen. The Town Hall was certainly in need of some major renovations. And the important policy decision was to say that it would be done using the best materials and for the long term, so there'd be an upfront cost but hopefully lower maintenance costs over the years. And it was also split up into quite manageable stages, so quite a long-term process from woe to go as to what was involved. So the main Town Hall itself had a major makeover, the buildings at the sides were renovated; the courtyards were sorted out between the two Chambers at either side, the bluestone was all cleaned on the outside and repointed. I mean, the Colonel Light Room was redone. The Queen Adelaide Room was put back to

its original size. There used to be a Lady Mayoress' Room sort of cut out of the back of the Queen Adelaide Room. The Members' Lounge was converted into space for the Lady Mayoress, and the Members' Lounge was put into what used to be the City Treasurer's Department. And that all was able to be put in place because the Council had built the Colonel Light Centre as sort of an Admin centre.

OH: And that's the tall building in Pirie Street?

ML-S: In Pirie Street, yes, so that was done, actually that was started in Town Clerk Arland's time. Initially most of the floors were rented out to the State Government, but over time that's become the Council Administration Building, and so there's very few offices in the Town Hall complex itself. There are some Councillor offices obviously that weren't around in my time, but yeah, no, the office component was transferred to the office building.

OH: Michael, you mentioned a courtyard. Is there an internal courtyard in the Town Hall building?

ML-S: There are two, one outside the Lord Mayor's Room and one outside the Town Clerk's Room. They're quite small but they were created as part of the filling in of the balance of the space between the Hall and the chambers effectively. If you look at a plan, I mean the Town Hall itself had nothing either side of it to start with. And I mean, there was actually a Price Alfred Hotel on the King William Street frontage, which the Council owned, and it's been incorporated into the Town Hall, and on this side, these Chambers which we're currently in, were also separate Chambers. They were offices, mainly used by the private sector, so over time the Council absorbed all those and linked them up, and what we did as part of the renovation was to create the space between those buildings into usable space, but there was the opportunity to create two small courtyards.

OH: In that restoration, who was responsible for the planning and the design?

ML-S: The City Building Surveyor had architects on his staff, and while the Planning Department provided some input, it was really run by an architect called Andrew Russell. He was the principal architect in the City Building Surveyor's Department, so he took responsibility for most of the design, but we had some specialist advisors as well. But it really was an internal Council administration approach to the whole thing. And as part of that, the other thing which was important at the time was the Town Hall organ.

The organ had become basically unplayable because not much money was put into maintenance. And there was a Town Hall organist who was always complaining. So it was decided that we would actually replace the Town Hall organ, and had a major campaign which was initiated by Lord Mayor Jarvis, and got some major sponsors for the replacement of the organ, and the Council itself put in some money. And there was a public subscription as well, so it was an interesting exercise actually getting a new organ into the Town Hall. Basically competitive submissions were sought from, I think just

British organ builders, I don't think we went to Europe. But there was quite a bit of competition to build a new organ, it's not a very common thing to do.

OH: And why was it seen as being significant?

ML-S: I think the Council had always been aware that acoustically the Town Hall is really terrific for chamber music. And there had been a Town Hall organ, but the importance of having a Town Hall organ in the Town Hall was seen by the Council to be something which should be continued, but all the reports we got was the existing organ was too far gone and we really had to start from scratch, so Council bit the bullet.

Jarvis was very important in that because he did use a lot of his influence with the corporate sector around town to contribute, people like the SGIC but I'd have to go back and look at the plaque. There's a little plaque actually in the Town Hall itself which shows who the major sponsors were. It was about a million dollars, which was quite a lot of money in those days.

OH: And I think when you were overseas in 1984, you had the opportunity to visit the builder, the organ builder?

ML-S: I actually did the interviews in the South Australian Agent General's house in Australia House [London]. So we'd got down to a short list of three on paper, from expressions of interest, and so they all came, or the representatives of their firm came to London. And I sort of, looked them in eye really to try and see if it was people we could work with. So yeah, that was an important part of the process, to talk to the organ builders while I happened to be on a trip to London.

OH: What an interesting assignment.

ML-S: Yeah, it was interesting actually. Yeah it was, different, very different. And yes, the way that sort of panned out in the end was really good. I mean I think the end result was really fantastic. I think the design of the new organ is terrific. I mean it's quite a different design from the original organ but they, I think, did a good job of putting it in place, and we now do have an ongoing contract that they send someone out once a year to just check it's all going in working order and tuning it, and all of those things, so there's an ongoing maintenance now. So hopefully it won't fall into disrepair again.

OH: And what happened to the old organ?

ML-S: I think it's somewhere in Gawler. There's a group of volunteers who did acquire the old organ. It was dismantled and obviously the parts all come apart separately. And it's still, I understand, being worked on, and it's still their intention to make it playable in, I'm not quite even sure where. [Laughs] But once it left the Town Hall we obviously no longer took any responsibility for it.

OH: And is there still a Town Hall organist?

ML-S: Not as such, no. We have a range of concerts and there are now invited organists. There's a network of people who are visiting this country quite

regularly, as well as other Australian organists who might be in Adelaide for a variety of reasons. So we do put on a series of Town Hall Organ Concerts, but now they are promoted by individual organists, rather than actually having a Town Hall organist.

OH: When you were talking about the Town Hall renovations you spoke about two rooms that obviously have important significance, one was the Colonel Light Room. What is that used for?

ML-S: That's the major Committee Room of the Council, so all the committee meetings of the Council itself are held in that room. It's got a lot of memorabilia from Colonel Light, a lot of his personal artefacts I think is probably the right word, and some of his water colours, and it was completely renovated. It was in a terrible state, really a rundown building, and a lot of time and effort went into making it quite a usable, friendly space, and it's still used for committee meetings.

OH: The Queen Adelaide Room?

ML-S: That's the main function room of the Town Hall. What had happened is that the position of Lady Mayoress had become quite an important one over the years, and was effectively a fulltime position for fundraising, charitable committee Chair type person. And the Council provided a secretary and a car and a driver to the Lady Mayoress in the early days, and so the back of the Queen Adelaide Room was actually partitioned off and made into a sort of Lady Mayoress Parlour it was called, which has really detracted from the nature of the Queen Adelaide Room. So as part of the renovations the old Members' Lounge, which was adjacent to the Council Chambers, was relocated to what used to be the City Treasurer's Department. And we created a Lady Mayoress' Room in that space, and therefore were able to remove the old suite out of the Queen Adelaide Room and return the Queen Adelaide Room to its original size and splendour.

OH: And I imagine that would have created a bit of, well quite a bit of interest that a lot of effort had been put into this renovation?

ML-S: There are now Town Hall tours which certainly explain the whole story and history, and I think people do appreciate the grandeur of those rooms. I mean they really are very elegant and part of the history of the Town Hall that they've been restored to their original situation, compared to what was in place in the late '60s, early '70s. I remember when I came to be interviewed to be the City Planner walking down the long corridor, and it had grey lino tiles up the wall, which was not exactly the best impression. [Laughs] So that was all changed over time. The foyer was completely redone and the marble staircase was reintroduced. I mean there were major changes, and it was quite a costly exercise. The whole renovation of the Town Hall was quite an undertaking by the Council, but by spreading it over several years it was a manageable bite every budget to be able to do that.

OH: Michael, talking about costs and budgets, I just wanted to explore the idea of finances, revenue, income, that kind of area, when you were in the role of Town Clerk/Chief Executive.

ML-S: I suppose it was important to look at how the Council values land, because that's what it bases its rate income on. Council has always taken the view that something called the Assessed Annual Value is a better method of rating, rather than a capital value. That's an ongoing debate. It probably does provide a bit more flexibility for the way in which Council is able to look at the rate in the dollar, which is the important aspect, but every year valuations do go up. Obviously there's a usual percentage increase as well as the new development contributing, so it's always a balancing act as to where the income streams come from.

The important aspect the Adelaide City Council has is its commercial operations, which is a bit unusual for a local authority, particularly in the car parking area. The City Engineer in the late '60s, 70s, had a quite strong view that there ought to be a ring of inner City car parks to support a pedestrian core. But it was important in the Adelaide context. Everybody thinks that they can drive quite easily and park at your front door, and shop, and park at the restaurant and eat, just outside, so the philosophy was to create a ring of inner City car parks, a quite noticeable designation of sites. And some of those had been built, but during my time, one as City Planner and one as the Town Clerk, we actually built Topham Street and Pirie Street car parks.

Now, although there's a policy aspect to that in that we effectively had a monopoly over car parks in the early days before the private sector started moving into Adelaide, so the pricing structure which the Council put in place really did determine the ratio between short-term and long-term parking, so the philosophy was always to make short-term parking quite cheap so that people could come in and do business and shop, but not park all day. We'd never seen the car parks as being something to provide commuter parking. I mean that really should be the split between public transport, the all-day person should be using public transport whereas the short term you're never going to persuade people to shop or travel by public transport for that, so it was quite a strong philosophical position that the Council took. But, it also provided a major stream of income.

I mean, the car park revenue was a significant component of the Council's budget, as well for charging on-street. So all the car parking meters provide revenue, but they were also geared to turn over so that people, again, didn't park for very long periods, they were short-term measures, so there was quite a strong input into the Council budget from its parking revenues, both on-street and off-street, but related to an overall philosophy about the City being user-friendly for the short term, but not car parks there for the long term.

OH: So the car parking was obviously a stable way of providing income and certainty?

ML-S: Yep, certainty, sure. It provided a very strong income stream and allowed for growth. The other aspect was always to look at some borrowings, to be honest, so that the argument about long-term infrastructure being funded over a longer period of time, and if you're looking at something which is in place

for 25, 30, 40 years, then you want to be able to spread that burden over that period of time. And the way you do that is by borrowing for it, not by trying to fund it all up front, because then it's an impost on the current ratepayers, as opposed to the life of the project.

OH: And ratepayers, what proportion of income would have been from ratepayers? I guess I'm asking how big a contribution to the overall budget would residents have contributed?

ML-S: The residents were a small proportion of the budget. The major ratepayers, the commercial operators in town, are significantly so. I mean without being precise I think it was roughly an 80/20 split income from commercial to residential, so the residential rate is really quite low. It changed a bit over time. There was a residential rebate which was part of the Residential Renewal Policy, by getting people to live in the City, and you'd actually get a rebate on your rates if you were an owner/occupier, because if you own property and rent it out then it's an outgoing you can put in your tax return. So it's a difference between owner/occupiers and renters, but there was a scheme to provide for a rate rebate to residential owner/occupiers. The commercial ratepayers have always contributed by far the largest share of the Council's income from the rates.

OH: And I guess that's where in the Local Government world, a capital City as a Local Government …

ML-S: It makes it different from all the suburban Councils. I mean the percentage of commercial income in most, I'd say all the other Council areas would be, a majority of their income would be from the residential ratepayers. Obviously they have some commercial areas, but the City is unique in terms of the extent of its commercial interests compared to residential interests.

OH: Do you recall as Town Clerk, City Manager, Chief Executive, whether there were debates about increase in rates, like was that an annual issue?

ML-S: Yeah, it's annual, because the budget has to be set annually, and there's always a debate as to what the rate in the dollar should be, and what impact that will have on development and/or just the whole way in which the services can be provided. I think when you have, I mean the rule of thumb was in the three-year Council, you could put up the rates and the rate in the dollar extensively in the first year, because then that's when all the screams would occur then, but by the time the next election came around, it was sort of kept flatter. So that was a sort of political judgement by the Councillors, usually that that's how they would deal with that.

We now have four-year terms, and I think the factor is still the same. The rate in the dollar was increased last year, this year the rate in the dollar is being proposed to be kept the same, but there will be an increase in revenue because land values go up. I mean there is, in a sense, an automatic increase in the revenue stream, because as values go up, if you keep the rate in the dollar the same, then you still get more rates because of the increased land values.

OH: Michael, talking about land, I'd just like to ask you about it as a chestnut in the agenda of Council. You talked a little at the beginning of the last interview about the idea of the government use of Park Lands as distinct from Colonel Light's vision, but do you remember issues when you were in your role?

ML-S: Yes indeed. The important first aspect, again going back to George Clarke, was supported by Lord Mayor Roche, to try and establish a land bank that was to have a precise knowledge of how many acres there were in the Park Lands, which were then Park Lands.

OH: Was that not known previously?

ML-S: There must have been records, but it wasn't something which was sort of up front and in people's minds, so there was a policy position which basically was going to try and argue that if land was alienated for any new reason, then it had to be traded off against some other site which could be returned to Park Lands. Dunstan brought about a report by someone called Commissioner Tomkinson, who was a Commissioner of the Planning and Environment Court, and he identified throughout the City areas which he thought could be returned to Park Lands, from lands which had been alienated over the years.

OH: And was the benchmark Colonel Light's plan for identifying?

ML-S: No, no, not really because there was a recognition that the institutional uses along North Terrace had occurred, and so you had to take that into account as being a fact of life, and in fact the Council itself had supported legislation through the Parliament, well Parliament House, itself actually. The first one was the University, I mean the alienation of land to provide for the University, the Museum, the Art Gallery, all of those institutions had specific legislation go through the State Parliament, both the Lower and Upper Houses, obviously, to indeed excise that amount of land from the Park Lands. For all the uses which were in the public domain, the Adelaide City Council supported those because they saw the advantage of having them. I mean our cultural boulevard along North Terrace only exists because sort of again a joint City/State agreement that that's what would happen.

But in other cases like an interesting one I found was the high school on West Terrace which Playford excised. I mean you could argue that education was a public interest, but the Council did oppose that because it said: *Well, that's not something in the overall sort of public interest. Is that the right place to build a school? Maybe it should be in the town acres, not the Park Lands.*

I suppose the biggest argument in my time was actually the ASER Development, where the railway station was converted into the Casino, but then the balance of the development was the then Hyatt Hotel and the Riverside office building. The Council vehemently opposed that because the argument was why is an office building going on Park Lands, although railway land as it then was, as opposed to the other side of the road, which was where offices should be. So that was a real argument with the State

Government, and the Government effectively put through special legislation, which it did get through the Parliament, to bring that development about.

So it's been a varied argument over the years, but going back to the original point of Tomkinson's report, there were signs which he identified which the Government did pick up on, and the main one was actually on the corner of Dequetteville Terrace and North Terrace.

OH: I think you talked about that last time.

ML-S: Last time? I think I probably did because that stands out as a good example of changing back to Park Lands, and the recent one is actually up near the police barracks in Thebarton where that's just happened. I mean it's currently being rehabilitated right now back to Park Lands. So there are two sides to the coin.

But the Council tried to keep this record going. Now that stopped so, there is no register of areas Park Lands which you add and detract from anymore, which I think is a bit of a pity. I mean from a perception point of view it would have been nice to say: *Well yes, we are giving up so many acres or so many square metres here, but we're getting it back there.* But that's no longer the case.

OH: In doing a bit of research I noticed that you wrote an article for *The Advertiser* in 1988 called *The Adelaide Park Lands, Colonel Light got it right.*

ML-S: In 1988? That was probably about the way in which the City was seen as an entity, that North Adelaide was part of the overall City, so it's a figure 8 Park Lands about the totality. There were arguments about hiving off North Adelaide to Walkerville, or some other groups, and so the argument was that the City was really the square mile and North Adelaide could be treated separately. So my argument was that Colonel Light's plan was the important bit, which was the exterior of the Park Lands and therefore North Adelaide was always part of the City and shouldn't be treated separately.

OH: That's interesting. Another chestnut is the Central Market. How important was that, say in your time as an issue?

ML-S: It was an issue fairly soon after I became Town Clerk in that there was a Commercial Director of the Council who actually saw that as an opportunity for a major redevelopment. I mean the market does go in sort of cycles and it was looking a bit rundown, so his view was to actually have a major redevelopment of the market. I mean to put a market back there but in a much more up-market [laughs] sense with some other development. Now that caused a real community backlash. I mean it's the market which people like as it is, and so there was a lot of concern about the proposal.

I mean one of the issues about the market obviously is the delivery and how you deal with frozen stuff, I mean all the mechanics of dealing with the market, and that also relates to how many days it trades, and those sorts of issues, so from a philosophical point of view he was probably right that there

needed to be underground storage and ways in which the market could be put back into scale, and you could certainly have more people, you could have a residential development demand. So from that point of view you could understand where he was coming from as a Commercial Director, but the public reaction to getting rid of the market, even for a period of time, and trying to put it back in some other form was violently opposed, it caused a real stir.

So we then engaged Roger Cooke to give advice as to what could be done, so that did result in some brick paving along the centre, for example: some upgrading of the stalls; some areas which became cafes, which previously hadn't existed; better linking it into the arcade next door, which was a Joe Emanuel development; and buying that space to increase the car parking. So we put more decks on the car park, so there was some improvement in the car parking function and the general sort of ambience, but it was really low key and marginal, and keeping the character of the existing market, rather than a redevelopment, but that was a major political issue at the time. I mean, there were certainly strong pressures from the community at large, not just the residents of the City, but the broader community, about retaining the Central Market. And so the issue over time, has been how to best manage that, and so there were various models put in place, and it's interesting just in the last couple of weeks the Council has appointed a new Market Authority, which is one step removed from the Council. So the Council itself is not involved in the management of the market, so it retains the ownership obviously and going to have a policy position, but the day-to-day operations and how it's actually managed is now going to be the responsibility of an appointed body.

OH: Why do you think that the Central Market is such, well, I guess, an icon, for people in Adelaide?

ML-S: I suppose it's the variety of what goes on there, it is just the feel walking around. I mean I've shopped there for over 30 years, every Saturday morning. I mean, you get to know the shopkeepers, and it's just the variety of stalls. I mean those change over time but it really is the sort of freshness of the produce. I mean it's amazing, you know, people get up in their market gardens and pick it that morning and buy it. [Laughs] So it's a real icon. I mean it's hard to pin down precisely what it is. People have tried to put some words around why it is of that sort of iconic status. But I think it's really, its importance is the actual ambience and the feel, and the smells of the coffee grounds, the cafes, and just the whole range of meats, cheeses, I mean it's just a great experience to go and shop there.

OH: Was the Council always the owner of the market?

ML-S: Oh yes, it goes to the 1860s, the first one. I mean it actually burnt down. There's the little plaques around the market showing what's happened over the years. It started off with a group of traders getting together and actually leaving the East End, which continued as wholesale for a time, to become a retail market. That was, I forget the year it burnt down actually, but the Council took a lot of effort to keep them trading while they rebuilt it, and it's

really been one of those things the Council has always been actively involved in.

OH: Which leads to another icon, maybe, Victoria Square. My question is, why has almost every Lord Mayor had an interest in reshaping it?

ML-S: I think it goes back to the history in the first place, that it was actually a divided Council that put in place the current scheme. And if you look at Colonel Light's plans and the way in which the roads had bisected the Squares, that had always been, in a sense, quite a large urban space. But part of the engineering approach to the City during the 50s and 60s was to make King William Street the major north-south road, as well as doing the Frome Street to the eastern side of the City as major north-south route through the City. And that amount of traffic being envisaged, going down King William Street was quite hard to basically send around a traffic island. So the engineer came up with this diamond shape which allowed the traffic to flow more freely through the Square, but in so doing, created the corners, which are really unusable. I mean, they're really left over bits of greenery, and so really cut up the whole layout of the Square. That was an issue within the then Council.

Part of the trade-off was to put in the new water feature so there was support for that as a work of art in the Square, but it actually came to the casting vote of the Lord Mayor, which is unusual, and the protocol is that it comes to a casting vote, most casting votes are to maintain the status quo. I mean that's the regular approach to a casting vote. You don't bring about a change. If it comes to such a divided position, you stay with the existing situation. It's not a rule but it's accepted protocol.

In this case, the Lord Mayor at the time was Sir James Irwin, who was an architect, and the City Engineer had persuaded him that the traffic was such an important aspect of the City that it ought to happen, and so the Lord Mayor cast his vote in favour of the new scheme. So the scheme that's there now only exists because of a divided Council vote, and the Lord Mayor voting for change, but that immediately put the balance of the Council to say: *Well, we're going to change it back or we're going to bring about change.* So from the very day that this scheme which exists was put in place, there was opposition to it, and positions taken to bring about some change.

Over the years I think Lord Mayors saw it as something which needed to be improved, I mean the actual environment itself. The trees are straggly, there was never any money really allocated for just improving the existing situation, because the underlying view was that the traffic was wrong, the actual layout of the traffic to split up the Square in the way that it is needed a fundamental change, and so to reinvigorate the Square to some elegant space, people are going to compare it to Central Park in New York and all those things, and it is a very large space. If you overlay a lot of European and American central areas over it, it's a large space. But you don't get that feel because of the way it's been split with the traffic. So it's really a traffic island

rather than a green space of any significance.

Why Lord Mayors? I think it was an easy political platform to say: *Well, I'm going to bring about some change* is an obvious one in the sense that it's popular, people want to see some sort of change there because it is pretty awful and undistinguished. The fact that the tram stopped there was an interesting element in terms of the debate about the extension of the tram, how that was going to be changed through the Square, so bringing it to the side rather than stopping it just in the southern quarter. So it's been an ongoing debate for those sort of reasons.

Nothing has really happened until, well nothing of any significance. Lots of schemes were put up.

OH: In your time too?

ML-S: Oh yeah. Well not so much by us. Lord Mayors would quite often get the private sector to produce some schemes. There was actually quite a detailed one done by Guy Maron in I think Jane Lomax-Smith's time as Lord Mayor, after my time but certainly quite a major scheme. Certainly Condous got an architect to do some work for him, so there were schemes put forward. But the issue was always the cost because I mean what is the benefit? Yes, it's nice to create a space, but there's no real commercial trade-off. I mean it's not going to generate any development around the Square because basically the whole Square is now developed. I mean, there's little development opportunity around the Square itself given the heritage buildings and the recent the SA Water building, the last one on the tram barn side. So it's been an ongoing issue for the Council and it currently still is.

I mean there's a real opportunity for change. We are about to, in fact, I think probably tomorrow, put out a concept plan which is effectively Phase 1 of a potential longer term scheme. I mean there was a lot of work done during the last year of Lord Mayor Harbison, and with extensive review, design review process, with a field of really quite international experts. So that there was a scheme produced which said: *This is what we would like the Square to look like.* But that was effectively about $100m scheme, so the City was looking at State and Federal funding to support that. It's clear that at this budgetary time neither the State nor the Feds are going to contribute at this moment. The State, I think, is still keen over time to look at it, but certainly not in the current budget, so the Council is now faced with doing what it can for probably $20m over the next two years. But that's about to go to public consultation, so whether that actually comes about, we shall see.

OH: Yeah, interesting! Talking about something that was obviously an important item in your portfolio in 1984-85 … you were responsible for negotiations with the government about the Grand Prix.

ML-S: Yes! That was an idea from Kym Bonython. He was certainly a mover and shaker in that, and persuaded Wendy Chapman that a Grand Prix in Adelaide which would be something which was possible. John Bannon was also

persuaded that that was something which could be looked at, and the advantage from Adelaide's point of view was that it could be a street circuit, so rather than building a purpose-built Grand Prix circuit, it would have the advantage of being a City circuit.

The Government appointed someone called Mal Hemmerling to be the Project Manager, and so we had a lot of discussions with Mal Hemmerling, and the then City Engineer was John Haddaway, as to what routes it might be possible to use around the City, and that was all progressing well. It was all geared up to be in place for 1986, which was the sesquicentenary year of the State, so that was all being worked through and was seen as being quite a sensible approach. Bernie Ecclestone was still the Grand Prix wizard based in London. Bannon was sent to London to talk to him about the Grand Prix commencing in 1986. But Bannon came back from London saying that Bernie Ecclestone had said: *Well if you want it in Adelaide, you've got to do it in 1985, you can't wait until 1986 because of the way the circuit runs*. You know one other City was dropping out, so that was then a really hectic negotiation. So Bannon came back and we met Mal Hemmerling. I mean I remember the meeting, it was John Bannon, Mal Hemmerling**,** Wendy Chapman and I, said: *Alright, well if that's going to happen we need to see how we can make it happen.*

So there was a lot of work done on the route, and in fact I've actually got a map up there on the wall which shows the first Grand Prix route. The advantage of using Dequetteville Terrace, obviously along the straight, but the key thing was to find a way of extending the route to make it a viable circuit length, and the only way we could see it doing that was into the Park Lands. That did create an amazing amount of discussion because the South Australian Jockey Club controlled the lease. Well, it was our land, it was Park Lands, but it meant crossing the track in two locations. It meant building the Pit Straight, which was bitumen in the Park Lands, so there were lots of issues about that, but it was always seen as a temporary, *once a year, put up the buildings, take them down,* and the track would simply be there for however long the Grand Prix was.

The initial legislation was actually quite clear that if we ever lost the Grand Prix then the track would be dug up and reverted to Park Lands. That was the initial legislation which the Council agreed to, and was therefore publicly supported, so the whole event was based on: *Yes, we will put in train temporary closures every year. Yes, we would support the way in which the track was utilised.* But it was always seen in that way.

So after my time when the Grand Prix went to Melbourne, [laughs] and the Government at that time decided to try and get some other alternative, that was all changed, so instead of the track being dug up in the Park Lands and reverted to Park Lands, it became a more permanent solution to what became the Clipsal race.

I mean, the timing was really important back in 1985, that the work which had to go in to simple things like on all the sewer caps in the road had to be welded in, you couldn't go and have a potential hazard because of something blowing up during a race. So there were lots of quite detailed stuff going on, as well as the mechanics of how to define the area, how to control the area. The whole of Wakefield Road was re-bituminised to create an appropriate surface, a special bitumen mix was developed, which was just put in all the roads which formed part of the street circuit, so it was quite an expensive operation to put in place, but I think it's fair to say it was a really successful event. I mean the Adelaide Grand Prix won a whole lot of prizes for being the best circuit that year, etc, etc. And I think it was really successful for the City.

OH: And when you say it was expensive with that infrastructure, who paid the costs of that?

ML-S: Some of it was the Council budget, the State contributed through the motor sport or the Grand Prix Board actually, there was money allocated to a Grand Prix Board, so it was a mixed, a joint approach. I forget the balance of the funding but different parties paid for different elements of the actual promotion.

OH: Listening to you, Michael, I imagine the workload involved in those negotiations and then putting into place the steps that led up to the first Grand Prix, must have been huge?

ML-S: It really fell on the City Engineer and his department to work with the State. I mean Mel Hemmerling, as I said, was the Project Manager and became technically the Grand Prix Director, so the State, certainly through the Transport Department of the State, and the City Engineer's Department, worked really closely together to put it all in place, all the mechanics. So there was a lot of effort between the City and State to achieve that, yeah.

OH: And Michael, were you involved at the time that the Grand Prix moved to Melbourne?

ML-S: No, it was after I'd left.

OH: A couple of other of the items that I wanted to just raise with you – development of Sister City relationships, I understand that was quite a feature in your time?

ML-S: When I came to Adelaide we already had the Sister City with Georgetown, Penang, and Christchurch, New Zealand, so those two were already in place. In 1982 we entered, literally a couple of months after I became Town Clerk, into the arrangement with Himeji in Japan. The reason that came about was that John Bannon had just become Premier after David Tonkin, and Mitsubishi was buying Chrysler.

The Bannon Government saw an advantage in having some presence in Japan, and there were some early discussions as to what might be an appropriate City, and Himeji emerged because it also had a Mitsubishi

manufacturing place, and so negotiations were back and forth, delegations were coming from Japan to talk to the Bannon Government, and then also to the Lord Mayor. We were authorised, this is Lord Mayor Watson, and I, were authorised to go and sort of sign up the City Sister deal. So it was actually just 30 years ago.

Just in the last couple of weeks Lord Mayor Yarwood was invited back to celebrate the 30-year celebration, which was interesting, but yeah, it was really quite a major exercise back in 1982. Himeji has got this famous castle, which is just terrific, and cherry blossoms are gorgeous, so it's an interesting sort of City. But it is a largely industrial City, and a City of about, I think, three-quarters of a million, from memory, and the Japanese are quite strong on Sister City relationships. So that's how Himeji came about.

Austin, Texas, was through, again, the Government's importance in1986. Texas and South Australia were both formed in the same year, 1836, so 1986 was sesquicentenary of the Foundation, and so there were some view as to how that might, Texas and South Australia might cooperate, and so the capital City was the obvious choice, so Austin, being the capital of Texas – by far, obviously, there's bigger cities in Texas, Houston in particular – but Austin was seen as an appropriate partner. So there were some ongoing discussions about signing up with Austin, and again that was done in 1986 when Jarvis was Lord Mayor. So he and I signed up agreement.

OH: For the Adelaide City Council, what does it mean to have Sister Cities?

ML-S: Over time I think that's changed. Initially it was certainly just to sort of feel good, people-to-people relationships. Interesting, the Japanese one, which Lord Mayor Yarwood commented on when he came back, coming out of that one has been an ongoing relationships through the Departments of Education. There are a lot of teachers from South Australia have gone and spent a year teaching in Himeji**,** and apparently quite a lot of Japanese people, particularly the university students, have come the other way, so it's sort of evolved from more than just people-to-people. It does tend to go in cycles.

Unfortunately, some politicians have always seen them as just sort of junkets, an excuse to sort of travel. We'd always tried to build on a sort of trade basis as well, and establishing linkages between businesses, and certainly State Departments like the Education in particular. It was seen as an important element. There is an ongoing review at the moment about sort of international relations of what Adelaide might be able to contribute. I think once you actually are a Sister City. I'm not sure you can actually get divorced, as somebody said. [Laughs]. But just how active it is, does depend on the support of current Councils.

During my time actually we did have four committees, one for each of the Sister Cities, which were private sector, I mean, people of influence and government people, so that they were quite active in terms of maintaining linkages in an informal way. In fact, we had someone on staff called the

Sister City Coordinator, and a Board which the Council managed, on which sat the Chairs of the four Sister City Committees, so it was quite active in terms of maintaining the presence, and there were visits from one to the other, and exhibitions which were put on.

Certainly Himeji, because of its size, and indeed Austin, were important connections. I mean our problem I think is we are just the square mile. I mean it's not like metropolitan Adelaide, which in a sense should be the body which is the Sister City, but that's got a whole lot of complications trying to involve other Councils, some of which have Sister Cities themselves, so Adelaide as a capital City is a bit sort of hamstrung in terms of the amount of effort it can put into that.

Overall I think they were really quite successful in achieving some ongoing relationships, but there was always the political downside of what it was costing to put in place, and what's the cost benefit, if you like, and I think that needed to be looked at in a much longer term, and sort of people to people relationships rather than the hard economists dollar approach to such things. So it tends to go in phases. Certainly since my time I think it went into more of a decline, it wasn't seen as something which the Council should be putting too many resources into. But it's sort of back on the agenda at the moment, but in a broader context of international relations with the capital City role, as opposed to a Sister City role.

OH: Michael, a little while ago you mentioned the sesquicentenary in 1986. Was the Council involved in celebrations, or acknowledging that?

ML-S: Not so much, it was more State. I mean there were things done like the plaques on North Terrace, the individual memorials to prominent South Australians, so yes, while we were involved it was really a State sort of function rather than the City.

OH: One other item before we finish the interview is about technology and the growth in technology in your time as Town Clerk, City Manager.

ML-S: Hewlett Packard I think was the company we engaged initially. Certainly computers were beginning to emerge, and the whole question of records and data was becoming an important issue, so the Council did start investing in that and having an IT, and putting in a major computing system, and creating sort of the appropriate spaces, so some of the offices, actually on the first floor of this building, were converted into an IT sort of hub. Once that's established then it's easy enough to upgrade it every time you need sort of upgrading, so the Council has always maintained its own IT Department from the beginning, which has clearly grown over time.

It's now such an important way in which it's done, but I think, I wouldn't say we were leading edge, but certainly we were early into the recognition of using IT as an important element of how the Council operated, and the ability to get information spread around quickly, and getting the whole massive data which was manually really hard. I mean all those files which got created, all

the retyping letters manually, all of that suddenly, well it's not suddenly but over time evolved in change. We've got some good people on board who are able to be running all that and maintaining our own system, so it's quite an important element of Council these days.

OH: And I was thinking in your time as Town Clerk, City Manager, Chief Executive, from 1982-1994, that would have been the beginning of a lot of organisational-wide technology being implemented.

ML-S: Yeah, certainly, I wouldn't like to put a precise year on it. But certainly by the time I left it was, throughout the organisation, it was sort of well ingrained in terms of individual computers, and being able to manipulate the data as needed quite effectively, so yeah.

OH: Well, thank you Michael, I think we'll bring a close to today's interview. So thanks very much again for your time.

ML-S: My pleasure, pleased to do it.

OH: Thank you.

End of recording

FIFTH INTERVIEW WITH COUNCILLOR MICHAEL LLEWELLYN-SMITH
RECORDED BY MADELEINE REGAN

in the Adelaide City Council, Adelaide
on Wednesday 30th May, 2012

Transcript of fifth interview (30 May 2012)

This is an edited transcript. Four paragraphs on page 111 have been withdrawn in agreement with the interviewee. The original and complete transcript will be available in September 2022.

Oral Historian (OH): Thank you, Michael, for agreeing to this fifth interview.

We completed the last interview with your reflections on a range of issues that the Council dealt with over the years that you were City Planner and then Chief Executive Officer. And today we'll begin by looking at some of your latter years as CEO. I wanted to pick up firstly on the area of professional learning. I understand that after ten years with the Council, in 1984, you took some sabbatical leave. Would you be able to talk about that?

Michael Llewellyn-Smith (ML-S): Yes. One of the nice things about Local Government is that after ten years you do have some time to reflect on where you're at and where you might be going. I was fortunate in '84 to be able to go back to Cambridge, not to the School of Architecture where I trained initially, but to the Department of Land Economy. And I also had a visiting fellowship at my old College, so I had accommodation provided in Cambridge, by the College, which allowed me to also dine at high table, which was quite a fun thing to do. But the work was really through the Department of Land Economy, and I'd become quite interested in how development, or really the sort of pressures for development, and the financing of such things, really was occurring. So the move from Architecture into Planning was really an interesting one to see how the other side of the equation, if you like, actually operated, so how developers looked at sites and what they were proposing, and the whole way in which they financed developments, became quite of interest.

So, I did some research at the Department of Land Economy, it was only for a term, so that was ten weeks or so, back in the UK, and wrote a paper about it which was, I think, just submitted to the Council for information. I mean, nothing really came out of it in terms of some positive recommendations for change in Adelaide, it was really just a better understanding of how the

development industry worked generally, as opposed to looking at it from the Local Government side, which in a sense is the receptor of development applications, and so I was trying to get behind the ways in which developers worked and thought about looking at sites, and how they might relate to the City Planning context. So it was an interesting time to be back in the UK.

OH: Michael, how common would it have been for Town Clerks, CEOs, to take sabbatical leave overseas?

ML-S: Probably very rare actually, and probably rare to actually go and in a sense keep working. I mean leave was meant to be leave, and most people having sabbatical leave would actually have a holiday so I, in a sense, had a working holiday rather than just a holiday, but there were obviously advantages being in the UK. I mean I was able to catch up with old friends and family, so there was some benefit from that side of things, but I was actually working reasonably hard for a term.

OH: That would have informed decisions or work when you came back?

ML-S: It was really more broadly-based general information. As I said, I don't think there were any positive recommendations I made to the Council resulting from it, it just provided me, I think, with better appreciation of how the sort of private sector was operating within the development industry. Actually I don't quite remember the name of the paper I wrote, but I mean I just submitted it to the Council for information, not with any positive recommendations coming out of it.

OH: You wrote other papers that you delivered at national and international forums. How did you manage to spend the time working on those?

ML-S: [Laughs] Well, yes, time allocation was always an interesting thing for senior executives. I think it depends a lot on your ability to delegate and allow people to actually get on and do their own jobs, but I always made the time available to do some work myself. So yes, I have presented quite a lot of papers to different forums, both within Australia and a lot of overseas over the years, mainly in the Architecture and Town Planning, and then obviously the Local Government field, so it's something I've taken an interest in. I mean I think I've actually got over 40 published papers.

OH: And did they inform your practice here in the Council at the time?

ML-S: I'm not sure about informing the practice so much, they were really explaining what we were doing in Adelaide in the early years. And then in terms of Local Government I saw it as an opportunity to provide some advice to colleagues about what was happening in the capital City. I mean there was quite a network of CEOs obviously between the capital cities, but also between larger Councils in metropolitan Adelaide. Those sorts of opportunities were good in that you were able to communicate and use the networks, so as well as presenting papers you actually attended meetings and learnt from other people. So it was really just part of a normal progression, I think.

OH: And would other CEOs of other Councils, across Australia have been doing similar things?

ML-S: Probably not to the same extent, but certainly reasonably often you'd see the CEO of a capital City presenting papers at different functions. I suppose the main one from my point of view was the international context. I mean, I'd always been keen on, obviously coming from the UK in the first place and travelling to Canada before I came to Australia. Travelling had always been something which I just found easy to do, and liked doing, and the International City Management Association provided a lot of contacts throughout America and Canada, as well as the UK. And their conferences were always incredibly well attended, with a range of really interesting papers and excellent speakers.

So I found that network particularly a useful one to be part of, to be able to contribute to in terms of writing papers for some of those conferences, which you had to submit and they may or may not have got accepted, so I was in a sense fortunate. Quite a few of the ones I wrote did get accepted for presentation, but they were also great conferences to attend, as I was saying, so I made a point of getting overseas to attend the international functions.

OH: And how would you have known about the International City Management Association?

ML-S: I got invited to join when I became Town Clerk. The Town Clerk of our Sister City, Christchurch, was a member, and he pointed me in that direction, so you had to apply for membership but it is an organisation for effectively Chief Executives in sort of western developed countries. There are some in parts of Europe, in fact these days there's quite a strong Swedish and Norwegian sort of arms, but primarily it was the old sort of 'big four' – the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, oh, and Canada - sorry, five in a sense. So the majority of membership was made up of those countries, but there were members from other countries, and it's a really good international network. It's got a professional secretariat based in Washington, with an Executive Director, and I actually served on the Board of the organisation for two years, and became Vice President.

OH: And what did that role involve?

ML-S: Attending four meetings a year in Washington, and that was fairly hectic. Basically I'd fly out on a Friday, so you'd arrive in Washington on a Friday, and other cities, have the weekend in meetings, and then leave on Sunday night and come back. So doing that for a couple of years was a bit hectic, but that's how it happened.

OH: Did you have many tasks that were required of you in that role?

ML-S: Really just attending the Board Meetings and providing some strategic direction to the organisation, so on a couple of sub-committees, like planning some of the conferences and working on some policy issues. So yeah, it was, I mean, I just found it really interesting, and just a great group, and I'm still

friendly with at least half a dozen American City Managers as a result of those networks I built up, so we keep in touch and visit when we can.

OH: Interesting that somebody from Australia would be on the Board. Was that a usual practice?

ML-S: There's usually a slot for at least one overseas representative, and it tended to be rotated between Canada, UK, Australia, and New Zealand. I think I was the second Australian to actually get on the Board. It's more common now, but yes, it was not usual in those days.

OH: No, and that was in the '80s?

ML-S: Late '80s, yeah, early '90s, yep.

OH: In the late '80s, obviously governance was an important issue for you right through your role in the Adelaide City Council. And in *The Messenger Press* in 1989 you wrote an open letter as City Manager, to Piers Akerman, who was then the editor of *The Advertiser,* and you were quoted as saying that: *Local Government in general, and the Adelaide City Council in particular, was the most open and accountable sphere of government because of decisions on setting budget, raising rates, spending funds. These had to be made in the public arena, which is the Council Chamber of the Adelaide Town Hall*. Can you comment on that?

ML-S: Yes, I think at the time, the Council was under some attack from Piers Akerman and *The Advertiser* generally about the extent to which the Council was going into confidence for some meetings. And under the Local Government Act, there are quite clear criteria for which the Council can go into confidence, and they normally relate to things like commercial activities or legal opinions. But what's interesting is that the Council itself has to resolve to go into confidence to actually deal with the matter in confidence, so there's a public process of the decision making in the first place as to whether an item will be dealt with in confidence. So that's an important distinction.

Now, if you compare that to State and Federal Governments, I mean, nobody gets to go to Cabinet meetings, and although the Parliaments are open and you can hear the debate, I mean the key decisions are clearly made behind closed doors. And the point I was making, key decisions of the Council, like on things like budgets and, well major projects, are actually made in open in the Council Chamber, as opposed to State and Federal decisions, which are primarily made in Cabinet rooms. While the Parliament might be an opportunity for the Opposition to question it, the decisions have really already been made. And so I was really making the point that while *The Advertiser* might be critical of the Council for going into confidence, on all occasions that we went into confidence, they were for valid reasons under the Local Government Act, and the major decisions the Council made were always made in open, and not in confidence.

OH: And I think that you might have said previously, Michael, that the media began to play quite a significant role in your time as Chief Executive/City Manager.

ML-S: I think there's always been an interesting relationship with *The Advertiser,* going back to the '30s actually when there was clearly some sort of major disagreement between the Town Hall and *The Advertiser* across the road. While *The News* was operating as the afternoon paper, that was always the sort of counter-balance, and I think I mentioned at the time, like Arland in particular used a particular reporter on *The News,* a guy called Garth Rawlins, and so the Council's message could often be got out in the afternoon press, quite often in response to what was being critical in *The 'Tiser* in the morning, and so that was an interesting balance.

The problem occurred when *The News* went out of business, and there was only *The Advertiser.* And so there was no other medium really which could be used, and it was too easy for reporters to sit in the Council Chamber and basically walk across the road and submit their articles after a Council meeting, so *The 'Tiser* had really an inside running, and compared to other Councils it was just too easy to write a whole lot of reports.

I think over time the media has certainly changed. I mean reporters tended to turn over at a fairly high rate of knots. Even the editors weren't around all that long, and then Rupert Murdoch seemed to keep his Editors on their toes by moving them quite frequently as well, so it was actually quite hard to build up a decent relationship with the media because it was a sort of constant change in relation to *The 'Tiser* across the road.

I think in terms of the Lord Mayors, the one which I think tried to bring out some change was Jim Jarvis, because that was his personal professional background. I mean, he had his media and public relations company. So when he got to be Lord Mayor he worked hard at getting Council messages out in a sort of positive way, and started using television, which up to then hadn't been a particularly useful medium. So he would quite often appear on sort of sound bytes and picture bytes on the various TV channels, and that was a change, and I think after that it became more common for the TV as well as just the printed media to become involved in Council affairs. But it varies a lot over time depending what the issues are, so with the online stuff these days it's even more sort of instant 24-hour media cycles, it's quite a different environment these days.

OH: And what about the *City Messenger,* what role did the *City Messenger* play in the media kind of world?

ML-S: [Laughs] Well it began to become more important when it started, as the sort of local press that picked up on the local stories and because it went to, well there's two papers actually. [Laughs] It's interesting in itself. Des Ryan was the Editor at the time, and we were always complaining about why there wasn't one *City Messenger* for the whole of the City, as opposed to North

Adelaide being lumped in with Prospect, and what have you, and there was a simple explanation. It was because we're obliged to put certain advertisements in the local press on a whole range of legal fronts, by splitting up the *City* into two papers, Mr Ryan got double the income because we had to put it in the *North Messenger* as well as the *City Messenger. S*o it was quite cynical I'm afraid.

OH: And does that still happen?

ML-S: It does, absolutely. All the applications for development, which require notice, and all public notices, we have to put in both the *City Messenger* and the *North Messenger,* the same advertisement. But it has to appear in both, so we pay double the fees.

OH: And Michael, I'd like to ask you about the professional memberships that you had in your time as Chief Executive or City Manager. Were they, the memberships for example, like you were a Councillor in the South Australian Division of the Adelaide Institute of Management. Was that something that you opted into?

ML-S: From a professional point of view, I mean I've always been involved. I became an architect first and I retained my professional membership of that organisation, although I really wasn't practising as an architect. Similarly in the Town Planning arena, which became the Planning Institute of Australia, and so I retained my membership of that, and when I became Town Clerk there was a Local Government, well it was actually in the early days, called the Institute of Municipal Management, which was slightly odd, which subsequently became Local Government Managers Australia. So those three professional bodies I've always maintained a particular interest in.

The Australian Institute of Management was really a more private sector organisation, and I thought it would be useful to, it was actually a way of maintaining contact with the private sector around Adelaide, because most of the major businesses were represented on the Australian Institute of Management, South Australian Division. So the local lot of heavies from the South Australian community were actually involved in the Australian Institute of Management, and they actually owned the old brewery building in Hindley Street. So we used to meet in sort of oak-panelled offices in the Boardroom of the Australian Institute of Management, and there were some really interesting people contributing to that, so some, as I say, some of the heavies of the private sector in Adelaide at the time, because at the time we still had quite a few companies based in Adelaide, as opposed to being, the headquarters moving to Sydney or Melbourne. So South Australian companies, initially, had quite a lot of their own Boardrooms based in the City. That was changing but I found that it was, in a sense, a counterpoint to the Local Government. It was more private sector orientated, so I enjoyed that as another means of just keeping tabs on what was going on around the City.

OH: And the other two organisations were more relevant to your role?

ML-S: Well, they were the professional ones of architects and planning, planning particularly. When I became the City Planner I immediately got involved in the Planning Institute in the South Australian Division, and went on to become a National Councillor of that, obviously through Local Government Managers I became a Councillor, then the State President, and then ultimately a National President, so I actually served as the National President of Local Government Managers Australia.

OH: And how did you balance these memberships with the workload?

ML-S: Well, I suppose it goes back to the sort of delegation and, you know, really good staff and Heads of Departments who'd support staff when I was away doing other things, and I think in fairness the Council itself saw it as useful to see their Chief Executive being out and about, and doing other things, and contributing in the broader sense. So it was a means of having a whole range of networks in a whole range of fields to keep tabs on, not only what was going on in Adelaide or in Australia, but also in the international field.

OH: In 1993, which was the year that I understand that things changed for you in terms of your working life and decisions, I'm just wanting to check, the former departments of Planning and Buildings were combined, was that during your time?

ML-S: Yeah, yeah.

OH: Can you speak a little bit about that?

ML-S: Yes, the opportunity really arose because the State was over-viewing the Planning Act, and that was part of the review which ultimately ended up in repealing the separate City of Adelaide legislation. But they were concerned about the sort of red tape which was involved in applications getting first of all you get a planning approval, and then once you've got your planning approval you then had to submit what are technically working drawings to get a building approved. So it was a two-stage approach before you could actually do anything, and the State was keen to try and amalgamate that into a much more simple process so that you could actually move through the system more quickly. And it seemed to me that if that was going to happen, which clearly it was at the State level, there would be some merit in actually having a combined process within the City as well. And also at the time the City Building Surveyor was retiring, so it really was an opportunity when I didn't have to replace a Head of Department, I could actually look at re-jigging things within the Council to provide that opportunity.

And the other thing that was happening, I think there was a growing recognition that Councils were moving into more community-orientated events, as well as the old rates, rubbish, etc. I mean, we'd always had people like Health Inspectors and a couple of Community Service people. But there was really not that much effort went into that side of the Council's operations, although there were some community services. I remember we were beginning to look at some libraries in different parts of the City. And so there were a range of reasons why it seemed opportune to combine Planning and

Buildings as part of a process of dealing with applications, and as a result of freeing up that Head of Department role, to bring together some of the other functions the Council had, into a new department and appointing a new Director of Community Development to head up all those sorts of functions, which previously had been sort of scattered around. It had then *ad hoc*, to be honest. And it just seemed the right time to bring all that about.

OH: And when you brought a change to the structure like that, how was that reported to Council, or was it reported to Council?

ML-S: Oh yeah, yeah, so certainly I used to use the Chairman's Committee basically because we had a strong alignment between departments and committees of Council. But as it happened, the Building Department really didn't have a committee to report to, because that was the technical side of stuff. So it was very rare that anything out of the Building Department became a committee report, so in that sense it made it a bit easier, and we did have a Community Services Committee, I think it was called, and so by having a new Director of Community Development to align with that, that made a whole lot of sense, so I'd certainly had discussions with the Lord Mayor and the Chairs of the Council Committees as to that sort of structural changes which were being planned. But at the end of the day, the Local Government Act is quite strong, it actually gives the CEO a lot of power to sort out the administration of the Council, I mean it's his or her ultimate responsibility. Obviously it's wise for the CEOs to consult with Councillors and get the politics, or for them to understand the politics, but at the end of the day the CEO can just say: *This is what I'm doing,* and just tell the Council. But obviously politically it's wise to have a bit of a discussion about what you were thinking.

In fact, that goes back to my very early, when I was appointed, I mean in terms of, so this is back in '81 when I'd applied to become the new Town Clerk, the interview process then by the Chairs of Committee, I actually made it clear that if I was appointed Town Clerk, I was going to reorganise the organisation fairly early on, because Russell Arland had 13 Heads of Department, and he basically operated on the divide and conquer type approach by having that size Executive. It was, I found quite a large executive.

I mean I was one of them as the City Planner but it was really hard to try and get an overall corporate view with so many Heads of Department, so I made it clear that if I was appointed as the Town Clerk, the Council could expect me to bring about some changes, and reduce the number of heads of departments anyway. And given that I was appointed then, I mean I had a sound basis on which to reorganise the structure, even though technically I could have just done it anyway.

OH: And Michael, what were the steps involved in your decision to resign in '93?

ML-S: Yeah, that's an interesting one really. There was a new Lord Mayor. Henry Ninio became Lord Mayor, and there was a lot of different Councillors appointed who, in a sense, had a mind that they wanted to bring about some

change, and it was also resulting from the arguments which had gone on between what I'd call the heritage faction and the development faction, which was a difficult period for the Council.

Steve Condous initially was a very popular Lord Mayor for his first term, during his second term perhaps not quite so much but still an interesting period of time. But then when he ran for a third time the heritage faction had the numbers on the Council. So you had a situation where a Lord Mayor was really out of step with the majority of Council, and that caused a lot of debate within the Chamber, because basically there were what I'd call a few independents, but there was a large chunk of members who were development, and a large chunk of members that were heritage. And it became quite vicious between those two factions, unfortunately.

The expectation was that Mark Hamilton, who was the Deputy Lord Mayor, would head up the heritage faction, and Henry Ninio had sort of emerged as the nominal leader of the development faction, that those two would run head to head for the next Lord Mayoralty in 1993. So there was an expectation, and because the heritage faction then had the numbers, a lot of heritage was proposed to be listed. And it was quite a divisive thing in the community.

A lot of the owners were concerned about the implications with being listed, even though the Council had probably the best incentive scheme in Australia at the time, in terms of grants and advice, and a whole range of things, and so the issue for that election was very much development as opposed to heritage. And when Mark Hamilton, for lots of personal reasons, unfortunately, fairly late on, decided not to run, Ninio got in unopposed in '93. So you had a new Lord Mayor who was very much anti-heritage and pro-development at all costs, and he got the numbers on that Council, so there was quite a shift from an approach to heritage which had been worked on professionally, and suddenly: *We don't want anything listed.* And the major change which the State agreed to, which did surprise me, was that any owner who objected to listing, could do so. I'll go back a stage. The process was the professional assessment criteria and a building being listed and sort of signed off, and then either being, in some cases, State, but more predictably on a Local Heritage List, there was also some concerns about what we were calling Townscape, because that was not individual buildings but a sort of street which had some merit, but the individual buildings within that street were not listed, but there was status trying to be given to the character of the whole street.

The State wouldn't agree to that, they came up with the local listing, so individual buildings had to be listed. I mean they had, in their view, strong legal reasons why they didn't want to have streetscape as part of the planning control, so it had to be an individually listed building. But the end result of that was some uncertainty in the community about if you had a building in a streetscape proposal, whether or not you could change it, or what it mean to be in a part of a streetscape. So to clarify that, the Government said: *No, we're not going to support any of that. Every building has to be locally listed*

or not listed at all, and that's the end of it.

Coming out of that, if you did own a building which was proposed to be listed, you could object, obviously. Under the old system, even though you objected, it was taken into account and balanced up and then, you know, a tick of approval, it got on the list. But Ninio's faction when they got to power, persuaded the government that if an owner objected to listening, then it wouldn't be listed, end of story. And that caused a really interesting debate in terms of gaining community involvement in heritage as well.

So we had a situation where a lot of work had been done, and a lot of buildings were proposed to be listed, which suddenly, even though all the professional advice was: *Yes, they should be, and they contributed to Adelaide's character, and even if it was listed it didn't really detract from development potential, there were ways in which you could still develop.* So most of them were basically the facades, or to a depth of perhaps two or three metres, and you could still do the development behind or above, so there were a whole range of things. But that caused a quite severe concern within the Council. So that was one aspect going on.

The other aspect was that the Council under Ninio felt that we needed to save a lot of money in terms of the Council budget, which is fair enough. I mean, they do that most of the time, but they decided to have an external firm do a major review of the organisation, and that was negotiated with the unions and with me obviously, I mean I was party to it. I set up an internal working group to work with the consultants, and we actually did a major review of the whole organisation, which took almost from the time Ninio started, it took us about six or seven months, so quite a detailed investigation, and as a result of that there was a report which targeted almost 100 jobs to be lost. But we'd negotiated with the unions the severance packages and, you know, if anyone was targeted just what they'd get in terms of their sort of payout.

OH: And what was the reason for targeting them?

ML-S: That their jobs could be lost without detracting from the services, or there was duplication between jobs quite often, or was in an area, and partly the concern of the new Council was in fact this new Community Development Department. They didn't quite see that we should have quite such a department on the books, that they were almost reverting to the old rates and rubbish, that Community Service was not something that ratepayers should be spending money on. So there was quite a concern about what I thought was an enlightened approach to thinking about Community Services.

OH: And you'd made that change prior to the Mayoral elections?

ML-S: Sure! Yeah, I mean there was a Director of Community Services. So she'd been appointed and was in place, and so anyway, and they had a target of sort of $4m-$5m they wanted to save out of the budget. So it was a fairly difficult period obviously, people concerned about their jobs, but when the report was prepared they were all talked to personally. I mean we had extensive

counsellors in terms of offering what was available, and we also had, there was going to be, obviously, a regular amount of retirement and people leaving anyway, so there'd be other jobs to move into, but it was a difficult time. I mean, there was still a divided Council over Heritage and Community Services, and the majority of Council looking at significant savings, which meant staff cuts.

OH: And Michael, was there a problem with the finances that had arisen?

ML-S: Not in my view, no, no, they just, they felt that it was part of the development push that ratepayers should be, we should save some money. I mean the Council's finances were certainly not in any difficulty. It was a, I think a sort of tactical, political thing for Ninio, you know, to run on: *We're going to cut the rates.* And it was just a political, in my view, a political slogan which was easy to say, but the reality was quite hard to deliver, but we were going to deliver it.

[Four paragraphs deleted]

I negotiated a retirement package myself, which they were very good about. I mean it was amicable. Some of the Councillors said: *No, no, you shouldn't go,* from the heritage side I suppose it's fair to say. Some of the others said: *Look, that's fine, if that's what you want to do.* What was good about it though was I didn't leave immediately, I actually stayed until June 1994 but the decision was made in December '93. And interestingly, it was at the same time the Liberal Government came to power, and at the same time the City Act was repealed, and that was another thing which was concerning me. I could see that with the repeal of the City's separate legislation, the State's planning system was going to take control, and that was also something I didn't particularly want to have to live with, to be honest, so there were a couple of factors, all of which I think in my interest worked out well as it turned out. So we negotiated a time which would be, I'd actually leave on 30 June the following year, so I actually had six months to wind down slowly. And what was good about that was, I actually sat in on the interviews after they advertised for a new CEO. I actually sat in on the, interviews, selections, with an external HR consultant, so I was aware of the way in which Ninio was thinking about a new CEO.

I mean it was all amicable. And in fact, the Council gave me a really nice civic reception when I did retire in June, so I felt at the end of the day well, time to move on. I think I only had two years on my contract left anyway, so effectively it was a retirement package which bought out my remaining two years of my contract. I mean that's effectively what happened, so it wasn't

quite one of the retirement deals which everybody else had, but it was in that sort of framework, so yep.

OH: And what was that last six months like, like were there major issues that were coming up that you had to deal with as Chief Executive or City Manager?

ML-S: The main one was probably back in the Planning area where the Planning staff had to get used to the new State Planning regime which had come in. We certainly had to try and deal with a new Liberal Government, it had been a Labor Government for a very long time. And the other issue I suppose, was how the new Council was going to deal with the staff which were leaving, and how that was going to affect the structure. Clearly that was going to be a job for my successor to sort out how he was going to do that, and that's another story. [Laughs] Yes, but after I mean after the initial decision it all sort of flowed through reasonably smoothly.

In fact, my successor did start, they managed to find someone and got him appointed, I think in April, so I physically, you know, I moved out in April. But I'd come in and talk to him and brief him, and generally we got on quite well actually, it was quite good. In fact [laughs] because he'd come from the private sector, after a couple of months he decided that, well he used to say to me: *How on earth did you put up with this?* [laughs] Because he was used to Boards which had a common agenda, as opposed to 19 members with different agendas, so I think he found it very stressful.

OH: The person who succeeded you was?

ML-S: Ilan Hershman.

OH: And Michael, what happened at the civic reception then for you?

ML-S: All the former Lord Mayors who were living turned up, which was really nice – we had about 200 people – so we had a nice speech from a couple of the former Lord Mayors who'd worked with me, and it was just very pleasant actually. It was in the Queen Adelaide Room and over 200 people came, so it was very civilised.

OH: And when you have a civic reception like that, do you invite the people who attend?

ML-S: Oh yes. There was a sort of standard guest list, as I say, such things like Lord Mayors, but yeah, I mean I had the opportunity to invite people I'd worked with over the years, and friends generally, so yeah, it was good.

OH: And you would have made a speech?

ML-S: Yes. [laughs] Yes, crafted carefully to reflect on some things.

OH: And Michael, what did you do once you resigned?

ML-S: I had a private company set up quite some time ago, because I was never going to go beyond the age of 55 anyway, and it was called Llewellyns International Urban Management Consultants, so that company existed. I simply 'cranked it up' particularly when the new CEO started in April. So in

a couple of months, I was able to sort of start putting out Expressions of Interest as a consultant, and looking at obviously doing some work in the urban management field, particularly town planning, but sort of architecture related. I mean by that time also there was an Urban Design Panel established by the Federal Government, which I got appointed to, so that took up some time, and I actually did some work for Walkerville, strangely enough. [Laughs]

OH: Walkerville Council?

ML-S: Council, yeah, and just started getting the name sort of known, but through the international network I then did some work in Poland, through US Aide, which was rather significant. And over time, I picked up other work in South Africa and in Sri Lanka, but obviously mainly in Australia. The main one is obviously the City of Prospect. I mean initially, I mean I did it as a consultant. Initially I was going to do a three-year stint there but that got expended over time. So I did a lot of the work at the City of Prospect as a consultant but also throughout Australia, and for some of the private sector people who would ask for particular reports on particular planning issues.

But by that time I also got involved in, and the State appointed me in fact, Di Laidlaw was the Minister under the Liberal Government. She initially appointed me as the Deputy Presiding Member of the Development Assessment Commission, and ultimately I became the Presiding Member of that, and that was basically a day, two day a week job. So I was quite busy doing the State's development as a result of having left the Council.

OH: An interesting counter balance?

ML-S: Very different actually looking at State major projects in particular. I mean I used to fly around the State to look at major things like marinas and Kangaroo Island, so it was quite an interesting, different perspective actually, yes, and I really enjoyed that. I found my time as a member of the Development Commission quite an interesting one, really.

OH: And Michael, I'm going to ask you about some of your reflections on the role as Town Clerk, CEO, what's the other term, the City Manager? What would you say were the most significant achievements in your time?

ML-S: I suppose initially, I mean we came to Adelaide in '74 on a sort of five, seven-year time horizon, and I mean that's how I saw being the City Planner. I think the advantage of Adelaide's planning from Colonel Light and, really sort of grows on you, to realise the extent to which that was such a farsighted decision to site the City where it is in the metropolitan plain. Because for all time Adelaide will be central to the metropolitan area, and it's halfway between the sea and the hills, halfway between the North and South extremities of the metropolitan area.

That has enormous advantages, particularly the Park Lands on the, some people say it's a moat but it really defines the City, that external boundary is quite unique, and if you were in Sydney or Melbourne you drive from

Melbourne into South Melbourne, or Sydney into North Sydney, you really don't know you're going from, well South Sydney, you do in North Sydney because you cross the Harbour [laughs], you know, there's nothing on the floor to say: *You're now …* There might be a sign: *Welcome to the new Council.* But it just merges. Whereas, Adelaide is unique in that sense of a defined exterior boundary which are the Park Lands, and that's quite a significant issue.

So my, I think, achievements as the City Planner was to convert George Clarke's Planning Study into a workable City Plan. Obviously that involved working closely with the State Government representatives, but it was really cutting edge planning in the early '70s, to get that sort of separate system in place, and then to see the reviews of that every five years also working. So that there was an ongoing good working relationship between the City Council and the government.

I suppose the other thing having become the Town Clerk was the ability to work with different Lord Mayors and their different approaches, and an emerging Council. So I mean I worked with John Watson, then Wendy Chapman, then Jim Jarvis, and then Condous and, as we were just recently talking about, Ninio. So, quite a different range of characters and the way in which they operated.

There's an interconnecting door between the Town Clerk's Office and the Lord Mayor's Office, so you can pop in and out really as often as you want or not. An interesting thing, I always found that you could lock it on the Town Clerk's side but you couldn't lock it on the Lord Mayor's side. [Laughs] So Town Clerks could always go to see the Lord Mayors but the Lord Mayors couldn't always go to see the Town Clerk. [Laughs] Somebody – that was way before my time obviously – but somebody put that in place.

And that, I mean working that relationship so that the City's role was seen as important, and it was important. I mean the State Government recognised the ability that the Council had to effect legislation through the Parliament, through its extensive networks. Now that did change over time.

But the other thing I think which was important, the Council was quite an active developer in its own right, and sort of touched on why I was interested in doing that work back at Cambridge. So that, I mean we built the Rundle Mall Car Park to support the Rundle Mall. I mean Rundle Mall was probably an initial major achievement, to actually put that in place, it was the first Mall in Australia, but the support was required to put a parking station there as a trade-off with the major retailers to support the Mall.

But over time, we also put in place the Topham Car Park, and the redevelopment of the Commonwealth Centre, and private sector offices in Waymouth Street. I mean that was a major land owning that the Council had. Later, the Pirie Street Car Park, which was just for development at that end of

town, and I suppose one of the really significant ones was the CitiCom Development which is on the eastern side of Hindmarsh Square.

Part of the issue about development in the '70s was that a lot of offices, or a lot of developers and building owners, argued that because we had what we called Zone X in the central City, you couldn't provide car parking in the pedestrian zone right in the heart of the City, that that was causing the flight of offices to the other side of the Park Lands where you could park underground. We always found that was a really silly argument, to be perfectly honest, because [laughs] there are lots of ways you could provide parking just outside the central area. And it would have been good for a couple of people to walk a couple of extra metres from their car park to an office. But anyway, no parking was a strong argument by developers, and what had happened, Unley and Burnside in particular had rezoned just the other side of the Park Lands to commercial uses from residential uses, and so you had a lot of two and three-storey office development occurring just the other side of the Park Lands, and the government itself had started that even earlier with the ETSA Building on Greenhill Road. I mean, you know, a 10-storey building just the other side of the Park Lands was really quite ludicrous from a planning point of view, but that was done deliberately by the then government, before my time, but I mean it existed.

And so, the Council decided that we should try and counter that. So we acquired, we owned some of the site, we acquired the rest of the site, and actually developed a scheme through some urban design controls, to allow the private sector to have two and three-storey office buildings with parking underground, so that was a deliberate counter to the Greenhill/Fullarton Road developments. Not so much a counter but an opportunity for keeping businesses in the City and that, so that whole development was actually carried out by the Council, ultimately with a private sector ownership. But we put in place significant controls to show that the Council could actually do those sorts of developments.

And the other issue was the residential development. I mean, one of the major factors of the early Planning Study and our initial Action Projects was to get more people living in the City. And I think I used the example earlier of Angas Court where we made some money as a developer, so we showed that it was feasible, and that was always being kept pushing.

Latterly the whole of the East End was negotiated with the State Government, so that the market, the wholesale market, moved out. So really a lot of interesting issues like the heritage facades, but a residential use, and then a commercial use on Rundle Street East, and that was a really interesting set of negotiations between the Council and the State Government and the private sector, to bring about what I think is really quite a successful development. I mean Rundle Street East is still sort of magic in terms of shopping and eateries, and a significant residential population, but the retention of the heritage facades.

So there were lots of good things which arose from a good working relationship between the City Council and the State Government. And I think I said earlier, we had regular meetings between the Premier and Lord Mayor, and me and the Head of the Premier's Department, and they were quite significant in terms of resolving things before they ever got into the public domain.

There was also the Joint Planning Commission which was a four:four membership which achieved a lot, and was the authority, because the Council couldn't approve its own works. All these projects I've been talking about were actually approved by the Commission as technically a State body, but on which there was Council representation. So that whole system was really, I think really enlightened, but did start declining in perhaps the very late '80s and the early-90s, and I understand, you know, a whole lot of reasons for that decline. But it all resulted in a significant change in December '93.

OH: And that leads me to the challenges. If you look back in the time that you were with the City Council as first City Planner and then Town Clerk/CEO, the major challenges for you?

ML-S: I suppose the major challenges were always to try and retain the Council's significance within the State's sphere of influence. I mean that was clearly starting to change. It changed really in '84 when the Government brought about legislation which changed the composition of the Upper House, but also the Local Government Act. So there were ongoing issues between the City and State, so from when I, well when I came in '74 from the Council in itself being quite a powerful body as a player in that whole relationship, to when I left, particularly when Brown became Leader of the Liberals and the new Party, or new Government in December '93, I think at that point the relationship between the City and the State was, in a sense, at an all time low, and in fact there were moves by the Brown Government to dismiss the Council. I mean after I left, but, you know, the legislation was in the Parliament to dismiss the Council and put in a Commission, and so that really summed up the [laughs] decline in City/State relations I think, and I'd sort of foreseen that coming, I'd have to say. It was part of the reason, not a significant one, but certainly a contributing factor in my time, deciding it was time to leave the Council.

OH: And Michael, you have received a number of awards that reflect your contribution to the areas of Architecture, Planning, and City Management. Can you speak about those awards?

ML-S: I'm very privileged to actually be a Life Fellow of each of those three professions, and that's recognition by your peers. Life Fellowship is awarded by a professional organisation and recognises pretty much a sort of lifetime support for the professional institution of which you're a member. So I'm, I think, rather unique in having membership of three. I mean there's quite a few people that have had two, but to have three is rather unusual.

OH: And can you just speak a little about each one of those professions?

ML-S: Well, I mean given that I was trained as an architect in the first place. I've always found architecture a really interesting profession in terms of solving problems for a client who has a site and what he wants to achieve, but within the planning context, which led on to then Town Planning being the context within which individual applications are dealt with, but then the longer term strategic approach to towns and regions.

And then City Management is quite a different one, but really brings that together, but also picks up all the other functions the Council has to deliver, such as the Engineering or Parks. So there was a combination of all those things was always interesting to me.

Yeah, I think I've just been lucky to actually be able to maintain an interest in three distinct professions obviously related, but they are still in existence as separate professions and, I mean I just enjoy getting their magazines for free, which is one of the privileges of Life Membership. [Laughs]

OH: Your citations, I just want to, you know, put a label on each of those Life Memberships. You received the International City Management Association 30-year Distinguished Service Award, and that was the American body.

ML-S: Well, it's the International City Management Association, it's the one based in Washington, which I'd served on as Vice President, but that's an organisation which takes advice from respective sort of counterparts like Australia and New Zealand. So having served over 30 years in Local Government in total, which included London, Sydney, Adelaide and then Prospect, a recommendation goes forward to the Board, by which time I wasn't on the Board, and they make such awards. Usually they actually give them out at the annual conferences, so that was quite a nice thing to actually attend the conference and be given that particular award, mm …

OH: And then the Life Membership of the Local Government Managers in Australia?

ML-S: Well that's basically my peers, particularly in South Australia, again a recommendation out of the South Australian Division goes to the national body. And I think, yeah, I was particularly pleased on that one, I think that's a recognitioin from all the other CEOs around Adelaide at the time.

OH: And the Life Fellowship for the Planning Institute of Australia?

ML-S: I think that came after a couple of years on DAC [Development Assessment Commission] actually, yeah. I mean I'd in a sense, been out of Town Planning since obviously I became the Town Clerk from being the City Planner, but in a sense going back into the Planning profession because that's really what DAC is about. So that nomination actually came from some of the staff at Planning SA, that again has to go through the process, so yeah, that was nice.

OH: And that was in 2007?

ML-S: Mm …

OH: And then the 2010 Life Fellowship with the Australian Institute of Architects?

ML-S: Yeah, I'm not quite sure how that one came about to be perfectly honest. [Laughs] I think by that time I'd really retired. Again, someone nominates you. I think there was a recognition that, partly through DAC and the fact that I had still maintained my membership of the Australian Institute of Architects over a long period of time, and used to attend their functions and give papers now and again, and also however I had gone back and become a student at the School of Architecture at the University of Adelaide in terms of the PhD. So I'd re-established a bit of a network through the School of Architecture, but again someone nominates you and it progress through the system, and the national body assesses the application and the merits, you know, what you've achieved over time, and I suppose I was a young architect but I mean, I was involved in quite major buildings, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, when I first came out to Australia; some buildings in Sydney through McConnell, Smith and Johnson; some university buildings at LaTrobe. So actually, as an architect as well as doing some private houses myself, I maintained that interest in the profession, so somebody suggested it was a good idea, so I was pleased that that emerged. But yeah, that's quite recent.

OH: And I think the citation for the Fellowship referred to your mentoring of younger planners and architects?

ML-S: That's true. I'd always seen that as an important issue that as you move through a profession, that it's important that the next generations, and certainly people starting off, have got someone they can sort of talk to and have a bit of advice from some elderly people. [Laughs] But yeah, I think mentoring is actually an important aspect of professional development and all those professional bodies encourage it so that there are people in place that younger people in the profession can actually go to. So your name is published as someone who they can talk to if they wish.

OH: And Michael, you mentioned our PhD. I'd like to ask you why did you decide to do a PhD?

ML-S: Mm … [Laughs] I was the Chair of the University of Adelaide Alumni Association, and through that I got to know the Vice Chancellor of Adelaide, James McWha quite well, because the Chair travels to some of the overseas graduation ceremonies, and that was always fun. So I did a lot of travelling with James McWha and really got on very well with him, and the staff generally, and alumni at the university. But one of the reports I'd done on one of my study tours was to actually suggest that universities, particularly in the UK, not so much the USA but certainly the UK, were moving away from separate organisations for alumni. An alumni was automatically something you were having been through the university.

Because what used to happen at the end of your three-year degree, someone

would stick a brochure in your hand saying: *Well, now you can join the Alumni Association, pay your fee and then you're an alumni.* Which seemed to me quite strange I'd have to say, so that the report basically recommended that the association be disbanded and alumni simply were, and you'd actually embed people from the Alumni Office in the faculties of universities, so that people were aware of the alumni, not so much in first year. But if you made it through first year because of the drop-out rate, but by the time you were in second year, there was a growing awareness that there was an Alumni organisation, which was part of the university as opposed to separate from it. And that was accepted by the University Council, and so in a sense I was out of a job, so James McWha said: *Well, what are you going to do now? Have you ever thought about doing a PhD?* And I said: *Well, many years ago I sort of vaguely thought I might do something, but I hadn't.* So he said: *Well, you know, have a think about it,* to be honest, and sent me off to see David Jones, who was an Associate Professor at the School of Architecture and a landscape architect who'd done quite a bit of work for the Council actually on the Park Lands over the years. And I had a chat to him and just vaguely started thinking about possible topics. And it seemed to me that Adelaide was unique because of this 21 years that we'd had separate legislation, going back before my time, from'72 when the Interim Act came in, and the fact that it was then repealed in '93, so there was a distinct period of 21 years when the City of Adelaide had unique planning legislation. And that seemed to me it might be a useful topic to research in detail, and so I actually put a, so I then had to put a proposal together that that would be the topic.

OH: And the topic in the end became?

ML-S: It actually moved through different stages as the research progressed, so the final topic was about three steps removed from my initial one, and that's what, in a sense, what research will lead you to. But what was important as it progressed was to recognise the importance of the sort of City/State relationship which provided the framework within which the '72 legislation and Dunstan came into effect. And so I did then significantly provide the historic background, so the title reflects the fact that the 21 years is seen within that historic context, from 1836, so there's a whole chunk at the beginning of the thesis which is the historic relationship going back to Colonel Light and Governor Hindmarsh about the siting of the City, and how that then developed over time until the '72 legislation came into effect.

OH: And how was the experience of doing that intense kind of study over three and a half years?

ML-S: Certainly interesting. [Laughs] I mean there were some other mature age students floating around the university, but you are mixing basically with 20-year-olds who've, you know, done their first of maybe Masters degree, who are doing fulltime research. I got awarded a Divisional Fellowship to do that, so it actually provided me with an income, so I gave up, well, for the first year I was still Chairing DAC, which time wise was quite hectic. But then that's why I decided to not seek reappointment as the Presiding Member of DAC, and literally became a fulltime student. But because of the support

through the University Divisional Scholarship, I was sort of able to do that financially. So it was a way of actually providing a means to be a fulltime student, so I mean that was all very nice.

The last three months were really hectic. I mean I worked incredible hours doing the writing, writing it all up, so the research was interesting and I particularly found the historic stuff interesting actually, things I didn't know about. So I found out a lot about the history of the State and how it developed, and more particularly the development between '72 and '74, which I physically wasn't here for, so obviously of the 21 years, for 19 years I was involved either as the City Planner or the Town Clerk, but for the first two years when the CADC was operating, that was genuine research. But I did carry out a whole range of oral histories, which was fantastic. I mean people like Hugh Stretton and Stuart Hart, and some of the key players from the '60s and '70s, all the Heads of the State Agencies, all the living Lord Mayors.

I think I identified initially 65 key people that could be interviewed. And I ended up interviewing 48 because, obviously, some were already dead, like Dunstan and some of the Ministers for Planning were already deceased. But of the ones who identified, in fact only one declined to be interviewed, which was interesting, out of the whole lot, so I have on record 48 Oral Histories, which are actually in the City Archives. I mean I donated the texts to the City Archives, so that's an interesting Oral History in itself.

OH: And Michael, do you have any plans for publishing the thesis as a book?

ML-S: I do indeed, and the university has commissioned a book. In fact I recently signed a contract. And we're at the stage of second peer reviews, which I've just got back, so I'm actually into the third draft of the chapters for the book. Hopefully we publish later this year or certainly early next year.

OH: Through the University of Adelaide Press?

ML-S: Mm … yep.

OH: Michael, I wanted to ask you why you ran a campaign as Area Councillor in 2010.

ML-S: I think it actually came out of my thesis. What I'd discovered was the interesting relationship between the City and State as we briefly discussed. And my view at the time was that the relationship between the City and State, although as I said earlier, it started declining when Dean Brown became Premier, I think it was even at a further low to be perfectly honest, that there was not a working relationship between the Adelaide City Council and the State Government, partly because Premier Mike Rann and Lord Mayor Michael Harbison didn't see eye to eye, and very rarely communicated about anything which was, in this sort of City/State, which is what we are, I think extremely sad.

And the other issue was that the, as I said, when the City Act was repealed in

’93 and the City’s planning legislation was absorbed and became an ongoing City Plan determined by the Minister for Planning, that had become quite a sort of cumbersome document that every time something goes wrong, the immediate reaction is to add more layers of controls. So from a document which I’d been used to, which was really quite slim and high-level policy issues, obviously some detailed controls, but still a reasonably workable document and understanding, it had become this enormous document of, you know, 400 pages with quite detailed policies and controls. To try and understand your way around it I thought was just silly, to be honest.

So two of my concerns were to have a fundamental review of the Adelaide City Plan, and to work towards improving City/State relations. I did have some other sort of key topics, and I came up with a little phrase of: *We need to bring about some light back into the City,* sort of playing on Colonel Light as well as the implications of life generally, so I used that as sort of: *L for Leadership; I think I for Integrity;* I’m trying to struggle with the … [pause] Isn’t that interesting? It’s not that long ago but anyway, I’ve forgotten. I had this little catch phrase and I’m using some key topics. My issue was, and I had to go around residents’ meetings and put out brochures and what have you, and a lot of door knocking in the South East.

I decided to run as an Area Councillor because obviously I did know a lot of, still had a lot of contacts with business community as opposed to just being a resident of the City. I mean I had moved into the City about seven years ago, always had, not always but we’d bought property in the City quite some time ago as sort of investment situations, but as opposed to running as a Ward Councillor, I thought as an Area Councillor I would be able to get quite a bit more support from my networks, both in North Adelaide as well as where I lived in South Adelaide, but also the CBD office, commercial type people. So that was the reason to run as an Area Councillor.

So the fundamental issues were those two policy questions of trying to work towards improving City/State relations, and having a fundamental review of the City Plan, and I think in a sense, although we are only halfway through this, and I mean I got elected, Anne Moran had the highest number of votes, but then I was second on the ballot and got in without having to go to preferences, so she and I were elected in our own rights. And then the other three Area Councillors went to preferences. I mean I was quite pleased with that achievement, to be honest.

I never quite knew what it would be like to be a politician compared to being a City Manager. But no, it’s been an interesting experience, I think it’s fair to say, and given that the Minister has brought about a new Plan for the City of Adelaide, which we contributed to, and I am on the Capital City Committee which has certainly improved since Jay Weatherill has become Premier - I mean he’s got the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport. We have the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, and me as Chair of the Planning Committee. So the six of us actually meet and quite often without any staff

present, so it's a really good political discussion about City/State relations, and I think people have agreed that things are significantly improved since Mike Rann left, in terms of City/State relations.

There's lots of reasons for that, but Jay's certainly got a different approach to cooperation between City and State, and I think there have been good working relationships over things like the Oval, there will be over the river bank, so there's ongoing discussions on a range of things where the City and State have an interest. So there is now a mechanism back in place where that can occur politically, so in a sense I'm pleased that that's already happened within less than half the term of the current Council. But I've already decided that I won't run again. I actually find it frustrating being a Councillor compared to being the CEO, but some things have been achieved, which is good.

OH: What are the main frustrations, do you think?

ML-S: I think the frustration is knowing what goes on, on the other side of the fence, and seeing how things could be done differently. I mean, even if I get a motion up on the Council floor, which means getting at least six other votes, it's usually not too hard to achieve that, but once the Council has made a decision, I mean unless there's significant provision within the budget, or the staff are 100% behind it, it's too easy for Council decisions to sort of get passed around and put on backburners, and generally not exactly given the priority individual members might think. And my problem is I know how that happens. I mean I've done that too often myself, so when I see it happening now and there's nothing I can do about it. I mean that's the frustrating bit. I mean as an individual Councillor there is no executive power, you're one of 12, and the 12 have to vote, and that's where the power lies as a Council as a whole. Now that has some advantages but it also has some disadvantages in terms of executive leadership.

It's interesting, actually. In New South Wales, and indeed in the UK, there are significant moves towards Executive Mayors, that the leadership politically is going to be given quite a few of the sort of powers which currently reside in the CEO, and I'm not sure how that's going to work. I understand why it's being brought about in some areas, I mean there is a frustration between, electing a political body but really, to be frank, the real power resides with the CEO in terms of actually getting things done on the ground. I mean that's how it works, and so it's interesting that there are these political moves in other places. Now it hasn't, as far as I'm aware, it hasn't occurred in South Australia yet, but I wouldn't be surprised if that does start to emerge over time that the Lord Mayor would actually have some powers to bring about some change, as opposed to simply being the figurehead and Chair of the Council. So that could be interesting in the future, but certainly it's some time off.

OH: And your term finishes in 2014?

ML-S: Yes, November 2014, yeah.

OH: And Michael, in terms of some general kind of reflections on say, you know, if we look from 1974 - 2012, that's 37½ years of association with the Adelaide City Council, what would be some of the main changes that you have seen in your time?

ML-S: Mm … I'd say it's a really good question. I think what's happening these days is really it isn't just at Council level, it's in politics generally, it's the 24-hour media cycle that the media is now so, or the nature of social media as well, I mean the networks in which those information flow, and the whole electronic sort of computing-based stuff. I mean we now get Council agendas delivered on iPads, and you can access stuff through your computer.

I still have a, probably I'm showing my age, but I still think that there are issues, like the City Plan for example, where there's a lot of people would actually still like to come in and talk to a planner face-to-face and go through what the issues are. And while you can do it online and you can interact online, it's never quite the same. So I actually, I mean I was quite responsible for bring about the Planning Lab we've got in the Colonel Light Centre on the ground floor, so there's a physical space where there's always a planner sitting, and people can go in and look at things, can look at things on a screen but there's also somebody there you can talk to. And I think that's quite an important issue. But overall the major change has been the nature of communication, that you can access so much information so easily, as long as you have your own computer or access to a computer, and the whole social networking sites, which our current Lord Mayor uses extensively. I mean he's at that age where Twitter and Facebook are just how you do it, and my kids are the same.

I mean my children are early-30s, and it's just second nature to them, sort of they grew up with PCs at Scotch College from an early age, that's one of the schools that had a PC from an early age and was delivering stuff through. So I think that's probably the biggest change in my lifetime.

In terms of the City itself, I mean, while there have been a whole lot of buildings developed, I mean I was just reflecting. I mean I've got various photographs of what it was like. If you look at that one, behind you, I know it's black and white, but if you look at the black stump in the middle, it had been just completed when that was taken.

OH: What year was that?

ML-S: That would have been '74 or '75.

OH: And what is the black stump?

ML-S: In Grenfell Street, the tower which is black clad. Whereas, now we've got State Bank which is much higher, and a whole lot of other high rise residential buildings, and obviously the oval development is occurring. So there have been physically quite a lot of changes, but the underlying planning system, or plan of Colonel Light remains. I mean we've still got the Park

Lands, we've still got wide streets, we've still got a fairly clean City. So the fundamentals are still as they were when I came in the '70s I think, but the whole, the working environment is certainly different.

The fact that I've got an office as a Councillor is something which was not heard of in my Town Clerk's days. I mean the Councillors had a lounge but that was it. I mean there were very few who could afford the time to be fulltime Councillors, and the amount of work Councillors did was much less. I mean the Council meetings were, it was very civilized. I mean you'd come in and have a drink in the Lord Mayor's Room about noon, you'd have a sit-down lunch. You'd go to the Council meeting at 2.15, and if it wasn't finished by 4 o'clock there was something wrong because then it was time to go and have afternoon tea.

It was all very civilised. [Laughs] And that's how it all operated, but now it's sort of meetings, endless meetings, and I find that annoying. They're usually all at night. I mean occasionally during the day but, you know, they start at 5 o'clock and can go through. So yeah. It's a different commitment in terms of time I think these days, as a Councillor, compared to what it used to be.

Our Lord Mayor is now a fulltime job, gets paid, which was certainly unheard of during my time. Even when I left it was still, there was a sort of small allowance but nothing like recognition as being a fulltime job for which you got paid. So there are quite significant changes in one sense, but in another it's more of the same. Local Government is still happily going on dealing with the things it needs to.

OH: And Michael, if you think about people who have been significant in your time in the Council, would any stand out for you?

ML-S: John Roche was the Lord Mayor at the critical time, and the Council itself brought that about. I mean he was a developer from the Adelaide Development Company, but a Company Director and a whole range of things, and understood about planning from the private sector, and so the critical negotiations which occurred from '75 through to '77, which brought about the change from the Planning Study to the first City Plan. He and I really worked incredibly closely together, and I had a great deal of respect for him and his abilities.

But also on the other side, Hugh Hudson was the Minister for Planning, and John Mant was the Advisor. John Mant and I became really close friends, we're still in touch quite regularly. He came and gave a paper at the Heritage Week just a couple of days ago, and Hugh Hudson, obviously a Labor politician; John Roche clearly a member of the Liberal Party and influential, a personal friend of Malcolm Fraser. But they personally got on incredibly well together. So the amount of effort which the four of us put in to sorting out City/State relations to get the City Plan in place, was probably the major achievement, to be honest. But certainly all the Lord Mayors I've worked with, except maybe from Ninio at the end which was difficult. But Bob

Clampett when I came was Lord Mayor and he was a real gentleman of the old school, famous war hero, Lieutenant Colonel, and there's a hill named after him in Papua New Guinea I think from memory, from the War. [Laughs] And then after Roche, George Joseph who was a lawyer, very different, sort of down to earth Lord Mayor but got on well with him.

Then Jim Bowen, and Jim and I had a few disagreements initially, but he put in place the beginnings of the Heritage Study, which was again an important issue for the City, so he certainly provided leadership on a range of fronts. And then John Watson, who was the Lord Mayor when I was appointed, so a key member in a sense of the Chairman's Committee which appointed me, and again a real gentleman in North Adelaide, a medical doctor, who took time off from his practice to be able to be the Lord Mayor.

He was followed by Wendy Chapman, first Lady Lord Mayor, an interesting, different perspective from Wendy, and a real sort of terrier to get things done. She was good about being across a whole lot of Council decisions. I mean she'd work hard at getting the numbers particularly organised beforehand so that there were very few sort of confrontations in Council when she was Lord Mayor, because she really did put in the time to get a sort of consensus view of things. And I mentioned Jarvis earlier, he was really good about the PR and media, and bringing about a positive approach for the Council because of his personal abilities, and professional background. And then Steve Condous, who was I mean a very likable fellow. I had a lot of time for Steve, but stayed around, in my view, too long. I mean he knows [laughs] I felt that. A second term we could have lived with, but the third term, particularly when he was offside with the heritage faction, was really not good for City/State relations, and then particularly when he became the Liberal candidate for Colton, and John Bannon said he wouldn't work with him anymore, or couldn't meet with him anymore because he didn't know whether he was dealing with the Lord Mayor or the Liberal candidate for Colton. I think that was very sad because it did bring about the end of that personal relationship between City and State, and I think that had significant implications for the future. And then after Condous, I was expecting, to be honest, Hamilton would have beaten Ninio, I think, in a Lord Mayoral contest. But then Mark didn't run, which was unfortunate. And so Ninio became Lord Mayor but also had the development numbers on the Council, which affected the heritage issue. Like I said the owners could object and not be listed. They wanted to bring about significant budget savings, understandable politically, cut the rates, but unnecessary in a financial sense, and then the issues about the staff which needed to go to bring about the sort of savings, and the way in which they went about that, as opposed to what would have been a professional approach, all of which resulted in me deciding it was time to get out myself, which was fine.

As I said, fortunately it was done amicably with the Council, and I think from a point of view of not being stressed. My wife always said: *Well, there's a good time to go so, you know, if you don't want a heart attack because it was a strain trying to be a City Manager in that sort of political environment.* And

really I have enjoyed life ever since, so it has been fun being back as a Councillor, but as I say I don't really find it enjoyable. [Laughs]

OH: And Michael, some final kind of reflections. I'm interested to know what is your relationship to the City of Adelaide? How would you define it?

ML-S: Well it's obviously a very close one. I mean I think when we decided to come initially, we actually decided to live outside the City for what I thought were good reasons, so we bought a house in Rose Park, convenient in terms of location. But it really does go back to just the incredibly farsightedness of the City Plan layout which Adelaide is through Colonel Light and the Park Lands.

I mean you actually, well we found, got to love the lifestyle. I mean it's a really easy place to live, and a great place to bring up a family in. Adelaide in that sense is, I think, unique in Australia if not, maybe some cities which you could live within the States. But my wife and I had a lot of discussions over the years about where else would we live if not in Adelaide. The trade-off however is our ability to travel frequently.

I mean it does still have that capacity to be perceived of as a large country town, and the parochialism which sort of goes with that. But as a place to live and bring up kids, it's really magnificent. And in terms of relationship to the City, we always saw that as somewhere where we'd want to be, somewhere, we bought some other properties reasonably early on, once we decided we were going to stay and not move on after five or seven years. And so there's been a personal involvement in terms of seeing how that was going to develop. And seven years ago, decided to actually move into the City, into one of the, in fact a local listed property, which I rolled up my sleeves and did the architecture drawing and designs for, so we had to preserve the façade and the site, that was the extent of the local listening. But basically doubled the size of the house and provided a really nice family house in Kate Court in the City, so in residence in the City for over seven years; we still have other properties either through my super fund or our partnership. So an interest in ensuring that the City is progressing in a way which we find appropriate for our sort of lifestyle.

So we probably still do travel frequently. Unfortunately both our kids live overseas so it's an excuse to travel. Whether they'll ever come back I doubt. Well, certainly I don't think our son will ever come back, our daughter might. But it's been an ongoing relationship with the City. I mean every time you fly back into Adelaide, you see the Park Lands and you see the buildings we've set in the Park Lands, and the river, and it just really is a magnificent place. I mean it's really hard not to like it, and I think it's changed in a positive way over the last couple of years, to be honest. But there's a sort of feel that Adelaide is not the sort of backwater that used to be perceived in lots of ways. And I think that the Oval development will be a major catalyst for change, I mean bringing that number of people into the City.

I think there is a freer approach to residential development than there used to be. So there are areas where now many more buildings might emerge. But the trick is really to make sure the design outcomes deliver what we think they will, and that's perhaps a bit of a question.

It depends who the Government appoints to that Design Panel. I mean the Government Architect will chair it but who else gets appointed to that will have a lot to do with the outcomes about how the City is going to look. But at the end of the day it's probably hard to mess it up quite honestly. I mean, Colonel Light's streets and layout will still be there, and the individual buildings will be looked at in context, and green spaces, the squares, will still be there. So the framework within which individual buildings sit is not going to change.

OH: And Michael, what do you see as the future of Adelaide, say in the next 10-20 years?

ML-S: I think the Government's objectives in terms of a 30-year Plan which have been reinforced by the Council in terms of the residential, I mean the main thing is to bring that residential population back up to 50,000. I mean cities work if you've got a vibrant population to make the 24-hour, seven-day a week cycle operate. So although we are well short of that, I mean it did decline, it was at the lowest ebb when I came, which was like 11,000, 12,000 people, and it's certainly been up in the mid-40,000s prior to the War. But like I've mentioned earlier, I mean you have to take on board that a lot of those were low income families with a large number of kids. So that population was somewhat limited.

Now the areas where residential can now occur are much more mixed use like overseas. So you can get commercial uses in the same building as residential uses, so it's not the physical separation which the rigid Town Planning Controls used to bring about, so there is real potential for 50,000 living in the City within the next, within the 30-year Plan for the City. I think the Government needs to put in the tram route, I think the transport issues need to be resolved in terms of moving people around, and the way in which high densities would certainly relate to those transport issues. So I think there will be a decline in the use of cars for the all-day parkers. But the short-term parkers I think, will continue for the foreseeable future, even if the cars become more electric and hybrid rather than petrol, which is an issue of carbon dioxide in emissions, etc, But the flexibility of the City's plan, because it's such an easy grid to get around, won't change. Although the Government's recently introduced bus lanes, or is going to introduce bus lanes for Grenfell Street. That will have an impact on public transport obviously.

Issues like providing ongoing taxi ranks becomes important. Pedestrian priority becomes important; more bicycles lanes is certainly on the books, so all the sort of signs are in the right direction to make it a much more liveable and vibrant City. And if that comes about I think Adelaide will be a great

place to live in 20, 30 years time. Well, it is now. But I think it will be significantly improved because of the sorts of things going on to make it a more vibrant City, so it doesn't close down at 5 o'clock. Or you come in on Sundays and it's dead. I mean I think there will just be more people living in the square mile who will make it a much more enjoyable place to be, with more things going on to enjoy it.

We have a great cultural boulevard along North Adelaide. I mean it's unique in the capital cities if you have all those institutions within easy access. If we can link the lanes through to Rundle Mall, and we have more flexible hours in Rundle Mall already, but I think likely to be more. It will just be a really great place to live.

OH: Well, thank you very much, Michael, for your contribution to the Oral History Project. And before I finish I just wanted to check whether there are any other items or themes that you wanted to cover?

ML-S: Well, thank you very much, I don't think so. I briefly thought about that but I think you've really done a great job of doing some investigative work to ask the right questions, which has enabled me to respond, so I really appreciate that. So thank you very much for your time.

OH: Well thank you, Michael, it's been a great experience interviewing you, thank you.

End of recording

Michael Llewellyn-Smith

Timed summary, first interview, 9th March 2012

Time	Subject	Keywords
00.00.00	Introduction. Background. Full name. Date of birth (28 November 1942) Family background: father, a Methodist Minister. Mother's family were farmers. Growing up. Extended family.	Michael John Llewellyn-Smith. Tintern, Wales. London.
00.05.20	Secondary education. Aspirations. Studied Architecture. Awarded scholarship.	Architecture. Cambridge. Rhodes Travel Scholarship. Canada.
00.09.45	Seven year Architecture course. Interest in planning. Practicum year in Australia.	Pembroke College. Eisenman. Town Planning. Institute of British Architects. Sir Roy Grounds. National Gallery of Victoria.
00.15.44	Early employment as an Architect. First experience of planning. Development control.	City of London.
00.19.41	1970, awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship. Study and work in Sydney. Marriage to Ida. Job with City of Sydney..	Sydney University. City Planning. City of Sydney Strategic Plan. George Clarke. Sydney City Council. Chief Planning Officer.
00.32.56	Influence of George Clarke. Innovation on Council. Planning as a political process. Became Deputy City Planner.	City of Sydney. Action Projects. Woolloomooloo. Jack Mundy Green bans. Commonwealth Government.
00.39.00	George Clarke's strategic plan for Adelaide. Recommendation to establish new Department of City Planning. Attraction to work in Adelaide. 1974 Appointment as first City Planner for City of Adelaide.	George Clarke. City of Adelaide. Colonel Light. Bill Hayes. Don Dunstan. City Planner.
00.43.30	First experience of new role in Adelaide. Comparison with Sydney party system and Council. Independent authority for City of	Adelaide City Council. Council Chamber. Dunstan. Hayes. City of Adelaide Development Commission. [CADC] Hugh Stretton. Bob

	Adelaide. Key leaders in government and Council. Active partnership between City and State.	Bakewell. Newell Platten. Jim Bowen. John Chappel. John Roche. George Clarke. Planning Study.
00.48.43	Time of change with planning. Community consultation for City Planning Study. Zoning. Increasing residential population. Role of Housing Trust. Quality of the design of public housing.	Bill Hayes. Dunstan. Stretton. St Peter's Residents' Society. MATS Plan. CADC. Zoning. South East. South West. South Australian Housing Trust. [SAHT] Newell Platten.
00.57.37	Infrastructure to support role of City Planner. Change in Engineer's role. Need for change about planning. Support for new approach. Reformist Lord Mayors. Management structure, 12, 13 heads of departments. Workforce of over 1,000 staff. Planning Department employed over 30 after two years.	City Engineers Department. City Planning Department. Queen's Chambers. Mr [Hugh] Bubb. Car parks. Hayes. Clampett. Roche. Town Clerk. Russell Arland. Management Team. Val Ellis. Director of Parks and Recreation. City Planning Department.
1.03.52	Issue of heritage in context of the Planning Study. State and City processes to protect heritage listed buildings. Influence of residents' groups in North Adelaide and the City.	George Clarke. Planning Study. Dunstan. State Heritage. Edmund Wright House. South Australian Hotel.. City Plan. North Adelaide Society. MATS Plan. North Adelaide Village Centre. Adelaide Residents' Group. Alistair Fisher. John Watson. John Roche. Peter Stephens. Planning Department Reports.
1.09.51	Conversion of Planning Study to Plan. Government involvement in analysis of the City of Adelaide Plan. Public consultation. Role of media. Major arguments about rezoning. Impetus for increasing residential population. Public transport.	City of Adelaide Planning Study. City of Adelaide Plan. Bob Clampett. CADC. George Clarke. Bakewell. State Government Review Committee. Planning Centre. North Adelaide. Rezoning. South East. South West. Residential population. State Government. Public transport.
1.14.57	Role of City of Adelaide Development Commission in the early 1970s. Public consultation for City of Adelaide Plan. Council's demonstration of viability of residential development.	Bakewell. State Government Review Committee. City of Adelaide Plan. Derek Scrafton. Keith Lasirit. Alex Ramsay. Keith Johinke. Wards. Property owners. Angas Court. Housing Trust. Manitoba. Playford.
1.20.07	Policy changes made to Planning Study. Strategic and statutory	John Mant. Hugh Hudson. Bakewell. George Clarke. John Roche. Dunstan.

	aspects. Leadership roles in City and State. Establishment of new Commission. Five-year review cycle for the Plan.	City of Adelaide Development Control Act. City of Adelaide Planning Commission.
1.27.58	Final agreement December 1976. Council resolution to adopt Plan. Act came in March 1977. George Clarke's vision. Public transport. Heritage debate continued.	City of Adelaide Development Control Act. Hudson. Roche. Fred Hanson. Heritage. City of Adelaide Heritage Study. Marsden, Stark & Donovan. Transferable Floor Area scheme.
1.34.41	George Clarke's response to City of Adelaide Plan legislation. Own reaction at completion of processes towards legislation. City of Adelaide Planning Commission. International interest in the City of Adelaide Plan	John Roche. Planning Department. John Mant. Hudson. Stuart Hart. State Planning Authority. Commissioners on City of Adelaide Planning Commission John Roche. Jim Bowen. John Chappel. Newell Platten. Derek Scrafton. Alan Waite. Lord Mayor Clampett.
1.41.20	Session ends.	

Michael Llewellyn-Smith

Timed summary, second interview, 30 March 2012

Time	Subject	Keywords
00.00.00	Introduction. Action Plans for the City of Adelaide Plan. 1976 – ten priority Action Plans. Residential development.	City of Adelaide Plan. Action Plans. George Clarke. City Planning Department. Rezoning. Angas Street. Engineer's Department. Parks and Recreation Department. Building Surveyor's Department.
00.09.56	MATS Plan. Proposed changes to the City. Council's purchase of properties. Interim control. Residential development. Change to traffic engineering approach to planning.	Bill Veale. Dunstan. Hugh Stretton. CADC [City of Adelaide Development Commission]. Frome Street South. Institute of Architects. Guy Maron. John Chappel.
00.14.58	Information systems for internal administration. Management of data. Use of computers 1970s.	Don Hopgood.
00.18.25	List of Registered Places. Heritage and development lobbies in 1990s. Statutory controls. Heritage debate in Council and community. Environmental significance.	State Heritage. Dunstan. Edmond Wright House. Ayers House. *Red Book. Blue Book.* City Plan. North Adelaide. Jim Bowen. Lord Mayor's Heritage Advisory Committee. City Heritage List. Transferable Floor Area. Donovan, Marsden and Stark. Steve Condous. Mark Hamilton. Townscape. George Clarke.
0031.03	Impact of Action Plans on the work of Council. Change of culture. Role of City Planner to coordinate projects. Analysis of City population. Community development, an Innovative by Local Government. Opposition from some councillors.	Works Program. Planning Department. Town Clerk Russell Arland. City Engineer. Parks and Recreation Department. E&WS Department. Telstra. North Adelaide Village Centre. Community Needs Survey. Community Development. Sr Janet Mead. Moore Street Centre. Hutt Street. Health Community Services. Health Inspectors.
00.40.51	Relationship between land use and transport. Policy decisions. City/State relations.	Minister of Planning. Minister of Transport. City Engineer. City Planner. Town Clerk. Joint Planning Commission. George Clarke. CADC [City of Adelaide

		Development Commission]. Lord Mayor.
00.51.03	Action Projects managed by work teams. Impact on elected members. Major challenges for implementing City Plan. Leadership of Lord Mayors. Monthly meetings between Premier and Lord Mayor.	Engineer's Department. City Planning Committee. State Government. Transport Department. Derek Scrafton. Director General of Public Transport. Bob Clampett. John Roche. George Joseph. Jim Bowen. CADC [City of Adelaide Development Commission]. John Watson. North Adelaide Residents Society. David Tonkin. Head of Premier's Department. Town Clerk. Wendy Chapman. Jim Jarvis. Steve Condous. Henry Ninio.
00.58.58	Lists achievements as City Planner. Residential population. Innovative planning system. Public housing. Changes in 1993. Role of Council in implementing City Plan. Decision with Ida to stay in Adelaide.	City Plan. *Red Book. Blue Book*. Angas Street. Housing Trust, Stretton. Alex Ramsay. Playford. Manitoba. Planning Commission. Local Government Act.
1.09.37	Session ends.	

Michael Llewellyn-Smith

Timed summary, third interview, 20 April 2012

Time	Subject	Keywords
00.00.00	Introduction. History of control of Park Lands. Legislation and alienation. History of site of Festival Centre.	Park Lands. Adelaide City Council. City of Adelaide Planning Study. State Government. Legislation. E&WS Depot. ASER Development. Playford. Adelaide High School. Dunstan. Ken Tomkinson. Valve House. City Baths. Festival Centre. Steele Hall. Russell Arland. Stuart Hart. Colin Hassell.
00.10.24	Hutt Street redevelopment in 1990s.	City of Adelaide Planning Study. George Clarke. Hutt Street precinct. South East. Hutt Street Precinct Association. Plane trees.
00.12.32	Appointment as Town Clerk 1982. Context of appointment. Internal applications. Controversial appointment. Mentors. Division between statutory and management functions.	Russell Arland. Local Government Act. Jack Measday. Murray Hill. Institute of Municipal Administration. George Payne, Town Clerk of Unley. ACC Deputy Town Clerk, John Williams.
00.23.37	New approach to role of Town Clerk. Influence of planning background. Restructuring.	Executive Committee. City Plan. Brigadier Veale. MATS Plan. Heads of Departments.
00.36.17	Relationship with Lord Mayor. Growth of City/State relationships. Rituals in Lord Mayor's Office. Rapport with the media. Open committee meetings.	John Watson. David Tonkin. *The Advertiser. The News.* Garth Rawlings. Jeremy Cordeaux.
00.45.02	Next Lord Mayors. First woman Lord Mayor. Franchise. Change to Town Clerk's title. Controversy about Steve Condous' second term.	Wendy Chapman. Rosemary Boucaut. Lady Mayoress' Committee. Jim Jarvis. Local Government Act 1984. Steve Condous. George Joseph. Senior Alderman. Ward Councillor. Jim Bowen.

00.54.10	Steve Condous' third term as Lord Mayor. Changes on Council. Heritage and development factions .Challenges for Administration. Heads of Departments attended Council meetings.	Steve Condous. Council. Administration. Heritage Study. Jane Lomax-Smith. Jacqui Gillam. Mark Hamilton. Henry Ninio. House of Chow. Aurora [Hotel]. Aurora Heritage Action Group.
00.59.21	Changes in City/State relationships. Urban design issues. Importance of Public transport.	Jim Jarvis. John Bannon. City of Adelaide Planning Study. *Red Book. Blue Book. Green Book.*
1.03.33	Design of Council logo. Involvement in public events in role.	City of Adelaide Coat of Arms. Kym Bonython. State sesquicentenary. Sesquicentenary of Council 1990. Civic Receptions.
1.09.04	Restructure. Need for more consultation with employees. Workforce of more than 1,000. Residential renewal. Move of Works Depot.	Engineer's Department. Halifax Street Depot.
1.15.53	Section deleted	
1.22.09	1993 Repeal of separate City legislation. Change to planning system	Bannon. Ninio.
1.24.01	Session ends.	

Michael Llewellyn-Smith

Timed summary, fourth interview, 3 May 2012

Time	Subject	Keywords
00.00.00	Introduction. Five yearly reviews of planning. First City Plan 1976 – 1981. Three components of the Plan; legislation; strategic approach; Action Plans. City/State relationship. Corporate planning. City planning.	City of Adelaide Plan. George Clarke. John Mant. Planning Study. *Red Book. Blue Book. Green Book.* Planning Commission. Jarvis. John Bannon. Minister for Local Government. Minister for Planning. Minister for Transport. Legislative Council. Lord Mayor Hayes. Premier Don Dunstan.
00.07.18	Workload at end of five year planning cycle. Consultation.	Property Council. State Department of Transport. Ward Councillors. Aldermen.
00.10.16	Approach to attracting more residents. Rezoning of south east and south west. Decline in population. Public housing in the City for the first time in 1927. ACC negotiations with Housing Trust. Attempts to involve private sector in housing developments.	George Clarke. Metropolitan Development Plan. CADC [City of Adelaide Development Commission]. South Australian Housing Trust. Hugh Stretton. Alex Ramsay. Manitoba. Playford.
00.17.09	State also involved in heritage protection. Factions on Council – heritage and development. ACC advisory service for residents in heritage listed properties. Council focus on townscape	George Clarke. Listings of Environmental Significance. Dunstan. Edmund Wright House. Ayers House. Jim Bowen. Lord Mayor's Heritage Advisory Committee. North Adelaide. Lord Mayor Condous. Lord Mayor Ninio. Local Heritage Listing. State Heritage Committee. Townscape. Desired Future Character.
00.25.27	Restoration of the Town Hall. Long-term process. Replacement of Town Hall organ. Public subscriptions. Interviewed organ builders in London.	Town Hall. Lord Mayor Bowen. Queen Adelaide Room. Lady Mayoress' Room. Members' Lounge. Colonel Light Centre. Prince Alfred Hotel. City Building Surveyor's Department. Andrew Russell. Town Hall organ. Jarvis. Colonel Light Room. Committee Room of the Council. Queen Adelaide Room.
00.36.38	Council finances and revenue. Residential rates small percentage. Resident rebate.	Rate income. Assessed Annual Value. City car parks. City Engineer.Topham Street car park. Pirie Street car park. Residential

		Renewal Policy.
00.44.14	Use of Park Lands. Proposal to have land bank. Legislation to excise parts of Park Lands.	Park Lands. George Clarke. Lord Mayor Roche. Dunstan. Commissioner Tomkinson. Planning and Environment Court. Legislation. University. Museum. Art Gallery. State Parliament. Playford. ASER Development. Thebarton. North Adelaide.
00.49.55	Central Market. Public reaction to major redevelopment. Iconic reputation.	Central Market. Commercial Director of the Council. Roger Cooke.
00.54.39	Reasons why successive Lord Mayors have wanted to change Victoria Square. History of plans.	Colonel Light. Sir James Irwin. City Engineer. Guy Maron. Jane Lomax-Smith. Condous. SA Water building. Lord Mayor Harbison. State funding. Federal funding.
1.01.16	Negotiations with State Government for Grand Prix 1985. Legislation.	Grand Prix. Kym Bonython. Wendy Chapman. John Bannon. Mal Hemmerling. City Engineer, John Haddaway. Bernie Ecclestone. Park Lands.
1.07.40	Sister City relationships. Trade opportunities. Four committees – one for each Sister City. Signed agreements.	Sister Cities. Georgetown, Penang. Christchurch, New Zealand. Himeji, Japan. John Bannon. David Tonkin. .Mitsubishi. Chrysler. Austin, Texas. Lord Mayor Watson. Lord Mayor Yarwood. Jarvis.
1.14.25	Growth of technology in the Council 1982 - 1994.	Hewlett Packard. IT Department.
1.16.49	Session ends.	

Michael Llewellyn-Smith

Timed summary, fifth interview, 30 May 2012

Time	Subject	Keywords
00.00.00	Introduction. Took overseas sabbatical leave after ten years. Study of the development industry. Attendance at overseas conferences. Role of CEO in Capital City Council. Over 40 papers published nationally and internationally. Served on the Board and was Vice President of International City Management Association.	Sabbatical leave. Cambridge. Department of Land Economy. International City Management Association.
00.10.09	Media reaction to Council. Accountability of Local Government. Role of the local paper.	Messenger Press. Piers Akerman, Editor of *The Advertiser. The News.* Garth Rawlins. Jim Jarvis. *The City Messenger*. Des Ryan.
00.16.35	Membership of professional associations while Town Clerk/Chief Executive.	South Australian Division of the Adelaide Institute of Management. Institute of Municipal Management. National President. Local Government Managers Australia. Australian Institute of Management.
00.19.55	Steps in decision to resign in 1993. Internal changes in Administration. Repeal of City of Adelaide legislation. New Lord Mayor. Heritage. Development.	Department of Planning. Department of Building. Community Service. Director of Community Development. Henry Nino. Local Heritage List.
	Section deleted	
00.36.00	Negotiated a retirement package December 1993. Stayed for further six months. New CEO. Farewell Civic Reception. Professional life after ACC.	Ninio. Ilan Hershman. Llewellyn's International Urban Management Consultants. Urban Design Panel. Walkerville. City of Prospect. Deputy and Presiding Member of the Development Assessment Commission. Minister Di Laidlaw.
00.43.48	Reflections on roles as Town Clerk and Town Clerk/Chief Executive. Conversion of Planning Study to City	City Planner. Colonel Light. George Clarke. City of Adelaide Plan. John Watson. Wendy Chapman. Condous.

	Plan. Woking with different Lord Mayors. City/State relations. Council developments. Increase of residents. Challenges in the roles of Town Clerk and Town Clerk/Chief Executive. Decline in City/State relations.	Ninio. Car parks. Joint Planning Commission.
00.53.28	Recipient of a number of significant awards. Life Fellow of three professions. Mentoring young architects.	30-Year distinguished Service Award for the International City Management Association. Local Government Managers in Australia. Life Fellowship of the Planning Institute of Australia. Development Assessment Commission. Life Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Architects.
00.59.55	Reasons for studying a PhD. Experience of study over three and a half years. Topic on planning and City/State relations in context of Colonel William Light 1972 – 1993. Interviewed 48 people. Book will be published late 2012.	Adelaide University Alumni Association. James McWha. Associate Professor David Jones, School of Architecture.
1.07.02	2010 Decision to become Councillor. Improve City/State relations. Fundamental review of City of Adelaide Plan. Challenges of being on the 'other side of the fence'.	Area Councillor. City of Adelaide Plan. Governance. Lord Mayor.
1.14.54	Reflections on main changes in 37.5 years association with the ACC. Growth. Development. Residential increases. Significant people in his terms.	Politics. Social media. Cityscape. Professionalisation of Councillors. John Roche. Hugh Hudson. John Mant. Bob Clampett. George Joseph. Jim Bowen. John Watson. Wendy Chapman. Jarvis. Steve Condous. Ninio. Mark Hamilton.
1.24.48	Explains close relationship to the City of Adelaide. Enjoyment of living in the City. Integrity of Colonel Light's plan for the City. Predictions for the future of City of Adelaide in next 10 – 20 years.	
1.32.21	Session ends.	