



2.16 View toward Sydney Harbour Bridge from Cremorne.

based on a project mentality, with parts of the waterfront considered separately in isolation from the city and from each other. In Vancouver, the waterfront is seen as an extension of the city and although it is developed project by project there exists clarity of thinking as to the whole.

For Sydney to reconnect with its water, more dramatic interventions will be necessary. Often discussions of urban design in Sydney describe expressways as major planning “mistakes.” Whether they are mistakes or simply regrets is debatable. A mistake implies a slip of a pen or an act unintended. If the political parties in Sydney were committed to the quality of the physical realm of the city then the continuation of such “mistakes” would not occur. The continuation of the Eastern Distributor through the heart of Woollahroomooloo, completed only recently, suggests that Sydney lacks the political will to define its urban presence.

In comparing Vancouver to Sydney, a critical difference needs to be articulated. This difference involves the political administration of the spaces in the city. Vancouver follows a typical North American model. The City is responsible for the development of the city. In Vancouver, as we have already discussed, development occurs with the public and private sectors joining forces for the design exercise, policy is determined by city politicians, and development approvals are granted by city-appointed officials. In Sydney, by comparison, the territory of the city is highly contested. This contest involves the State Government of New South Wales and the City of Sydney. Both lay claim to the space of the city in different ways and it is this lack of demarcation that lies at the heart of Sydney’s schizophrenic urban development.

The State Government is very powerful in Sydney. The City and the Lord Mayor, in comparison, unlike the city governments and Mayors in North America, are relatively unempowered. The current urban renaissance in Sydney is remarkable when one realizes the relative weakness of the