

## Albury Civic Centre 1943-1987

*Ray Gear*

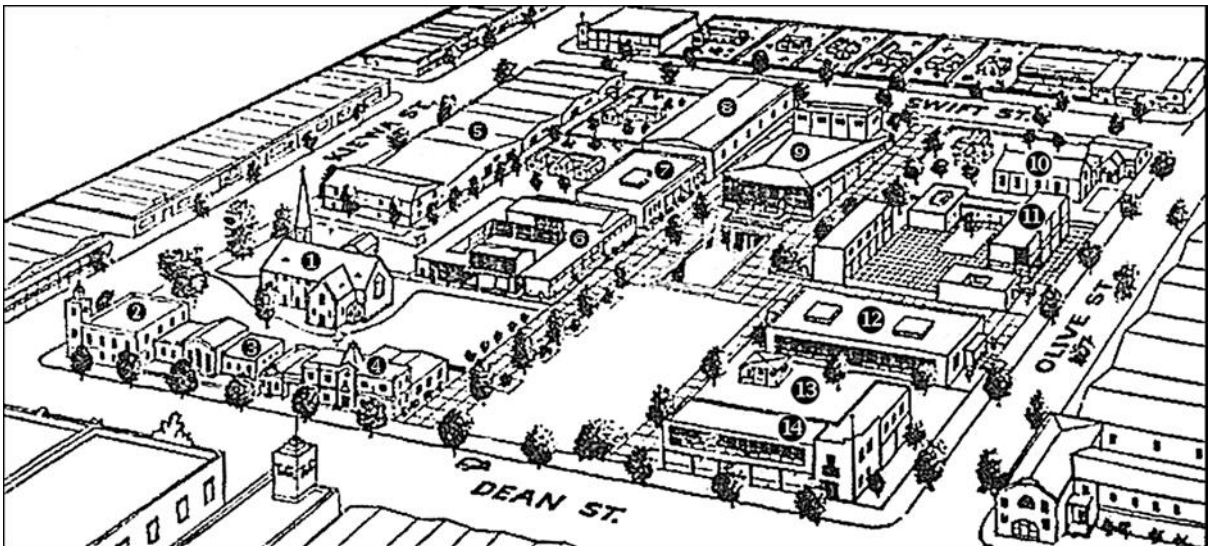
In 1943 Council's Post-War Plan for improving Albury included a Civic Centre Precinct, a concept that originated in the 1930s. This Precinct, to be part of a proposed town planning scheme for Albury, was seen a decade later by the local newspaper as "a feature to be admired by future generations both locally and elsewhere."

According to a Minute at Council's Meeting held on 21 May 1969, "Albury was one of the first major provincial cities and towns in NSW to make a civic precinct part of their town plan development."

Originally, in August 1946, it was proposed that the first stage of a town plan only involve Section 12, a block of land, enclosed by Dean, Olive, Swift and Kiewa Streets, that contained several public buildings including the Town Hall.

The particular purpose of the scheme for this section was for the development of a Civic Centre or Square in the central area of Albury. Ten weeks later however Council resolved to prepare a town planning scheme for the whole of Albury rather than the initial one section only. Meanwhile, Council began negotiations regarding land resumptions for the Civic Centre proposal.

In late 1949 work on remodelling the Town Hall began to fit the building into what was envisaged for the precinct. Other existing development included Dean Square, and the Mechanics' Institute. New buildings proposed were St Matthew's Memorial Parish Centre (opened 1961), a new Police Station (1962) in Olive Street, a War Memorial Civic Theatre (1964), a Public Library (1966), State Government Offices (1966), a City Hall and a new Court House in Olive Street.



*Border Morning Mail sketch, 9 June 1969.*

Key: 1. St Matthew's Church 2. Post Office 3. Court House 4. Council Chambers  
5. Existing Business Premises 6. St Matthew's Parish Centre 7. Library  
8. Proposed Town Hall/Council Chambers 9. New Civic Theatre  
10. Methodist Church 11. New Police Station 12. Proposed Court House  
13. Proposed State Govt Offices 14. Tech College

According to the *Border Morning Mail* of 5 August 1965 the creation of the Civic Centre was “a grand community partnership venture between the State Government, the Church of England and the City Council.”

By the start of 1969 only two major projects in the Civic Centre Precinct had not started, the City Hall and the new Court House. With the opening on 19 May 1972 of the City Hall, now known as ‘Albury Entertainment Centre,’ by the Honourable Milton A Morris MLA, the *Border Morning Mail* announced that “Albury’s Civic Centre was now all but complete.” Its completion took, however, another twenty-five years when on 26 October 1987, Albury’s new Courthouse opened in Olive Street.