

# NEWS BULLETIN

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June 1999

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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*Given that Paddington has one of the highest population densities in Australia, it is ironic that we are subjected to constant development pressure. 1999 has brought with it development on a hitherto unparalleled scale, much of it in the guise of "adaptive re-use".*

*Community consultation has begun for the development of a master plan for the White City site. The old tobacco warehouse in MacDonal Street is in the process of being converted into units. A development application is currently lodged with Council for converting the taxi depot in Glenmore Rd into units. The Water Board site in Oxford Street is currently open for tenders and like the Uniting Church property up the road, will no doubt be a mix of commercial and residential accommodation. The Royal Hospital for Women site, now under construction, is approved for units, town houses and commercial development. Next door, the Greenwood Hotel site has been approved for redevelopment.*

*Clearly this will have repercussions for Paddington, not least in exacerbating the traffic and parking problems that now exist.*

*At a recent meeting of Woollahra Council's Development Control Committee, a developer referred to vacant land at the rear of a group of Oxford Street shops as "one of the last under-developed sites in Paddington". In a suburb where useable open space is so precious, it seems that Paddington is becoming nothing more than a development opportunity.*

*It is surely time for a planning overview of this fragile suburb, where real social damage is being done by isolated and unrelated development. Perhaps a State planning body is the appropriate authority to undertake such a task.*

*Penny Carle  
President*

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## THE STORM

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Paddington was badly knocked about by the hail, if not quite as devastated as Kensington. Many of our roofs, like many of us, were elderly, and the hailstones went clean through. Now, with whole streets tarpaulined and tied down tight like Gulliver, we brace ourselves for the next stage: re roofing.

Zoltan Kovacs, Heritage Officer at Woollahra Municipal Council (telephone 9391 7171) advises that generally speaking people do not have to submit a DA before re-roofing, since this can be classified as maintenance work. However, where a change of material is intended, work should only be undertaken with written permission following a site inspection by either Zoltan or Warren Turner.

Originally most terraces would have been roofed in slate, and where possible the Council is encouraging owners to replace broken slate with slate, even when this means some delay (many months, some suppliers are saying) owing to shortage of supplies. This advice is particularly important where a terrace is part of a row.

Terracotta tiles are only appropriate on Edwardian and Federation (or later) houses. Where a terrace has been roofed in the past with terracotta tiles, this disaster may provide the opportunity to replace them with slate. The cost is greater (and the extra will have to be borne by the owner, not the insurer) but there would be a substantial increase in the property's value. Replacement of terracotta with dark grey colourbond (corrugated iron) is another option. Concrete tiles are not recommended. A compromise may be to roof the street frontage in slate and use corrugated iron for the back.

Don't forget to make sure, if you're switching to slate, that your roofer is a licensed slater.

*Mary J de Merindol*

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## NEWS FROM SOUTH PADDINGTON

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There seems a great deal about to happen over this side of Oxford Street, large spaces awaiting a developer, here is some news about a few of them.

### **St John's Church and Manse, Oxford and Regent Street, Paddington**

Perhaps some members of the Paddington Society will remember the contentious development application for this site, approved by council in 1992. This development application has now expired.

I understand from a South Sydney Councillor that there have been predevelopment application discussions between South Sydney Council and the Uniting Church.

Council has been asked, as in the previous application, to organise meetings between the developers and some key local representatives, ie architects, planners and the Paddington Society, before an application is lodged with council.

I understand that the preliminary plans anticipate the building of a block of flats, which could well provide one level of parking underground and one at ground level, a possible total of 48 parking spaces. The development would therefore present five levels and is expected to be built very close to the boundary on Renny Lane.

It is also proposed to refurbish the Manse in Regent Street for residential use, possibly a total of 20 flats of varying sizes. I understand that there are plans for a restaurant to seat 200, which will front Oxford Street. The point of greatest concern for residents will be that all of these developments are expected to be serviced from Renny Lane, and that the site is of historical significance.

### **The Walter Read Reserve**

A late item which came before the Planning and Development Committee of South Sydney Council recently. This area is zoned Public Open Space under LEP 1998 and classified as Community Land under the Local Government Act 1993. I am sure that everyone will be aware that the reserve has been closed to public access since the collapse of the reservoir roof in 1990.

South Sydney Council has now set up an in-house

project team to manage the future development of this site.

The site is also the subject of a Permanent Conservation Order, and will require Heritage Council approval for any work on the site. It is also listed as a heritage item on Council's Draft Heritage Local Environment Plan, not yet gazetted.

It is worth noting that under LEP1998, consent can be granted for any purpose provided that the proposal does not adversely affect the heritage significance of the item, and the conservation of the building depends on the granting of the consent.

Various consultants have been employed by council to report on the state of the site. The latest one by Sinclair Knight Mertz found that the corrosion and failure of a number of transfer beams erected in 1925 caused the collapse of the roof garden area. There are apparently still 10 of these transfer beams supporting the remainder of the roof garden, and the report suggests that if remedial work is not undertaken in the near future, the remaining roof will collapse. The remainder of the site is said to be in good condition.

It is important to be aware that the adjoining Water Board site is for sale for development. I think that this brings a sense of urgency to Council's decision on possible future uses of the reservoir. Councillor Margaret Deftereos supported Council's decision to set in place this Plan of Management, but asked that council organise a series of meetings with the community, as part of the drafting of this Plan of Management, and this was agreed to.

It is expected that the Paddington Society would have some interest in seeing that the heritage significance of the site be retained, as far as possible. Many Paddington residents will remember the pleasant sunny lawn roof, used by many people, which gave a sense of openness to the streetscape of Oxford Street.

### **The Telstra Site, Stewart Street**

This large site has apparently been sold to developers, despite the fact that the notice of impending sales does not say this. As yet there is no reliable information as to what is planned for this site, but it is being monitored, so when there is news we will let you know.

*Anne Fraser*

### **Water Board Site**

Two redundant Water Board sites have been on the market for some time. The larger one, fronting Oxford Street and next to (but NOT including) the old Reservoir site, is still under negotiation.

The other, on Moore Park Road & Oatley Road has been sold to the Walker Corporation. Chad Walker (yes, the son) says they propose 73 dwellings (but only 63 parking spots) to be in two blocks of terrace-style apartments. One is to be behind the facade of the existing building (the building itself, conveniently "deemed unsafe by our engineers") on Moore Park Road, with the other to be built adjacent forming a courtyard, which will be landscaped to include a lap pool. The existing palm trees are to remain. The kindergarten currently operating on the corner was not part of the sale. Chad says he is keen to hold a meeting with interested neighbours to talk about the plans. We are too!

*Mary J de Merindol*

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### **ST VINCENTS CAMPUS RE-DEVELOPMENT**

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The re-development is proceeding more slowly than I think St. Vincent's envisaged. The approval for the underground car park from South Sydney Council took longer to achieve, but has been given. The excavation of the Aikenhead front lawn is to facilitate the construction of an underground car park for 275 cars.

The main difficulty throughout all of the time of the re-development will be the intense disruption to those who live at the back of the hospital in West Paddington. St Vincent's say that they will do all they can to minimise this, and hope to be able to exert strict control on the movement of the traffic within the development area.

There is still dissension amongst community members on the Community Consultative Committee about the sheer bulk of the building, and its undoubted negative impact on residents. This is a matter which can never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

One member of this committee has resigned leaving a vacancy for a community member. Advertisements have been placed in local papers, inviting interested people to contact Damien Gleeson at St Vincent's Hospital.

*Anne Fraser*

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE**

**Congratulations to the 66 families who have already renewed their annual subscriptions with the Paddington Society.**

<b>Family</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
<b>Single</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>
<b>Concession</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>

**The Paddington Society  
PO Box 99 Paddington NSW 2021**

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### **GLENMORE RD TAXI DEPOT**

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Residential units are being planned for the Glenmore Rd Taxi Depot site which will be vacated by Taxis Combined when they move their operation to Alexandria.

The site was originally Crown land but has been used for mixed industrial and residential use since 1906. The current building, built in 1949, was taken over by H.G. Sleigh (Caltex) in the late 60s as a service depot for cabs, against considerable opposition from the Paddington Society, which warned against increase in traffic, noise and unsociable hours of operation.

While not listed as heritage, much of the existing structure will be retained. Particularly interesting are the waffle slab floors and their mushroom supports. The new development, which we support, will have 110 units with 82 parking bays, plus 10 for visitors.

Our main concern is for adequate off-street parking. Council believes that by reducing off-street parking in new developments, people will be encouraged to use public transport if accessible. Public transport use may well be increasing but most households also have a car, often two. We believe that at least one car space should be provided for each unit. Ideally, the number of car spaces should be tied to the number of bedrooms to relieve the pressure on surrounding streets.

*Mary J de Merindol*

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## WHITE CITY

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ACE, the community group formed to monitor the development of the White City site is opposed to any rezoning of the site and to the preferred developer - Manboom's, current development proposal for 250 dwellings, a 25 story apartment tower and a four-level commercial property on the site.

Changes to surrounding streets are indicated in Manboom's plan and the traffic and noise generated from this sort of development would severely strain existing infrastructure. Most of the White City site is zoned Open Space and ACE wants this zoning and the recreational and leisure requirements of this zoning adhered to by the developers.

White City's cultural significance and its importance an Open Space resource so close to the city centre makes any development of the site highly significant to the whole of the Paddington area.

Along with the development on the Women's Hospital site, proposals for the Scottish Hospital site and proposals for the Glenmore Road Taxis site, Paddington is about to be swamped with a massive influx of residential development of the scale threatened in the bad old days of the 1970s. Action must be taken swiftly and resolutely now by Woollahra Council to preserve the Victorian character and livability of our area.

*June Cummings*

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## YOUR 1999 COMMITTEE

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**President:** Penny Carle 9331 5365  
**Vice Presidents:** Robyn Attuell 9361 3877  
Loys Thompson 9360 4877  
**Secretary:** Mary J de Merindol 9331 5777  
**Treasurer:** Francis Walsh 9363 9572  
**Committee:** Cedric Carle 9331 5365  
Anne Fraser 9331 1445  
Bill Garrett 9331 1903  
Lorine Marsh 9331 6525  
Bill Morrison 9331 1405  
Susan Tooth 9363 3136  
**News Bulletin:** Robyn Attuell and  
Mary J de Merindol

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## CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA - THANK YOU

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A small but dedicated band of volunteers gathered, signed on, and were despatched, in the drizzle to some especially litter-filled spots. One small night-soil lane was so choked that our volunteers decided that they would leave the other half till next year.

And next year we shall be calling on all members, as residents, to identify for us any rubbish hot-spots so that we can direct volunteers where most needed. And calling on you too, to think about being a clean-up volunteer.

And if you are wondering, alas Paddo rubbish is no better than anyone else's, mainly food and drink wrappings, with a leavening of discarded furniture and palm fronds. By the way old paint cans can NOT be included. Ring the Council for special instructions if you have some.

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## A STRIKING TOWN HALL CLOCK?

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As part of its work regarding the history of Paddington, the Society has had an ongoing interest in the Paddington Town Hall in Oxford St - and in particular the tower (or turret) clock. The tower was completed in 1905. It has a four-way crows nest, and four motion works of English manufacture. The four 6ft dials (engraved W. Auld 1905) may have been cast at a local foundry. The dial facing Oxford St, instead of 12 bar chapters, carries an inscription: EADWARDUS VII, commemorating the Coronation of King Edward VII.

Originally the clock was weight driven and wound twice a week. Modified in 1950, a master battery was installed, but it still required winding twice weekly. Extensive alterations in 1970 saw the clock motorised.

It is a great interest to the Society that the tower was originally designed to include a single bell of 10cwt to be struck on the hour. To mark the millennium, and as an interesting addition to Paddington life, the Society is liaising with South Sydney Council to have the bell installed. It is believed a suitable bell still exists in the old Showground.

*Susan Tooth*

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## DEMOLITION

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We were shocked when we found out, after the event, that a terrace in Jersey Rd has been demolished. We are now requesting from Woollahra Council, that the Paddington Society be given access to all applications for demolitions in the area as a matter of course.

*Robyn Attuell*