

NEWS BULLETIN

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July, 2000

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The White City rezoning application and master-plan submission by Tennis NSW is currently a priority for the Paddington Society as the submission date for our objection draws closer. We believe that the proposed development would violate the natural and urban environment and the commissioning of an environmental consultant to support this view has had its rewards, see details further on.

Extended trading hours are constantly being pursued by some local hotels. The good news is that Woollahra Council rejected the application for 1am closing at the London Tavern on the corner of narrow residential streets. Council also rejected 3am closing at the Greenwood Tree which backs onto Gipps Street, however, an appeal is currently in the Land and Environment Court.

The proposed closure and sale of the Police Boys Youth Club is back on the agenda. It is a terrific community facility and has been of great benefit to visiting country children over the years and we support its retention.

It was disappointing to be notified that the Uniting Church is again off to the Land and Environment Court to appeal against Council's (this time South Sydney) refusal to allow over development of the St John's Church site in Oxford Street. Now more than 20 years since its formation, this Court appears to favour developers over maintaining a reasonable residential amenity. However, the function of the Court is being reviewed and we look forward to more positive outcomes in the future.

The Woollahra Philharmonic Orchestra is a wonderful enthusiastic community group which performs every couple of months at The Scots College. As an expression of support, we sponsored them with a donation of \$200. Last month we also donated \$250 towards the preservation of the National Trust's film archive.

Clean Up Sydney is on the 13th August and we are focusing on our local streets. Meet us at the back of Juniper Hall at our meeting room at 9am on the 13th for bags, gloves and directions.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at Vamps for our winter dinner on 23rd August.

Robyn Attuell

WINTER DINNER

**Join us at Vamps, Five Ways on
Wednesday, 23 August at 7:30pm**

**\$40 per head, two courses with coffee,
full menu, BYO**

RSVP Friday, 18th August

Anne Fraser, phone 9331 1445

(numbers will be limited)

PADDINGTON RESERVOIR

The 17th June on site launch and ideas session for the future of the Walter Read Reserve and the historic Paddington Reservoir was a great success. Visual displays explaining the history, areas of possible preservation and comparable international usages helped whet our imaginations for possible future community uses. Many of us had forgotten just how large the subterranean space is.

The Paddington Reservoir is listed as an item of State Significance and Environmental Heritage. South Sydney Council is committed to making sure that the site becomes a special community asset and has engaged heritage architects, Conybeare Morrison & Partners and extensive community consultation has been organised.

Meetings will be in Paddington Town Hall at 6pm. The first was on 25th July, then followed by another on Monday 7th August where the ideas

previously suggested will be refined. Then finally on Tuesday 29th August the preferred options will be further developed. All interested members of the community are invited. Be there.

Robyn Attuell

OUR PRECIOUS ARCHIVES

As members know the Paddington Society is Australia's first resident action group, and since its inception on a wet and cold night in 1964 the Society has fought for the Paddington built environment and its residents. Our archives are remarkable. Committee member Lorine Marsh has liaised with Woollahra Library archivist Bill Casey, who is delighted to take charge of all our records, and the Society is pleased to have the archives safely housed.

Recently Anne Fraser and Susan Tooth went to the Woollahra Council's Archival premises to identify photographs from our large collection. The task was great fun, but a challenge! Thanks must be given to member Anne Cuthbert for her excellent photographic work including a large album showing the mid 80s march to save Juniper Hall. We recognised a large number of Society identities, including Ken Pearsall Smith, Viva Murphy (the first Secretary of the Society) Penny Carle, the Gee family, Miss Leslie Bridle, Pat Thompson, Max Kelly, and politicians of all persuasions.

One of the Sunday morning 'breakfasts' featured (c:1970) friends in smart bell-bottoms, velvet shirts and interesting spectacles. We spotted Jean Cooney, Biddy Oquist, Anne Fraser, Peter and Victoria Thompson and Leo Schofield. The opening of the John Thompson Memorial fountain was attended by, among others, Pat Thompson, Jack Lee, John Cooney and Susan Tooth. The file includes a set of 1970 houses, some unfortunately 'modernised'.

Lastly we discovered the DMR aerial photos from the late 1960's – the plan to widen Jersey Road, making it a six lane highway. This notion would have destroyed houses on both sides of the street, and many in Queen Street. Only the prompt, effective and marvellous Society campaign saved these streets, and probably Paddington as well. There is still much to do. Please contact the Society if you have any material relating to the Society which may be of historic interest, it will be much appreciated.

Susan Tooth

STOP PRESS

Over 150 Paddington residents packed St George's Hall on 26th July for our *Meet Your Councillors* gathering & passed a resolution for a moratorium on major developments in our area. More next Bulletin.

WHITE CITY

The Paddington Society vigorously opposes the rezoning of the White City site. As mentioned earlier, we commissioned an environmental consultant to advise and hopefully substantiate what we believed was environmentally unsound - the proposed building on the valley floor and specifically, the covering over and building on the channel/creek which cuts diagonally through the site. The creek which follows the natural contours of the valley, has been marked on every map since the early 1800s.

This natural waterway comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) which requires, through the River & Foreshores Improvement Act, that they are notified of any application for rezoning or development within 40m of the creek. This was not carried out.

We now understand that no building can occur within a minimum of 10 metres either side of this waterway, and that it can be reconstructed as a natural creek with suitable vegetation. The report from DLWC, is to be released on the 28th July.

Many of the issues we are pursuing are complex and technical. The salient points have been explained succinctly in a letter to every director of Tennis NSW from James Lockhart of ACE, and with his permission excerpts follow:

"...The opposition to Tennis NSW's proposal is organised into various groups. There is a body called the Stakeholders Group which meets approximately every three weeks in relation to the White City proposal. The Stakeholders Group consists of the ACE Residents Group, White City South residents, the National Trust, the Paddington Society, Sydney Grammar School, Medina Apartments, White City Tennis Club, The Darling Point Society, the Rushcutters Bay Foreshore Protection Association, the Woollahra History & Heritage Society and the Little Paddington Residents Group...

- To allow residential and commercial development on the site, the Council must rezone what is presently zoned Open Space. The whole site is zoned Open Space with the exception of the Shell Service Station on New South Head Road, which is zoned Commercial.

- An Open Space zoning allows recreation activities, and structures ancillary to recreation activities, eg a clubhouse. Open Space zoning precludes residential and commercial development of any sort. As a matter of planning, each Council determines its municipality's requirements for land usage, i.e. what proportion and what areas should be set aside for residential use, business and commercial use, high rise use (if any), and what land should be preserved for open space.

- Open space services the community with the valuable breathing space required, whether that be in private or public hands. Naturally, a higher density area has a greater imperative for open space. Paddington is one of the highest density areas in Australia. White City is only 1 km from King's Cross which is the highest density area in Australia. White City's open space, along with Sydney Grammar School's adjacent playing fields (also zoned Open Space) are recognised in the Paddington Development Control Plan as *open space and landscape features of the Paddington heritage conservation area*. White City is within the Paddington heritage conservation area. Rezoning, which is what your organisations' application is seeking, is totally contrary to the planning needs of Paddington. The Masterplan is inconsistent with basic planning principles and the Woollahra LEP.

- Heritage and tennis: the community wishes to maintain the site's highly attractive green grassed valley floor which for so long has been grass tennis courts. The Masterplan proposal keeps a limited number of grass courts, but these courts will be elevated on to a man-made structure up to approximately 3.5m high. According to the curator of the South Yarra club it is not possible to maintain grass courts on such a structure; inevitably they will become artificial courts. The grass courts in front of the clubhouse are recognised as some of Australia's best grass courts. They are of heritage significance. Why would Tennis NSW - a non-profit tennis body which exists to promote tennis - wish to destroy them?

- The proposal has not properly addressed flooding problems. White City is a flood plain. There are substantial problems with the Masterplan methodology for addressing those problems...

- There are contamination problems which have also not been addressed...

- The apartment blocks proposed are large in scale. The proposal involves nine new buildings. One of these buildings is 10 storeys high. The others are up to 7 storeys above ground level. These buildings are totally out of proportion with the Paddington context.

**WOOLLAHRA
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

**Concerts are held at The Scots
College Bellevue Hill at 2.30 pm.**

Next Concert: Sunday, 3rd September

- **Shostakovich *Festival Overture***
- **Vangelis *Chariots of Fire***
- **Walton *Facade Suite***
- **Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man***
- **R Strauss *Olympic Hymn***
- **J Wolfe *Olympic Overture***
- **Walton *Crown Imperial***
- **Peter Sculthorpe *Small Town***

Adults \$10, Students and Pensioners \$5

For decades Tennis NSW has been paying minimal council rates and land taxes in respect of the site - based upon the open space zoning. Yet despite this subsidy, Tennis NSW seeks to rezone and reap for itself the land's value on a developed basis.

Furthermore, throughout the process leading up to the lodgement of the application with Council last December, there was not one attempt by Tennis NSW or Manboom to compromise with the community... It is widely understood that the community's views expressed during the Reference Group process undertaken last year were basically ignored by Tennis NSW and Manboom. Tennis NSW owes its obligations not only to tennis, but to the communities in which it operates.

Tennis NSW has already received approximately \$28 million of public funds to transfer from White City to Homebush. In any event, what is readily apparent is that if debts exist, realisation of the site will eliminate such debts, without any change in zoning...”

James Lockhart ACE

POLICE & COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB

Paddington Society members may be aware that once again the Paddington PCYC is under threat of closure. This threat was averted in 1997, but now it is proposed that the club merge with Maroubra PCYC, on the grounds that Paddington no longer appears to need its own club. Closing clubs in Paddington, Newtown and North Sydney will allow clubs to be opened in areas of higher crime rates. The club's premises on the corner of Underwood and Heeley streets may then be demolished and developed.

We believe that Paddington Police Boys Club continues to fulfil a need in an area which is being increasingly over developed, with little of the development catering to the needs of young people. Whilst the Paddington Society would agree that there is a need to establish PCYC's in other areas, the committee feels that it should not be at the expense of the Paddington Club.

We understand from board members of the club that a variety of activities is offered at relatively inexpensive rates. The club also serves as a centre for the whole community. It is used by local schools for sports activities and local dances. It has also been working with Woollahra Council's Development officer and with the Youth safety officer from Rose Bay Police on projects which all play a part in keeping young people out of trouble. Involvement in such projects contributes to a greater understanding of the needs of young people.

The club building also has the capacity to sleep 60 people allowing it to provide low cost accommodation to young people from clubs in rural NSW, many of whom come from disadvantaged rural areas. By June this year over 300 young people had been put up in Paddington. Closing the club would therefore severely disadvantage these groups. The Paddington Society committee recognises the value to the community of the Paddington PCYC and supports the club in its endeavours to remain open.

Anne Fraser

WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Any excuse is a good excuse for a party, but my preference is things like a Blue Moon, an eclipse, an equinox or a solstice. So when I began to feel that too much time had passed without any opportunity for grass roots participation in our Save White City campaign, a Winter Solstice Celebration seemed ideal.

The original idea was to get some publicity by having a big bonfire (traditional for a Winter Solstice) in some spot with high visibility. In fact our first announcement asked everyone to bring two sticks of firewood. Eventually we concluded it was too hard to find a site and get approval for a bonfire.

In the end with 36 people plus a few dogs and infants, everyone enjoyed themselves. Walker Avenue makes an ideal place for a street party as it is wide, only one block long and dead ends into our issue site, White City. Charlie Walker (no relation to the Avenue) not only supplied the barbecue, he also proved his expertise as a barbecue chef by cooking for everyone.

Alan Marshall

YOUR DIARY

August 7th, 6.30pm	<i>Paddington Reservoir Paddington Town Hall</i>
August 10th, 7.30pm	<i>Meet with Clover Moore RSL Club, Paddington</i>
August 13th, 9am	<i>Clean Up Sydney Juniper Hall, U'wood St</i>
August 22nd, 6pm	<i>White City Workshop Woollahra Council</i>
August 23rd, 7pm	<i>Winter Dinner Vamps, Five Ways</i>
August 29th, 6.30pm	<i>Paddington Reservoir Paddington Town Hall</i>
Sept 3rd, 2.30pm	<i>Woollahra Orchestra The Scots College</i>