

NEWS BULLETIN

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May, 2000

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The historical nature of Paddington is under threat as much as ever with the number of large developments currently taking place. I feel that our members are perhaps unaware of just how actively involved our dedicated committee is in trying to stem inappropriate and over development of our suburb.

For several years three members of our committee, an historian and two architects, worked with Woollahra Council planners, urban designers, heritage consultants and councillors to put into place guidelines specifically for the preservation of Paddington. As a result the 'Development Control Plan' for Paddington has now been adopted by Council.

We fully support the local community group ACE on prevention of rezoning and subsequent over development of the White City site. Since April last year we have had representation at the Community Reference Group meetings, we've met with ACE, Manboom's architects, written to Woollahra Council supporting maintenance of existing zoning and donated \$1,000 to ACE for the Save White City banners and are currently preparing a submission of objection.

The developers and heritage consultant of the Taxis Combined site presented their plans to our committee prior to putting their DA to Woollahra Council. There was much discussion on ways to limit the impact on the neighbourhood. We consider the final outcome to be a satisfactory result.

Similarly the developers of the Water Board site on Moore Park Road presented their plans early last year. There were many aspects which we were unhappy about. Amended plans were presented and there were considerable improvements but the new building was still out of proportion and scale with its neighbours. We submitted our objections to South Sydney Council. We are also looking closely at the Oxford Street site.

With St John's Church Site in Oxford Street, we submitted our objections on insensitive and gross over-development of the site. We have liaised with local residents, councillors and Clover Moore MP. We have also written to the National Trust and the Heritage Council of NSW expressing our concerns.

A letter, followed by a submission of objection on another gross over development - the Scottish Hospital site, has been sent to Woollahra Council.

CALLING ON MEMORIES

Please help build the Paddington knowledge bank. Our wonderful collection of photographs, letters newspaper clippings, conservation plans, submissions are being sorted and catalogued by Woollahra Council's history librarians.

But we would like an even more comprehensive history. We know there are bits and pieces tucked away in folders, shoe boxes and drawers. If you have anything at all relating to the tireless work the Society has done since 1964 please call Lorine Marsh on 9331 6525

We have also been alerted to the changes at Dirty Nelly's pub (formerly the Rose and Crown which was in fact the last remaining original name of all the pubs in Paddington). The issue of Parking Meters, cataloguing our archives, application for a Community Grant, future of the the Paddington Reservoir and organising a public meeting with our three Ward Councillors are also keeping us busy.

On a lighter note, our Heritage Week picnic at Trumper Oval was a great success for the small group who attended. Many thanks to Churchill's of Queen Street who donated sausages. While Victor Trumper may not have acknowledged our cricketing prowess, we had lots of fun.

*Robyn Attuell
President*

DO WE WANT PARKING METERS?

The Paddington Society supports parking meters in Oxford Street only. It is suggested that meters also be introduced in the following streets adjacent to Oxford Street for a distance of about 100m - Barcom Ave, West Street, Comber Street, Hopewell Street, Glenmore Road, Shadforth Street, Brodie Street, Young Street, Ormond Street, Underwood Street, William Street, Victoria Street, Elizabeth Street, George Street, Tivoli Street and Jersey Road.

We object to the character of our streets appearing as paid parking areas.

If there were meters in streets adjacent to Oxford Street as proposed, the higher turnover of vehicles must mean a higher movement of vehicles looking for a space to park.

Surely drivers will penetrate further into Paddington (beyond the stated 100m) in order to avoid the meter cost. Many already park well beyond this distance at present in order to shop, go to the markets, or the pub. Surely streets half metered, half restricted-by-sign will be difficult to administer. Surely the area covered by meters will be extended further with time. Surely, rather than limiting vehicle usage, the introduction of meters will ensure that Paddington will become one big parking lot. These schemes have little to do with improving the environment for residents, and are simply revenue raisers which, once implemented, are there forever.

We suggest that the reduced vehicular traffic on Oxford Street as a result of the Eastern Distributor would make it possible to remove the clearway restrictions. This would return Oxford St. to a more friendly 'village centre' environment. The parking capacity of Oxford St. would be increased by an additional 5 hours per day spreading the shopping time over a more extended period and satisfy retailer requirements.

Further streetscape improvement in Oxford Street could occur. As a result there would be decreased shopper traffic in residential side streets and so reduce need for parking meters.

Parking limits in side streets could thus have greater restrictions placed on them (for non residents) without the requirement for meters as part of the trade-off with retailers.

A statistical analysis of parking use in Olive and Ormond Streets has been recently compiled over an eight day and night period by Bill Garrett. If you would like information on this, Bill's phone number is 9331 1903.

Bill Morrison

THE PADDINGTON RESERVOIR

Many people will be aware of the sorry state of the site in Oxford Street known as the Paddington Reservoir. The collapse into the reservoir of the Walter Read Reserve a few years ago rendered the site both unsafe and unsightly. It was brightened up briefly by paintings by schoolchildren. It now sits behind a cyclone fence.

South Sydney Council is soon to organise a series of community based meetings, in which you will be asked to give some thought as to how this site can be restored for future community use. It should be done in a way which will reflect its own historical significance.

The Paddington Reservoir and Walter Read Reserve is part of the important Paddington Town Hall, Paddington Post Office, Juniper Hall and John Thompson Memorial Park historical precinct. I am sure that many people will remember the pleasant aspect the Walter Read Reserve presented to Oxford Street. The John Thompson Park is dedicated to one of the founders of the Paddington Society. The restoration of the site will aim to be in harmony with other activities on Oxford Street. Points to be taken into account when considering restoration should include structural, environmental, heritage and landscaping issues. The resulting development may have to be economically self-supporting after a certain period of financial support from the Council.

THE PADDINGTON RESERVOIR

COMMUNITY MEETING

**The Mayor of Sth Sydney, Cr. Vic Smith
invites you to attend the launch of the
PADDINGTON RESERVOIR PROJECT
from 11am to 1pm Saturday, 17 June
at Walter Read Reserve
cnr Oxford St and Oatley Rd, Paddington
SHARE IDEAS & ENJOY A SAUSAGE SIZZLE**

The Paddington Reservoir is important as it was one of the three main sources of water for Sydney in the first hundred years of British settlement. It was built after the Tank Stream and Busby's Bore had become polluted. The new Botany scheme, which had been available to Sydney since 1859, did not have strong enough pumps to pump water to the higher areas, such as parts of Paddington. The Paddington Reservoir was completed around 1865 after delays on the part of the contractor.

Water had been originally pumped by steam engine from Botany Swamps and Lachlan Swamps, to a small reservoir in Crown Street, Surry Hills. Until the water of the Nepean River was harnessed to the Prospect Reservoir, Paddington remained the main source of reticulated water for the whole of Sydney until the late 1880's. Until the construction of the Centennial Park Reservoirs in 1924, the Paddington Reservoir had provided water for 60 years for the people of the area. The Paddington Reservoir is a valuable example of a nineteenth century industrial site, and its importance to Paddington is great. It is important that residents should come to the community meetings to discuss the future preservation of the site, with some understanding and sympathy for its heritage and cultural value to the suburb and to Sydney. The first meeting is 17 June, at the site. See opposite page for details.

A Paddock Full of Houses - Max Kelly
The Paddington Reservoir: the case for Restoration.
Paddington Reservoir Restoration Society
Anne Fraser

WHITE CITY

While Manboom Pty Ltd has withdrawn from the extensive redevelopment of White City, we believe the owners of the site, Tennis NSW will still proceed with the plan to rezone it from Private Open space to residential so as to allow future development.

Woollahra Council recently formed the Community Representative Committee (on which we have a representative), as part of its adopted programme of assessment and consultation for the White City rezoning application. We understand Council is waiting for formal notification from Tennis NSW that they will proceed with the masterplan proposal before further meetings are convened.

We are preparing a lengthy submission of

objection to the rezoning of the site for development and are seeking professional advice from an environmental consultant at a substantial cost the Society, to specifically target the problem of building on the valley floor. We understand Council will not be seeking such a report from an independent environmental consultant.

Robyn Attuell

WOOLLAHRA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

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

Next Concert: Sunday, 2nd July

- **Kabalevsky *Overture to Colas Breugnon***
- **Beethoven *Piano Concerto No 3 in C minor, Soloist - Rachel Valler***
- **Schubert *Symphony No 9 in C***

ST JOHN'S CHURCH - OXFORD STREET

The amended DA for the St John's Church site in Oxford Street proposed the conversion of the church to a shop containing 3 levels, the old manse to a restaurant and the new manse to a dwelling. Along the rear Renny Lane boundary a 4-5 level residential flat building was proposed with a total of 14 units. Also, the site is to be subdivided into three lots.

The DA came before South Sydney Council's Planning and Development Committee on 5th April. Many residents and the President of the Paddington Society voiced their objections to the proposed development. The committee agreed to an inspection of the site on Saturday 8th April, just a few days before full Council would make its decision. The site inspection turned into a public meeting attended by a large number of Paddington residents, two Community Independent Councillors, the Mayor Vic Smith and the Independent Member for Bligh, Clover Moore.

There was great concern, which was shared by the Paddington Society, at the prospect of substantial excavation on the site, visual obstruction by new buildings, environmental consequences on neighbours of overshadowing, loss of privacy and solar access, the removal of an old stand of trees and the proposed height of the flat development and its closeness to the footpath. Whilst there was an acceptance that development was inevitable, the overall view was that the present proposal remained a grave over development of the site. The meeting was heartening in that there was a genuine concern for the heritage and historical significance of the site as well as the more personal anxiety at the loss of residential amenity the current development proposal could bring.

It was reassuring that full Council at its meeting on 12th April, deferred its consideration of the proposed application, inviting the applicant to submit amended plans.

Council proposed that any amended plans should delete all commercial parking provision and other excavation between the old manse and Oxford Street and of the proposed stair structures; all loading of goods to business premises to be done from Oxford Street instead of Renny Lane; the height of the proposed residential flat building to be a maximum of 4m from Renny Lane, plus the provision of balconies and open space to be in accordance with Council's DCP 1997.

The Council itself is undertaking to seek the views of the Heritage Council and National Trust on the existing and amended plans. It also undertook to obtain computer generated shadow diagrams from an independent consultant, to show the overshadowing effects on surrounding terraces.

All Paddington residents I am sure will welcome this move by South Sydney Council. It is a good, as well as rare result for residents who have worked tirelessly to prove that this would not be a good development for such an important historic site. South Sydney Council should be congratulated and encouraged to maintain their resolve.

Anne Fraser

We were saddened to hear of the death of Muriel Floyd late last year. Muriel was a longtime member and great supporter of the Paddington Society. Our belated thoughts best wishes to her husband David.

THE SCOTTISH HOSPITAL SOARS

The Scottish Hospital site is owned by the Presbyterian Church Property Trust. It was bequeathed to the Church by Sir Alexander McCormack to operate as a hospital in 1926.

Today it contains a nursing home and hostel for aged care - together with a building which is not presently being utilised.

The Property Trust has lodged a DA with Woollahra Council to increase the number of aged care beds from 90 to 250. This includes total refurbishment of the heritage Cooper Street building plus four mansion type buildings in the garden. The proposal put to Woollahra Council is massive and complex. The impact on the existing gardens is such as to substantially remove them.

'The Terraces' was built by Judge Kinchella in 1840 upon two and a half acres. In 1882 'The Terraces' was offered for sale and was considered by contemporaries to be the finest local mansion.

"It was built of stone and brick of two storeys with 'the work being of an unusual character' on the ground floor an opening onto an eleven feet wide verandah with a hall, and drawing and dining rooms as well as breakfast room, day nursery, library, pantry and glass and china closet. On the upper floor and approached by a wide by a wide handsome staircase are best bedroom, 28 by 18, a very beautiful lofty apartment with dressing room and six best other bedrooms. The outbuildings accompanying the household were rather more extensive than those of other Paddington mansions. The house was indeed well equipped for the life of a gentlemen. But it was the remaining two acres of ground that caused the auctioneer to exceed himself in verbal description. 'The whole', he wrote, 'is terraced by stone retaining walls. The garden is so well known and enjoys so high a repute for tasteful arrangement and sylvan beauty as scarcely to need comment. It was originally laid out by a well known amateur florist and botanist, an Educated and Judicious arborescence pervades the whole which may be fitly described as one brilliant mass of magnificent trees and rare shrubs of mature growth. Glorious in height, perfect in form and exquisite in symmetry, clumped and clustered together in a most attractive manner... Giving nearly perpetual bloom and delightfully secluded as if in the deepest heart of a sequestered wood'."

The Scottish Heritage Neighbourhood Association (SHNA) is preparing to lodge an objection to the DA on the basis that it is inadequate and does not comply with the Paddington Development Control Plan; the impact on the existing gardens is massive with four mansion type houses to be built in the gardens; views down Glen Street and up Stephen Street should remain green and the existing garden should be maintained; a substantial carpark excavation should not be permitted in the gardens; the heritage assessment is inadequate as well as the heritage impact statement; no options have been developed for review and community consultation has been inadequate and misleading.

Local residents bought their homes knowing there was a hospital and nursing home on the site, in an area so badly served with aged care facilities. Of course we are not objecting in principle to the provision of additional aged care. The Presbyterian Church has shown itself to be a caring and professional provider of such services, however we consider DA a serious over development of the site which will include removal of most of the trees and heritage garden in one of Paddington's last remaining significant green spaces. We do not know when this application will be discussed at Council but we will be asking for local support at that time.

Paddock Full of Houses - Max Kelly

Loys E Thompson
Vice President SHNA Inc

YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2000

President:

Robyn Attuell 9361 3877

Secretary:

Mary J de Merindol 9331 5777

Treasurer:

Francis Walsh 9363 9572

Committee:

Penny Carle 9331 5365

Stephen Fitzgerald 9362 4619

Anne Fraser 9331 1445

Leonie Furber 9380 8327

Bill Garrett 9331 1903

Lorine Marsh 9331 6525

Bill Morrison 9331 1405

Drew Robertson 9328 7792

David Saywell 9363 0317

Loys Thompson 9360 4877

Susan Tooth 9363 3136

CELLARS AND OTHER EXCAVATIONS

Everyone who has lived in Paddington for a while knows that there are parts where underground water rises and flows (Cascade Street didn't get its name for nothing) yet no-one seems to really know with precision where the water goes. There are anecdotal reports of cellars in one property causing flooding in the neighbouring one, wells being covered over and built upon, and original fuel stoves pulled out to reveal a constant trickle of water. When Telstra was laying underground cables in South Paddington work had to be re-done because water levels rose and filled the original trenches.

Subsidence, cracking of walls or worse are risks when excavation takes place. Yet developers, forced to provide off-street parking, regard basement garages as a perfect solution. And families, pressed for more space, feel triumphant if they can provide this underground.

The society feels anxious that all this is taking place, piecemeal, without any proper studies or scientific hydrological investigation.

The Society wrote in March to both Woollahra and South Sydney Councils asking for their views on this subject.

Mary J de Merindol

MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions are due at the beginning of each calendar year. Please check if yours is due now.

If you can't find your Society Membership card and don't know whether you are currently financial, please phone Mary J de Merindol, 9331 5777 and she will be able to help you. Many thanks for your support

Family \$30.00

Single \$20.00

Concession \$10.00

The Paddington Society

PO Box 99 Paddington NSW 2021

