

NEWS BULLETIN

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July, 2001

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

With our continued and intense involvement in these trying issues, I am beginning to believe that our Bulletins are becoming a Paddington Overdevelopment Update, but there's much more.

Briefly, the proposed development on the historic St John's Church site on Oxford St of retail, restaurant, cafe and 8 substantial flats is currently in the hands of the Land & Environment Court; Tennis NSW is still to lodge a new masterplan and rezoning application following rejection of the original by Woollahra Council and extensive consultation with Council officers and the Community Reference Committee; the Presbyterian Church's proposed redevelopment of the Scottish Hospital site is still undecided - report over page.

Surely these developments can be commercially viable (before the greed factor kicks in), without ravaging our heritage precinct and residential amenity, especially considering neither churches nor hospitals pay rates.

Good news on the Paddington Green public park on the corner of Glenmore Rd and Brown St - it has been approved with the additional finance to be met by Woollahra Council.

Our committee is enthusiastically implementing new ideas. A huge effort and much research is going into this year's special Winter Dinner. The archives are still being increased with local memorabilia. Our historical research team will be gathering information on specific buildings and streets with the view to publication in the longterm, anyone interested in helping? We'll be attending a two-day strategic planning workshop next month and I'm sure there will more to report from that. Over 140 people attended our first public meeting for this year. It was a great success and will be followed by another soon. Diary dates are on the back page.

Robyn Attuell

HERITAGE WINTER DINNER

The Paddington Society's Winter Dinner has taken a new direction this year with the evening focussing on our gastronomic heritage. This event will be held on Tuesday, 21st August at the Grand National Restaurant, Paddington.

The Grand National chef Samantha Joel, has researched archival material including banquet menus from the 1880s through to the early 1900s when Paddington was being established, to recreate a 'traditional' four course degustation-style menu with complementing wines:

Welcome Sherry or Ale

Mock Turtle Soup

Rabbit Pie

Roasted Mutton with a Traditional Stuffing

Chokos, Marrows and Jerusalem Artichokes

Stewed Rhubarb with Blancmange

The evening's guest speaker will be Colin Bannerman, an author with a passion for the subject of traditional Australian cuisine, and whose titles include *A Friend in the Kitchen - Old Australian Cookery Books*, and *Acquired Tastes - Celebrating Australia's Culinary History*. Colin's gentle passion for food and old cookery books has produced a delightful insight into the Australian way of eating in what he calls "the Federation years" from the colony's first centenary in 1888 to the outbreak of World War I. Against an evocative historical backdrop, he has drawn from books published in that period to reveal how British cuisine and its associated formalities were gradually re-shaped to suit Australia's more relaxed lifestyle.

Join us for a 'traditional' evening of fine food, wine and banter.

Tuesday 21st August at 7:00pm

\$55 members, \$60 non-members

RSVP Thursday 16th August

See coupon back page. Numbers will be limited.

TRAFFIC - A RECENT HISTORY

Back in August 1997 Woollahra Council developed a plan to reduce through traffic in West Woollahra and Paddington. This was in response to longstanding and widespread community concern about the volume of commuter traffic 'rat running' through our area in order to avoid the surrounding main roads. A Community Reference Group was set up to look at ways of resolving the acute traffic problems and had the support Clover Moore, The Paddington Society, The Paddington Action Group, West Paddington street representatives, Queen St and West Woollahra Association, South Sydney Council engineers, Woollahra Councillors and senior staff.

Traffic counts indicated that Hargrave St/Glenmore Rd carried over 15,000 vehicles per day and Brown/Macdonald Sts over 9,000. According to RTA standards, residential amenity declines noticeably at volumes greater than 5,000 in normal suburban environments. Clearly, the impact is much greater in Paddington's narrow, winding, build-up streets. Most of this traffic stops neither to visit nor to buy - it simply uses our residential streets as a convenient shortcut.

Further increases in traffic is predicted following the completion of residential developments such as Paddington Green, Whites, Scottish Hospital, as well as the two Water Board sites and St John's Church site in South Paddington, not to mention the Cross City Tunnel.

The initial plan developed by ARUP Transport Engineers and Council officers was a starting point to reduce through traffic and encourage more pedestrian usage. A huge crowd of over 400 poured into Paddington Town Hall for the presentation of the plan and the beginning of the community consultation process.

Following the Town Hall meeting, Council organised three community workshops. Each was attended by 80-100 residents and business people to thrash out problems encountered and solutions which could be developed. Many options were discussed from the initial proposal Option A, to Options B, C, & D until a consensus emerged before being assessed by the traffic engineers and Council.

In the meantime many people became aware of a campaign by some gallery owners and commercial property investors to oppose reduction of through

traffic in our streets claiming it was only in the interests of 'a handful of Paddington residents'.

Operating outside the community consultation process, this group advertised widely in the *Wentworth Courier* the misleading claim that streets in Paddington would be closed causing "substantial traffic disruptions, and many services such as deliveries of goods to shops and homes as well as repairers, doctors and other emergency services such as ambulances and fire engines will all be badly affected". They advocated for a network study for the Eastern Suburbs before looking at local traffic. Network studies come under the jurisdiction of the RTA not Council, and are confined to the study area's arterial road system - any network study would simply recommend a LATM (Local Area Traffic Management) scheme for the precincts within the study area, which was what the community consultation process was working towards.

This notion went to the then Minister for Transport Carl Scully resulting in a regional traffic and transport study to investigate impacts which affect Woollahra and the adjoining municipalities. It was commissioned by Woollahra Council at a cost in the order of \$200,000 and took two years to complete.

Finally, back to a LATM. In November 2000, the last vestige of Option E was approved by Council's Traffic Committee, including representatives from RTA, STA and police. A six month trial of "No Left Turn 7am-9am Weekdays, Buses Excepted" from three streets into Ocean St and "No Right Turn from Oxford St to Wallis St" was to be implemented to restrict the 'rat-run' through West Woollahra and Paddington. This seemed reasonable in the light of the reduction of vehicles in Ocean St since the opening of the Eastern Distributor. But no, OSNOF (Ocean Street Not Ocean Freeway) called a public meeting convened by Nick Eddy, and Ken Gresham of Queen St and West Woollahra Association, with councillors and staff. A rescission motion was passed at the next Council meeting by Cr Andrew Petrie with the support of Mayor Dawson and Cr Corrigan. All decisions made through proper community consultation were overturned. So after four years we are back where we began.

However, a Paddington Traffic Working Party has been set up with representatives from The Paddington Society, Queen St and West Woollahra Association, Clover Moore, RTA,

STA, police, Council officers and Councillors. This committee has recently convened and we look forward to longterm changes to benefit us all. For too long we have suffered the effects of a single-minded approach to traffic planning which favours giving priority to through movements of the motor vehicle without consideration for resident, shopper, pedestrian or heritage.

Our position is based on the Society's paper, *Towards an Integrated Traffic Management Plan for Paddington*. We believe that local streets should be designed for the mutual benefit of pedestrians and vehicles - not to speed up traffic. Such measures as having pedestrian crossings at most intersections, widening footpaths and reducing road widths allowing 'people use' of the footpaths (which has happened at Five Ways with outdoor dining), establishing paved entry forecourts from surrounding streets and creating landscaped 'slow way' roads at key intersections. This approach not only introduces people friendly measures but would slow down traffic and deter those seeking a fast short-cut through the area without denying access for those living in, visiting or carrying on a business. We look forward to the implementation of such measures in the future.

Robyn Attuell

SCOTTISH HOSPITAL

On 16th July Council's Development Control Committee (DCC) considered an application for redevelopment of the Scottish Hospital site. The project involves extension of the aged care facilities from the current 92 beds to 250 beds. This will provide 28x2 bedroom and 154x1 bedroom hostel/nursing care units and 19 self care units, the majority of which are 3 bedroom and are to be sold for approximately \$750,000 each.

Society President, Robyn Attuell spoke at the meeting reiterating our view that the site, as the only remaining 'gentry estate' in the area, is of extremely high heritage significance. Whilst fully supporting the need for additional aged care, the Society is alarmed at the damage to the site and its immediate environment should the project proceed in its present form.

The Society has consistently urged that a development control plan be prepared for the site which would facilitate upgrading and extension of this aged care facility in a form and scale acceptable to the community and consistent with its listing in

Council's LEP a of "high heritage significance".

Despite a recommendation from Council officers that the application be refused (primarily because of its detrimental impact on the heritage building and its gardens), the DCC recommended that the matter be called to full Council and that Council issue a deferred commencement consent. Amended plans are to be lodged incorporating amendments sought by the Heritage Council on 11 July 2001 and Council officers would then issue consent subject to appropriate conditions.

In taking this decision the Development Control Committee had before them amended plans for redesign of the project to meet concerns raised by Council officers and the Heritage Council of NSW. These plans which apparently contain major changes to the original application, were only made known to councillors minutes before the meeting commenced. Needless to say there had been no opportunity for community comment.

It is unfortunate that with all parties supportive of retention and extension of aged care on this site that the argument has become so polarised that proper processes, such as community consultation are being bypassed.

The matter is due for consideration by full Council on 23rd July - as we go to print.

Jeannie Lyall

EXCAVATIONS

As mentioned in an earlier Bulletin, we are becoming more and more concerned about the increasing number of DAs before Council for major excavations under our heritage buildings - a small wine cellar is one thing but swimming pools, garages and even a Turkish bath below ground level must upset the natural water table and cause potential problems for neighbours many doors away. The following excerpt from life in the mid 1800s may be a reminder of what Paddington is built upon:

"Despite the streams which flowed through Paddington, there was a shortage of water for domestic purposes, especially in the southern part of the district. This was overcome in various ways, the earliest one was being the itinerant water vendor, who supplied casks of water from 6d. to 1/- per cask. A few of the more fortunate property owners had their own well or spring, but such good fortune was usually guarded carefully,

and kept for the family only. An exception was Mrs. Isabella Campbell, mother of Charles Campbell, an early Mayor of Paddington. The Campbell property, Hopewell Estate, had a permanent spring, and Mrs. Campbell allowed local residents free access to its waters for many years. After the construction of Busby's Bore, which pumped water from the Lachlan Swamps, a number of pumps were erected from which water could be obtained at 1d. per bucket. When the pump outside Victoria Barracks was installed, there were great rejoicings. This old cast-iron pump is still in existence, about 150 feet from the main gates, near the footpath. Attached to its stone foundation is a brass plate, which reads:- "This pump, erected 1868, is preserved by the Municipal Council as an interesting relic of the district's early water supply. To it came many of the residents with buckets. Carts distributed water from it to the outlying part of the district. Excavations for the well were carried out by Mr. W.J. Martin, and the pump was supplied by the engineering firm of P.N. Russell". A creek at the foot of Stewart Street augmented the water supply for nearby residents."

Historical Notes on Paddington by L.G. Norman.
Published by the Council of The City of Sydney
1961. *Robyn Attuell*

PUBLIC MEETING REPORT

It had been decided to open by asking for suggestions from the floor for topics of interest not for this meeting but for the future. These comprised the PCYC, the decrepitude of the Water Board's infrastructure, the ongoing review of Woollahra Council's DCP, the proposals for the Reservoir site, the enquiry into the Land & Environment Court, traffic and the possibility of classifying Paddington as an "Historic Area". An interesting mix of local and wider-ranging interests.

Our speakers then took the floor. Keri Huxley opened with an overview of the situation to date on White City. The impression was that the Stakeholder group was engaged in a valiant campaign which had been successful to date, but the developers, with so much at stake, were not going to give up and go home. Were we all able to keep on fighting?

Bill Morrison then spoke passionately about the Paddington Society's philosophy behind their stance on traffic and parking. This is another front on which we shall have to continue to battle.

Better news on the Paddington Green development where at last the deadlock over the park at the corner of Brown St. and Glenmore Rd has been broken. Council funds have been allocated and work should start soon.

As for the Scottish Hospital, this is another horror story in the making, with huge developments planned.

The last subject was the result of the Sproats enquiry into the possible amalgamation of eight Councils into four. John Mant suggested that we should all read the Sproats Report on the web but he predicted that it would be ignored by the State government.

Mary J de Merindol

CENTENNIAL PARKLANDS

We are alarmed by the plans to commercialise our public parklands in order to generate income. The Trust feels justified in doing this because costs have more than doubled in the past nine years and government funding has been dramatically reduced. This is the same government that has encouraged urban consolidation bringing many thousands of new residents into inner city areas and placing a greater burden on the existing public parks. Find out more at a public meeting in Paddington Town Hall organised by Clover Moore.

YOUR DIARY

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|----------------------------|---|
| August 16th, | <i>RSVP Winter Dinner</i> |
| August 21st, 7pm | <i>Winter Dinner - Grand National Restaurant</i> |
| August 21st, 7.30pm | <i>Clover Moore Public Meeting - Centennial Parklands Plans Paddington Town Hall</i> |
| August 28th, 7.30pm | <i>Paddington Society Public Meeting RSL Club, Paddington</i> |
| Sept 23rd, 2.30pm | <i>Woollahra Orchestra St Mary Immaculate Church, Waverley</i> |

Contacts:

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Leonie Furber 9380 8327; Francis Walsh 9363 9572;
Mary J de Merindol 9331 5777.

HERITAGE WINTER DINNER

Cost, including food, pre-dinner sherry or lager, and wine: \$55 for members and \$60 for non-members.

Payment in advance is necessary.

Contact Julie Martin on (0407) 616 983 or curlyolutions@ozemail.com.au for more information or to book for the Winter Dinner.

**To confirm, please send this registration, along with your cheque payment to:
Mary J de Merindol
7 Stewart Place
Paddington NSW 2021**

A receipt for payment will be sent to you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Paddington Society Member? Yes No

Number of people attending: _____

Names of your guests:

Cheque payment of \$_____ is enclosed.

Please tear off and return by mail