

THE PADDINGTON PAPER

PEOPLE PASSIONATE FOR PADDINGTON PAPER

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Over the Palisade

☞ Dual purpose Rain Gardens – the footpath corners at certain intersections in South Paddington are being extended as traffic calming measures. As well, some will include Rain Gardens if the gradient is not too great. These are areas where part of the blister contains soil for suitable plants, watered by drain water flowing slowly into it.

☞ The roundabout: the contentious Glenmore Rd/Cascade St/Hampden St intersection is to have the roundabout reinstated, due to pressure from residents despite the fact it will be no safer for motorists and pedestrians will be disadvantaged.

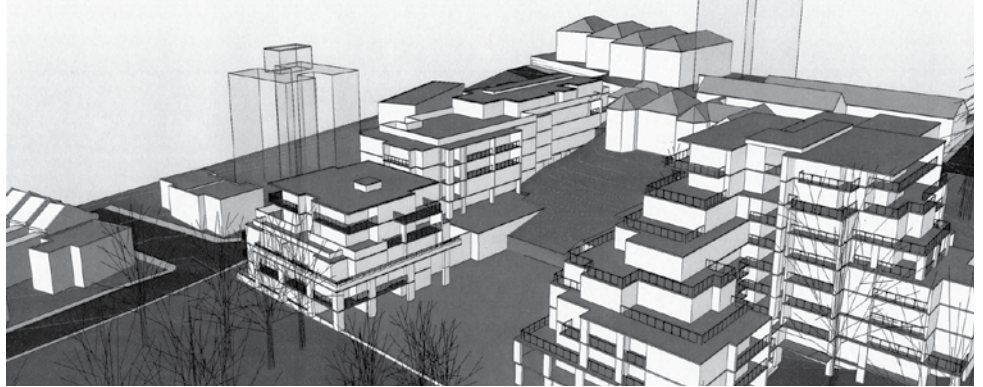


The trees have been saved, but 23 signs in less than 100m? Paddington does need a Public Domain Plan.

☞ With Councillor Cavanagh in London to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee perhaps he could approach the Queen to help with the Windsor Castle restoration fund.

☞ Sadly La Gerbe d'Or is no more. After 30 years of producing fresh baguettes, brioche and pastries, a doubled rent brings another Paddington institution to a close - our loss and Andy and Deborah's dream of a long-term and successful business gone. We wish them luck in their next venture wherever it is in the world.

☞ Paddington Town Hall is having more than a face lift: conservation and restoration of the clock tower, repairs to the leaking roof, installation of a lift as well as a paint job.



Mega development for Paddo

An alien space ship crash-lands in the tree-covered gully in Paddington. 50% of the trees were destroyed and locals have swapped a view over a dense natural environment for wreckage five stories high.

The consent given to the **Presbyterian Aged Care Scottish Hospital** development was one of the last consents given under the notorious Part 3A of the planning legislation. Part 3A was introduced by the previous State Government and engendered a rush of donations to the ruling Party.

Once a development qualified for consideration under Part 3A it was dealt with by the Department of Planning and the Minister instead of the local Council. Fortuitously, the Scottish Hospital development was so designed as to just achieve the \$100 million mark necessary to make it to the Minister's desk.

A Part 3A development was assessed, not in accordance with the rules that apply to all other developments in Paddington, but by what planners like to call 'on merit'. Discretion was, as they say, at large.

Despite this apparent freedom, the assessment of a Part 3A development was supposed have some regard to the relevant controls for the area.

The existing development in Paddington is dense – the amount of built floor space is about 0.9 sq m per sq m of land – in jargon terms 'an FSR of 0.9:1'. The form of development means that Paddington has a high density of residents.

The Paddington controls support the continuation of that level of density. The Benevolent Society's Royal Women's Hospital development, which was negotiated with the Council and the community, was highly successful for all parties at an FSR of 0.9:1.

An earlier scheme for the Scottish Hospital site also had an FSR of 0.9:1 and was the only previously approved scheme. The community assumed it was a benchmark.

The latest scheme was approved at an FSR of 1.28:1.

The development consists of 79 large apartments with parking and a new nursing home with a marginal increase in the number of beds compared with what exists on the site now. The land is zoned 'special uses' under the Council's controls. However this limitation is overcome by use of the State's controls for Aged Housing, which allow, in effect, a spot rezoning for medium density living provided it is inhabited by over 55s.

Interestingly the State controls that permit seniors' living rezones, also have an FSR limit of 0.9:1. But happily for the applicant, the Part 3A provisions allow this to be ignored.

The justification for a development of this size was weak. The major impact on Stephen Street was justified by the Department using the type of double negative so beloved by planners who know they are on weak ground:

'The presence of a 23.17 metres long, 3-5 storey building will present a distinctively different streetscape character when compared to the existing vegetated presentation of this portion of the site. However, having regard to the context of development on the eastern side of Stephen Street, the Department does not consider the change to be unacceptable.'

'The development on the eastern side' includes a high-rise development that would not now be permitted. The controls applying to Paddington put a stop to development that was not compatible with the heritage qualities. Consistently Council has refused applications that sought justification on the basis of the precedent of an existing development that would not now be permitted.

The Department of Planning felt no such constraint. It paid little regard to the objectives of the Heritage Conservation Area controls.

continued on page 2

Scottish Hospital ...cont

The new Government made the Planning Assessment Commission the deciding body rather than the Minister. The members of this PAC, unlike others in the past, at least conducted a hearing and gave written reasons. Some very well prepared citizens, as well as The Society and the Council, presented what sounded like compelling arguments that the development should be scaled back to something more like the size envisaged by the statutory controls.

The PAC apparently felt that the Department's assessment was not sufficiently challenged by the submissions and therefore gave approval to the scheme.

Heavily emphasized by the Department and the PAC was the expectation that the residents should have accepted that the need for aged housing and the demands for increased housing in the inner city would inevitably see their sylvan environment replaced by development that looked more like the rest of the city.

While clearly some change was inevitable, The Paddington Society suggests that the community of Paddington should have been able to bank on the detailed controls applying to the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area being applied rather than ignored. It is not surprising that there is little faith in the planning system of NSW when such a process results in decisions such as this one.

Why I live here



Hawa Arya Lecturer in Law

We love living in Paddington and moved here primarily for the reputable schools in the area, particularly Glenmore Rd Public School. The proximity to great fresh produce, chemists, public transport and parks, is essential and liberating with two toddlers 17 months apart. Above all, we love that people greet and chat with our children. Indeed Dudley St acts as our front yard, with almost every second home housing a toddler, baby or both. The children play together in a no-through-road and this fact compensates for the signature smallness of the terrace. The sense of community in the neighbourhood is a feature particular to Paddington from other areas in which I've lived.

Paddington's Great Streets

Great Streets by Allan B. Jacobs (MIT Press 1995) is the volume most likely



to be found on the bookshelf of every serious urban designer worldwide. This is a great recipe book for understanding what makes streets effective, enjoyable and memorable urban spaces.

Great Streets compares hundreds of streets around the world to determine the design and other elements that make some of them great. Paddington is the only Australian example amongst the many wonderful examples from around the world. Over a double page spread Jacobs has a portion of Paddington in plan and section with a brief description of the structure and dimensions.

We have redrawn his plan of the selected area of Paddington. The location is the interesting node where William Street slopes downhill to meet the junction of Hopetoun and Paddington Streets. This is where Alimentari café initiates not only many social interactions over good Italian coffee, but also a run of little boutiques up William Street.

We have added trees and roofs to the original plan diagram drawn in the book to illustrate more clearly the dense urban pattern that caught the eye of Jacobs.

With permission, we have selected some written passages that articulate the characteristics of great streets. These words of Jacobs encompass some of the most famous streets and boulevards in the world, but similarly seem applicable to the more modest residential streets of Paddington.

This book is about great streets, some of the best streets in the world. More particularly, it is about the physical, designable characteristics of these best streets. The book is also about street

patterns as the physical contexts for urban living and as the settings for streets, great and otherwise...[Page 2]

...A major purpose of this book is to provide comparable information about the physical qualities of the best streets – plans, cross sections, dimensions, details, patterns, urban contexts – for designers and urban decision makers to refer to in their work...[Page 3]

Criteria for Great Streets

What is it that a great street should do? First and foremost, a great street should help make community: should facilitate people acting and interacting to achieve in concert what they might not achieve alone...

A great street should be a most desirable place to be, to spend time, to live, to play, to work, at the same time that it markedly contributes to what a city should be. Streets are settings for activities that bring people together...

A great street is physically comfortable and safe. A great street might be cooler, more shady than another street on a hot summer day and therefore more pleasant to be on...

The best streets encourage participation. People stop to talk or maybe they sit and watch, as passive participants, taking in what the street has to offer...

The best streets are those that can be remembered. They leave strong, long-continuing positive impressions. Thinking of a city, including one's own, one might well think of a particular street and have a desire to be there; such a street is memorable...

Finally, the truly great street is one that is representative: it is the epitome of a type; it can stand for others; it is the best. To have achieved that status, it will have been put together well, artfully. [Pages 8, 9]

Settings for Great Streets

All streets have settings, in street patterns and blocks and, at a finer scale, amidst buildings and spaces. Maybe it is the contrast of one street with surrounding ones, in size or direction or shape, or in the

Did You Know?

We would do well to contemplate the world-class electric tramway system that once existed in Sydney, only to be abandoned around 1960 in favour of the mobility offered by the private motor vehicle.

Amidst this extraordinary network which traversed Sydney from Bondi to Abbotsford and from The Spit to La Perouse, were two lines which served Paddington. One along Oxford Street commenced from 1902 (taking over from the steam trams); the other, less than a kilometre apart commenced operation in 1909 along MacDonald Street,

Brown Street, Glenmore Road, Gurner and Hargrave Streets to Moncur Street and Queen Street (the current 389 bus route), then proceeded on to Bellevue Hill. These lines provided frequent services with not much more than a four minute headway at multiple stops.

As is the case today, the planning to insert these lines into an existing neighborhood, especially one with the layout complexities of Paddington, was not easy. Many routes were analysed before a final route was selected and even then the mid-village route changed during the time of construction. Of the options considered we may well have had trams along Glenview Street, Campbell

nature and size of the buildings that are found on it, that sets the one street apart and makes it special...

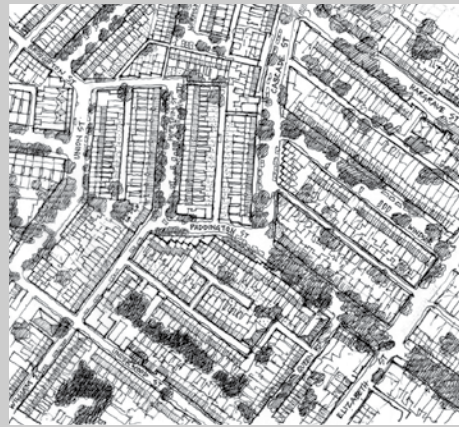
There is magic to great streets. We are attracted to the best of them not because we have to go there but because we want to be there. The best are as joyful as they are utilitarian. They are entertaining and they are open to all. They permit anonymity at the same time as individual recognition. They are symbols of a community and of its history; they represent a public memory. They are places for escape and for romance, places to act and to dream. On a great street we are allowed to dream; to remember things that may never have happened and to look forward to things that, maybe, never will.

The search here is for those physical elements most likely to make urban streets places where the magic can happen.

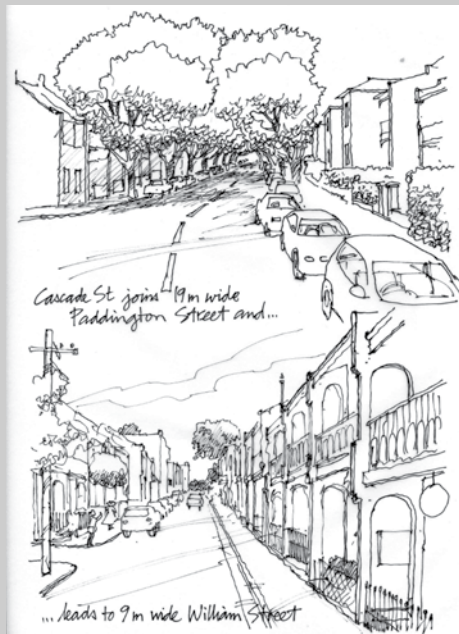
[Pages 10, 11]

Of Paddington Jacobs states:

- Amazingly dense, small-scaled, single-family, terrace housing streets. Many houses are as little as 12 feet wide. Net residential densities are 50 dwelling units per acre along some streets; truly high for single-family homes.
- Public rights-of-way of 40 feet are common.
- No off-street parking, so cars park on narrow (20-foot) streets that are crowded and slow-moving. The entire right-of-way becomes pedestrian-oriented.
- Some 4-foot-wide sidewalks have trees planted along them.
- Building setbacks of 5 feet are often planted with shrubs. Setbacks and narrow porches are major socializing, community-building areas.
- The street right-of-way is not unlike Roslyn Place, in Pittsburgh. Essential differences are the closeness of Paddington homes to the street and their continuous facade.



Paddington street plan.



Illustrations by Graham Stewart, Paddington.

PS The Society has been asking for Woollahra Council to join with it in preparing an Urban Domain Plan that would protect Paddington's Great Streets from death from a thousand small decisions. No luck so far.

Passages in italics quoted with permission from: *Great Streets*, Allan B. Jacobs, MIT Press 1995; ISBN 978-0-262-60023-1 (PB)

Street, Broughton Street, Windsor Street and even Norfolk Street, with varying degrees of bridging, cutting and land resumption. The line along Windsor Street needed to cut through the Congregational Church in order to get back to Moncur Street. As it was, the final route did require the construction of the Cutler Footway, and land resumptions in Liverpool Street/MacDonald Street/Brown Street, as well as Gurner Street/Cascade Street in order to achieve the necessary rail geometry.

The increasing dependence upon motor vehicles over the past 50 years has finally come to a head. We can't

keep building more motorways, we can't keep widening roads, we can't keep creating more car parks, and in the case of Paddington the kerbside is finite. A return to light rail along Oxford Street will be a great asset for mobility. It could also be a welcome shot in the arm to help bring the Oxford Street shops back into line as being a useful community resource, a restoration of the coordinated land use and transport model we once had.

Fingers crossed - the Government is considering light rail through Taylor Square and along Oxford Street as part of an emerging light rail system.

Source: *The Eastern Lines*, David R Keenan MCIT 1989

1 Newcombe Street DA

On 14 May City of Sydney granted 'deferred commencement consent' to this development for a new 2 to 3 storey building for a retail outlet and 20 residential units, on the current carpark site opposite the Uniting Church. Local residents and the Paddington Society have kept a watchful eye on this last major development site in South Paddington since it was first submitted to Council more than 12 months ago.

Although the building first proposed by the Uniting Church was welcome in terms of usage and its scale in the street, residents were concerned at the size of the fresh food outlet and the lack of residential development at street level. There was particular concern about increased traffic generated from trucks to service the supermarket as well as from vehicles using the public carpark proposed, particularly in Gordon Street where a pre-school and two schools are located.

After months of on-site meetings, 95 letters of objection and lobbying of Councillors there has been a resolution of sorts. The retail outlet has been reduced to almost half and five more units are now added along Gordon Street, while façade materials are somewhat improved.



The real breakthrough has come from Council support for all vehicular access to come from Oxford Street and not from Gordon Street, thus greatly reducing the traffic impacts on the local area.

However, the applicant still needs approval for the re-opening of Newcombe Street at Oxford Street (and closing at Gordon Street) from the Roads and Maritime Services. And a future application needs to be submitted for the retail fitout.

Watch this space...



Tram on the Cutler Footway above Boundary Street, Paddington about 1960. Photo: R Fawl

Renovation Tips

Preservation before desecration

Nobody told me the rules had changed? One night last month a section of ceiling crashed down leaving my living room in chaos. I realise now this was a signal to rip it out, gut it, and rebuild in whatever style. But I didn't. I found a plasterer skilled in this work, who took moulds of the cornice and rebuilt it just as it was. Good for another 100 years.

So am I out of step? I'm OK with Paddington as a living village, not as a museum, but certainly not as a development site. I look at the Windsor Castle, now more like a mass grave than the thriving hub it once was, a museum to avarice. And then there are developments down the hill which more resemble the rebuilding of Hamburg after WW2, nails in the coffin of conservation.

Silly me, I thought Paddington was still of heritage significance. Now I don't mind a certain shift in cultural logic, but have we gone too far? The disregard of the State Government is somehow to be expected in their blind charge to do 'something', do 'anything'. Our own Councils display an increasing negligence towards heritage, and I would have to say a total failure to recognise their responsibilities for the public domain, the glue which holds it all together.

So have I missed something? Is it now acceptable practice to set about stuffing it up? To wring the real essence and life out of the place? It's time we arrested this construction creep and got back to the real job at hand, the conservation of this remarkable place, its history, its buildings, its activities. Now where did I put that screwdriver?

Ron the Renovator

Another Viewpoint

COFA's proposed new fencing in front of the Albion St Public School building, is causing angst in the local community who are fiercely protective of their heritage precinct. The fencing would have a negative impact on the character of the area generally and the intersection in particular.

The proposal needs to be considered in relation to the overall streetscape, including the other three corners of the intersection, which is the heart of the local residential community. We believe the fencing is unnecessary and would degrade the whole precinct. Negotiations are ongoing.

City of Sydney will soon begin tree planting in Albion Ave and we also expect to see new trees in Iris and Taylor Streets.

Life



Exposed at last - Cascading development

“Cascade Street in Paddington is a favourite of mine, because it tips down the hill in that wonderful cascade and all the terraces which are slightly angled to the street just go dit... dit dit ... dit ... dit [sic] so that they're ... the same and not the same, and they express and articulate the topography in a way that just makes my heart leap! I love it.... I've never seen anything like it in the world....”

Elizabeth Farrelly, Interview on ABC radio LNL with Phillip Adams, 17.5.12

With the new development on the old quarry site in Cascade Street emerging from its screen of scaffolding after two years of construction, do these words still apply?

Council rejected the original mixed use development in 2007. Neighbouring residents repeated their objections to a modified scheme pointing out the excessive height, bulk and scale; floor space and height were still more than double the LEP standards. Strong support was given by The Paddington Society but all were disregarded. In December 2009 Council approved the development – by a majority of one vote from a Paddington Ward Councillor:

For:

Clr Boskovitz, Liberal, Vaucluse
Clr Shapiro, Liberal, Bellevue Hill;
Clr Edelman, Liberal, Vaucluse
Clr Zeltzer, Liberal, Double Bay
Clr Cavanagh, Liberal, Paddington
Clr Carmichael, Liberal, Bellevue Hill
Clr Howe, Liberal, Double Bay
Clr Petrie, Liberal Cooper

Against:

Clr Wynne, Residents First, Vaucluse;
Clr Medcraft, Residents First, Paddington
Clr Young, Residents First, Cooper
Clr Plater, Residents First, Double Bay
Clr Jarnason, Greens, Paddington
Clr Shoebridge, Greens, Cooper
Clr Grieve, Greens, Bellevue Hill.

The buildings are now revealed: five massive three storey town houses located above five lofty maisonette units, car parking and storage areas. Excessive floor to ceiling heights have resulted in an overwhelming development equivalent to a six storey building facing Royston Lane; some affected existing residents have tried to protect their amenity from overlooking by greening and screening – a sad choice, some privacy re-gained, but only by blocking out even more sunlight.

The heavy massing of the facades, particularly on the frontage facing Cascade Street, have made few concessions to the special fine-grained character of Paddington – the development would be more suited to a site in Double Bay, Bellevue Hill or Darling Point (which may explain the opinions of supporting Councillors).

Does it belong here, in the context of our cascade of traditional terraces?

Coming up...come along

• **Annual Dinner at Victoria Barracks** Thursday 30th August - Guest speaker: **Malcolm Turnbull MP. Details on our website from June 30** - see below.

• **Annual General Meeting** – Thursday 8th November – Guest speaker: Kim Ellis, Director Centennial Park & Moore Park Trust. Venue & time to be advised

The Paddington Society 2011 Committee

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Graham Stewart	Committee

The Paddington Paper is the official newsletter of The Paddington Society providing news and informed comment on local issues. Views expressed are those of the editorial committee and not necessarily those of the membership of the Paddington Society.



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Passionate for Paddington? Then join us and get involved! www.paddingtonsociety.org.au

Voting for Councillors and a Lord Mayor

The two Councils that share the governance of Paddington will go to elections on September 8, 2012.

The City has an electorate of the whole, meaning there are no wards and residents on the southern side of Oxford Street will vote for all nine Councillor vacancies. All candidates therefore have an interest in Paddington issues.

Woollahra has five wards with three Councillors for each ward. (12 of the 15 Councillors have no real interest in Paddington.) Instead of a popularly elected Lord Mayor, as in the City, the Councillors annually elect Woollahra's Mayor from among their numbers. (Maybe one of the reasons why the City performs better than Woollahra?)

We asked the Paddington Ward Councillors to reflect on their four years in office and here's what they say:

Peter M Cavanagh – Liberal Councillor

I have really enjoyed my term as a Paddington Councillor and I am looking forward to a further term from September.

At the time of the last election there were three issues that people spoke about the most. They were; the roundabout at the bottom of Cascade Street; the lamp post returning to Five Ways and thirdly; the closure of the passageway between Glenmore Road and Cooper Street.

Clr Medcraft and I worked hard to achieve all three. Approval to reinstate the roundabout has been confirmed and work will commence soon; Five Ways has its lamp post back and Council has acquired control of the right-of-way between Glenmore Road and Cooper Street at great cost, and has installed timed gates and thus prevented its closure.

As Deputy Mayor for two of the four years I have had a unique opportunity to be deeply involved in a wide range of projects across the whole municipality. This role has given me an additional ability to have input into matters of concern to the municipality as a whole and Paddington in particular.

I especially enjoy many of the social roles of Council. Attending citizenship ceremonies is a particular joy. As acting mayor I actually performed one. Such a thrill to actually make people citizens. Meeting a wide range of amazing people, especially such wonderful volunteers is reward in itself.

Like my fellow Councillors, heritage and its preservation are uppermost in our minds. It was the main reason I decided to stand for Council in the first place. That is not to say we always win on that ground alone. In an evolving society things

change and we do not always like the results. But that does not stop us trying. Personally, I like sympathetic development not contrasting development so favoured by architects. I am sick of hearing the word 'pastiche' for sympathetic development.

As to the future, well I hope I have done well enough to be elected again and I look forward to bringing the mayoralty back to Paddington in the forthcoming term.

Susan Jarnason – Greens Councillor

After nearly four years as a local Greens Councillor in Paddington I can cast my mind over a wealth of experiences gained while aiming to represent such a diverse community.

There are two common themes that have resonated for me during this time. One is that the people of Paddington are active, involved and informed. The second is that living cheek by jowl in one of the most densely populated intact heritage suburbs in Sydney there is still so much 'community' alive in Paddington.

I have come to rely on the knowledge that the residents will fiercely protect pedestrian amenity, stunning historical architecture, green spaces, no matter how small, and the fine balance needed for a growing liveable village.

The approval of two over-developments; one in Cascade St and more recently, the Scottish Hospital were two examples where, despite Council's planning controls, formidable submissions by eloquent, knowledgeable residents and the Paddington Society, reason gave way to developer arrogance and greed.

Today I was contacted by a resident who was concerned about the constraints of developing in the "heritage conservation area" that is Paddington. Unlike the rest of the municipality, where sadly the price of real estate drives design and scale far beyond good taste and decent amenity, I could refer her to a knowledgeable group of local residents prepared to assist others in understanding the nuance of developing their home in Paddington. Sympathetic to heritage, mindful of others' amenity, truly sustainable planning and development. She was relieved and enthusiastic.

The Paddington community is, by no accident and very much by design, a place where everyone loves to live.

Greg Medcraft – Residents First

Looking at my achievements, I have constantly tried to ensure new developments comply with the Paddington DCP. On major projects such as White City, Scottish Hospital and Cascade Street, I have opposed any moves to compromise our planning principles, to mitigate overdevelopment.

I opposed moves to rezone areas of Paddington to allow higher density

developments. Council adopted my motion to develop a vision and master plan for William Street. Structural and cyclical trends lead me to believe that we need to look more broadly at our retail precincts.

I moved to establish an Ecological Sustainability Task Force in 2009, which I have chaired since its creation. Amongst its achievements was adoption of a carbon reduction plan to cut emissions by 20% by 2020, through a combination of more efficient street lighting, solar power and gas co-generation.

I have pushed a number of initiatives to revitalize and protect the recently renamed EJ Ward Paddington Community Centre.

We need a community centre in Paddington more than ever, given the changing demographics of our village.

I initiated the establishment of Ward Meetings to act as forum to brief local residents on current issues affecting the area and get feedback.

I have supported Council balancing its budget without the support of borrowing, at the same time increasing funding for capital infrastructure, particularly drainage and footpaths

My frustrations include the lack of a Paddington Place Manager - this is essential for Paddington. I initiated a move to consider this and was rejected by Council.

The 389 Bus Link to Edgcliffe - I initiated moves to establish this connection, but was rejected by Council.

Bike Share – I successfully moved for Council to examine this, but at this stage the mandatory helmet laws make viability an issue.

Pedestrian access to Rushcutters Bay via White City – I have continued to pursue re-opening this.

Have your say...

A short edition of The Paddington Paper will be distributed just before the elections giving readers a run-down on the candidates and their policies. The Society will be detailing its expectations of the new elected Councils; these will be made known to the candidates and discussed in the Paddington Paper election edition.

To assist us in preparing our policies **we would like to hear from you**, email us: heritage@paddingtonsociety.org.au

**Society's Annual Dinner
with Malcolm Turnbull MP
Thursday 30 August 2012**

**Join the Paddington Society today!
www.paddingtonsociety.org.au**

Excavation can dig a real hole for you

Excavating to create a new basement may sound like a great idea, but it can create havoc for you, neighbours and even those further afield.

Paddington's houses are built on porous Hawkesbury sandstone and loose sandy soil – not a good start for solidity. Our terraces, particularly those in groups, have a shared system of footings, common party walls of sandstock brick and lime mortar, and lateral cross walls which are interconnected and interdependent – really quite fragile and neighbour co-dependent... even removing a fireplace can transmit cracks next door. Examples of significant structural damage and loss of heritage fabric due to excavation are numerous.

The fact that Paddington is on a ridgeline means that the natural sub-surface water flows either to the Lachlan Swamps in Centennial Park or works its way down to Rushcutters Bay. With almost every parcel of land built on from the late 1800s, the water flows are well established, and if interrupted by excavation can pool, causing rising damp elsewhere. With an original basement the water pattern is already established; this pattern can be disturbed by excavating next door, so precedence is not an OK. Situations have arisen where pumps have had to be installed to remove the constant new flow of seepage water.

To protect the structural integrity of buildings and residents' amenity in the Paddington Conservation Heritage Area, Woollahra and City of Sydney Councils have specific controls for anyone contemplating excavation.

Sites sloping to the rear are more suitable, however excavation is not allowed under common walls and footings, freestanding boundary walls, or forward of the front façade; nor is it allowed if a floor has to be removed to carry out the work.

If existing footings are on sandy soils up to 1m deep over rock, excavation has to be more than 1m from the footings; if the sandy foundation has a depth of 1m-1.5m under the footings the excavation has to be more than 1.5m away; 0.2m away if the footings are directly on rock foundation. If rock substratum is more than 1.5m below the footings no excavation is allowed.

A groundwater drainage system should be incorporated in the design plan. For natural light and ventilation, the new habitable basement must have one external wall fully above the existing ground level.

Boundary-to-boundary excavation can be allowed for garages on rear lanes if the structure does not adjoin the main building or a secondary wing of a building

on the common boundary. There are also controls for excavation for pools and spas relating to the size of the property; if less than 6m wide, the set-back from the boundary must be 0.9m and at least 1.5m from the boundary if the site is more than 6m wide.

Another issue is the necessary amount of landscaping at natural ground level that all properties must have; this often precludes such additions and therefore excavation.

For excavation, councils usually require a geotechnical report and a structural report with the DA and often a dilapidation report documenting the condition of neighbouring properties prior to commencement of excavation. These reports no doubt will state that everything will be just fine; maybe it will be, if highly competent engineers and builders are doing the job, but paperwork is no guarantee.

However, if you are a neighbour and your property is damaged, councils will not be held responsible, nor be involved directly in disputes between the developer, contractors and neighbours. It becomes a civil matter; neighbour against neighbour, not a pleasant place to be.

So the upshot is, if council guidelines are strictly adhered to, there shouldn't be disputes, or destruction of our heritage, or unsustainable 'bat caves' and we will continue to live harmoniously in this densely populated, beautiful suburb of Paddington.

For more information on the Paddington Development Control Plan (DCP) go to:

- www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/building_and_development
- www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development/cityplan



Paddington Bookshops

In 1967 Angela Child established The Paddington Bookshop at the junction of Paddington and William Streets, arguably the first of the area's quality art bookshops. Angela had a particular aesthetic which focussed on both the obscure and the known and introduced an exciting collection of contemporary art titles, enticing publications of Japanese art and Japanese gardens; married as she was to Eric Child, ABC radio's popular jazz identity there were important Jazz books too. Generous and sociable, Angela enjoyed entertaining and informing her clients at her regular soirees - serving unusual food, wines and titles.

Another of the interesting small independent bookstores was the New Edition Bookshop, which William de Winton opened on Oxford Street in 1974 – the name is still set in tiles in the entrance to the Boulangerie at No 328A. William noticed that tourists often got lost in Paddington so initiated daily walking tours. In 1979 this led to the publication of the free annual "The Paddington Book", which told tourists (and residents) everything they needed to know about the area. By the time the shop was sold at the end of the eighties 50,000 copies a year were being distributed, still free of charge. New Edition also opened the Tea Rooms next door to the bookshop in 1980, and it became a hub for residents, poets and musicians. Unfortunately the shop and tea rooms closed in the 1990s.



New Edition Books in the 1980s.

Today Paddington has three bookstores. In 1985 Ariel Books, which also has another branch in the Rocks, opened on Oxford Street, and has been a Paddington landmark since that time. Berkelouw Books has been in Sydney since 1812 and in 1994, the sixth generation of the Berkelouw family opened the Paddington store. Ariel Books and Berkelouw Books are open till very late most nights of the week, attracting an interesting and eclectic variety of customers. Both are conveniently located near the Palace Verona, making them perfect places to spend some time before or after a film.

Amperand Books, nearby on Oxford Street, is a café and bookstore which buys and sells second hand books, with over 30,000 volumes. Three levels worth of books and dining tables all fit inside an old house with a stone dungeon below, and a courtyard and café known for its excellent coffee.