

VILLAGE VOICE



News Bulletin of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

PO Box 50 Woollahra NSW 2025

MAY, 1973

HELEN KELLER HOSTEL PRESERVED

The Royal Blind Society will probably make a decision this month on the sale of its property between Waimea Avenue and Woods Avenue.

One thing can be taken as morally certain -- the lovely old Victorian town house known as the Helen Keller Hostel will not now be demolished.

Since the short, sharp and effective protest campaign in March against the Society's irresponsible action in starting to destroy the building, several firm and substantial offers have been made to the Society to buy its property.

This includes the land round Helen Keller Hostel -- an obvious site for town house development -- and a number of homes in Waimea Avenue and Woods Avenue.



CONTINUED BACK PAGE. By courtesy of the Sunday Telegraph

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

will be held in

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HALL

Jersey Road (near Moncur Street)

TUESDAY MAY 29TH at 8 p.m.

The evening will include a Forum to discuss the results of our survey into residents' wishes for local planning.

Panel : Alderman Frank Taylor of Woollahra Council, T. V. personality Diana Fisher and architect Neville Gruzman.

Non-members and prospective members welcome.

Queen St. Commentary

Roll up, roll up, folks ... the one and only Queen Street Fair will be held this year on Saturday, November 24. We're applying to shut off the whole street, and lots of marvellous diversions are planned.

Charges for hiring stalls are not yet worked out, but if you would like to put your name on a preliminary booking list, phone Anne Schofield on 32-1326.

WHAT THE SURVEY SHOWED.

The association's recent survey to sound out local residents' views on planning questions has been an outstanding success. A very high proportion of residents returned completed questionnaires and the information they gave will prove very valuable.

Market research expert John Boyce has analysed the data and made a full report to the committee of the association. This shows that several points were mentioned or endorsed by a high proportion of the respondents.

Of nine measures suggested or improving the area, two were clearly favoured by the majority: (1) Planting more trees on the footpath (94.5% in favour), and (2) The intelligent usage of large obsolete buildings (95.2% in favour).

Mr. Boyce says that the list of amenities which residents would like to see established covers a wide range.

"On the leisure side there is a demand for both cultural and social facilities. Lack of a local public library concerns a number of people, while others see a need for a meeting hall, a concert hall, a public art gallery and so on.

"Cleanliness is a matter of great concern to residents of the area. They think the local Council should be doing more, both by cleaning streets and public places and by providing a more frequent and efficient garbage collection service.

"One of the main causes of dirty streets and footpaths is the large number of dogs found there: more respondents asked for steps to prevent dogs fouling footpaths than made any other single request in answer to this question."

The report says that there is clearly a general desire for derelict, run down and untidy buildings to be renovated or demolished --- and respondents mentioned a number of specific cases.



There is also a significant demand for overhead electricity and telephone cables to be put underground.

The report shows that 89.7% of respondents favoured more small businesses in Queen Street, with food shops the most popular request. Most widespread was the demand for a fish shop (27.6% of respondents) followed by a cake shop (23.6%) and a self-service grocery or supermarket (7%).

NEW AT THE NEWSAGENCY.

Welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tuckwell who have taken over Giles' Newsagency (ex Nairn's, ex Barnes', ex McMillan's) in Queen Street.

A former hospital administrator, Tuckwell is new to the business of getting in the shilly dally to make sure that half Woollahra can chew over the latest political crisis with its cornflakes.

FAREWELL MacDONALD'S.

After 94 years of providing nails and screws, pots and pans, pegs and paint for the people of West Woollahra, MacDonald's hardware store in Queen Street closes on May 31. The premises are to be developed as a series of boutiques.

Mr. Ron Barlow, who has worked at MacDonald's for 44 years and owned the business since just after the war, agrees it is a great pity that Queen Street will now be without a hardware store.

But he puts the blame squarely back on the local residents who patronise his store only for small items like nails and screws, but go to the city and suburban department stores and discount houses for their tools, paint and appliances.

This trend, coupled with the low retail margin on hardware, will drive every small neighbourhood hardware store to the wall in five years, he says.

MacDonald's, with its attentive staff and fascinating range of kitchen goods, was an institution which will be sadly missed --- especially on Saturday morning when the urgent family handyman job could be put off no longer.

"Ostrich Feather Cleaning, Dyeing and Curling Taught, Mrs. Jones, 44 Queen Street, Woollahra."

Don't rush, ladies. This advertisement, found by antique dealer Roderick Palmer, is from the Sydney Daily Telegraph of 1896. And if some of the businesses in Queen Street today are just as colourful and unusual, they don't flourish at number 44.

Sadly the former ostrich curling establishment of the long-forgotten Mrs. Jones is now one of that depressing collection of decaying shopfronts where local government planning ordinances decree that businesses - exotic or otherwise - are taboo.

HELEN KELLER HOSTEL cont.

All the offers would include a guarantee of preservation for the Helen Keller building.

The offer most favourably regarded by our association comes from a development company which would present the building to the National Trust, on condition that a body of trustees was formed to administer it on behalf of local people.

Under this scheme, an appeal would be organised to restore the building, including making good the depredations of the Royal Blind Society.

Though Helen Keller House is saved, the battle to ensure this sort of thing does not happen again has hardly begun.

The building stands today not because of legislation or official action. It stands because the indignation of local people was mobilised so quickly and dramatically into a protest campaign which proved of great embarrassment to the Royal Blind Society.

It stands also because while officialdom was powerless, the civic conscience of the Builders Labourers Federation could be appealed to to halt the demolition -- just an hour or two before it would have been too late.

Now we must fight to give local councils power to prevent such irresponsible demolition

THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST
WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Rd., Ocean St., and Oxford St., West Woollahra, N.S.W.

ADDRESS: Box 50 P.O.
Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

SUBSCRIPTION: \$2 a year

CHAIRMAN: Leo Schofield

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. Joy Barraclough (32.4398)

COMMITTEE: Miss. Rowan Beckett,

Mr. Robin Brampton, Mr. Karl Feller ARAIA, Mr. Michael Magnus, Mr. Neville Marsh, Mr. John Newton Mrs. Patricia Thompson

VILLAGE VOICE is published approximately every two months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (31 6305 day, 32 4475 evening and weekends).

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME
(please state Mr. Mrs. or Miss)

ADDRESS

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Post, together with \$2 for first year's subscription to the Association at Box 50, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

NEW MEMBERS:

Captain and Mrs. M. C. Armstrong.

Mr. Russell Ballantyne.

P.B. Clarkson.

Mrs. J. Cobden.

Miss. Jean Dibley.

Mrs. G. Kevan.

Doctor and Mrs. S. Renwick.

The Misses E. and B. Tildersley.

Mrs. Wareham.