



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

MAY, 1979

Frustrating year, says president

The following is the full text of the annual report, prepared for presentation at the association's annual meeting on May 16 by the association's president, Leo Schofield:

The past year has been a particularly frustrating one for this association as we seem to have advanced no further towards a satisfactory planning scheme for West Woollahra.

The unveiling of Woollahra Council's latest planning proposals at a poorly attended public meeting last year merely compounded the frustrations felt by concerned residents, for it represented no advance on previous plans, but a positive step backwards.

Particularly unappealing were the proposals for highrise buildings along Oxford Street which were strongly opposed at the meeting and which have since been the subject of growing resident opposition.

To date Council has given no indication that these proposals will be dropped.

Equally unattractive was Council's scheme to channel more traffic into Ocean Street.

Despite assurances from aldermen that the plan presented at the meeting was merely tentative and designed to draw resident comment, there has been growing concern that West Woollahra will, via highrise and increased traffic and pollution, lose the village character which initially attracted residents to the area.

Further meetings are scheduled between the association's representatives and the Council's planning staff at which abandonment of the Oxford Street highrise proposals and a more equitable distribution of traffic through all main roads in the area will be urged.

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CONCERNED ABOUT WEST WOOLLAHRA?

All local residents are invited to the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

QUEEN STREET GALLERIES
38-40 Queen Street, Woollahra

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16th, at 7.40 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. Paul Landa
Minister for Planning
and Environment

will speak on

**"The Role of the
Resident Action
Group in Planning"**



Display of ideas for Queen Street Fair by landscape architecture students

FREE WINE TASTING BY COURTESY OF ROSEMOUNT ESTATE

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

A Special General Meeting of the Association
will be held on

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16th

At Queen Street Galleries, 38-40 Queen Street, Woollahra
at 7.30 p.m. (preceding the Annual General Meeting)

To consider and, if thought fit, pass a resolution to amend the constitution regarding election of office bearers and committee.

Details have been circulated to members.

A facelift for Queen Street

Russell Lloyd of Woollahra Council has informed VILLAGE VOICE that plans are in hand to upgrade 200 metres of Queen Street between Halls Lane and Oxford Street. Work should commence in approximately four to five weeks.

The proposed design is similar to improvements recently carried out by Council at the corner of Transvaal Avenue and Cross Street, Double Bay.

It is understood that this initial work is in the nature of a "pilot scheme" and further work will be carried out progressively in other sections of Queen Street and West Woollahra.

A welcome aspect of the scheme is the planting of additional trees and enlargement of planting areas around the base of existing trees to allow for supplementary planting – hopefully by residents.

Woollahra Council is at present carrying out improvements to footpaths at Five Ways, Paddington, and in Oxford Street.

The Five Ways scheme involves laying cobblestone-style paving bricks and is particularly attractive. However, the Oxford Street scheme, comprising panels of black bitumen bordered with brick, is neither particularly successful nor attractive.

The association has been pressing for improvements to key thoroughfares in West Woollahra and we are pleased that Queen Street is next for footpath upgrading.

FRUSTRATING YEAR, SAYS PRESIDENT

Continued

In the meantime, residents of Ocean Street have asked for and received the association's support in their fight against parking restrictions and increased traffic in their street.

THE ASSOCIATION'S INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING: Recognising the need for an expert overview on the Council's most recent proposals, the association commissioned an independent and highly respected town planning expert, Mr. P. J. Devery, to prepare a report for presentation to Council and to the association's membership.

Mr. Devery had been involved in reviewing an earlier Council draft plan and was familiar with the area and its special requirements.

While generally endorsing Council zoning proposals, Mr. Devery did, however, differ on a number of points and these are under discussion.

Mr. Devery has been present at all major meetings between the association and the Council.

QUEEN STREET FAIR: Favoured again with superb summer weather, the 1978 Queen Street Fair, most professionally organised by the association's secretary, Mrs. Pixie Nolan, was a runaway success.

This event, now something of a Sydney institution, provides the association each year with working capital and enables us to print and distribute what is regarded by many people as Sydney's most dynamic resident action paper, *Village Voice*.

The fair also benefits many charities. Special stall rental rates are available to registered charities so in effect the association subsidises their fund-raising activities.

In addition part of the profit from the fair is distributed to local community service organisations.

This year the association is making donations to the Woollahra Children's and Community Association (\$500), the Woollahra Senior Citizens' Welfare Association (\$500), the Parents and Citizens Association of Woollahra Demonstration School (\$500) and the Pensioners Christmas Fund Appeal in Paddington (\$250).

YOUR COMMITTEE: Because of business pressures, I have reluctantly come to the decision to step down from the chairmanship of the association.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the outgoing committee but in particular the remarkable Robin Brampton, vice-president and an active and energetic member since our foundation; our secretary, Mrs. Pixie Nolan; and the chairman of the architectural sub-committee, Mr. Douglas Gordon, who has shaped and guided the association's planning philosophies for the past four years.

To them and to all members of the outgoing committee, I extend sincere thanks for their support throughout the last year.

I also wish all members of the incoming committee every success in their work during the next twelve months.

LEO SCHOFIELD

FOCUS ON LOCAL ISSUES

More than 80 people packed the library at Holdsworth Street Community Centre on April 18 for a lively discussion on local issues which sometimes got heated – but never out of hand.

The "Residents' Forum" arranged by the association was attended by two of our local ward aldermen – Tony Perry and Marcel Piat – who stood up manfully to a withering crossfire of questions and criticism.

The discussion covered three main topics:

– *Woollahra Council's Action Plan for Woollahra West.*

– *The controversial private application to Woollahra Council to turn the disused Parisian Laundry building into an arts and crafts centre.*

– *Traffic control, particularly the sudden restriction of parking in Ocean Street, between Forth Street and Oxford Street.*

Our president, Leo Schofield, opened the Action Plan discussion by detailing the extensive work which the association had put in over seven years to try to help Woollahra Council formulate an action plan which truly reflected the needs and wishes of local residents.

Leo spoke feelingly of the association's disappointment that after all this time and input, no plan had been gazetted and our dismay at certain aspects of the Council's most recent draft Action Plan, published a year ago.

These include the proposal for four and six storey residential development in Oxford Street; the proposal to direct as much through traffic as possible through Oxford Street; and the completely new approach to zoning.

It was obvious that other people in the audience share our frustration with the Council's snail's pace approach and vacillating attitude to overall planning in West Woollahra.

Leo Schofield contrasted the slow speed at which the planning process works in Woollahra with the quick and efficient way Sydney City Council had produced and adopted an acceptable plan for South Paddington.

Mustering the defence forces, Alderman Tony Perry objected to the Council being treated as a "bogeyman" in the planning issue, and defended the present situation on a number of grounds.

He reiterated what he claimed he had emphasised at the public meeting when the present draft plan was first presented 12 months ago – that it is purely a tentative proposal to test public reaction, and flexible enough to be changed.

He foreshadowed that the plan could



Queen Street's phantom graffiti writer strikes again! He (she?) must be particularly proud of this sally, because this was the second time it appeared on the walls of Queen's Court. His other favourite canvas is the walls of the Woollahra Hotel. With so much paint and effort being needed to erase his creative efforts, perhaps the Queen Street Association should erect a special board for graffiti. There's a good precedent. The Arts Council discourages people from fly posting on its headquarters in Crown Street by having a special "If you must post bills, post them here" area.

be modified before it was re-presented at further public meetings, probably to be held later this year. And he pointed out the need for planning to be responsive to constantly changing circumstances.

The Parisian Laundry discussion was opened by Mr. Peter Grossman, one of the applicants, who outlined its advantages as an arts and crafts centre which local people could use, and denied that it would injure the amenities.

Although there had been energetic protests locally against the scheme, it was obvious that a proportion of the people at the meeting saw advantages in it.

A lady who keeps a boarding house in Ocean Street spoke, probably from deep experience, of the need for more facilities for people in the area to occupy their spare time profitably, particularly on Sunday.

The case against the scheme was outlined by Tom Wilhelm, the association's treasurer, speaking on his own behalf rather than that of the association.

He saw the project as more of a store to sell goods than a true arts and crafts centre, and feared that it would generate as much traffic as the Argyle Centre at The Rocks, thereby destroying the character of the area.

Another speaker severely questioned the accuracy of Mr. Grossman's claim that the project had the support of the Visual Arts Board, which she stated never supported commercial applications.

The third topic, traffic control, was obviously the one which had brought a very large number of people to the meeting — following the unexpected implementation of new parking restrictions in Ocean Street.

Mr. Len Brandt, an Ocean Street resident, gave voice to their frustrations, claiming that they had been made the victims of a "\$25 million bungle" — the new Oxford Junction By-Pass.

Bitterly he described the situation caused when residents were suddenly unable to park outside their homes, and businesses saw their turnover drop alarmingly because customers could not stop outside.

Their protests were supported by Alderman Marcel Piat, who earlier in the week had presented to the Council a petition signed by 160 residents.

However, the two local aldermen were placed on the spot on the question of whether they knew in advance that the parking restrictions were to be invoked.

It appeared that they were no more aware of what was going to happen than local residents.

On another traffic question, the aldermen were able to be more reassuring. There was no truth, they said, in rumours that traffic restrictions were to be instituted in Spicer Street.

Apart from its value in focussing attention on some of the controversial problems of the area, the high attendance and quality of discussion at the meeting clearly demonstrated that the people of West Woollahra care deeply about their area.

The association's vice-president, Robin Brampton, who chaired the meeting, suggested that more such gatherings should be held in future.

And he thanked the local aldermen for "putting their heads in the lion's mouth" and submitting so equably to so much criticism and cross-examination.

DMR TO REASSESS PARKING

Following their well-organised protest, a deputation from residents met the Local Traffic Committee on April 26 to seek the removal of new parking restrictions in Ocean Street.

Introduced in March, the new restrictions between Forth Street and Oxford Street are preventing many Ocean Street residents from parking outside their homes.

Some retailers in the area claim they have lost between 30 and 50 per cent of their trade because customers cannot park outside.

Mr. Len Brandt, who led the deputation to the Traffic Committee, said that as a result of the protests, the Department of Main Roads was re-assessing the situation and it would be discussed again at the Local Traffic Committee meeting late this month.

The Traffic Committee consists of representatives of Woollahra Council, the Department of Main Roads, the Transport Department and the Police.

The new restrictions create "no standing" areas in Ocean Street between Queen Street and Oxford Street between 6.30 a.m. and 9.30 p.m. on the west side and between 3.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. on the east side.

In the area between Queen Street and Forth Street, no parking is allowed at any time in or opposite the retail area on the east side of Ocean Street.

On the west side, parking is prohibited beyond Peaker Lane between 6.30 a.m. and 9.30 p.m. At other times during weekdays and on Saturday morning, one-hour parking restrictions apply.

Local residents and business people are incensed that they received no warning before the restrictions were introduced.

Mr. Brandt said that the restrictions meant that many Ocean Street residents could not park outside their homes overnight, forcing them to park in crowded John and Queen Street, causing new traffic problems.

He said restrictions on the west side were totally unnecessary because traffic from Oxford Street was channelled into one lane before it entered Ocean Street.

As part of their protest strategy, the residents group has made a film of traffic in Ocean Street.

Ocean Street residents and shopkeepers see the parking restrictions as part of a general move to make Ocean Street a no-parking arterial road for fast-moving traffic.

It is the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association's policy that the burden should be shared by spreading through traffic through all major streets in the area.

THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, N.S.W. Affiliated to the National Trust.

Address: Box 16, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

Subscription: \$3 a year. Life membership \$25.

Patron: Joan Sutherland

President: Leo Schofield

Vice-President: Robin Brampton

Secretary: Pixie Nolan

Treasurer: Tom Wilhelm

Committee: Peter Billing, Sandra Cameron, Douglas Gordon, Mollie Lenthall, Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts

Chairman of the Architectural Committee: Douglas Gordon

Village Voice is published approximately every three months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (357-1488 day, 32-4475 evening and weekends).

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AN INVITATION TO JOIN US

Every home in the area covered by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association gets a copy of *Village Voice*.

If you're reading this and you're not a member of the association, please join us by filling in the coupon below.

We need your support, both moral and financial, in our constant fight to preserve the architectural heritage of our area and ensure that it always remains a pleasant place to live.

THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

ENCLOSED IS MY SUBSCRIPTION OF \$3 FOR ONE YEAR.
IF YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN A MEMBER, PLEASE PUT A TICK HERE

NAME

ADDRESS

POST TO: The Secretary,
Queen Street and West Woollahra Association,
PO Box 16,
WOOLLAHRA, NSW 2025.

MEETING ON ACTION PLAN

At the invitation of the Town Planner of Woollahra Municipal Council, Mr. Peter Jensen, a group from the association met him and members of his staff on May 4 to discuss the Council's draft Action Plan for Woollahra West.

The plan was published just over a year ago, and the association has since taken issue with several of its proposals.

Our group at the meeting included Mr. Jack Devery, a town planning expert retained by the association to provide an independent report on the Council's proposals.

Mr. Jensen threw some light on why the Council had scrapped a previous Action Plan after the association had gone to an enormous amount of trouble to provide constructive help and support.

He said the former plan probably would not have been acceptable under new planning legislation now going through State Parliament, but he was satisfied that the new proposals lined up well with the legislation.

We then had a useful discussion on the "hot potatoes" - areas of West Woollahra which will have to be redeveloped in some way because they contain commercial property which has fallen into disuse.

The idea put forward in the new Action Plan is that such areas along Oxford Street be redeveloped with four and six storey residential properties - a plan the association finds totally unacceptable.

Mr. Jensen emphasised that the proposal was only a tentative idea, and indicated that the Council would like some survey material from local residents on their views of the future of the properties.

It was our suggestion that this should be done on the basis of a fair sampling of resident opinion - not just by obtaining the views of people with a commitment or residents conscientious enough to fill in forms voluntarily.

On the more general aspects of the Action Plan, Mr. Jensen again emphasised

the safeguards which he believes will protect us from the new, rather "bitty" approach to zoning in West Woollahra, by having an overall Conservation Zoning.

He invited us to see how this would work when the more detailed Control Code for Paddington is published in a few weeks time.

We asked to be given the opportunity to draw up specific recommendations for the Control Code in West Woollahra, and Mr. Jensen said he would welcome this, especially if it included suggestions for individual buildings.

On the subject of traffic, Mr. Jensen and his staff obviously see difficulties in avoiding Ocean Street becoming a main thoroughfare for through traffic, and letting other streets in the area take their fair share.

He spoke of "lines of demand" which naturally draw traffic from the end of the new Bondi Junction By-Pass to the Edgecliff Station area.

Our group remained unconvinced that something constructive could not be done to spread the traffic onto other streets, and this is obviously a matter which the association will have to give a lot of attention to in coming months.

On the timetable of the plan, Mr. Jensen said it was hoped to have it on exhibition in September, and assured us that it could contain a number of changes in the light of opinions expressed by residents.

Altogether, the meeting was valuable, and we hope more can take place.

ASSOCIATION'S NEW COMMITTEE

Perhaps shortage of time had something to do with it, but when nominations closed on May 2, only six people had nominated for the nine positions on the association's 1979-80 committee.

Tom Wilhelm was re-nominated as treasurer, but no nominations were received for president or vice-president, and only five nominations were received for the six committee vacancies.

Our constitution provides that in these circumstances, all nominees are declared elected at the annual meeting, and additional nominations are called to fill the other vacancies.

Your retiring president and vice-president have put their heads together and will make a suggestion at the annual meeting as to how the two principal positions can be filled.

However, we would welcome any other suggestions, and particularly nominations for the committee from people who are prepared to give up a little time not only to attend committee meetings but also to handle some of the other tasks that crop up in a busy organisation.