



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

MAY, 1980

Slow progress on Action Plan

The following is the full text of the annual report, prepared for presentation at the association's annual meeting on May 12 by the president, Robin Brampton:

Once again the association's work in the past year has been principally concerned with trying to ensure that the West Woollahra Action Plan being developed by Woollahra Council accurately reflects the needs of the area and its residents.

Progress continues to be slow in getting the plan to the stage where it can be gazetted.

In his annual report last year, my predecessor, Leo Schofield, drew attention to several unsatisfactory aspects of the latest plan which the Council first published early in 1978.

I would emphasise again that generally our association welcomes the plan's treatment of West Woollahra as a conservation area, with strict restrictions on the sizes of new buildings and their relation both to their sites and neighbourhood.

Unsympathetic with area

However, we were disappointed — as indeed were so many individual local residents — that the Council's excellent philosophy for the area as a whole should be marred by a proposal that the general 9.5 m building height limit for the conservation zoning should not apply on three large areas fronting Oxford Street.

Instead it was proposed that height limits of 12 m and 18 m should apply to the sites — broadly based on the old Parisian Laundry, the junction of Wallis and Oxford Streets, and the old Diamond Horseshoe Nightclub.

The association believes that such

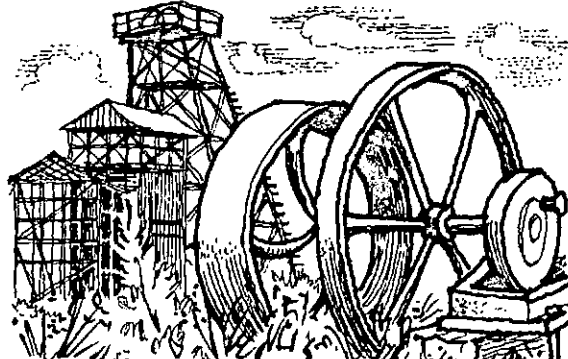
CONCERNED ABOUT WEST WOOLLAHRA?

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

MONDAY, MAY 12th, at 7.30 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER
Judy Birmingham,
of the Department
of Archaeology,
University of Sydney,
will speak on
"Preserving
Australia's Rich
Industrial Heritage"



**FREE WINE TASTING OF A NEW RELEASE OF RHINE RIESLING
FROM HUNGERFORD HILL, WITH A SELECTION OF CHEESES BY
COURTESY OF SAY CHEEZ, OF SPICER STREET, WOOLLAHRA.**

development — which would allow residential blocks to be constructed up to six floors high — would be completely out of scale and unsympathetic with the general architectural character of the area.

Because resident reaction to this part of the plan was so uniformly hostile, we naturally hoped that it would be dropped when the Council first revised the plan.

Unfortunately this did not happen with the Wallis Street and Diamond Horseshoe sites where the unacceptable height limits still appeared in the second stage plan which the Council

put on exhibition in September, 1979.

To help define its attitude, the association commissioned a respected town planning expert, Mr P. J. Devery, B Sc MTCP, of the Department of Geography at the University of Sydney, to prepare a detailed report and comment on the second stage plan.

Although generally complimentary about the scheme, Mr Devery suggested that some "fine tuning" should be carried out, particularly on matters of definition, and agreed with the association that the height limit of

Continued next page

President's Report

continued

9.5 m should apply to the whole area without exemptions.

The association adopted this report as its policy, and copies were forwarded to the Mayor of Woollahra, our ward alderman and council officers.

It had been the association's intention to call a public meeting to discuss the plan, when the Council itself arranged a meeting in November to hear resident reaction.

The Council gave this meeting deplorably little publicity, and a letter informing the association that it was to take place and asking us to promote it was sent only seven days before the event.

Nevertheless, we were able to produce an emergency edition of our *Village Voice* newsletter to alert local people to what would probably be their last opportunity to influence the plan, and some 70-80 West Woollahra residents attended the meeting.

Many spoke eloquently against the height limit exemptions, and it was encouraging that several of our supporters were non-members of the association.

The latest development is that in the past few days we have had encouraging discussions with Council officers which suggest that the Council is prepared to substantially amend its proposals in line with residents' wishes.

We naturally hope this matter can now be resolved quickly and that before the end of the year we will have an action plan which is fully acceptable to residents and which can form a constructive basis for all future planning.

Queen Street Fair

The eighth annual Queen Street Fair, held on Saturday, November 24, was slightly marred by two short but heavy rainstorms.

However, attendances were unaffected and, as most of the day was fine, the fair was as successful as ever as a community event.

The association is constantly concerned to encourage stallholders to achieve a higher standard of artistic presentation.

A new approach was tried with the 1979 Fair — making rebates of \$50 each to the 10 stallholders judged to have achieved the best standard. This was in addition to our normal "best stall" and "best costume" awards.

After paying all costs, the association

1979 QUEEN STREET FAIR Income and Expenditure Statement

INCOME

| | | |
|--|-------|--------------|
| Donations | | 100 |
| Revenue from stalls | 24920 | |
| Less: Licence Fees | 1370 | 23550 |
| Concessions | | 300 |
| Interest from Building Society | | 221 |
| | | <u>24171</u> |

Less: EXPENDITURE

| | | |
|---|------|-------------|
| Administration | 4879 | |
| Hire of stalls, stages, bins, toilets | 3812 | |
| Publicity Costs | 2178 | |
| Insurance | 1807 | |
| Cleaning | 1530 | |
| Transport and Labour | 1215 | |
| Prizes for stalls | 600 | |
| Entertainment — Bands | 550 | |
| Printing, Stationery, Postage, Photostats | 416 | |
| Security | 306 | |
| Electricity & Sound Equipment | 667 | |
| Bank Charges | 52 | |
| Audit Fees | 325 | |
| Entertaining | 57 | 1839 |
| | | <u>5777</u> |

SURPLUS FROM FAIR

| | | |
|--|--|----------------|
| Add: Proceeds of Insurance Claim | | 20000 |
| | | <u>\$25777</u> |

NET SURPLUS

made a surplus of \$5777 on the Fair. In addition we had an unexpected windfall of \$20,000 from a full payment on the pluvius insurance policy which is taken out as a protection against the Fair being completely rained off.

Carol Concert

For the second year, the association arranged a carol concert for local residents, followed by champagne and Christmas cake, in the Queen Street Galleries in the week before Christmas.

The Dowland Singers, a large group from the University of New South Wales, were in fine voice and some 100 people gathered to hear them sing.

The association pays all the costs of this evening from its Queen Street Fair surplus as a gesture of thanks to local residents for letting us hold Queen Street Fair.

Membership and Finance

The association ended the 1979 calendar year with 225 members, including life members. At the time this report was compiled, 101 ordinary members had renewed their subscriptions for 1980, 22 of them taking out life membership.

You will see from the Treasurer's statements to be presented at the annual meeting that despite the expenses incurred in connection with the West Woollahra Plan, our finances are in excellent shape.

This is principally due to the excellent trading surplus on the 1979

Queen Street Fair, and the almost embarrassing "windfall" on our pluvius insurance.

This year we have allocated \$2000 from our Fair surplus for distribution to local community service organisations.

Despite the healthy situation, we believe it would be prudent to make no other plans for the distribution of our funds until we are certain that no further major expenditure will be needed in connection with the Action Plan.

Committee

I would like to thank members of the committee for their loyalty and enthusiasm, and my daughter Julia for taking over the duties of secretary when the previous secretary resigned during the year.

Since the foundation of the association in 1972, Leo Schofield and I have alternated the roles of president and vice-president in Tweedledum and Tweedledee fashion.

For some years we have both felt that it would be desirable to have some "new blood" in the leadership, and we are pleased this year that Tom Wilhelm, a very dedicated activist for the needs of local residents, has agreed to nominate.

Both Leo and myself have offered to continue to sit on the committee in support of Tom, if it is the wish of members that we should. — R. B.

We need a traffic plan

In addition to its work in trying to influence a more acceptable West Woollahra Action Plan, the association is taking a continuing interest in traffic planning. Committee member Norman Prescott, a professional engineer, is taking the leading role in this activity. In this article he outlines the present situation and our causes for dissatisfaction.

Residents of West Woollahra are alerted to the effects on traffic flow in their precinct of recent actions and developments, namely:—

— The Paddington Traffic System Management (PATSYM) Scheme, aimed at eliminating through traffic in central Paddington, which went into operation this month for a three-month trial period.

— Traffic flow installations at the Bondi Junction by-pass, York Road, Oxford Street and Ocean Street intersections.

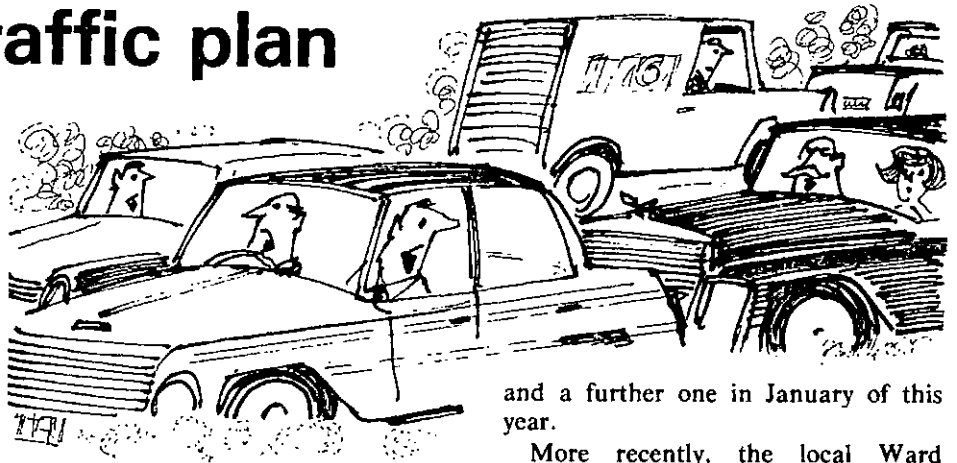
— Traffic arrangements at the junction of New South Head Road and Ocean Street.

For some time, the association has been pressing Woollahra Council to formulate a new traffic plan for the area.

The association has emphasised its view that West Woollahra cannot be left for study in isolation from these other developments. In particular, the effects on West Woollahra of the PATSYM trial will need to be watched closely.

The association is not unsympathetic to the desires of some Paddington residents to eliminate through traffic but, perceiving similar problems in West Woollahra, must view the PATSYM trial with cautious optimism.

A working party of the committee is putting much effort into the question of traffic problems.



To support these efforts, the association invites suggestions, views and comments from all interested and affected residents of West Woollahra.

We want a traffic plan based on amenities for people and not simply traffic flow solutions. To avoid a preponderance of the latter, people must speak up and make their feelings known.

Background Events

The last definitive statement by Woollahra Council was contained in the *Woollahra West Action Plan*, submitted at a public meeting at Forth Street School in April, 1978.

This received strong opposition and a Local Residents Forum, arranged by the association in April, 1979, and attended by two Council Aldermen, voiced concerted objection to many aspects of the traffic plan.

In May, 1979, a group from the association held discussions with the Woollahra Council Town Planner who spoke of "lines of demand" which draw traffic through the area.

The association was unconvinced that something constructive could not be done to share the traffic burden in a better way.

The Town Planner reaffirmed that opinion expressed by residents would be taken into account.

At a public meeting in the Council Chambers in November, 1979, Council officers advised that no further work had been done on the West Woollahra Traffic Plan due to other pressing matters such as the PATSYM Study.

Also during November, 1979, the association's representative on traffic matters wrote a lengthy commentary to the Council following examination of the PATSYM Study Report.

Other than in the form of standard advices related to the implementation of the PATSYM trial, we have received no constructive answers to this letter

and a further one in January of this year.

More recently, the local Ward Aldermen have expressed interest in the topic and have, no doubt, taken our views to Council.

However, some two years after the announcement of an ill-conceived traffic plan for West Woollahra, we still await a clear presentation of its intentions by Woollahra Council.

Some Basic Issues

The following items briefly summarise the main issues of traffic planning which the association sees as being important to the residential amenities of West Woollahra:

1. The PATSYM Report recognises that any traffic measures taken within the Paddington precinct could affect surrounding areas. Apart from restricting access for some residents, the report specifically estimates that an extra 180 vehicles will use Ocean Street in the peak period.

2. The report states that New South Head Road and Oxford Street are operating at below maximum capacity. It also states that through traffic is best discouraged at the perimeter of the study area.

These two statements taken together are contradictory with what we see happening at either end of Ocean Street.

At both junctions, traffic signal green times and two-lane right turn holding areas are encouraging traffic to pass through West Woollahra rather than proceed along the defined arterial routes of New South Head Road and Oxford Street.

3. Extension of the principle that traffic studies of closely-knit areas such as Paddington and West Woollahra cannot be dealt with in isolation indicates that the real perimeter of the problem is further afield.

The bulk of traffic has to be induced to use the two defined east-west access routes to and from the city.



Continued next page

We need a traffic plan

continued

Measures such as traffic signal co-ordination and no-right-turn signs in Oxford Street and New South Head Road should be accelerated. To this can be added the construction of the planned Eastern Distributor.

These steps could be expected to benefit residents well beyond Paddington and West Woollahra.

4. Increased traffic flow into Ocean Street has a deteriorating effect on the general environmental amenity of West Woollahra.

It causes secondary flow into other streets. It creates traffic snarls at the Queen Street intersection, particularly for turning buses. It inhibits the safe movement of local traffic across the area. It restricts access to local facilities, shops and residences.

5. The PATSYM Report, in proposing the solution for Paddington, advocates 60 dB(A) as the maximum acceptable average noise level for a residential street.

Most streets in West Woollahra are of a corresponding residential nature to those of Paddington and it would be unacceptable for traffic flow restrictions into Paddington to cause any worsening of traffic volumes and noise pollution in the similar environment of neighbouring West Woollahra.

6. The association has expressed a strong viewpoint that it is preferable in areas such as Paddington and West Woollahra for all trafficable streets to share the burden rather than apply street closures and other local restrictions.

Department of Main Roads

The association has also endeavoured to present these views to the Department of Main Roads whose response to date appears to only indicate interest in an objective to "cater for traffic volumes".

DMR actions show little concern for the effects on neighbourhood amenities or land use.

Woollahra Council has been asked to indicate its position with particular reference to preventing any further traffic encroachment on Ocean Street which should retain its basically residential character in conformity with the West Woollahra environment.

Immediate Action

The association's traffic group will be concentrating its attention on the following matters:

- The effects of the PATSYM Trial
- General traffic implications of the West Woollahra Plan (Town Planning)
- Ocean Street traffic conditions
- Submissions to the Council Traffic Committee

Relevant contributions from residents of West Woollahra who also consider these matters as being vital to the wellbeing of our community life will be most welcome.

SUPPORT FROM THE TRUST

The association's stand against the inclusion in the West Woollahra Action Plan of areas where residential blocks up to 18 m high could be built in Oxford Street has been supported by the National Trust.

The following letter was sent to Woollahra Council by the director of the Trust in New South Wales, Mr John Morris:

Re: West Woollahra Action Plan

"The National Trust welcomes the identification of a conservation area in this historic area.

"The boundaries of the proposed conservation area have been referred to the Urban Conservation Committee for comment and it is anticipated there will be liaison between this Committee and your planners in developing sensitive controls similar to your Preservation Code for Paddington.

"The National Trust does wish to object to the height limit of 18 metres identified in the proposed zoning map for:—

"(a) 120-170 Oxford Street.

"(b) 58-78 Oxford Street

"The Trust's objections are based on the premise that it is completely inappropriate to establish height limits in conservation zones which encourage development to a scale alien to the character of the precinct.

"The National Trust requests that the 9.5 metre height limit apply to the entire conservation area and the 18 metre and 12 metre height limits be deleted from the final statutory planning document.

"Yours sincerely
"John Morris, Director."

RESIDENT PARKING URGED

The President of the Queen Street Association has received the following letter from Marion Raymond, of 45 Queen Street:

I would like to ask you, as president, whether the association intends to do anything about getting resident parking for Queen Street.

This is really becoming a vital issue.

In England, for example, it has been found that resident parking in no way affects shopkeepers. People shop just the same but park in places where there is not an immense amount of traffic going through constantly — as there is here these days.

The building next door to me . . . uses between three and six parking spaces during the course of every working day. And that does not include the clients that also pop in and out.

Most people in this street do not own a garage. Some houses do not even have access to a rear lane. I think it is a gross inconvenience to be obliged to park one's car in another street when one lives in this one.

I find I have to cart the laundry and the shopping along the street physically because I often cannot find anywhere to park, and I am getting really angry about it.

If the association does not plan to do anything to press this point, I will start making noises about it myself. Please could I have your views?

(Yes, indeed, the association is deeply aware of the difficulty Queen Street residents have in parking, and the possibility of pressing for a resident parking system has been discussed at our public meetings.

There are some difficulties, but we feel the matter should be considered again, and Mrs Raymond's letter has reminded us to do so. We have invited her to come to our annual meeting on May 12 and lead a discussion on the idea — Editor).



A QUESTION OF TASTE

By Leo Schofield

Local councils, as we well know, are empowered to pronounce on how big or small an attic window may be, to decide whether or not an addition to an existing building is neighbourly or not, to dictate the size of garbage containers and the height of back fences.

However, possibly because no eager beaver legislator has got round to framing a bill governing architectural aesthetics, they seem unable or unwilling to use their considerable powers to ensure that fragile streetscapes are maintained.

Now not even the most rabid conservationist would suggest a charming late Victorian two storey house in our area was an indispensable building.

However its symmetry, its setback from the neighbouring terrace and the texture it contributed to the streetscape suggested it deserved something better than demolition and replacement with a new residence in sandstock brick.

Anything goes, it seems, so long as it's built in sandstocks.

Inspectors duped

Gratuitous application of iron lace, introduction of contemporary over-spaced spear-headed spindle fences in imitation of gutsier Victorian models, and the use of quaint or recycled building materials often seem to dupe planners and building inspectors into believing that a new building or a renovation will be in keeping with its neighbours and an area in general.

It is as if they scan the plans, see a few cutsey-poo quasi-period details on the drawings, spot words like 'sandstock', 'sandstone', 'iron lace' or 'shutters' in the specifications and reach for the building approval stamp.

A dangerous practice this, that could lead to the loss of more West Woollahra buildings with real rather than borrowed patina. Like Sandtoft.

Streetscapes take a long time to evolve but a few indiscriminate building approvals can destroy a century's worth of evolution.

One might feel happier about new buildings if they were superior in every way to the ones they replace. Unhappily this is not always the case.

A hulking Hilton replaced the Palace Theatre. The Australia and the Theatre Royal made way for the



Spontaneous, itinerant melody . . . as usual at the 1979 Queen Street Fair

dehumanised MLC Centre. The list is seemingly endless. Tasteless modern 'replacing' older more distinguished edifices.

There is a limit to so called progress. And unless a halt is called in the streets of our suburbs what hope is there for the heart of our city?

SAVE THE PARKS CAMPAIGN

It may interest Association members to know that a group called "SAVE THE PARKS" has been formed by nearby residents to preserve Centennial, Queens and Moore Parks from incursion by private and public groups.

The group is concerned not only that the parks are being overdeveloped by special interest groups, but that no long range plans exist — a very poor situation.

In response to this situation, the group has developed a proposed management plan for the parks and is negotiating with the State Government for the adoption of such a plan.

The group can be contacted at PO Box 157, Kensington, NSW 2033, and welcomes communications from concerned residents.

APRES LE DELUGE . . . JOIE!

Two heavy rainstorms — during the set-up and at mid-morning — did not prevent the 1979 Queen Street Fair from swinging along in its usual happy fashion.

Stallholders used a lot of good humour and ingenuity to overcome the effects of the rain; the rest of the day proved sunny; and the crowds were as great as ever.

To mark the fact that 1979 was the Year of the Child, we abandoned our usual Victorian playbill poster and held a competition for a suitable design among the children of Woollahra School.

This was won by 11-year-old Michelle Howard whose lively drawing of a child holding fairy floss, toffee apple and windmill was reproduced on the poster in full colour.

In 1979 we also tried another strategy to encourage stallholders to upgrade the standard of presentation — awarding 10 rebates of \$50 for stalls which were presented with some degree of flair, in addition to our usual "best stall" and "best costume" awards.

The judges were association president Robin Brampton, vice-president Leo Schofield, and David Spode, a designer with BBC Television in London.

Disappointingly, the standard was not conspicuously higher than in previous years, and the judges were only just able to find sufficient stalls worthy of the rebate.

Winners of the main awards were:

BEST NON-COMMERCIAL STALL: Nimrod Theatre.

BEST COMMERCIAL STALL: Dennis and Louie's Blacksmiths' Shop. ("Possessors of Extraordinary Skill in Metal Work. Established 1979.")

BEST STALLHOLDERS' COSTUMES: Rosie Nice and Friends.

BEST DECORATED SHOP IN QUEEN STREET: Cox's Boutique.

Financially the Fair was the most successful ever, making a trading profit of \$5777, with an additional payout of \$20,000 on the pluvius policy taken out as an insurance against the Fair being completely rained off.

This unexpectedly high financial result will enable the association's new committee to consider arranging the 1980 Fair on a more select and less commercial basis, in yet another attempt to improve presentation standards.

**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: Robin Brampton

Vice-President: Leo Schofield

Secretary: Julia Brampton

Treasurer: Tom Wilhelm

Committee: Peter Ekstein, Douglas Gordon, Mollie Lenthall, Pixie Nolan, Norman Prescott, 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.

QUEEN STREET COMMENTARY

Slowly but surely Queen Street is winning its battle for more shops to serve our day-to-day needs.

We have always emphasised how much we wanted a local cake shop . . . so a big welcome to *The Queen Street Konditorei* which has moved into number 140 with a mouth-watering selection of cakes, tortes, bread and rolls.

Another newcomer to Queen Street is the *Bryvord & Gordon* furniture showroom which has taken over the former Finlandia premises at number 153.

Now we have our cake shop, how about our other needs — a fish shop and a good takeaway food bar to replace our long-vanished fish and chip palaces.

Jersey Road has also seen a flurry of new commercial activity, with *Christopher Davis Antiques*, *The Welsh Pine Shop*, *The Tamarind Printworkshop* and *The Jersey Road Gallery* all setting up their shingles.

Christopher Davis has moved his antique business into a roomy structure where the Wentworth Lion Laundry once worked frantically 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide a laundry service for P & O liners when they turned round in Sydney.

An old weatherboard cottage has been demolished to provide access to the building from Jersey Road, and Christopher has equipped the entrance with impressive iron gates.

The Welsh Pine Shop has moved into the historic horse tram depot

where Marcel Piat formerly had his *Several Arts* business; The Tamarind Printworkshop has at last rejuvenated a long-abandoned shop which sticks out rather incongruously in a row of terraced houses; and The Jersey Road Gallery has opened up as an oriental antique shop at the corner of Paddington Street.

To all four new businesses we bid a welcome, and thank them for their contribution to the lively character of the area.

☆ ☆ ☆

Here's a thoughtful gesture.

The well-stocked Carillon Bookshop in Ocean Street can always help the customer who goes in to look for a book and finds that they have left their spectacles at home.

Proprietor Joan McPhee keeps a collection of different spectacles behind the counter to lend to long short sighted customers so that they can see to browse.

☆ ☆ ☆

Our committee was sorry to lose the services of Len Brandt, who has moved from Ocean Street to Watsons Bay.

Len was one of the principal activists in the campaign which forced the traffic authorities to have second thoughts about the highly restrictive parking regulations they tried to introduce in Ocean Street last year.

The intelligently planned campaign was a copybook example of what a group of concerned residents can achieve by acting promptly and unitedly when their interests are threatened.

In place of Len, the committee opted Peter Ekberg, of Wallis Street, another strong activist for the needs of local people.

☆ ☆ ☆

You can't please 'em all!

At least one local resident disagrees with the association's opposition to planning controls which would permit tall residential blocks along Oxford Street. And to register her point of view, she declined to renew her association subscription.

"I feel strongly that the only possible development along Oxford Street has to be higher rise, in view of the volume of traffic created by that road," she says.

"Furthermore, no sunlight is blocked and the buildings will provide a noise buffer to the fortunate residents in the streets lower down the hill."