

VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

23

NOVEMBER, 1980

Ocean Street traffic crisis — battle lines are drawn

THE Queen Street Association has obtained the support of Woollahra Municipal Council for its proposals for dealing with the traffic crisis in Ocean Street, published in the August *Village Voice*.

At a recent meeting of the Traffic Committee, the Council's then representative, Alderman Frank Donohoe, said the Council could see no justification for promoting the use of Ocean Street as a main road at the expense of not upgrading Oxford Street as an attractive main route to the city.

"Council's consideration in the matter was that other main roads can be upgraded and that the situation can be avoided where Ocean Street is being used as a de facto main road", he said.

Unfortunately, however, the Department of Main Roads takes the opposite view and in a letter to the association claims that "there would be little to achieve by seeking to restrict the flow of traffic along Ocean Street".

In the light of the Council's support for our campaign, the association's committee has resolved to seek a meeting with the Council's new traffic committee representative, the Mayor, Alderman Widdy, with a view to developing a joint Council/Association strategy on Ocean Street traffic.

The Council tells us that it is also about to conduct its own survey of Ocean Street traffic.

In the following article, **NORMAN PRESCOTT**, an association committee member with a special interest in traffic matters, explains the situation more fully:

Developments since the last issue of *Village Voice* have thrown a clearer light on what influences are at play in the arena of human amenities versus traffic flow.

Continued next page



The Queen Street and West
Woollahra Association

invites all local residents to

A CONCERT OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND SONGS

By the Taverner Consort
conducted by Sandy Newman

Queen Street Galleries
38 Queen Street, Woollahra

Thursday, December 18th — 6.30 p.m.

ADMISSION FREE

Including a glass of champagne (or orange juice) and
fruit cake to celebrate Christmas

OCEAN STREET TRAFFIC CRISIS — BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN

Continued

We are most heartened to be able to report that our proposals for dealing with the traffic crisis in Ocean Street, published in the August *Village Voice*, have received the full support of Woollahra Municipal Council.

This is a very gratifying result of the consultations and frank discussions with the Council over the past 12 months.

A different situation emerges from our correspondence with the Department of Main Roads.

The DMR advised that Woollahra Council would retain responsibility for Ocean Street, there being no current proposal to have the street reclassified, and that traffic signal co-ordination in Oxford Street would commence early in 1981.

Not favoured

The DMR reply went on to deal with perhaps the most vital of our contentions on the build-up that has occurred in Ocean Street traffic. We quote from their letter:

"The Department does not favour a reduction in the number of right turn lanes on Oxford Street at Ocean Street.

"The two lanes currently in use were provided some time ago and when it

was found that queuing was occurring because of the growth in demand for the right turn movement.

"The queuing obstructed the west-bound flow off the Bondi Junction By-Pass, created unsafe conditions and undue delays, and contributed (at that time) to the illegal practice of drivers turning into Ocean Street in two lanes.

Restrictions "necessary"

"The problem created by two lanes of vehicles having to merge into one lane in Ocean Street is recognised.

"While the (Queen Street) Association does not wish to see parking restrictions imposed, these are seen to be necessary, at least in the morning peak, so as to provide for the smooth flow of traffic between Oxford and Queen Streets.

"The matter is to be taken up with Council at an early date."

The utter fallacy of the DMR thinking is contained in the phrase "growth in demand for the right turn movement".

This growth in demand is largely a direct consequence of the favoured green time given to traffic from the east and south which is encouraged to use Ocean Street rather than the defined arterial route which has ample available capacity.

The statement is, therefore, a form of self-fulfilling prophecy.

The DMR response goes on to state that traffic flow on Ocean Street has increased from 13,380 to 17,370 vehicles a day since the opening of the Bondi Junction By-Pass. An increase of 29.82 per cent. At the same time, traffic in Oxford Street has increased by 21.96 per cent.

Surely, this is solid evidence to justify the stand being taken by the association to protect the amenity of the area against an unreasonable encroachment!

At a meeting of the Woollahra Traffic Committee, the Council's representative expressed views corresponding to the association's submission, whilst the DMR stated that peak hour parking restrictions in Ocean Street are necessary to facilitate vehicular flow.

Police support

The Police Department representative supported the DMR on this and the meeting noted the opposing views.

The Queen Street Association appreciates the Council's support in this vital situation affecting resident amenities in the area.

Now the protagonists are clearly identified, we must advise all concerned people of the need for strong and concerted support in the battle to preserve Ocean Street and its environs from degradation by the traffic flow bureaucrats.

High response to Ocean Street traffic survey

THE Queen Street Association would like to thank the 256 local residents who filled in the residents' traffic survey forms in the August issue of *Village Voice*.

The high degree of response indicates how strongly local people feel about traffic matters.

The results of the survey were sufficiently collated to enable them to be presented to our election candidates at a forum held on September 16 and provoked some useful discussion.

The 256 forms returned came from the area bounded by Oxford Street, Jersey Road, Ocean Street and adjoining streets. A total of 43.5 per cent of returns were from Ocean Street itself.

Replies to specific questions were:

Private or business premises?	90% private
Adversely affected by traffic?	82%
Increase noted since Paddington closures?	85%
Parking difficulties?	61%
Affected by traffic noise?	69.5%
Would support moves to reduce traffic flow?	90%

Out of the many and varied comments received, the following reflected common viewpoints:

Traffic noise complaint at all hours	38%
Problems of access to Queen Street by residents	24%
Pedestrian dangers	21%
Keep through traffic on Oxford Street/New South Head Road	17%
Air pollution complaints	17%
Traffic lights needed at Trelawney Street	13.5%
Traffic speed too high	12.5%
Against road closures	12%
Re-open Edgecliff Road to New South Head Road	8%
Resident parking permits needed	7.5%
Remove parking restrictions	5.5%

All these details, including a collection of individual suggestions have been passed to the Woollahra Council and the local aldermen.

Two points warrant further mention here.

Trelawney Street Traffic Lights: The Goodwin Retirement Village provided major support for the need for traffic lights at Trelawney Street, which, on the surface, is an obvious solution to a part of the overall problem.

Continued opposite



Buskers will, as ever, be a great attraction at this year's Queen Street Fair.

See You at the Fair!



YES, Queen Street Fair is on again next Saturday, November 29.

And, as promised, we have restricted its size to just under 200 stalls to make the event more visually attractive and more spacious for the vast crowd of visitors.

The theme of the 1980 fair is "Christmas in Queen Street" and it will be opened at 10 a.m. by Santa Claus (who else?) releasing a cascade of balloons.

Despite the smaller size, there will be the usual exciting variety of goods on sale, and free entertainment all day from three bandstands.

These will be located in Victoria Avenue, outside the Bank of New South Wales, and at the corner of Holdsworth Street.

One of the most interesting stalls will have a device which will enable visitors to have a photograph of themselves instantly reproduced on a china plate.

The Nimrod Theatre, which won a "best stall" award last year, will have its usual entertaining display with the famous "face painting factory" where patrons can have a colourful make-up job.

Other stalls will be selling such unusual wares as dough sculptures, crystal wall hangings, ceramic whistles, antique bottles, kites, straw hats, Australian native plants and "fashion trivia".

Family entertainment

Many of the stalls will be run by charities—everything from the Baldness Association to the Third Rose Bay Boy Scouts—and there will be plenty of antiques and white elephant stalls to rummage over.

Food stalls will be plentiful, with Lebanese and Mexican foods, pancakes and rare roast beef sandwiches among the delicacies to eat on the spot, and many other goodies to take away.

The entertainment will have a family emphasis in keeping with the theme of the Fair.

Emile Klein's German band, which has played at every Queen Street Fair, will be along again by courtesy of Lufthansa, and so will the Palm Court Orchestra conducted by Queen Street resident John Godfrey, sponsored by the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Other attractions will include the Sydney Youth Orchestra introducing their street theatre, the NSW Police Band, clowns, a live Punch and Judy, a children's jazz group and Morris dancers.

One area of the fair has been set aside as "The World of the Occult" where visitors can have their fortunes told by palm reading, tarot cards, tea-leaves or their birth signs.

It should all be great fun—and we trust again that Queen Street residents will be forbearing about the small amount of inconvenience it causes.

After all, it's only one day of the year.

Continued from opposite page

However, observation of the conditions prevailing currently at the Queen Street intersection could provide some indication of the situation that would be paralleled at Trelawney Street *if no other actions are taken*.

It will be noted also that higher "votes" were recorded against traffic noise and pollution and these could be exacerbated by a further set of traffic lights.

The association's view is that a total solution has to be found to the reduction of traffic volume on Ocean Street as well as consideration of the need for more traffic lights.

Re-opening of Edgecliff Road: It is interesting to note that a number of residents raised this issue, thus reinforcing the expert opinion in the Blunden report (see separate story).

In addition to the list of proposals made by the association, this could assist the distribution of traffic flow in the area and alleviate the problem for the many residents who expressed great difficulty in gaining access to Ocean Street.

It is allied to the congestion and accident hazard problem at Trelawney Street. Examination of the intersection arrangements at Edgecliff does not suggest such a change would be unfeasible or even difficult.

The association is grateful to all those residents who took the time to send in returns and values the amount of thought that went into many of them. The information gained will be most helpful in the task ahead.

Even a conflict of ideas can be useful—one resident proposed smoother road surfaces to cut down noise whilst another wanted rumble strips in the roadway to force drivers to slow down!

Traffic study supports association campaign

AS PART of its campaign against the traffic build-up in Ocean Street, the Queen Street Association commissioned a study by members of a Traffic Planning and Highway Engineering course at the University of New South Wales.

They worked under a distinguished traffic authority, Professor W. R. Blunden, who prepared the final report which strongly reinforces our case.

The report observes that Ocean Street is a convenient alternative for trips from the Bondi Junction region. However, Oxford Street, as the gazetted main road with a full arterial role, is the road for the job.

As the city-to-Bondi Junction corridor only feeds a terminal area, unlike other radial outlets, and the Eastern Suburbs Railway now provides vastly increased capacity, the "opportunity" role of Ocean Street should now be quite unnecessary, the report says.

It should be restored to a useful and valid role as a feeder collector road.

Vehicle count

The following is a summary of other significant points in the final report:

— Ocean Street carries approximately 1500 vehicles an hour in the a.m. and p.m. peak periods and about 1000 an hour in the off-peak

— The proportion of heavy commercial vehicles is negligible

— The level of through traffic is about 50 per cent. This figure is conservative as an unknown number of vehicles enter at Queen and Trelawney Streets, etc

— Travel times from the end of the Bondi Junction By-Pass to the city are 10-25 per cent less via Ocean Street than by the Oxford Street/Taylor Square route. The absolute time savings are of the order of 1-3 minutes

— The Paddington street closures did not have any appreciable effect on Ocean Street overall

— Approximately one-third of the traffic from the Bondi Junction By-Pass, Oxford Street and York Road in the peak period enters Ocean Street

— The sad state of affairs is that major traffic improvements at both ends of Ocean Street show a very poor appreciation of the situation by all the

authorities involved. More surprising is the fact that Ocean Street, which is not a gazetted main road, could be incorporated into major design and construction exercises of a Main Roads authority.

The options

Belated options that could be open are:

- (a) Altered signal settings
- (b) Reversion of Edgecliff Road to two-way operation at the New South Head Road end
- (c) Restriction of the right turn from the Oxford Street By-Pass junction into Ocean Street

— Woollahra Municipal Council should retain responsibility for Ocean Street as a local road. There should be resistance to any clearway status, moves to restrict parking, or any other measures aimed at encouraging through traffic.

The report says the medium in which both land use and transport factors find valid expression and the traffic role must be measured against environmental issues of noise, pollution and danger.

THE ASSOCIATION AT WORK More tender care needed

THE association has recently received complaints that the new trees in Queen Street are not getting the tender loving care from Woollahra Council necessary for them to thrive and flourish.

An inspection by the committee members showed that this was only partly true. We found about six trees broken or dying.

The problem appears to be mainly with "replacement" trees planted where trees in the original planting scheme had been killed or failed to take root. Generally it was felt a pity that the replacement had not been carried out with more advanced trees.

We also found only three trees fitted with tree guards, and as these were loose and not fixed into the ground, they were serving no useful purpose.

The association has written to the Council asking for the Queen Street trees to receive a little more attention.



At the present time there is no effective functional classification of roads in the metropolitan area and the traffic authority is devoting study to the problem of defining a road hierarchy.

The opportunity thus presents itself for the local Council to have a much more direct voice in ensuring that the traffic classification of its streets is better matched to the environmental conditions that are demanded by its residents and ratepayers.

☆ ☆ ☆
Since the previous *Village Voice*, the excellent Cobblestones pavement treatment in Queen Street has been extended right up to Halls Lane so that the whole commercial area is paved.

We have written to the Council expressing our thanks, and the hope that eventually it will be possible to give the Cobblestones treatment to the whole of Queen Street.

☆ ☆ ☆
The Paddington Society, with which we have a great deal of community interest, has recently been campaigning against the demolition of some interesting old homes which fall short of the criteria necessary to ensure their preservation by force of law.

We are very sympathetic and are approaching the Paddington Society to see how we can help in this cause.

Residents win the battle of the heights, but . . .

IN WHAT can justly be claimed as a victory for persistent and soundly based resident action in the face of official stubbornness, Woollahra Council has at last been persuaded to eliminate the possibility of four and six storey blocks of home units being built in our area.

In adopting a comprehensive control code under the Woollahra (West) Action Plan at its last meeting before the September election, the Council in effect instituted a 9.5 metre height limit throughout the area.

Residents have been battling for 2½ years against exemptions proposed to the 9.5 metre height limit which otherwise applies to the area.

These exemptions could have allowed four and six storey unit blocks to be built in three areas on Oxford Street, broadly based on the Parisian Laundry site, at the junction of Wallis and Oxford Streets, and in the block containing the Diamond Horseshoe building.

Gradual retreat

Despite protests from the association, many individual residents and the National Trust, the Council's planners have only retreated gradually and earlier this year were suggesting that we should agree to a "compromise" on height restrictions.

Apparently even at the September Council meeting, the planners still wanted higher zonings on two of the sites but mercifully the aldermen earned our lasting gratitude by overruling them.

Even though we have won our battle to keep the height of new buildings down to 9.5 metres, the Council has decided to zone the Wallis Street junction and Diamond Horseshoe sites not with a Residential 2(a) Conservation zoning but with the less strict Residential 2(b).

We are now getting advice on the Council's decision from the town planning expert who has helped us so much with our cause, Mr. P. J. Devery, B.Sc., MTCP.

However, now that the height question is resolved, we hope very quickly to have a reasonably acceptable plan

gazetted, so that much planning uncertainty can be avoided.

The association's president, Mr. Tom Wilhelm, has written the following comment:

"Several years ago when the Council unveiled its West Woollahra Plan, it angered residents by suggesting that three sites along Oxford Street be zoned for four and six storey buildings.

Less protection

"Since then, residents and the association have argued that these suggested zonings be dropped and all of West Woollahra be uniformly zoned at the standard residential three-storey limit.

"On September 15, the outgoing Council did just that. As soon as the Council's Control Plan No. 1 is gazetted, all of West Woollahra will have a 9.5 metre (three-storey height) zoning.

"In the plan, West Woollahra will be in the Conservation Zone, a zoning that has long been in effect in Paddington. This is designed to protect the character of historical places from unsympathetic development.

"Unfortunately, in its wisdom, the Council did not see fit to include all three sites in the new Conservation Zone.



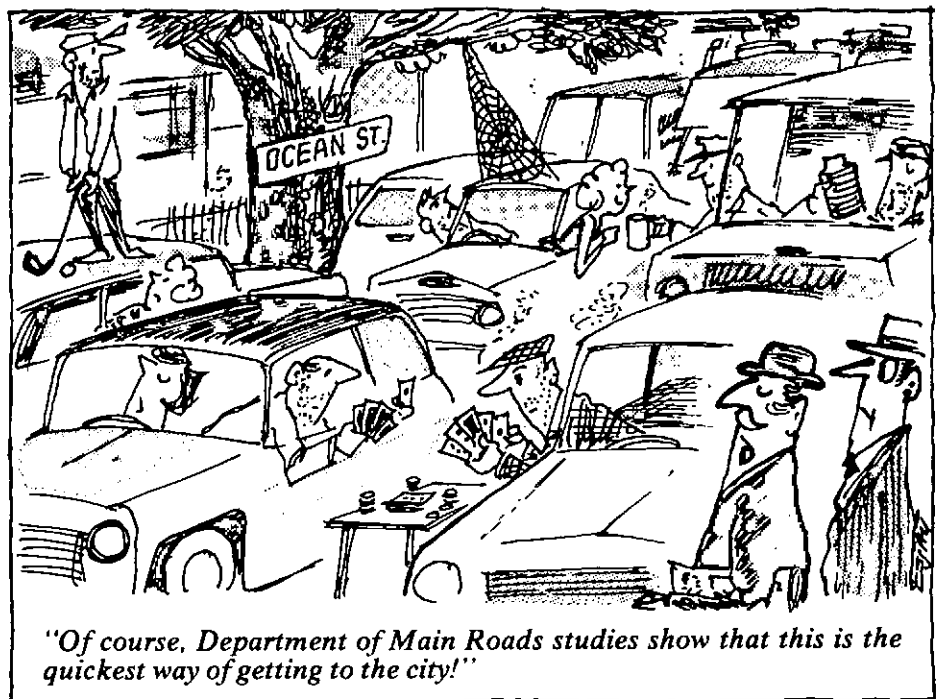
"This deprives residents who live at the western end of Wallis Street and those who live around the Old Diamond Horseshoe nightclub from the protection which Conservation Zoning provides.

"The Council did include in the Conservation Zone the easternmost site, around the old Parisian Laundry.

"This is surprising, because in the plan the planners themselves decry the piecemeal approach to planning that has been used in the past.

"The association feels that West Woollahra is a fairly integral unit and therefore certainly needs a uniform treatment.

"We hope that the new Council is even more thorough than the old in its approach to planning and gives residents and their unique environment the benefit of all the protection within its power."



Lively forum organised for Council election

OUR congratulations to Jock MacCallum, Susan Collett and Dr. David Wilson, the Woollahra Action Committee candidates who in September won the three Cooper Ward seats on Woollahra Municipal Council.

Mrs. Collett and Dr. Wilson are newcomers to the Council, taking the place of Tony Perry and Marcel Piat who did not seek re-election.

We look forward to enjoying a continued close relationship with our three aldermen in promoting the best interests of local people and safeguarding their environment.

On the Tuesday before the election, the association held a highly successful Election Forum at Holdsworth Street Playpark, attended by more than 50 people.

Against amalgamation

Our three new aldermen all spoke eloquently, as also did Virginia Walker who was forced to represent the Labor Party alone when her fellow Labor candidate, Phyllis Torda, had to leave before the meeting commenced.

On the day before the meeting, the Council had finally agreed with the association's longstanding arguments for a uniform height restriction of 9.5 metres for new buildings throughout West Woollahra.

Planning was therefore not such an important issue as traffic which monopolised the discussion and produced a lot of sympathy for the

association's campaign to reduce through traffic in Ocean Street.

The candidates sponsored by the Action Group spoke passionately against the Council amalgamations being considered by the Labor State Government, but Virginia Walker was not prepared to commit herself for or against without more knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages.

Her principal cause was the need for a social worker in Woollahra, more child care facilities and joint library facilities with Waverley. She is also opposed to aldermen eating and drinking on the present scale at the rate-payer's expense.

The meeting served a useful purpose in showing us not only the policies but also the personalities of our prospective aldermen. Susan Collett was very gracious to the association, praising its work, and Dr. Wilson emphasised that he believed himself to be truly an independent candidate, not bound by any particular philosophy.

QUEEN STREET & 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: Dame Joan Sutherland

President: Tom Wilhelm

Vice-President: Robin Brampton

Secretary: Monica McDonald

Treasurer: Mollie Lenthall

Committee: Jenny Fox, Douglas Gordon, Monica McDonald, Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts, Norman Prescott, Leo Schofield

Chairman of the Architectural Committee: Douglas Gordon

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A Message from the President

DURING the past year, in our dealings with Woollahra Council, it has become abundantly clear that an association is only as strong as its membership.

At a certain point in our negotiations with the aldermen about the West Woollahra Plan, we became aware that the Council representatives wanted to

know if we really did represent West Woollahra. At times it is extremely important to be able to say yes.

Even though we have well over 200 enthusiastic members, there are many local people who are not members. We feel that with their backing, the association could be even more effective as a pressure group.

We have finally seen some positive results this year on building height zonings for West Woollahra, but we are still very concerned about the over-use of Ocean Street by traffic and the accompanying deterioration of amenity for residents living along it.

For our campaign, we need the backing of our membership. If you are not already a member of the association, please join now by filling in the subscription form left. A subscription paid now will cover you to the end of 1981.

If you are already a member, perhaps you know another concerned resident who would like to become a member. If so, please encourage them to join.

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

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Queen Street and West Woollahra Association,
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WOOLLAHRA, NSW 2025.

TOM WILHELM