



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

MAY, 1981

Association has a year of success

The following is the annual report on the association's work in 1980, prepared for presentation at the annual meeting on May 21 by the president, Tom Wilhelm:

THE year 1980 has been one of successes for the association as we have seen several of our long-range projects come to fruition.

It has also been a good year for communicating with Woollahra Council and some of our success is related to this good change.

We tried to change some of our own projects and, in respect to the Queen Street Fair, our number one fund raiser, we even had a little success.

Perhaps the nicest occurrence of the year was the present that the outgoing aldermen left West Woollahra.

Aldermen Perry, Piat and MacCallum finally forced through on our behalf a change to the proposed West Woollahra Plan that gives all of our area a three-storey (or 9.5-metre) height limit.

After many years of fighting for the deletion of the sites along Wallis and Oxford streets for high rise zoning, we can thank the aldermen that it finally happened.

The West Woollahra Plan, if it is approved by the State Government in whose hands it is at the moment, will give us protection from over-development in years to come.

We held an Election Forum during the year, just before the Council elections. Many residents got to see and hear the candidates for the first time.

It was a valuable awareness-raising



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

QUEEN STREET GALLERIES
38-40 Queen Street, Woollahra
THURSDAY, MAY 21st, 1981, at 7.40 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr Eric Russell, author of
"Woollahra — a History in Pictures"

Free tasting of a new release wine by
Orlando and refreshments.

NOTE TO MEMBERS

A Special General Meeting of the Association will be held at Queen Street Galleries, 38-40 Queen Street, Woollahra, on Thursday, May 21st, at 7.30 p.m. (Immediately before the Annual General Meeting.)

The purpose of this meeting is to consider, and if thought fit adopt, an amendment to the constitution which would give the Committee the right to arrange the categories and levels of association subscriptions.

Continued next page

Will Dilbhur Hall be demolished?

THE association has given what support it can to a strong campaign by local residents to prevent the demolition of Dilbhur Hall, a superb Victorian residence in Wellington Street.

At the end of last year, the owners made a development application to Woollahra Council to replace the building with an 18 m high block of home units.

Subsequently the Heritage Council of New South Wales placed a Section 130 order over the building to prevent its demolition while it investigated its historical and architectural significance.

At the end of February, advice was promised in approximately six weeks but a check with Woollahra Council at the end of April showed there was still no decision on whether the order will become permanent or be lifted.

Opposition

The association has written to the Council opposing the development application but unfortunately, under the Woollahra Ridge Scheme zoning, a building to a height of 18 m is permissible on the site.

The main hope therefore lies in the Heritage Council recognising the architectural and historical value of Dilbhur Hall, built in 1876 or 1877 as the residence of Charles Cooper from the famous Woollahra family which developed the Cooper Estate.

In recent years we have seen two fine neighbouring Victorian homes — Addington and Kia-Ora — demolished to make way for high rise unit blocks and it would be a great pity if Dilbhur Hall is to share their fate.

Unlike some buildings for whose preservation we plead, Dilbhur Hall is in an excellent state of repair and decoration.

It provides a welcome break in the streetscape pattern on the north side of Wellington Street which is otherwise completely monopolised by multi-unit dwellings.

Let's hope it can be spared.



Dilbhur Hall from Wellington Street. When it was built in the late 1870s the main entrance was from Fullerton Street, then known as Oatley Street. Over the years the building has been used as an exclusive finishing school for girls, a boarding house and more recently a residence and clinic.

Continued from page 1

exercise for all involved and we hope to make it a regular feature of future Council elections.

We also intend to consult with the ward aldermen on a more regular basis. We had several productive meetings with them this year, to catch problems early rather than wait until they are beyond coping with.

No sooner do the difficulties with the West Woollahra Plan come to a seeming resolution than traffic problems, such as in Ocean Street, arise.

Woollahra has always been a suburb which is visited on the way to somewhere else for many Eastern Suburbs dwellers and now that the Bondi Junction Bypass is linked via Ocean Street with the Kings Cross tunnel, Ocean Street residents are only too aware of it!

The residents of Ocean Street realise that they will have to make themselves heard if they are to prevent Ocean Street from becoming a de facto freeway.

During the year the association sponsored a traffic study on the role of Ocean Street in traffic movements through the suburb. This was conducted by Professor Blunden of the School of Transport and Highways at the University of New South Wales.

To obtain further information, a committee member, Norman Prescott, organised a traffic survey in one of our issues of the *Village Voice*.

Both of these undertakings have helped us get the Council on side to prevent the Department of Main Roads from making Ocean Street a freeway by stealth.

At the moment, we have the fullest support of our aldermen and the Mayor. We need it, for the battle is far from over.

In a lighter mood, the Queen Street Fair, run in fine weather conditions this year (unlike the rain of 1979), was as successful as ever.

We decided to take full advantage of the fact that our treasury was in good shape this year and requested Pix Nolan, our Fair organiser, to change and improve the fair, even if it meant running it without a profit.

This was done. Fewer stalls, different attractions and a slightly new layout all contributed to this effort.

We hope that everyone thought it was as successful as we did.

A very busy and successful year all round. We hope that our members found the Queen Street Fair more enjoyable than usual.

We invite members to stand for positions on the committee. We always need active, interested people who wish to work for the improvement of our area.

Finally I take this opportunity to thank all those members who wrote to us about problems and areas of concern during the year and I encourage others to do the same.

Tom Wilhelm

OCEAN STREET TRAFFIC

The battle continues

• Much of the association's work in the past few months has been concerned with making representations to reduce the unnecessarily high flow of traffic in Ocean Street.

Woollahra Municipal Council is generally sympathetic. In its latest letter to us, the Council has indicated that it is preparing a summary of the situation to see what further action can be taken.

Our approaches to the Department of Main Roads have been less successful, to say the least. The Department's latest letter fobs us off completely by saying that a report is being prepared for the Minister for Transport and his eventual reply must be taken as the Department's reply.

The association finds totally unacceptable this arrogant treatment of a representative association of residents, particularly when we have gone to the trouble of formulating reasonable alternative proposals and had independent research conducted by such a noted traffic authority as Professor Ross Blunden.

Below Norman Prescott, a committee member who has concerned himself deeply with Ocean Street traffic, reports on the current situation.

Elsewhere in this VILLAGE VOICE, we publish a letter on the question from a Jersey Road resident, Mr Charles McCausland, and an interesting sidelight from two Ocean Street residents, Howard and Kate Hilton.

Further meetings with Woollahra Council

AS REPORTED in the previous *Village Voice*, Woollahra Municipal Council has given complete support to the proposals for lessening the volume of traffic in Ocean Street made by the association last August.

The Council has also put this position to the joint Traffic Committee for the Woollahra area.

Regrettably, the committee stalemated on the issues of community and traffic demands on Ocean Street.

The Department of Main Roads wished to "facilitate vehicular movement". The Police Department supporting this approach, although appearing to relate the aim for better vehicular flow with improved safety on pedestrian crossings — a view that can be strongly debated.

Obviously, a resolution of this situation must be achieved quickly and our discussions with Woollahra Council have been aimed to this end.

Two meetings have been held, in December and March, with the Mayor, ward aldermen and Council officers present. The association was represented by the president, Tom Wilhelm, together with Robin Brampton, Norman Prescott and Julian Beaumont.

Oxford Street traffic signals

An initial point of agreement was on the important bearing of traffic signal synchronisation in Oxford Street on adjustments to the control of Ocean Street traffic.

The Department of Main Roads advised that a VC6 Controller was to be tested in January, after which traffic signal co-ordination would be effected.

There had been a slight delay but completion was expected by the end of March. This should enable logical consideration to be given to changes to traffic control in Ocean Street.

Parking restrictions

On the general question of parking restrictions and street alignments, there was a situation of status quo.

Alderman Susan Collett particularly emphasised the adverse effects of the traffic build-up on use of the shopping precinct between Forth and Queen Streets. Relief was necessary in this area, she said.

It was revealed that the Traffic Committee has been considering re-locating the Albert Street pedestrian crossing for safety reasons.

Traffic speed

The excessive speed of traffic on Ocean Street has been a point of major discussion, particularly emphasised by Alderman David Wilson.

This is of equivalent concern to the circumstances which have given rise to the unreasonable traffic volume in the first place.

Control measures such as speed bumps and rumble strips are under consideration.

The association has suggested that benefit might be gained by translating the Paddington corridor halt sign philosophy onto Ocean Street.

Traffic flow

The association representatives identified two clear objectives in terms of Ocean Street traffic flow:

1. *An adjustment to the volume of traffic taken by Ocean Street to equate with its accepted role as an important local distributor or feeder road and for this volume to correspond to the proportions that applied before the development of the Bondi Junction By-Pass and Edgecliff Inter-change road systems.*
2. *The elimination of safety hazards caused by traffic speeds and local access to and from side streets. The Trelawney and Queen Street intersections are two major points of traffic conflict.*

These two objectives are contributory to each other and must be achieved together as an acceptable overall solution.

As will be well known to local residents, access to Ocean Street from Edgecliff Road is a frustrating and hazardous ordeal and no feasible alternatives have been provided by the traffic planners.

This aspect of the problem was referred to by Alderman MacCallum who expressed the view that access to New South Head Road for city-bound traffic from Edgecliff Road would be preferable to the present situation.

The Council has promised written replies to the Association's submissions following the residents' traffic survey and University of New South Wales traffic study carried out last year.

This is essential to the maintenance of our joint efforts on behalf of residents but, most importantly, the association has asked to be kept fully informed of further developments in the Traffic Committee's deliberations.

QUEEN STREET FLAIR

AS promised, the eighth annual Queen Street Fair on November 29 was somewhat different.

We reduced the number of stalls and placed more emphasis on island stalls. These were arranged in diamond fashion along both sides of Queen Street, leaving a broad concourse down the middle for the large crowds which wandered happily up and down.

We also had a spectacular opening, with Santa Claus releasing thousands of balloons which looked very colourful as they floated away.

Other things were very much as usual — the flamboyant dress, the fascinating range of goods, the happiness of crowds and, thankfully, the fine weather.

The new arrangement did set us one or two problems. Having fewer stalls meant that more interlopers tried to set up stalls illegally.

Unfortunately it also meant that we made far less money from the fair. The trading surplus was only \$1315 which means that this year we can make only token donations to the three community service organisations which we usually support.

As for individual stallholders, the judges of the decoration awards felt that generally there were even fewer stalls of outstanding merit, but the standard of window dressing in Queen Street shops was much better.

Holdsworth Street Children's and Community Centre, with their excellently presented native tree stall, won the award for the best non-commercial stall and Sheila Magazine took out the award for the best commercial stall with their "Starstruck" astrological presentation.

Our old friend Rosie Nice (and Friends) again gained the award for the best stallholders' costumes and four stalls were considered of sufficient merit to have a \$50 rebate on their stall fees.

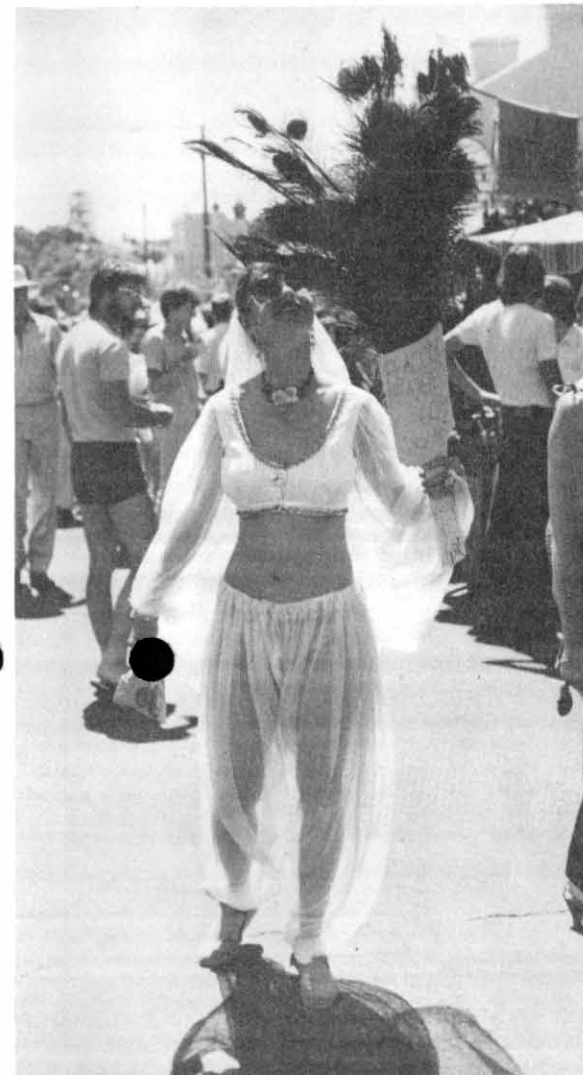
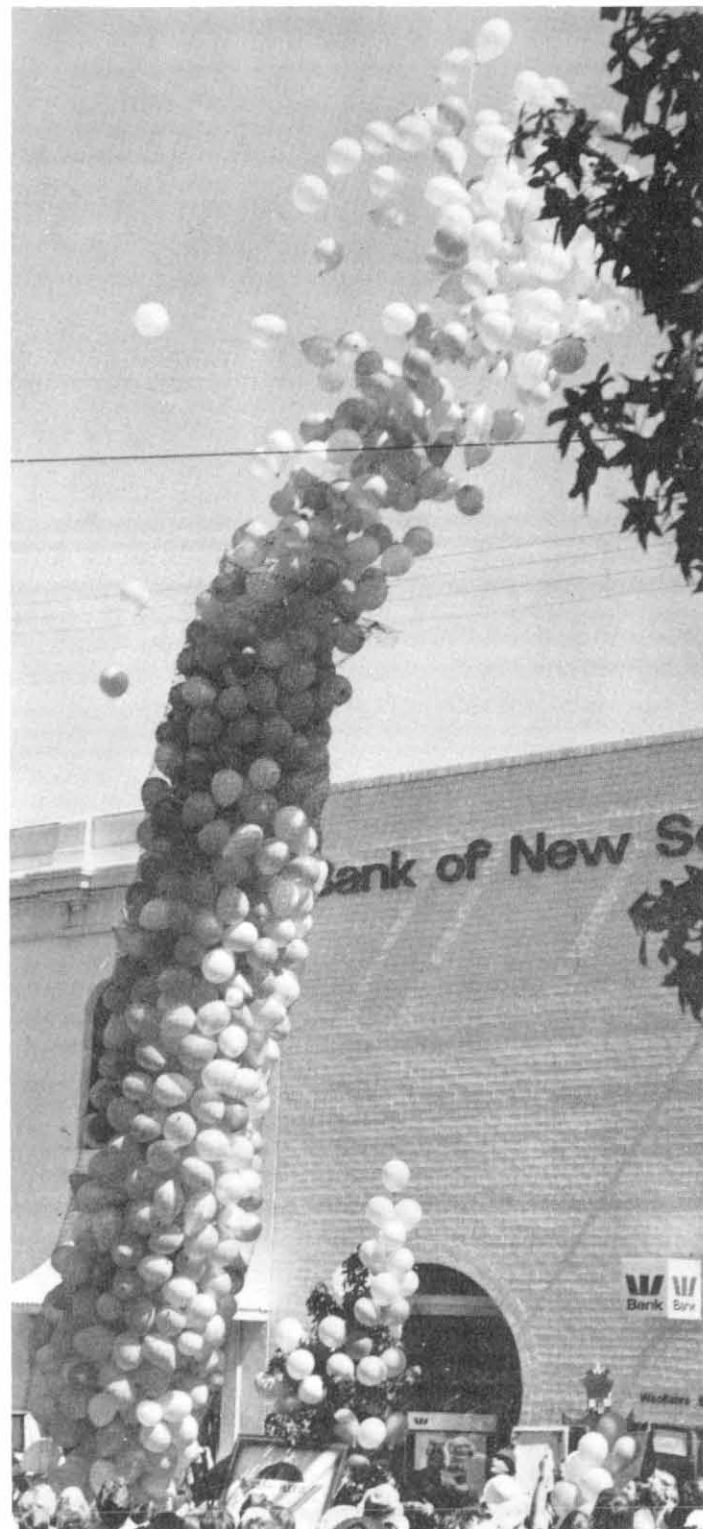
These were Margaret Alcock (Christmas fare), Mary Clark (food stall with very good costuming), Brenda Nash (plants and batik, with a striking decoration of parasols) and Waterbeds Australia (antiques displayed in a spectacular perpendicular fashion.)

The award for the best dressed window in Queen Street went to Cox's Boutique ("Ride a Cox Horse".) However, the judges made special mention of the windows of Peter Billings, Etcetera, The House of Edward Bear, Danny's pastry shop and Decor Gifts.

Planning is now under way for the 1981 Queen Street Fair which will be held on Saturday, November 21, subject to Woollahra Council approval.

Stall bookings will open as usual in August. If you are interested in participating, please let us know now by writing to Pixie Nolan, the Fair Organiser, at PO Box 16, Woollahra, NSW 2025. You will then be sent a form when they are printed.

(Pictures by Mark Cherrington of Beaconsfield Photographics)



The Great Ocean Street Shunt

AN ASPECT of the traffic build-up in Ocean Street which particularly annoys Howard and Kate Hilton, who live at 2a, near the corner of Oxford Street, is the way empty buses are "shunted" along Ocean Street between depots.

In a letter to the officer in charge of the Urban Transit Authority, the Hiltons claim that on a Friday afternoon early in April, 58 buses passed their home.

Of these only nine were carrying passengers and the other 49 were being "shunted" or used to transfer personnel between depots.

"It must be obvious to you that buses are a major noise pollutant and we should be grateful if you could reduce this terrible inconvenience to a minimum," the letter says.

The Hiltons have also put circulars in Ocean Street letterboxes, urging residents to send draft letters to Premier Neville Wran, the Urban Transit Authority, the Queen Street Association

and our senior local alderman, Jock MacCallum, to support their plea.

Written to him as "Premier of the State and as a neighbour" the draft letter to Mr Wran suggests that only a small amount of bus traffic is on scheduled service and points out that it would be cheaper and less noisy to use mini buses to ferry personnel about.

"If buses have to be used on non-scheduled services, they ought to be spread around the municipality rather than disadvantaging a few people," the letter says.

As our members and readers of *Village Voice* know, we have been fighting the battle of Ocean Street traffic very strongly for more than a year with the major authorities concerned.

The bus issue is only one part of the question. Nevertheless we are enormously sympathetic and congratulate the Hiltons on taking up the issue so actively.

OCEAN STREET TRAFFIC — The battle continues

A LETTER

Conflicting with Paddington's interests

184 Jersey Rd., Woollahra, 2025.

Dear Sir,

As a member of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association, I applaud the forthright article by Norman Prescott in the November, 1980, *Village Voice*. The case against excessive traffic in Ocean Street is well put.

But as a member of the Paddington Society and a resident of Jersey Road, I have reservations about traffic in the area.

Woollahra Council, and the Paddington Society, did try hard to minimise traffic between the Eastern Suburbs and the central business district of Sydney — and places west — going through the residential suburb of Paddington.

The idea was to keep through traffic to the main traffic arteries of New South Head Road and Oxford Street as much as possible, so that Paddington would become an island — but not a "desert island" and not a series of short cuts for all kinds of vehicles at all hours of day and night.

PEACE AND QUIET

It is hardly necessary to justify this objective. But perhaps it can be explained on the grounds of promoting the peace and quiet of the residents of Paddington, and the health and safety of its school children.

Any traffic scheme must reflect a conflict of interests. It seems that other interests than those put forward here have prevailed for the time being at least, and the best laid plans of the Council in PATSYM have been frustrated.

With the exception of a few street closures, and the constriction to traffic to slow it up in a few places, we are where we were, with noise, lead, carbon monoxide and vehicles ad lib in the residential suburb of Paddington.

I sympathise with those who are affected by excess flow of traffic through Ocean Street. But if the pressure on Ocean Street is to be relieved by excess traffic through Jersey Road and Paddington, I must declare that my interest is more for Jersey Road and Paddington than for Ocean Street and Woollahra.

This conflict of interest throws some light on a wider area — our urban society. Australia is probably the most urbanised country in the world, and the percentage of Australians living in urban centres is increasing yearly.

But urban problems, the malaise of the twentieth century, are a long way down on our priorities when we look at government interest.

If we are to solve the traffic problems of Ocean Street, we must certainly use the full force of interested citizens in organisations operating at the grass roots, such as the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association.

But we must look to government at local, State and national level to come to grips with the problem of urban life in Australia.

It is only by the employment of vast resources of planning and money that we can stop our cities from strangling themselves. The only way to do this is to decentralise on a national scale so that we can deal with the cause, and not the symptoms, of our urban nightmare.

CHARLES McCAUSLAND

A COMMENT

"Department of Myopic Response"

OVER the past 16 months, the association has endeavoured to have dialogue with the Department of Main Roads on the matter of balancing the respective needs of residential amenity, commercial activity and traffic movement in West Woollahra, with particular reference to the Ocean Street area.

The Department's responses have exhibited an overwhelming degree of myopic vision, associated with an apparent reluctance to communicate or, at least, to be extremely tardy in so doing.

Our last submission to the Department was on December 4, 1980, and we received "pro forma" acknowledgement of receipt on December 12.

Having received nothing further, we sent a reminder on March 13. In reply, the Department has virtually told us it does not intend to reply. It is preparing a report for the Minister and his reply must be taken as their reply.

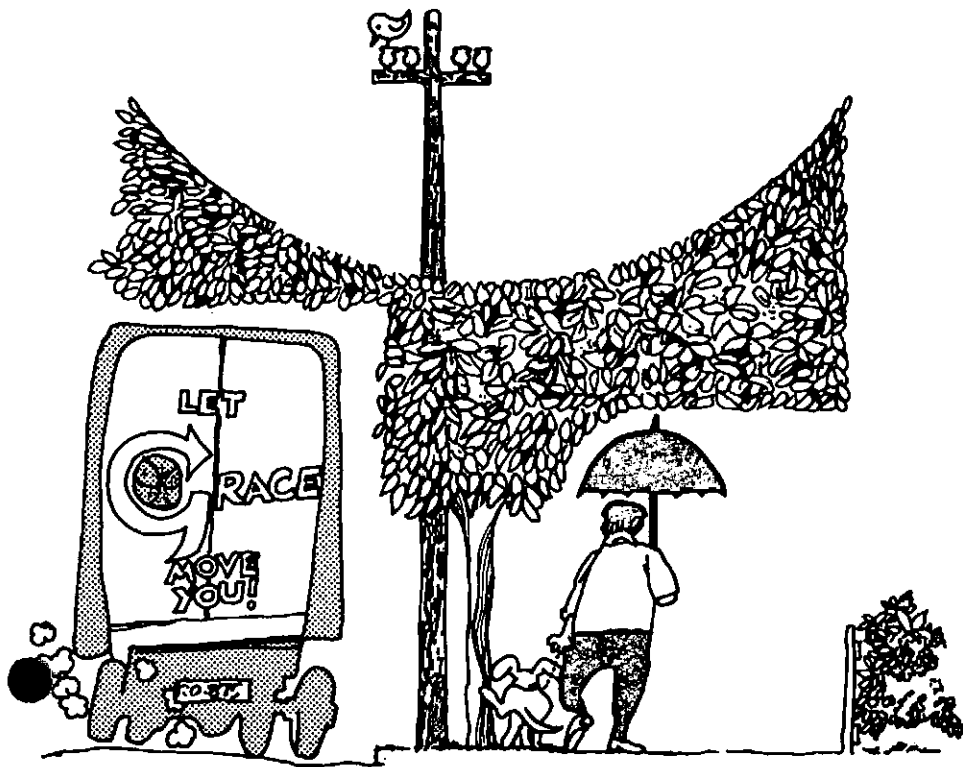
Does this disinterested attitude to communications and public relations reflect the Department's overall attitude to the community needs for its road system?

NORMAN PRESCOTT

1980 QUEEN STREET FAIR Income and Expenditure Account

	\$	\$
INCOME		
Revenue from Stalls	24,217	
Less Licence Fees	920	
	<u>23,297</u>	23,297
LESS EXPENDITURE		
Administration	6,437	
Hire of Stalls, Stages, Bins, Toilets	4,786	
Publicity Costs	1,695	
Insurance	1,826	
Cleaning	1,581	
Transport and Labour	2,580	
Prizes for Stalls	132	
Entertainment — Band etc.	1,388	
Printing, Stationery, Postage and Photostats	700	
Security	342	
Electricity	100	
Bank Charges	65	
Audit Fees	<u>350</u>	
	<u>21,982</u>	21,982
TRADING SURPLUS FROM FAIR		<u>1,315</u>

(Audited by Bersten Cowen Gilowitz and Co, Chartered Accountants)



THE IDEAL STREET TREE?

Not quite! Further requirements: sheds no leaves, nuts, fruit, bark or flowers; produces no hayfever; harbours no undesirables or noxious fauna; requires no pruning or spraying; and grows no roots.

Queen Street's new trees are not a flourishing success

THE association has become concerned by the condition of some of the trees in Queen Street planted four years ago in what was intended to be a comprehensive scheme.

The association contributed \$2000 to the cost from its Queen Street Fair profits.

Some trees are obviously not very healthy, particularly replacement trees planted by Woollahra Council where the first plantings were destroyed accidentally or by vandals.

We have always taken the view that the new trees should be protected by tree guards, but have been unable to persuade the Council to accept this view.

To get an independent assessment of the situation, we recently asked for a report from Graham Ross, a horticultural and landscape consultant known for his appearances on television.

Having looked at the trees in Queen Street and the immediate area, he identified no less than 22 specimens in four adjacent streets, which he observes "must be some sort of tree variety record."

Mr Ross says many of the trees are

suffering a variety of problems, including:

- No maintenance, including a lack of basic efficient watering methods.
- Herbicide poisoning due to weed control spraying.
- Insufficient growing space on the pathway.
- Too large a trunk size for street planting space and paving construction material.
- Incorrect tree shapes selected, eg conical and broad domed.
- Absence of careful establishment techniques, eg pruning.
- Excessive growth into overhead wire.

Mr Graham Ross has some quite sweeping recommendations about how to improve the tree situation in Queen Street which the association would like to consider carefully before taking any action.

Obviously tree selection and maintenance in a busy street, with attendant fumes, overhead wires and fairly narrow pavements, is not an easy task, as Mr Ross himself realises.

We reproduce an amusing illustration of "The ideal street tree?" which accompanied his report.

Early start on Keller restoration

WE CAN confidently expect a start to be made very soon on the restoration of Helen Keller House, the fine Georgian residence just off Queen Street which was saved from the demolishers by the action of incensed local people in 1973.

The owner, Mr Bill Kelly, dropped in to see us over Easter to show us his plans for the building. He intends to make an early start on the work.

Mr Kelly has three young children and he plans to use the house as a family home, with a special music room for his musician wife.

The house will be doubled in size but the extensions will be in exact keeping with the old building. The lovely aspect of the house from Waimea Avenue will be unchanged.

Mr Kelly tells us that he has already spent \$50,000 on preserving the building. The renovations and extensions will cost a further \$350,000, including adding a swimming pool, cabana and three-car garage.

Open space contribution

Mr Kelly obviously still feels very peeved at the unwillingness of Woollahra Municipal Council to waive its demand for a \$12,000 open space contribution, in view of the expensiveness of the restoration and his generally idealistic approach to the treatment of the site.

Since he bought the property, he has built seven town houses behind Helen Keller House in a manner which he claims does not make an over-intensive use of the site and is completely in character with the architecture of the area.

These town houses have now been let but because Mr Kelly has not paid the \$12,000 open space contribution and started work on restoring the old building, the Council has withheld the 317a certificate of completion which would enable the houses to be used as collateral.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the issue, it appears Mr Kelly will now have to come to terms with the Council. In the interests of getting the scheme completed at last, we wish him well.

Battle of the Heights — Zoning and the West Woollahra Plan

By Tom Wilhelm

THE long-awaited West Woollahra Action Plan has finally gone to the State Department of Planning and Environment for approval.

The association had battled for several years to get the Council, aldermen and planning staff to remove several sites from consideration for six-storey (18-metre) height zoning.

These sites along Wallis and Oxford Streets are currently occupied by three-storey buildings and the association felt that to re-zone them for six storeys would be an open invitation to developers.

Fortunately we had an election this year, just before the plan was to be finalised for presentation to the Department of Planning and Environment.

The outgoing aldermen, Tony Perry and Marcel Piat, and the incumbent, Jock MacCallum, forced a resolution through the Council removing these sites from consideration for 18-metre height zones.

Now all the top end of West Woollahra is to be zoned 9.5 metres (assuming the State Government accepts that zoning). This gives us a great deal of protection from overdevelopment.

There are still some areas to be zoned

18 and even 24 metres. But these are north of Wellington Street where such high buildings already exist.

We had Jack Devery, our planning adviser, look at the new proposals and he felt that we had the best protection that we could get.

If approved by the State, the zoning will preserve the small scale nature of West Woollahra to the greatest possible extent.

The value of a 9.5-metre height zoning was brought home to us recently when residents of Wellington Street contacted the association for support in stopping the demolition of Dilbhour Hall to make way for a six-storey block of home units.

Our hands were tied. This area has been zoned 18 metres for a long time and in the current plan, 18-metre heights are proposed to continue.

The residents had never opposed these zonings when they were proposed and, from a strict planning point of view, there is little that can be done now.

The only hope of preserving Dilbhour Hall lies with the attitude of the Heritage Commission which has the power to prevent its demolition on the grounds of its historical and architectural value (see separate report).

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: Julian Beaumont, Douglas Gordon, Monica McDonald, Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts, Norman Prescott, Leo Schofield.

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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Giving cheer at Christmastime

SPARE a thought — and a few dollars — for the Pensioners Christmas Fund Appeal organised by Alderman George Warnecke.

He points out that with the continual rise in the cost of living and aged pensions remaining practically static, pensioners will again face a cheerless Christmas unless some action is taken to assist them.

George's fund raises money to buy "Christmas boxes" for local pensioners in two ways:

— A salvage appeal for old furniture and other saleable household items. George's trucks will come and collect these from your home and give an "on the spot valuation", the money going to the fund.

— With a guessing competition. Books of 20 tickets cost \$2 (10c each).

To help by donating goods or buying tickets, phone George on 31 7887 or write to him at PO Box 3444, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001.

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.