



# VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

MAY, 1982

## Frustrating year – with a ray of hope

*The following is the annual report on the Association's work in 1981-82 to be presented at the annual meeting on May 19 by the president, Robin Brampton:*

The Association's tenth year has also proved one of its most difficult and frustrating.

When I took office at the 1981 annual meeting, I said that our principal task for the year would be to campaign strongly to reduce the intensity of traffic in Ocean Street.

This has reached a level which is quite intolerable for the comfort of local residents.

Sadly I have to report that despite our best efforts, the situation has not been improved. However, the fight is being continued strongly and there are welcome signs that our case is at least recognised in official circles.

It is also satisfying to report that the Association's importance as a responsible organisation, intelligently reflecting the needs and aspirations of local people, is becoming ever more firmly established.

### **Ocean Street Traffic**

Members will recall that two years ago, the Association proposed a number of steps to prevent Ocean Street becoming virtually a freeway in the traffic volume it is expected to carry.

Our suggestions were simple, practical, inexpensive and recognised that Ocean Street should still carry a fair burden of traffic.

Probably our greatest victory was to get the full support of Woollahra Municipal Council for these proposals,

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### **OUR SPEAKER**

Leo Schofield was first President of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association when it was founded in 1972 and has since served several other terms as President. Deeply interested in conservation, he is a member of the Council of the National Trust of Australia in New South Wales. Leo is one of the founders of a highly successful Sydney based advertising agency and is well known as a journalist and broadcaster with a witty approach to describing the Sydney scene, dining out and the appreciation of food. He lives in Queen Street in a house he has most painstakingly restored.



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  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 19th, 1982, at 7.40 p.m.

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

Leo Schofield on  
"The Price of Conservation is Eternal Vigilance"

Free tasting of a new release wine  
from Hungerford Hill and refreshments

### **NOTICE TO MEMBERS**

*A Special General Meeting of the Association will be held at Queen Street Galleries, 38-40 Queen Street, Woollahra, on Wednesday, May 19th, 1982, 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 extend the Association's boundaries northwards to the intersection of Ocean Street and Edgecliff Road. The Committee considers this move essential in view of the great interest the Association is taking in the Ocean Street traffic problem.*

## ANNUAL REPORT cont.

and I would like to thank the Council for its continued backing for our case.

However, our real problem is the unsympathetic attitude of the Department of Main Roads, which appears to have absolute powers in traffic control matters.

The DMR appears only interested in the needs of people on wheels and is oblivious of the social consequences of planning based only on traffic flow.

The DMR's obduracy came over very clearly last year when it introduced peak hour parking restrictions on the west side of Ocean Street after we had fought successfully three years ago to have them removed.

DMR took this arbitrary action using its statutory powers and in spite of the opposition of Woollahra Municipal Council which was justifiably incensed that its viewpoint and the needs of local residents were so completely ignored.

The DMR's philosophy of "traffic flow at all costs" also came through when the former member for Bligh, John Barraclough, arranged last August for a meeting between the Association's traffic group and senior officers of the Traffic Authority and the Department of Main Roads.

The only concrete hope the traffic planners gave us was that when the synchronisation of traffic signals along Oxford Street was completed, more city bound traffic would be encouraged to use this route instead of Ocean Street.

After the long delay, this synchronisation was completed early this year, but it remains to be seen whether it will have any beneficial effect.

We also presented our case very strongly to the new State Member of

## Queen Street Fair on November 27

Subject to the consent of Woollahra Council, the 1982 Queen Street Fair will be held on Saturday, November 27.

If you are interested in having a stall, drop a line to the Fair Secretary at PO Box 16, Woollahra, NSW 2025. You will be sent details and an application form when they go out, probably in August.

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association would like to acknowledge its gratitude to the following Queen Street businesses which acted as sponsors of the 1981 Fair:

- Bygones — number 90.
- Bradshaw, W. — number 96.
- The Commonwealth Bank — number 112.
- Etcetera — number 100.
- Latona Masterman — number 51.

Bligh, Mr. Fred Miller, MLA, following his election last September.

The fact that Mr. Miller had campaigned on the basis that his election would give electors better access to the Wran Government and that he favoured 'less heavy traffic in residential streets' gave us hope that something could be achieved through his good offices.

Mr. Miller gave us a very full and courteous hearing and asked for a fuller briefing on the situation. He also took part in a 'Local Residents Forum' which the Association organised in February when several local residents in addition to Association officials emphasised the disastrous situation which has arisen.

At this meeting, Mr. Miller spoke sympathetically about our problems and we now await some specific results from the interest he has taken.

We are also cheered by the contents of a road hierarchy plan prepared by Woollahra Municipal Council which we hope will have some influence on future traffic planning.

Although at this stage, details of the report are confidential, it has specifically excluded Ocean Street from the classification schedule so that its situation can be examined further.

Council has stated quite definitely that Ocean Street should not be treated as an arterial road, and that investigation should continue into methods of downgrading it in terms of traffic use.

One last point I would make is that the traffic situation in Ocean Street is so intolerable that several local residents — including, incidentally, a solicitor — have suggested that we should take dramatic action to highlight the situation.

While we are sympathetic with this point of view, we still believe that constitutional means of protest have not yet been exhausted.

## Area Planning

One of the main reasons the Association was formed in 1982 was to try and secure a planning scheme which would preserve the character of the area and prevent out-of-scale and unsightly development.

Amazingly, we still haven't got it!

The Association was entirely satisfied with the West Woollahra Action Plan adopted by Woollahra Council in 1980, particularly with the fact that it limited new development to three storeys.

But the approval and gazetting of the plan by the State Department of Planning and Environment is proving painfully slow.

We understand that one of the reasons is that the plan has been referred back to the Council for some drafting revisions.

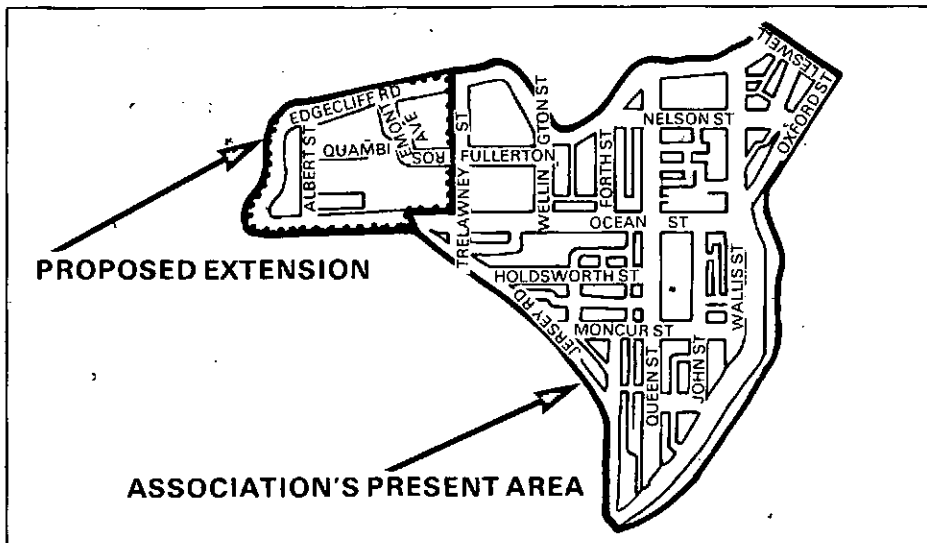
Our hope now is that the plan will finally be gazetted and become binding on future development later this year.

When it does, it will be a great day for the Association, as we can pride ourselves on having done much to shape its contents.

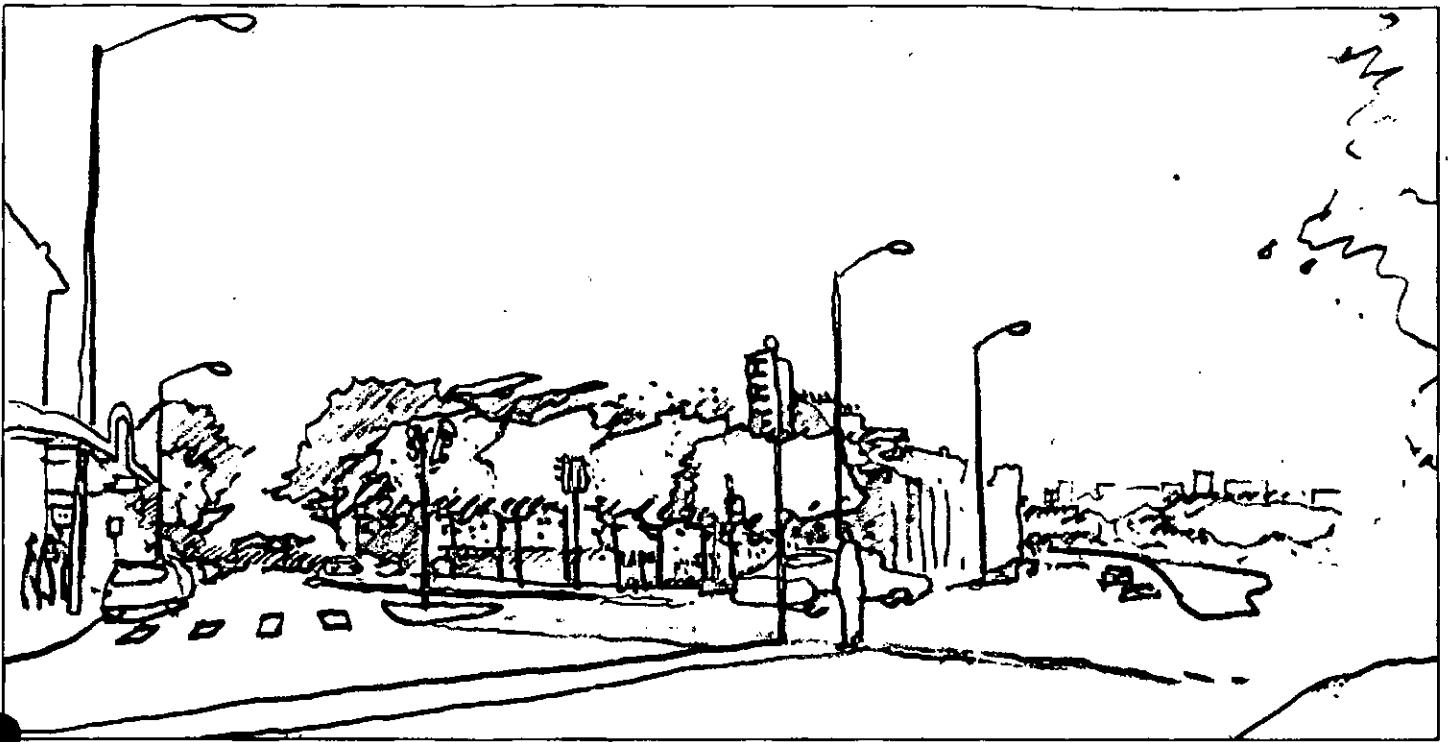
In the meantime, the Council's planning staff has this year produced a discussion paper on the Queen Street shopping centre and asked for our comments.

Our initial reaction is not entirely favourable, as we do not feel the document makes proper recognition of the special character of Queen Street.

We are also concerned with its preoccupation with off street parking. At least one member of our committee feels that



Map showing proposed extension to the boundaries of the area covered by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association.



there is merit in the present laissez faire parking situation.

### Tree Planting

In 1977, Woollahra Council adopted a uniform tree planting scheme for Queen Street, using only two varieties to provide both a splash of colour and a degree of shade — liquidamber styraciflua and fraxinus pennsylvanica.

At the time, the Association donated \$2000 to the \$6000 initial cost.

When the new trees went in, we were disappointed that virtually nothing was done to protect them in the early stages, with the result that many became damaged and had to be replaced.

Worse still, it appears that the original uniform scheme has been abandoned and the original trees are being replaced with other varieties on an ad hoc basis, without any thought of coordination.

While we realise the Council's new landscape staff may have a case for changing the original scheme, we still believe tree planting in Queen Street should follow an orderly and properly considered plan to produce the best effect in future years.

We are currently making representations to the Council about this.

A few months ago, Woollahra Council asked for our comments on a scheme which its planning staff has drawn up for the redevelopment of Davies Reserve.

Although there is obviously a need to improve the reserve, we did not favour the Council's plan which was, in effect, to create a 'mini' park where people

## A leafier Davies Reserve?

As mentioned in the accompanying president's report, the Association is taking a deep interest in a Woollahra Council proposal for a new treatment of Davies Reserve at the corner of Queen and Oxford Streets.

The Association believes the Council's first proposal was too expensive and elaborate, and the chairman of our architectural sub-committee, Douglas Gordon, M. Arch, FRAIA, has come up with a suggestion for a glade of trees on the site, in the European pattern.

Douglas has provided the above sketch showing how his concept would appear from Le Cafe, looking roughly east from along Queen Street on the left and Oxford Street on the right. Centennial Park is on the far right.

would sit.

The proposal would have been quite expensive and as Davies Reserve is immediately opposite Centennial Park, we thought it highly unlikely that people would use such a small area for 'rest and recreation'.

Instead we suggested that the Council adopt a much less ambitious scheme which would make Davies Reserve a purely decorative area — perhaps grassland with some central feature such as a fountain or rockery.

Another possibility is to have a group of trees, and the chairman of our architectural committee, Douglas Gordon, has prepared a suggestion on these lines

Douglas says the following points should be remembered.

- ☉ This is a busy intersection and masses of foliage will help to reduce noise levels.
- ☉ The area already has a multitude of elements of street furniture surrounding it and certainly doesn't need any more.
- ☉ A massed planting of trees will provide an echo of the planting in Centennial Park opposite and contribute to greater coherence in the overall streetscape.
- ☉ The massed foliage of the trees will read visually as an equivalent of building mass and will provide punctuation to the end of the terraces fronting Oxford Street.
- ☉ The trees will help provide more oxygen.

which has been submitted to the Council.

The Council is now preparing a revised scheme, and we have been promised the opportunity to comment on this also.

### Queen Street Fair

Queen Street Fair, on Saturday, November 21, 1981, was as usual a lively and colourful event, held in beautiful spring weather.

As a result of our suggestion that Woollahra Council might take a greater interest in the 'creative' side of the fair,

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the Council provided colourful flags in Queen Street for several days before the event.

For the 1981 Fair, we also closed off part of Moncur Street to provide more breathing space for the crowds who mill around the Woollahra Hotel.

Although most visitors to Queen Street Fair are very happy and good humoured, the behaviour of a few caused us concern. In the future, even more attention must be given to supervision.

Financially, the Fair made a surplus of \$2400 — a substantial increase on the previous year — and we are donating half of this to charities and community service organisations.

As we made a special effort to encourage disabled people to participate in the 1981 Fair, we are giving \$750 to the Committee for the International Year of the Disabled.

The rest will be divided in equal donations of \$150 among three local organisations — Holdsworth Street Community Centre, Woollahra Senior Citizens Association and Woollahra Community Service Association.

I would like to express my thanks to Pixie Nolan, who handles all the detailed administrative arrangements for the Fair, and John Sweetapple who looks after the physical arrangements.

## Other Events

The Association organised two other events during the year.

One was the very stimulating 'Local Residents' Forum' in February when a number of issues were discussed in addition to Ocean Street traffic.

We were very pleased that our three local alderman all attended. Susan Collett and Jock MacCallum also took a very constructive part in the debate.

At Christmas we arranged a successful Concert of Christmas Carols and

## Swimming pool to be demolished?

Woollahra Council has received a development application for the replacement of the training swimming pool in Holdsworth Street with a group of town houses.

The Association has objected to the proposal on the grounds that the type of town houses proposed would not be in keeping with the streetscape and also that the swimming pool should be retained as a useful local amenity.

Council has promised that our views will be considered.

Songs at Gaden Reserve, followed by champagne and Christmas cake.

The Taverner Consort provided a tuneful programme of original and traditional songs, and it was particularly pleasant that so many family groups shared the evening with us.

## Finances

Members will see from the income and expenditure account that subscriptions now account for less than 20 per cent of the Association's income.

To continue our work on the present scale, we are therefore very dependent on income from investments (principally resulting from our \$20,000 pluvius insurance windfall in 1979) and from Queen Street Fair.

I would like to congratulate our treasurer, Mollie Lenthall, on acting as our financial conscience so successfully and finishing the year with a slight surplus of income over expenditure.

## Committee

Our committee is comparatively small for the amount of work it does, and I would like to thank all its members for their support and efforts during the year.

My particular thanks are due to our conscientious secretary, Monica McDonald, and our vice president, Norman Prescott, who has had to carry a particularly heavy burden during the year as chairman of the Ocean Street traffic sub-committee.

Robin Brampton

## 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:** Individual \$5 a year; Family \$8; Corporate \$10; Life \$50.

**Patron:** Dame Joan Sutherland.

**President:** Robin Brampton.

**Vice-President:** Norman Prescott.

**Secretary:** Monica McDonald.

**Treasurer:** Mollie Lenthall.

**Committee:** Julian Beaumont, Douglas Gordon, Howard Hilton, Monica McDonald, Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts, Tom Wilhelm.

**Honorary Committee Member:** Leo Schofield.

**Chairman of the Architectural Committee:** Douglas Gordon.

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## Please Join Us!

The Association needs all the help it can get in its fight for the best interests of the local community. If you are reading this and you are not a member, please join us. For individuals, the cost is only \$5 a year.

Family membership costs \$8 (two people); corporate membership is \$10; and life membership \$50.) Just fill in the application form below and post it, with your cheque, to the secretary at the above address. Many thanks.

## THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

Please enrol me as a member in the category of (tick box)

Individual member

Family member

Corporate member

Life member

I enclose a cheque for S. ....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

POST TO:

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