



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

JANUARY, 1983

What's happening to our "village"?

By Monica McDonald
Secretary of the Queen Street & West Woollahra Association

WHILE we are endeavouring to conserve the "village" atmosphere of our unique area, its foundation is crumbling under our feet.

In recent years we have seen a gradual but persistent move from shops supplying our daily needs to those which sell "once in a lifetime" items such as antique furniture and homes.

Obviously we need all branches of the professions such as doctors, dentists, accountants, architects, hairdressers and these we have.

We are lucky to have some high class fruit, cake and cheese shops and delicatessen butchers.

But we do lack a seller of seafoods and someone who stocks "knick nacks" or haberdashery.

But what is a worry to us all is the preponderance of estate agents occupying shopfront premises. This will eventually kill our shopping area.

Of a total of 55 shops in Queen Street, eight are occupied by real estate agents - approximately one shop in seven.

I understand another real estate agent is moving in at number 126 the former St Cloud bedding shop. This will increase the number of real estate agents to nine - or one in six of shopfront premises.

And the excellent mixed business in Ocean Street, opposite Forth Street, has now been divided into two shops, one of which will be occupied by a real estate agency.

What can we do about it?

Is there a council policy to approve only of "passive" shops which lead to less cars, less people, less life, in fact less of everything?



Waimea House as it is today

Waimea House inquiry opens

TO its dismay, the association discovered late in 1982 that the battle to preserve Waimea House in Waimea Avenue from demolition is far from won.

In 1973, the association was in the forefront of resident action which - in the nick of time - stopped the Royal Blind Society from destroying the building, one of Sydney's most superb examples of Georgian style domestic architecture.

The house was built before 1860 and is featured in a book on Victorian architecture in Sydney by architect-historian Morton Herman.

Townhouses built

In 1978, the property was bought by a company headed by Dr Bill Kelly and subsequently he was allowed to build a group of townhouses on the site.

Dr Kelly has always assured the association that he intends to restore Waimea House to its former glory.

In 1981 he outlined to the associa-

tion's president, Robin Brampton, a scheme not only for restoring the building but extending it in Georgian style as a home for his family.

We were very surprised, therefore, that Dr Kelly's interests lodged an objection when the Heritage Council last year sought to place a permanent conservation order on the building.

As a result, an inquiry under the Heritage Act opened in Sydney on December 20.

A written submission was presented on behalf of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association and the president, Robin Brampton, spoke in support of this. He was supported by the chairman of the association's architectural sub-committee, Douglas Gordon, a highly qualified architect who lives in Queen Street.

Excellent cases were presented by the other bodies interested in preserving the building - The Heritage Council, the National Trust and Woollahra Municipal Council.

Continued page 3

Have you any old pictures of Queen St?

SOME day I hope it will be possible to produce a good illustrated history of Queen Street and the surrounding area – perhaps as an association project for Bicentennial year in 1988.

For this it would be very helpful if we could locate photographs of Queen Street in earlier years, particularly between the turn of the century and the second World War.

This thought was particularly prompted by a call I had recently from Mr James Webb, of Oxford Street, who has been researching the life of his grandfather, James Edward Webb, a Queen Street grocer.

Grandfather Webb came to Sydney from Toowoomba in the early 1890s. He married here in 1893 and in 1896 established his grocer's shop at 124 Queen Street where the Westpac Bank now stands. Mr Webb ran the business until his death in 1916, at the age of 51.

His grandson would naturally like to obtain a picture showing what this shop, and the surrounding premises, looked like at the time – and so would we.

If anybody can help, would they please contact me on 331 1188 (day-time) or 326 1257 (evening). Any pictures offered to us can be quickly copied so the original owner will not have to part with them for long.

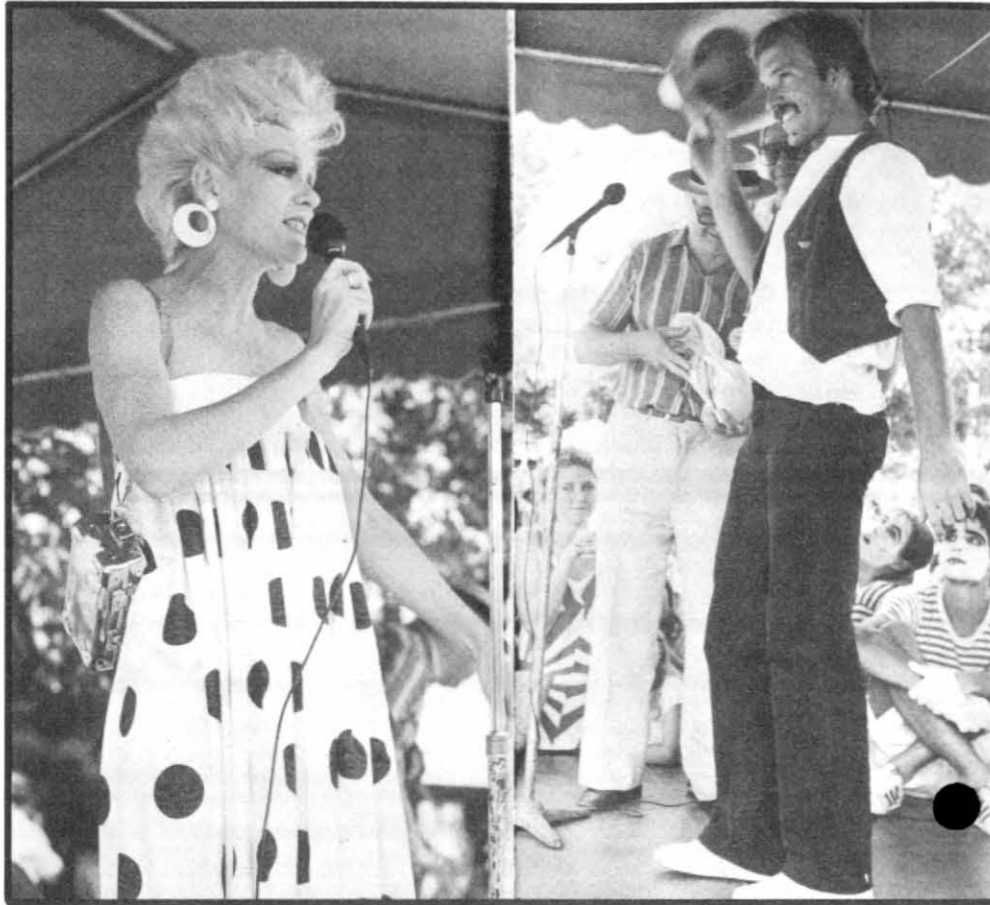
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Your association has two representatives on the community committee formed by Woollahra Municipal Council to consider ways the area can celebrate Australia's Bicentenary in 1988. They are myself and Pixie Nolan who handles the administration of Queen Street Fair.

The next meeting will be held in March and in the meantime the committee is anxious to receive ideas from people in the community about suitable events or permanent projects to celebrate the occasion.

* * *

For six months we will be without the services of our efficient secretary, Monica McDonald, who is going on a visit to London.



While she is away, the secretary's duties will be carried out by a strong supporter of the association, Mrs Winifred von Heisen of 49 Queen Street, telephone 32 2740. Correspondence should still be sent to PO Box 16, Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

Monica has indicated that she will be available to nominate again for the committee at the annual meeting in May, but we will be looking for at least one new nominee as Julian Beaumont, who was elected in 1982, has resigned during the year.

* * *

Residents have probably noticed that the bus shelter at the corner of Moncur Street and Jersey Road, which harmonises so well with the Uniting Church like an English lych gate, has recently been reconstructed – happily without spoiling its style.

Woollahra Council recently asked the association's opinion about replacing the bus shelter in Queen Street, near Nelson Street, with a more elaborate structure.

However, we have taken the view that so few buses now pass down this part of Queen Street that the cost would not be warranted.

* * *

The association's carol concert in the week before Christmas was again a great success. Among the 80 or so people who attended, it was a great

pleasure to welcome the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Judy May.

Although they had to sing unaccompanied, Sandy Newman and his Taverner Consort group were as tuneful as they were entertaining.

Grant Roberts very kindly lent us the garden of Kaleidoscope for the occasion and we were only sorry he was not able to be present. He was away in India.

* * *

Our area of Sydney will soon have its own community radio station – Radio Eastern Sydney with studios in Paddington Town Hall and a transmitter on high ground in Bondi.

The association supported the application for a licence and has now become a community organisation member of the venture.

We understand that Radio Eastern Sydney is now buying its transmission equipment and will soon run a training programme for its amateur broadcasters. When this is done, it hopes to be on the air before the end of the year.

* * *

In the past few months our area has been enlivened with two new retail businesses with quite stunning shop-fronts – the Zuccala boutique in Jersey Road and Fred Pazotti's imported ceramics business converted from an old factory in Moncur Street.

Zuccala is superbly decorated in

Queen Street Fair 1982

Pictures by Paul Ham

JEANNIE Little opened it in her inimitable manner ... it made a much higher surplus for the association ... and Queen Street Fair on November 27 was its usual bustling and exciting self.

A new feature was a buskers contest for a golden hat containing \$100 – mostly in change, of course – won by Dan Menendez, a highly entertaining street juggler from San Francisco.

As 1982 was The Year of the Tree, we asked stallholders to reflect a theme of "trees in all their glory".

Several did so effectively, including the winners of the award for the best commercial stall, Ambra Sansin, and the best non-commercial stall, the Primary Club of Australia.

Three other stalls were considered sufficiently attractive to be given a \$50 rebate on their stall fees – the Fashion Group Inc, Julia Brampton and Sasha Badrin.

The award for the best dressed shop in Queen Street on Fair Day went to Tania of Woollahra (Pat McLeod) whose window reflected the theme of trees and included a neat and appropriate verse by Ogden Nash.

Already there is interest in the 1983 fair. If you are interested in having a stall, drop a line to the association at PO Box 16, Woollahra, NSW 2025.



Waimea House inquiry

Continued from page 1

We were also very pleased to receive the support of Mr Douglas Small, an architect who lives at 182 Queen Street.

Mr Small had gone round with a group of interested neighbours and obtained signatures from 42 houses in the immediate vicinity of Waimea House opposing any possibility of demolition. Only two houses refused a signature.

Before presenting his case, the barrister for Dr Kelly was granted an adjournment to enable him to marshal expert evidence.

We therefore do not know on what grounds Dr Kelly is objecting to the permanent conservation order, though it can be surmised that he will claim that the economic hardship involved in restoring the building would now be too great to bear.

The inquiry is due to resume on Monday, February 28.

In the meantime, any resident who would like to express a point of view can write to the Commissioner who is conducting the inquiry, Mr William Simpson, c/ The Office of the Commissioners of Inquiry, Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979, GPO Box 3415, Sydney, N.S.W. 2001.

Action plan is under dispute

DEPRESSINGLY our West Woollahra Action Plan, approved by Woollahra Municipal Council in 1980, is bogged down in the corridors of power of the State Government.

The State Department of Planning and Environment has disagreed with some of the conclusions, and the matter is now being argued between the Department and Woollahra Municipal Council.

Our senior ward alderman, Jock MacCallum is heading a task force which is attempting to get the matter resolved without compromising the general stance of the plan.

This places quite severe height restrictions on new buildings in our area and generally embodies the philosophy of conservation in which the association believes.

The association and its planning advisor, Mr Jack Devery, have had discussions with Alderman MacCallum and offered the Council its wholehearted support in getting the difficulties resolved so that the plan can be gazetted.

At last report, Alderman MacCallum and the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Judy May, were hoping early this year to have a meeting on the question with Department officials.

Ocean Street traffic: Council to seek residents' comments

WHAT is happening to reduce the traffic volume in Ocean Street and make life more bearable for its residents – a cause in which the association is strongly involved?

"Like the endeavours of the duck on the pond, there has been a great deal of work under the surface without much indication of movement above," says our vice president, Norman Prescott, who is chairman of the traffic sub-committee.

"Unfortunately, we are not too sure of the direction which the duck is taking at this point in time!"

However, Woollahra Municipal Council is sufficiently concerned to have commissioned a full scale report on Ocean Street traffic from the consultants Colston and Budd.

This document was presented to Council last year and subsequently reports, with recommendations, were prepared by the Council's Engineer and Town Planner.

The next stage is that the Council is arranging a comprehensive exhibition of the data so that residents can be fully informed of the factors contained in the study and express their views.

The Town Clerk, Michael Regnis, tells us that it is hoped to have the exhibition at the Council Chambers in February, and it will be well publicised.

No action will be taken before this opportunity for comment from the community, and we urge local residents to view the exhibition and have their say.

The Colston and Budd study looked at the effects of a number of options for Ocean Street, ranging from the impractical idea of outright closure to the appalling possibility of increased arterial traffic flow under clearway conditions.

One-way traffic

Between these two extremes are three other options. One is to "maintain the existing situation" and another attempts to conform with the proposals previously made by the association.

The third is a novel proposal to have one-way traffic in Ocean Street, with one-way traffic in the opposite direction in Edgcliff Road.

In its representations to Woollahra Council, the association has supported the option which is closest to the well-publicised proposals it made in 1980.

To date only one of them has been implemented – the synchronisation of

traffic lights in Oxford Street to make it a more desirable alternative route to the City.

Mr Prescott says that in order to achieve acceptance by the Traffic Authority, there appears to be an opinion in the Council directed towards recommending "traffic favourable" options without any compensations for amenities on Ocean Street.

"We feel this approach is wrong as it overlooks the strong arguments contained in the study which support a better deal for Ocean Street," he says.

Parking suggestion

Mr Prescott is disappointed that the study does not suggest any action on traffic light "green times" at each end of Ocean Street to reduce traffic congestion.

However, he sees merit in a suggestion that parking restrictions in Ocean Street be "rationalised" to 7 am to 9 am and 4 pm to 6 pm "No Standing" restrictions instead of the variety that now apply.

"This would be beneficial both to local amenity and the containment of traffic volumes," he says.

"On a somewhat lighter note, we gather from the Wentworth Courier report that people would be encouraged to turn their houses away from the road.

"We look forward to observing this manoeuvre on one of our vintage terraces or town house blocks!"

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgcliff 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.

Acting Secretary: Winifred von Heizen.

Treasurer: Mollie Lenthall.

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

Honorary Committee Member: Leo Schofield.

Chairman of the Architectural Committee: Douglas Gordon.

Village Voice is published approximately every six months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (331 1188 day, 326 1257 evening and weekends).

Printed by Business and Commercial Mailing Service Pty Ltd.

Typesetting by Warrior Phototypesetting Services.

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 \$.....

NAME

ADDRESS

POST TO:

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