

VILLAGE VOICE

NOVEMBER, 1985

Newsletter of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into Ocean Street!

By Association President Robin Brampton

NEEDLESS to say, the association is dismayed and disgusted by the arbitrary ending of the trial which it was hoped would lead to some alleviation of the appalling volumes of through traffic in Ocean Street.

Under the trial, for the past 18 months westbound traffic wishing to turn right into Ocean Street at the Oxford Street traffic lights had been limited to one lane instead of two.

The trial was introduced just before last year's State elections by the then Minister for Roads, Pat Hills, who said that Ocean Street "should not be expected to carry other than local traffic".

From the beginning, the trial was largely abortive because there was no change

in the green time at the traffic lights for traffic moving into Ocean Street.

As a result, traffic from the second lane was often able to turn right after the first lane had emptied - and even before.

As long ago as last November, the Traffic Authority admitted that the trial was not working and that the reduction in traffic volumes had been insignificant.

Modification plan

To make it effective - and in the spirit of what surely was Mr Hills' intention - Woollahra Council and our association have constantly urged a reduction in green time at the lights.

We seemed to be making real headway in May when the Ministry of Transport wrote to the then Mayor, Alderman Jock MacCallum, saying that the trial was being extended and the Department of Main Roads had been requested to arrange, if possible, for the SCATS traffic control system to be modified to reduce green time.

The Ministry of Transport also told the Mayor that the Main Roads Department had been asked to report on comparisons of travel time between Bondi and the city via Oxford Street and Ocean Street.



But does anybody take any notice? The DMR's remaining attempt to keep traffic out of Ocean Street.

Continued next page

THIS IS A QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION

Ocean Street

continued

About this time we were assured by the Council Engineer, Denis Cafe, that the Minister would not allow the trial to be discontinued without further consultation with the Council.

In fact, none of this happened.

Green time was never reduced ... there was no further consultation with the Council ... and the first thing Mr Cafe knew about the scrapping of the trial was from a commercial radio broadcast on the morning of Wednesday, October 23.

The same day a letter arrived at the Council from the Traffic Authority, saying that the Department of Main Roads had been unable to agree to a reduction in green time.

The Department claimed that reducing green time substantially below its former level "would have widespread and appreciable disbenefits, even in the short term".

The Department also said it saw little purpose in expending resources on comparing travel times to the city on the Ocean Street and Oxford Street routes if the Authority intended to reduce green time for a short period only.

Three options

The letter said that as a result, the Minister for Transport was faced with three options:

- To extend the trial under the existing arrangements and to continue close monitoring of resultant traffic delays and possible diversionary effects.

- To modify the current arrangements, by removing the peak period "No Stand-



Traffic lights going up at the junction of Ocean Street and Trelawney Street. They were too late to possibly have prevented a fatality at the spot this year.

ing" restrictions on the western side of Ocean Street, between Oxford and John Street, to discourage the alleged illegal right turn manoeuvres from the former second right turn storage lane.

- To abandon the scheme.

About face

As a result, the Minister decided that "the least unsatisfactory option" was to abandon the scheme, and asked the Department of Main Roads to restore the two-lane turn.

Our association cannot see how such an about face can possibly be justified, or why the other options don't make better sense.

Partly in explanation, the letter to the Council says that Ocean Street is recognised as a sub-arterial road in the Traffic Authority's Sydney Road Hierarchy.

But how do they reconcile that with Pat Hills' carefully worded press statement last year that Ocean Street

"should not be expected to carry other than local traffic"?

Following the Minister's action, the association requested a meeting with both the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Hilda Rolfe, and our State member, Michael Yabsley, to consider the next protest move.

This was about to take place when we went to press, and the association will take the strongest action it can.

Meanwhile, another Ocean Street traffic development has been the installation of traffic lights at the corner of Ocean Street and Trelawney Street which should be working this month.

Although introduced as a safety measure, the lights may have some small effect in deterring through traffic.

But they are no substitute of what we have been unsuccessfully demanding for years - a proper traffic management scheme for Ocean Street which recognises that residents have rights as well as vehicle owners.

Waimea House plans arrive just in time

By Association President Robin Brampton

YES, we do seem to be getting action at last to restore Waimea House.

Woollahra Council gave the owner, Dr Bill Kelly, until November 4 to lodge his plans to restore the fine Georgian-style mansion off Queen Street.

Urged by our association and other concerned local people, the Council threatened that if the plans did not arrive, they would call on the State Government to resume the property.

Our impatience is understandable, considering that Waimea House has stood derelict since the Royal Blind Society's attempt to demolish it in 1973.

When the plans did not turn up on November 4, the Council was quick to shoot off a letter to Planning and Environment Minister Bob Carr, calling for the resumption.

But on November 5, the application arrived! So a hasty message was sent to Macquarie Street to ignore yesterday's letter.

Apparently, unknown to the Council, Dr Kelly had already submitted his plans to the Heritage Council which approved them in September.

Now Dr Kelly's application has to go through the usual grind of being checked by the Council planning department, and notification has to be given to adjoining owners before Council approval can be given.

Needless to say, the Queen Street Association will want to see and evaluate the application as soon as possible.

BUDGET FAMILY DINING

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WEST WOOLLAHRA PROFILE



In his last days as principal of Woollahra Primary School, Fred Armstrong is pictured with some of his pupils. The article is by Tom Wilhelm.



Fred Armstrong says farewell to Forth Street

WEST Woollahra's oldest institution, apart from the churches, is Woollahra Primary School which has operated daily from the same site in Forth Street since 1877.

The school has undergone many changes since the central building was originally designed by B. Backhouse.

It began to expand quite early, causing new buildings to be added, and by the year 1900 had some 1200 pupils.

At about this time, the school sold a large area of land which it owned between Forth Street and Queen Street to raise money to build the Paddington School in Oxford Street. How the school would love to own that land today!

The current principal, Mr Fred Armstrong, has had a long association with Woollahra School.

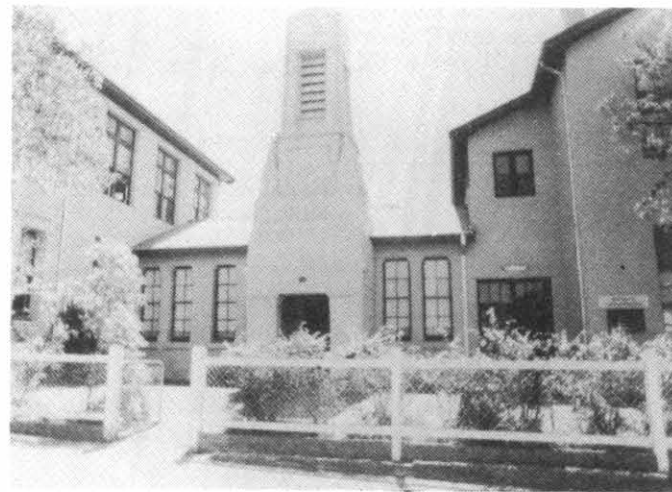
First he had a five-year spell as a teacher at the school in the 1960s, and he is just ending a 13-year "reign" as principal.

Tradition strong

This record of service is only surpassed by one other holder of the post, Mr J. Byrne, who was principal for 19 years from 1911.

Tradition is a strong feature of the school.

Its two oldest buildings are classified by the National Trust and Mr Armstrong has enrolled many pupils whose



The front entrance to Woollahra Primary School is dominated by a distinctive tower. The school's two oldest buildings are classified by the National Trust.

parents he had taught earlier in his career at the school.

In fact this year he enrolled a child who is a direct descendant of a pupil who began at Woollahra School in its opening year of 1877.

Not only has Mr Armstrong had a powerful effect on the school, he was directly involved in the formation of the Holdsworth Street Community Centre.

In fact the centre grew out of a meeting at the school in 1973 when Gillian Fisher and Helen Young proposed to make a proper community centre out of the "tin shed" that occupied the site in Holdsworth Street.

The fine result of those efforts, which took many

years, can be seen today, and now the school and the centre depend on each other in several ways.

The school uses the centre for sport and social functions, and the centre uses the school for adult photography and art classes.

The centre's bus takes the younger children from the school to the centre in the afternoons (the older children walk) and the school also uses the centre's bus to transport its orchestra when needed.

A teacher from the school is always a member of the committee that runs the centre.

Mr Armstrong's interest in the role of music in education has led to a very strong and

varied programme of musical activities.

The school has an orchestra of its top 35 musicians as well as separate guitar, flute and recorder groups. Even drum groups have been formed at times.

There are also four or five choirs for pupils of various ages, and the Opera House Choir which sings at the Opera House one night a year.

Opportunity classes

The school's annual music evening at Scots College auditorium is extremely popular and very well attended.

An interesting feature of the school is that it provides opportunity classes for intellectually gifted pupils, drawn from 38 primary schools in the Eastern Suburbs.

There are two of these classes – one each for fifth and sixth year – and they have been running since 1933.

The basic organisation of the school is to have two classes for each year, but this swells to four classes in fifth and sixth year because of the opportunity classes.

Mr Armstrong stresses that the school puts the development of its pupils foremost. To this end, the aim is to encourage the children in independent learning.

Classroom atmosphere is considered of the utmost

Continued next page

Fred Armstrong says farewell

continued

importance, and you only have to visit the school in session to see what a wonderful atmosphere it has.

Pupils are trained to find and present information. On the basis of the work I saw at the school recently, they do really develop these skills.

Their initiative is a great tribute to a headmaster and his staff, but there is soon to be a significant change at Woollahra School.

Fred Armstrong is leaving to open a new school nearer his home at Gerald Road in the southern suburbs of Sydney.

Both pupils and staff are sad at his departure.

US visit

In a statement to *Village Voice*, the staff said that Mr Armstrong had brought to Woollahra a wealth of experience from a variety of educational settings.

He had been guest speaker at conferences throughout Australia and was selected by

Rotary to represent Australia at a conference in the United States.

"His ability as an educational leader has always enabled him to inspire those working with him," the statement said.

And this year he was made a member of the fellowship of the Australian College of Education in recognition of his dedication to education.

New principal

The new principal will be Mr John Hathorn, a local resident who has children of his own at the school.

This gives him an extensive knowledge of the school he is about to inherit, and we can expect a smooth changeover.

We wish Mr Armstrong well in his new post ... we say a special word of welcome to Mr Hathorn ... and we congratulate Woollahra Primary School on its virile contribution to local life over more than a century.

• A farewell to Fred Armstrong will be held on Sunday, December 1, from 5 pm to 7 pm. If you would like to attend, please contact the school on 328 6313.

Is this good conservation at work?

By Mollie Lenthall

SEVERAL building developments which have been approved in the Queen Street area in recent months suggest that Woollahra Council's conservation policies may not always be applied in the interests of conservation and the lifestyle of the district.

It is with some dismay that we have observed the demolition and rebuilding of the shop at 51 Queen Street.

This building carried Council's B building classification in which are included "those buildings, the presence of which are essential to the streetscape character of the area."

The policy statement does not admit demolition, and it is to be questioned as to the grounds on which demolition of the facade was approved.

The new facade, although similar in style, makes one less original building contributing to the streetscape of Queen Street.

More insidious have been developments in James and John Streets involving the building of second storeys at the back of a cottage at 18 James Street and a single-storey terrace at 9 John Street.

While Council is committed to retention of facades and streetscapes, it is equally important to preserve the quality of life of those people who have chosen to live in the area.

Opposition

The James Street development was approved by Council in the face of vehement opposition from no less than 10 neighbours.

They objected to the detrimental effect on the low-scale streetscape of James Street.

But almost more important were the objections that those properties backing onto the development would be overlooked, their northern vista would be restricted and their privacy destroyed. The effect would be catastrophic.

Notwithstanding these objections, the development was passed by the Council on a second - and revised - application.

A single storey terrace house at 9 John Street has suffered a "builder's spec" conversion into a two-storey four-bedroom modern home.

A break from the Fair ...

On Queen Street Fair day, several organisations will be providing a cup of tea or coffee and a chance for parents to have a rest. Typically:

SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE, Gaden Reserve. Tables will be set out in the garden.

OZANAM VILLA, Queen Street. Teas and refreshments in the garden.

HOLDSWORTH COMMUNITY CENTRE, Morrell Street. Morning and afternoon teas and light lunches.

SHOP 2, SPICER STREET: Tea and coffee served in a very cosy atmosphere while parents can watch their children at play.

While it cannot be said that this has proved disruptive to the streetscape, the rear development is wholly unsympathetic in scale and style to that of the group of three terraces of which it forms part.

Overshadowed

The structure dominates and overshadows the adjoining terrace, and site coverage is clearly in excess of the prescribed ratio of 67 per cent.

However, in response to a local resident's inquiry, Council maintained that it was only 60 per cent.

It is disturbing that developments can take place without the owners of adjoining properties being given the right to object.

The owners of the property at 2 Wallis Street were not informed before approval was given for a studio to be constructed on their rear boundary, resulting in a 15 ft brick wall dominating the northern aspect of their garden.

One of the disturbing aspects of decisions which override residents' objections is that there is no redress except for the costly process of action through the Land and Environment Court.

These examples could very well prove to be the thin edge of the wedge.

If residents are not vigilant, and even when they are, the quality of their environment could be downgraded simply because precedents for unsympathetic developments have already been established.

House of Edward Bear

Children's clothing and shoes



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Queen Street Fair for the individualist

YES its on again on Saturday, November 30 – Queen Street Fair, the biggest and most successful event of its kind in Australia.

This will be the fourteenth fair and although it will be as huge as ever, the emphasis is changing.

More stalls will be devoted to craft and cottage industries, a move the organisers welcome, and the entertainment programme has been modified to be less noisy.

In fact generally it is hoped to make this year's fair one for the individualist.

The tone will be set first thing in the morning when a "Parade of Characters" will wend its way down Queen Street from Oxford Street.

This will include a town crier to announce the fair, a piper and "The Upside Down People" – all accompanying Michael Yabsley, State Member for Bligh, dressed as a 19th century politician.

Official opening

When the procession reaches the bandstand near the corner of Moncur Street at 10 o'clock, Mr Yabsley will officially declare the fair open.

At 3 pm on this bandstand, association president Robin Brampton will present a buskers competition which has been successful at previous fairs.

If you want to enter, meet Robin behind this bandstand, outside the Folie Restaurant, at 2.30 pm.

Other entertainment on this bandstand will be provided by 2UW and include The Razz, Glenn Miller-type band; Hat Trick, a traditional early Australian and Irish jig band; singer Malcolm McCallum; and juggler and fire eater Marty Coffey.

Another bandstand, in the mouth of Victoria Street, will feature the New South Wales Police Band, the Lufthansa German Band and the Coogee-Waverley Pipe Band.

More entertainment will be provided by a Dutch pipe organ at the Ocean Street end of the fair.

This year fair goers will have a chance to win a \$24,000 J24 yacht standing in Holdsworth Street in a competition organised by the J24 Association.



"The Upside Down People" will be a feature of the "Parade of Characters" which will herald the opening of this year's Queen Street Fair.

200 stalls

Among the great diversity of unusual and handcrafted items on the 200 stalls, there will be a special emphasis on Australiana and Christmas gifts.

Well known craftsman personality Mike Darlow will be selling woodturned items made from Australian timber in his workshop at Chippendale (where else).

Just as fascinating will be some of the craftwork from overseas ... handmade rag dolls from the Philippines, crystal from Italy and wooden flowers from Bali.

Many stallholders will be selling food and drink, mainly

to eat on the spot. Choose between baked potatoes and Malaysian sate, hot beef sandwiches and Danish marshmallow cream.

And if you like to dabble in the occult, you can have your palm read, your birthday charted or your handwriting analysed by computer.

It's going to be a great fair again. See you there!

FOOTNOTE: Of course, we hope local residents will ease traffic problems by walking to the fair. However, this year, parking will be provided at Woollahra Primary School in Forth Street. The small fee will swell the funds of the P and C Association.

Neighbourhood Watch – how it works

FOLLOWING the example of other groups in the municipality, the association is canvassing your interest in a Neighbourhood Watch programme in West Woollahra.

It involves a group of neighbours getting together to keep a watchful eye against burglary or other abuses within their immediate neighbourhood.

Before a group can be formally set up, the Police Community Relations Branch requires 200 signatures to

prove that there is a genuine interest in the project within the district.

A meeting is then set up at which a police representative explains the procedures for getting the programme going.

Each scheme usually involves 600-800 households, divided into smaller groups.

If you think Neighbourhood Watch would be a good idea for West Woollahra, ring the Association Secretary, Monica McDonald on 32 4407.

Come on Mr Wran, keep it simpler

By Association President Robin Brampton

IN its role as watchdog over the local environment, the association is opposing a Bicentennial Year scheme to place an elaborate canopy over the Federation Stone in Centennial Park.

The simple stone marks the spot where Commonwealth Federation was proclaimed in 1900.

While not disagreeing with the preservation of this historic monument, we would prefer some simpler form of protection.

We have therefore written to Premier Neville Wran, whose Department administers Centennial Park, telling him our view.

We are also working towards some agreement with Woollahra Council about a scheme to improve Davies Reserve at the corner of Queen Street and Oxford Street.

Student project

A year ago the Council gave its initial thumbs down to our proposal to install there a Victorian cast iron garden fountain which has been donated to the National Trust.

Our association had spent a lot of money in making arrangements for the donation, and the fountain is now in the Council's possession.

At the beginning of the year, we were assured by Alderman Hilda Rolfe, who is now Mayor of Woollahra, and the then Mayor, Alderman Jock MacCallum, that there was a possibility of the Council reconsidering the matter, subject to a suitable proposal.

We have therefore sought the help of the School of Landscape Architecture at the University of New South Wales whose students have been asked to draw up draft schemes as an exercise.

Liaison for the project is being handled by our treasurer, Mollie Lenthall, a member of the University staff. She reports an enthusiastic response from the students.

The results should be interesting. We hope to see them soon.

THE trees in our area are all in leaf, and what a lovely sight they are. But they would be all the better for some tender loving care.

What about a LIGHT prune at the right time here and there and a clear-up of the ground shoots.

Maybe the adjacent residents could grow some plants (such as busy lizzies) at the base of the trees and give them a little water now and then.

But no pesticides please!

* * *

JUST as Mr Keating swung his axe through tax deductible meals, along came a restaurant in West Woollahra to fill the yawning chasm in consumer needs between the US-inspired takeaway and the sort of restaurant whose charges would seem to indicate a quiet talk with your bank manager.

Mother Magee's at the corner of Jersey Road and Sutherland Street is the inspiration of Phillip Ashton, owner of the Royal Hotel at Paddington, and Frank Hooker who is undertaking the day-to-day management.

Standard charges are \$10 for a three-course meal and \$6 for a bottle of wine (including some excellent premium selections). Children's meals are a standard \$5.

A varied selection of dishes is offered and for the price, the quality is excellent. Just don't expect fine linen and silver service, or the sort of atmosphere that makes you want to linger until midnight.

On the evening of our visit, Mother Magee's was crowded, particularly with family parties to whom it is obviously designed to appeal.

The venture has proved such a success that Mother Magee's is now open for lunch on Saturday, and it is planned to open five more Mother Magees throughout Sydney.

* * *

LESS successful has been somebody's attempt to open a takeaway restaurant in the old premises of Olsen's Pharmacy in Ocean Street.



Compiled by Monica McDonald and Robin Brampton

Although the inside of the shop has been completely degutted, the walls panelled with stone and a takeaway counter installed, it never opened. Now there is a "To Let" sign in the window.

This "ghost restaurant" is in that strip of Ocean Street which has become something of a graveyard of commerce - the result of savage parking restrictions.

The shop premises next to the corner store, which were completely rebuilt with a rather inappropriate marble frontage, have been empty for more than a year.

And very sadly we learn that Joan McPhee is to close

her well-stocked Carillon Bookshop, following the expiry of her lease and the offer of the premises for sale.

"I'm certainly going to miss my friends in West Woollahra", she told us.

* * *

MEANWHILE, in Queen Street, commercial development is more alive. Number 51 is being rebuilt with a facade which will be similar to the one it replaces - and we hope still in keeping with the streetscape.

We understand that this is the new home of Designings, who will be moving up from the former Nigel's Birthday premises further down the street.

* * *

WHEN, oh when, will our beloved Council keep our streets clear of dogs' droppings, refuse and torn papers?

Perhaps they are waiting for another huge downpour, and then will wonder why the storm water channels are clogged.

A close examination of the footpaths would help eliminate the potholes. Maybe it is only the dog walkers who use the pavements.



The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd

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: Margaret Lewis.

Treasurer: Mollie Lenthall.

Secretary: Monica McDonald.

Committee: Ronald Gouder, Neville Kitto, John Morton, Pixie Nolan, David Ross and Tom Wilhelm.

Honorary Committee Member: Leo Schofield.

Convenor of the Ocean Street Traffic Committee: Neville Kitto.

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

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West Woollahra Diary

QUEEN STREET FAIR

Saturday, November 30. Queen Street, Woollahra, 9 am to 5 pm. More than 200 stalls and continuous entertainment.

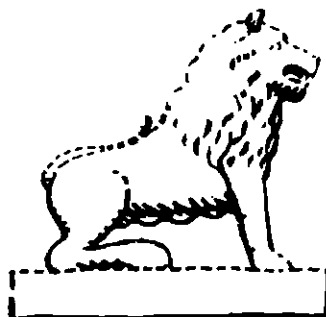
WOOLLAHRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Farewell to Fred Armstrong who is leaving the school after 13 years as headmaster. Sunday, December 1, 5 to 7 pm. Inquiries to the school, 328 6313

QUEEN STREET ASSOCIATION

Christmas Carol Concert for members and friends. Wednesday, December 18, 6.30 to 8.30 pm. In Queens Court. Singing led by the Taverner Consort, followed by champagne and Christmas cake.

ROBERT MORRISON ANTIQUES



84 QUEEN ST.,
WOOLLAHRA 2025.
PH. 32 3273

