Village Voice Your community news magazine for West Woollahra/Paddington

Official Journal of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association

No. 70 July - December, 1999

Mayor will give answer on concerns

THE new Mayor of Woollahra, Councillor Andrew Petrie, has promised to provide an early report on a number of oncerns about the area raised by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association.

He gave this undertaking when a delegation of association directors held discussions with him on October 27.

The association was represented by Mr Graham Freudenberg (President), Mr David Collingridge and Mr Ken Gresham.

The Mayor is himself a West Woollahra resident and a member of Woollahra Council for Cooper Ward which includes the Queen Street area.

The following matters were discussed:

Queen Street Refurbishment

Mr Freudenberg briefly traced the history of the current scheme,

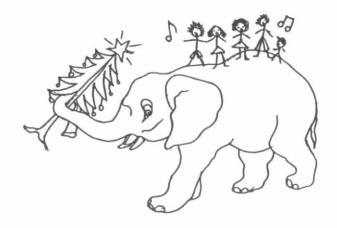
In 1995, Woollahra Council and the sociation together provided \$5000 for a design completed by Diane Stevens of Stevens Wallman Associates, publicly exhibited in 1996.

Council then provided \$50,000 for stage one between Moncur Street and Holdsworth Street. This included Banjo

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Don't forget!

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Mayor answers concerns

from page 1

Paterson Walk, and was completed in November, 1997. On December 9, 1995, the Council's Urban Planning Committee recommended expenditure of \$700,000 on Queen Street in the following four years.

However, since the completion of stage one, no further work has been scheduled.

The Mayor undertook to investigate the status of the programme.

Development Control Plan

Councillor Petrie told the delegation that the West Woollahra Control Plan, along the lines of the Paddington Plan, is in production.

The Council would welcome a substantial input from the association.

The Mayor made it clear that he shares the association's concern over both the increasing developmental and environmental pressures imposed on the area.

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd

ACN 002 872 433



A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, NSW. Affiliated to the National Trust. Subscription rates:

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David Collingridge, Ken Gresham,
Tim McCormick, Mary Read,
Alan Smith.

Editor of Village Voice:

Robin Brampton.

Address: Box 16. PO Woollahra, NSW 2025 Ph: 9363 5296 Fax: 9328 1157

Stalemate at Joan's old home

An excellent report on the neglect of Dame Joan's childhood home at 115 Queen Street appeared on page 3 of the Sydney Morning Herald in March. This accompanying picture shows the front of the house with three local personalities working, so far without success, to save it, (from left) Robin Brampton, Graham Freudenberg and David Leach. See report below.

(Photo Patrick Cummins, Sydney Morning Herald.)

Streetwatch

David Collingridge presented a consolidated report on the association's surveys of the condition of the district's streets and footpaths, conducted in October and November, 1998, and March, 1999.

A total of 157 problems had been reported to the Council.

Councillor Petrie agreed on the need for better follow-up procedures if the association's Streetwatch programme was to be made more effective.

Traffic

Ken Gresham, who represented the association on the Council's Traffic Study this year, outlined the special problems facing West Woollahra, particularly in regard to Queen Street and Ocean Street.

He said the problems are likely to increase with the operation of the Eastern Distributor.

115 Queen Street

Councillor Petrie agreed that it would be a tragedy if this property, the childhood home of Dame Joan Sutherland, would need to be demolished as the result of neglect.

He promised to see if action could be taken under the Council's development, health and fire risk powers.

Condition of Queen Street

Graham Freudenberg mentioned that he had received complaints about the frequently untidy appearance of the Queen Street "village" area.

He also complained of the poor street lighting, particularly in the area of Queen Street between Moncur Street and Oxford Street.

The constructive meeting ended with the Mayor undertaking to follow up the association's concerns in the face of the increasing pressures and problems of the area.

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Traffic study group given a hard task

by Ken Gresham

I HAVE recently been the representative of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association on the Woollahra Traffic and Transport Consultative Committee

Its objective was to develop a report to Council on traffic problems and possible solutions.

The committee was led and advised by professional traffic engineers and Council officers, and comprised of representatives of community groups and special interest and transport professionals such as RTA, taxis and buses.

Areas of interest included population and land use; traffic flows; parking, public transport and the needs of special interest groups such as cyclists and the disabled.

As you can imagine, the fact that the scope of the study was so wide and the area is so established brought the committee to an understanding of the difficulty of any form of change.

A series of working papers was written, covering the main issues and culminating in a report of around 500 pages with a 100-page executive summary.

Under threat

It became increasingly obvious to me, during the taking of information from experts, that our area is under threat of creased traffic, due to the Eastern Distributor opening in December, 1999. This will lead to diverted and by-passing vehicles slipping through Woollahra.

Other increases of traffic will come from:

 The opening of the Fox Studios complex with its large carpark, shopping centre, and entertainment and film production facilities, only one kilometre from our borders. Increasing through traffic from an expanding population base in the Randwick/Waverley Maroubra areas, particularly the 4000 new dwellings which will use Woollahra roads to get to New South Head Road and the city.

The population of our area is reducing, but all around us it is increasing annually.

Alternatives

Attempts to increase the use of public transport, bicycles and pedestrian traffic would seem to be either impossible or long-term alternatives.

Review of development control within Woollahra is a minor issue compared with the increasing densities around us.

Transit and bus lanes are a popular concept with traffic management professionals. However, most of our roads are single lane and clearways, therefore not a viable alternative. Improvements in rail and bus services are vital, including the suggestion of a local "stop and ride" service, using smaller buses on circular routes around the area.

The Woollahra Bike Plan was discussed. It is already with Council for discussion and would relieve some traffic problems.

Parking issues require the development of a staged management plan. Of course, better parking facilities may have a negative effect in encouraging the use of cars.

It is vital with all the issues now going on display and the ongoing debate in Council that you and your area are properly represented on a street by street basis.

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association is committed to the defence of the area from the invasion and intrusion of traffic from other areas, destroying an already fragile lifestyle.



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We would like to sincerely thank each and every one of you who have vouchsafed your property needs to us during our inaugural year. We trust we have upheld that faith and proven Georgia Cleary Estate Agents does offer a 'different approach'... one geared to you.

This year, the east has again proven its strength and investment potential. As Sydney gears up for the Olympics and GST, we suggest the first half of the year will give you the advantage of a more focused market. We are here if you have any questions!

In the meantime, we would like to extend greetings of the season to you all. Safe and happy holidays and we look forward to seeing you all in what promises to be a most exciting year...

Our very best wishes.



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COR LUV A DUCK!

The Queen Street and West Woodlahra Association has decided this year not to hold a year-end dinner.

Instead, a London/Cockney night will be held in the autumn, probably in May, with Cockney entertainment and, of course, terribly British cuisine.

So get out your pearly buttons or howler hats and be ready for an announcement in the next Village Voice.

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FRESH from some disappointing dining experiences in Paris — including an attempt to short change us 100 francs at a famous Left Bank bistro — our first culinary expedition back home was to Grand National.

The restaurant is spread spaciously over much of the ground floor of an architecturally splendid Victorian hotel, with a lovely open kitchen providing the opportunity to be entertained by seeing your food prepared.

The ambience is mercifully quiet and discreet, something we particularly appreciated as we were dining *en famille* with our Melbourne-based daughter and had much to discuss.

The food? Well "pub grub" it certainly isn't. And although the cuisine is upmarket and sophisticated, it is difficult to categorise except perhaps with the catch-all phrase "modern Australian".

The menu is shortish, with dishes well varied and one or two original surprises

From the seven possible entrees, Mrs L was very satisfied with the Carrot Soup with Spiced Roasted Onions and Creme Fraiche (\$8.50), while our offspring and I chose a real originality, Hickory Roasted Oysters with Warm Pink Eye Potato and Caviar Salad.

Something hearty

While \$14 might seem on the steep side for just three oysters, the complex result was delicious.

From eight possible main courses, Mrs L's choice was the Panfried Calves' Liver with Bacon and Thyme (\$18.50), while Miss L was in the mood for the Panfried Ocean Trout with Seared Scallops, Coriander, Coconut and Lime (another complexity, \$23.50). Both got the thumbs up.

As usual on such a cool evening, I went for something hearty, the succulent Braised Veal Shank with Parsnip Mash,



Broad Beans and Chorizo Sausage (\$18,50). For added excitement, we shared a dish of delectable, melt-in-the mouth potato mash (\$5).

At dessert time, we playd cheapskates by sharing a yummy dish of Lemon and Passionfruit Curd Pudding (\$9.50).

Grand National's extensive prizewinning wine list is a delight for anybody like me interested in exploring the boutique end of the Australian wine industry, with all sorts of interesting offerings from little known vineyards.

Aussie-Italian

We had the TGallant Flag Pinot Grigio, a wine variety more at home in Italy than on the Mornington Peninsula from whence came this bottle (\$33). It is one of the 17 wines also available by the glass (\$5 for a small glass of "sticky" to \$14.50 for a top champagne).

As Mrs L and I were about conduct a wine tour to Margaret River, we got a foretaste with a bottle of Amberley Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc (\$29.60). And for a touch of red with my veal shank, I ordered a glass of Austins Barrabool Cabernet from Woburn Ponds in Victoria (\$8).

Altogether a splendid meal. I was particularly impressed with the service — polished, knowledgeable, discreet, attentive and helpful. (No raised eyebrows when we asked for three spoons with one dessert!.)

I would class Grand National with Lucio's and Buon Ricordo in giving Paddington some of the finest and distinctive dining to be found anywhere in the world.

And nobody at Grand National tried to short change us on our \$153.50 bill. Give me the homestretch over the Left Bank any day!

By Lucullus



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Unusually also, the restaurant is open only during the day, although it can be booked at night for weddings, and private or corporate functions.

Especially at weekends, lunch clientele tends to be family parties with plenty of the young fry for whom the management thoughtfully provides special chairs.

The cuisine is predominantly Mediterranean with some interesting dishes from elsewhere such as the exotic Sri Lankan Snapper and Octopus Curry with Jasmine Rice (\$22,50) on the menu on the Sunday of our recent lunch visit.

Highspot of our meal was Mrs L's Warm Salad of Duck Confit with Baby Beetroot and Grilled Pear (\$24,50). Duck can be a be very variable in restaurants but this was superb. I know because I was allowed a generous taste. The beetroot was a novel surprise. In addition to the "common or garden" burgundy coloured beetroot, we had some of the newly developed golden beetroot, its richness of colour matched by the taste.

As a dieter, my choice was more conventional, a no nonsense Asparagus and Smoked Salmon Salad with Poached Egg (\$24,50).

Instead of entree, we shared a plate of Middle Eastern Dips with Grilled Turkish Bread (\$14.50) but went our separate ways at dessert time.

Mrs L is a rhubarb fancier (I kid her it is an aphrodisiae!) and she pronounced the Stewed Rhubarb with Vanilla Bean Ice Cream (\$10.50) as "very fresh". No complaints either with my Sable with Youngberries and Raspberry Curd (\$10.50)

The restaurant has an exemplary wine list with plenty of reputable boutique vineyards represented, including a rarity, two offerings from Leeton. Always willing to try something new, we opted for one of these, the Thomas & Thomas Classic Dry White (\$6 a glass, \$24 a bottle.)

For the modest imbiber the restaurant has one wine available by the glass in every category.

Restaurant prices have escalated quite dramatically of late, and prepare for an even greater shock when GST comes in.

With six glasses of wine, a tonic water and five courses, our bill was of the order of \$147, including weekend surcharge.

However the meal was superb, with polished and enthusiastic service, and food that arrived promptly despite the number of people being served. And as the lovely view is thrown in free, the establishment still gets full marks for value.



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REAL ESTATE REPORT

• As reported below, site preparations have started to build townhouses in Holdsworth Street, at the corner of Jersey Road. Although the "blot on the landscape" of the untidy site hopefully will soon be no more, pedestrians in Holdsworth Street probably will still have to make the agonising choice between picking their way along a footpath made almost impassable by a zig zag of steel fencing, or stepping out into the road and being hit by a car!



Boom to continue until GST

by Robin Brampton

REAL estate prices continued to grow strongly in the Queen Street area in 1999, often beyond expectations.

Joe Abboud of Richardson & Wrench said the highest sale in the locality was when his organisation secured \$7.56 million for the Hillside Building, an older style property of 11 apartments in Edgecliff Road.

"There is always one sale in the Queen Street area that stands out," said Joe. "This year it was a free-standing modern house in John Street that sold for \$2.65 million."

Joe believes that the market strength will continue into the new year, at least until June, followed by some uncertainty when GST is introduced.

A similar view was expressed by Georgia Cleary whose Paddington-based real estate agency recently celebrated a very successful first year of operation.

She said that in addition to the unsettling effect of GST, which will increase the costs of selling a property, any rise in interest rates would not help the market.

Georgia has secured very healthy prices for real estate in a large area of the Eastern Suburbs and says that in addition to Woollahra-Paddington, the Coogee-Tamarama area is experiencing an ongoing boom.

WORK has just started on site preparations for the building of six town houses and an art gallery on the devastated site of the former Holdsworth Gallery at the corner of Holdsworth Street and Jersey Road.

When the appeal by the owners of the town house sites came before the Land and Environment Court, Woollahra Council withdrew its objections. The Council was satisfied that the amendments the applicants had made to their schemes met the Council's concerns which were mainly on heritage and streetscape grounds.

Peter Kauter, the Council officer handling the development, said in November that construction certificates had now been issued and the developers were anxious to proceed.

We trust this means the early end to the stagnant pools of wat and general ugliness of the site which the Council unsuccessfully tried to make the developers clear up earlier in the year.

AN area of Ocean Street opposite Wellington Street, which saw the creation of three major town house and home unit developments in the 1960s, is likely to see renewed multi-residence development in the year 2000.

A proposal to construct eight new town houses on the site of an old home at Number 60 was withdrawn when local residents objected, mainly on the grounds of intensity. A redesign, with only five luxury town houses, met with virtually no opposition. Now the site, with planning approval, is due for auction of December 6.

At Number 64, a cleared site with an approved scheme by Allen Jack + Cottier for four luxury town houses was auctioned in September by Blackett and Glasgow for \$3.06 million.

The site was formerly occupied by a grand turn-of-the-century brick mansion with a tennis court in front. Ironically, Blackett and Glasgow suggested that, as an alternative to town houses, the new owner might like to build their own magnificent mansion — with a tennis court!

QUEEN Street has a new name in real estate. Longstanding local real estate sales operators. Tim Pockley and David Roderick, have surrendered the Raine and Horne franchise and now operate under their own names as Pockley and Roderick.

We wish them well. The address is still 108 Queen Street, phone 9328 7211.

Living in John Street - what I love and hate

by Warren Fahey

JOHN Street, Woollahra, has developed a certain mystique; and as a long-standing resident. I am always fascinated how these things develop.

I was recently mentioned in a Sydney Morning Herald Domain feature on the street and identified as "music man Warren Fahey". So I got to wonder about the street's obvious appeal.

There are things I really dislike about John Street. The plane trees drive my allergies mad in spring and summer. The garbage trucks seem to delight in arriving at 5.30 am. Parking is now at a premium every Friday and sturday evening.

Hoon raceway

Locals still use the lanes as dumping grounds for old whitegoods, furniture and garden refuse. Then there are the hoons who insist on using the street as a raceway.

In retrospect, these are small irritations compared with the positives of the area.

Not much I can do about the plane trees or the garbos. However, Council has been working on a roundabout at the junction of Moncur and John Streets which should stop the speeding cars. And as for the lanes, well this is something we all need to be aware of.

The positives of the area contribute to John Street's reputation and, for my money, they include me old favourites and some recent arrivals.

The Queen Street shopping centre has changed considerably since I arrived nearly 20 years ago. It now boasts top class stores, especially the food outlets, newsagency, bookstore, video library, chemist and giftware.

If I have a gripe in this area it is the butcher and chemist not being open on Saturday afternoons. But the neighbouring specialist stores of Simon Johnson and Jones the Grocer are especially welcome.

Sunday plea

Love the antiques. However I wish the street would open on Sunday when folk love to walk the strip.

The dry cleaner on the corner of Queen and Victoria Streets appears to be doing good business and that spot has certainly changed. It was a

two-pump petrol garage when I first moved into John Street.

Another attraction of the area must be the the quantity, within walking distance, of quality eating and drinking destinations.

I'm simply mad about The Jersey Cow, Agostini's, Bistro Moncur and the Centennial. Then there are the wonderful cafes where coffee and atmosphere meet so successfully.

What else do I love about John Street? Well I can tell you I don't love the junk mail. Residents must be targeted for just about every mail box campaign imaginable.

We get boxes full of the crap, despite signs that say "No Junk Mail", "No Unsolicited Mail", etc. Every day we throw away half a forest.

Local real estate agents are the main offenders, closely followed by the junk food leaflets.

I have often thought about collecting every single piece of mail and analysing it at year's end. But I suspect it would be too depressing. So I will refrain,

Atmosphere

I love the easy access to the great Centennial Park; the walk through Trumper Park and the "Paddington gully"; and the close proximity of Paddington's Oxford Street where, sadly, the retail mix has finished up looking like a clothes bag.

I love the 10 minutes to the city, Harbour or beach. Most of all I love the village atmosphere of West Woollahra and the people who live here.

(Warren Fahey is a writer, record producer, performer and folklorist. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1987 for his service to the arts.)



Robin Brampton at the investiture with the New South Wales Governor, Mr Gordon Samuels. Robin is showing him an item from his theatre collection, a 1960s programme of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" in which the Governor's wife, actress Jacqueline Kott, played the lead role of Martha.

Robin Brampton awarded OAM

by Graham Freudenberg

THE Admirable Crichton of Queen Street. Robin Brampton, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in the 1999 Queen's Birthday Australian Honours.

The Governor of New South Wales, Mr Gordon Samuels, inducted Robin into the Order of Australia at Government House, Sydney, on September 23.

The Queen's citation stated that the award was in recognition of his community services, particularly to the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association.

Among those nominating Robin for the award were the patron of the association, Mr Neville Wran, Sir James Hardy, Leo Schofield and two former Mayors of Woollahra, David Leach and Charles Widdy.

They all emphasised that Robin's community services extended far beyond his foundational involvement in the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association, although he was gratified that this was especially mentioned in the citation. Neville Wran spoke of Robin's outstanding voluntary work on behalf of senior citizens in the Woollahra Municipality.

Sir James Hardy drew attention to his indefatigable promotion of Australian wines.

Wine promotion

At the investiture, the Governor recalled that Robin had, uniquely, twice received Woollahra Council's Citizen of the Year Award.

Our heartiest congratulations to Robin on the well-deserved recognition of his outstanding contribution to our community over three decades.

Etcetera shop pioneer dies

MARGARET Thompson, one of the pioneers who transformed Queen Street from its post-war dowdiness to become an avenue of fascinating shops, has died at the age of 65.

Her Etectera store at Number 100, which she opened in 1965, was an Aladdin's cave of fascinating small gifts. She is also remembered for the range of aprons and other fabric items, with a distinctive daisy emblem, which she manufactured.

Margaret retired and closed the shop in 1994, following illness, but she owned Number 100 until recently when it was bought by the present occupiers, Ian and Belinda Perryman, who run a successful antique carpet and rug business.

Margaret's partner in later life, who pre-deceased her, was the flamboyant "Last Card Louie" Benedetto, a one time gambler and Kings Cross personality.

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