



the peninsula Observer

newsletter of the Balmain Association

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Saving the Balmain Tramway substation

by Malcolm Garder



The only remaining tramway substation in Sydney, located at 10 Hancock Street, Rozelle was slated for demolition in 1992.

This 1907 industrial building was the last remaining intact structure of its kind in the state. The local Rozelle Chamber of Commerce had demanded that Council purchase the derelict and long unused Balmain Tramway

Substation for shopper parking.

As the property was owned by the NSW Government a fair deal was quickly arranged for its transfer into Council's ownership.

Unfortunately for the Chamber of Commerce I was asked to value the property for Council. On my initial inspection I could immediately see the heritage significance of the building and realised its demolition

would not be in the public interest. In my report I detailed my concerns and recommended that the Town Planner investigate the heritage significance. Allan Coker, the then Chief Planner, recommended retention of the building.

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Letters to the editor

Malcolm Garder's article on the new tobacconist shop in Darling Street fired up a strong reaction among *The Peninsula Observer* readers. Below are some of the heated responses we received to Malcolm Garder's call for comments. The issue has clearly got a lot of people hot under the collar!

In the June edition of *The Peninsula Observer* you asked for feedback on your front page story about the tobacco store in Balmain, so for what it's worth I thought I'd let you know that I agree one hundred percent with the the actions of the Balmain Association in this instance and like you am horrified by the apparent indifference of the Council and Police. I well remember the enormous trouble and expense I went to to get a Development Application for a tiny attic I put in and am staggered to hear that the shop proceeded without bothering and that the Council doesn't seem to care. There seems to be two laws operating here and if I was still a resident of the peninsula I would be outraged. Keep up the good work. It's nice to know that someone still cares.

JN

Good work on pursuing the issue of the vape shop. From the article in the newsletter, it appears any property owner/ developer can destroy heritage without approval, but then lodge a building certificate with Council to then gain the appropriate paperwork. And all without a penalty. This of course is the way to get things done by the shonky operators.

A vape shop in this most prominent location should be of concern to the Council and residents. We seem to have gone backwards from the resounding success of plain cigarette packaging and accompanying health warnings. These vape/convenience shops are everywhere now along with the health issue of children and vaping - much of which will not be realised until a short time in the

future, i.e. what will be the health impacts of vaping in children generally?

Unfortunately whatever business model these outfits are set up around often means they stick around despite little patronage. Yes please continue to pursue any avenue you can with Council and the authorities to ensure the heritage frontage is reinstated and let's hope the outlet just closes through lack of business.

ADS

Good on the BA for championing this matter. Destroying a heritage shopfront to start with, then moving in without a DA for a business which is a scourge. Another example was the loss of the heritage shopfront for the newsagency near Charlottes Cafe in Rowntree Street near the intersection with Cameron Street. It has been replaced by yet another beauty salon. Why is Council complacent?

JS

Having a vape shop is bad enough, but destruction of the traditional shopfront adds insult to injury. They should be made to restore it properly, as an example to anyone else who might have similar ideas.

MW

Great article on 285 Darling Street. You asked for feedback - I wrote to Kobi and asked what we can do about the change. Kobi said she'll follow up with the council on this unauthorized change.

Thanks for letting us know!

MH

I thoroughly applaud your taking that tobacco station roller door issue up with council, but can we do anything to get rid of the

shop altogether? It is nothing but an invitation to entice people into buying vapes by pretending to be a chip and lolly store. Who owns Tobacco Station anyway? A big red sign pushing tobacco in the middle of our shopping street is an eyesore. We fought off McDonalds and some American coffee house chain, we need to get rid of this mob too.

AP

I agree with everything you write in your article in the *Peninsula Observer* about the new tobacco shop. I've been away for a couple of months and apologise for not writing sooner to you or Council.

I strongly object to the shop starting without development approval for its operation or change to the frontage.

I oppose its purpose of selling tobacco products and for it being, most likely, a front for selling vaping products illegally including to children. I object to any shop of this kind but especially in prime central locations such as this one where it is visible to all walkers and drivers. I strongly recommend Council not to approve this change of usage.

I was angry to see they demolished the old window and entrance frontage and so blatantly without permission and even without even applying for approval.

This business has proven it has no respect for Council and its authority and therefore no respect for the Balmain community.

Thanks for all you've done and are doing about this awful business.

AL

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This caused ructions in Council as some Councillors were in favour of demolition.

The Chamber of Commerce was in uproar! Council would not demolish an old factory building for its customer car park.

Allan Coker was blamed for allowing the purchase to go ahead and Larry Hand, the Mayor at the time, (who supported retention of the building) was in the firing line from both sides.

When things quietened down the property was put on the market with heritage controls in place and the Council then had control on any development.

The property was purchased by a sympathetic resident who started the renovation process and subdivided the block retaining the rear office-like building as a separate dwelling.

The main tramway substation was restored and extended as a warehouse office and residence with a mezzanine floor. The substation has changed hands a number of times, the latest sale being in August 2023.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* 'Domain' featured the building in its August 12, 2023 issue.

It's good to look back 30 years to see a unique piece of our industrial heritage saved, loved and repurposed in our very diverse area.

Thanks to Bresic Whitney for the photos used in this article.



The Balmain Association Inc. representing Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle

Since 1965 we have aimed to:

- Improve the living, working and recreational amenities of our area
- maintain all features having natural, architectural and or historical value of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest
- seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above.

Members are welcome to attend the Balmain Association meetings at 6pm on the first Wednesday of each month at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain.

The History Room at the Watch House is open every Saturday from 11:30am to 3pm and every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm.

Website: www.balmainassociation.org.au

Postal: PO Box 57 Balmain 2041

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From the archives

by Helen Carter

Last year a number of plastic containers were delivered to the Watch House and amongst the material was a hard cover journal style scrapbook.

It had been in the possession of the Blue Mountains Historical Association and a cursory look revealed the handwritten name of 'Fras Spence' on a number of admission tickets and a letter revealed that Fras Spence lived in Booth Street.

Scrapbooking was a popular hobby during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Pasted in this book were press clippings and other ephemera such as theatre programs, regatta programs and a number of admission tickets; all of which were related to entertainment on offer in Balmain during the 1860s.

Interestingly, J. Degotardi, an east

Balmain resident, printed many of these programs at Sydney Printing House, Robinhood Lane, Sydney.

A search on Trove (the National Library of Australia's digitised newspaper database) came up with a Mr Francis Spence, a civil servant, as the Hon. Secretary of the Balmain Regatta in 1867 (*SMH*, December 2, 1867).

From the earlier cuttings it appeared that Francis Spence not only had an interest in sailing and amateur rowing but also volunteer rifle matches held at the Balmain Butts or the Military Range at Paddington. He held the rank of Colour Sergeant. Apart from these sports Francis attended a number of performances by the Balmain Amateur Dramatic Association (under Vice-Regal Patronage) and musical concerts put on by the

Balmain Musical Union and held in the School of Arts. The price of a ticket was about four shillings.

I am glad that the newspaper cuttings in this journal are now digitised as they are disintegrating and discoloured and not a desirable tool to find out information.

On the other hand the entertainment tickets and programs are in much better condition and will remain as a tangible link to the past for some time. This fascinating journal certainly gives the reader an insight into Mr Spence's lifestyle. It illustrates that there was a local cultural awareness and that the School of Arts provided a venue for live performances that members of the Balmain community could attend during their leisure hours.





Members of several Balmain community groups were present at the naming of the Kathleen Hamey Glasshouse on June 29 this year.

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Cr Kobi Shetty forwarded an update from the Inner West Council regarding the tobacco shop.

‘A site inspection was undertaken by an Officer on the 7 July 2022 and it was noted that the wall signs do not appear to be exempt under Subdivision 3 of the SEPP, and the Fascia Sign also does not appear to be exempt under Subdivision 4 of the SEPP. Therefore, the issues were the Wall Signs (the ones around the front of the shop) and the Fascia Signs (the one attached to the front of the awning fronting the street). Council issued an Notice of Intent to Serve an Order for the

removal of this signage on the 5 August 2022, which has now been completed and the signs have been removed. The remaining under awning sign and top hamper sign are exempt development under the SEPP and therefore can remain.

Regarding the type of business in this area, this comes under exempt development. This property was approved as a retail business in 2006, even though this is a Tobacconist, Council does not see this a matter considered under planning requirements.

A further Notice of Intention was issued on the 21 February 2023 advising to demolish and remove

all components of the newly erected roller door at the front of the premises and to reinstate the timber and glass shopfront that faced Darling Street, Balmain. Development Control Order was issued on the 28 March 2023 requiring the demolition and removal of all components of the newly erected roller door at the front of the premises and to reinstate the timber and glass shopfront that faced Darling Street, Balmain. They had until 5pm 10 May 2023 to comply.’

Exhibition at the Watch House

by Di Garder

Last Sunday, after a day out in Sydney enjoying the unseasonably warm weather, Mal and I caught the ferry from Barangaroo to Balmain east and then the bus up the hill to the centre of Balmain.

As we passed the Watch House we saw that the art exhibition was still open and there was music in the front garden so we jumped off the bus!

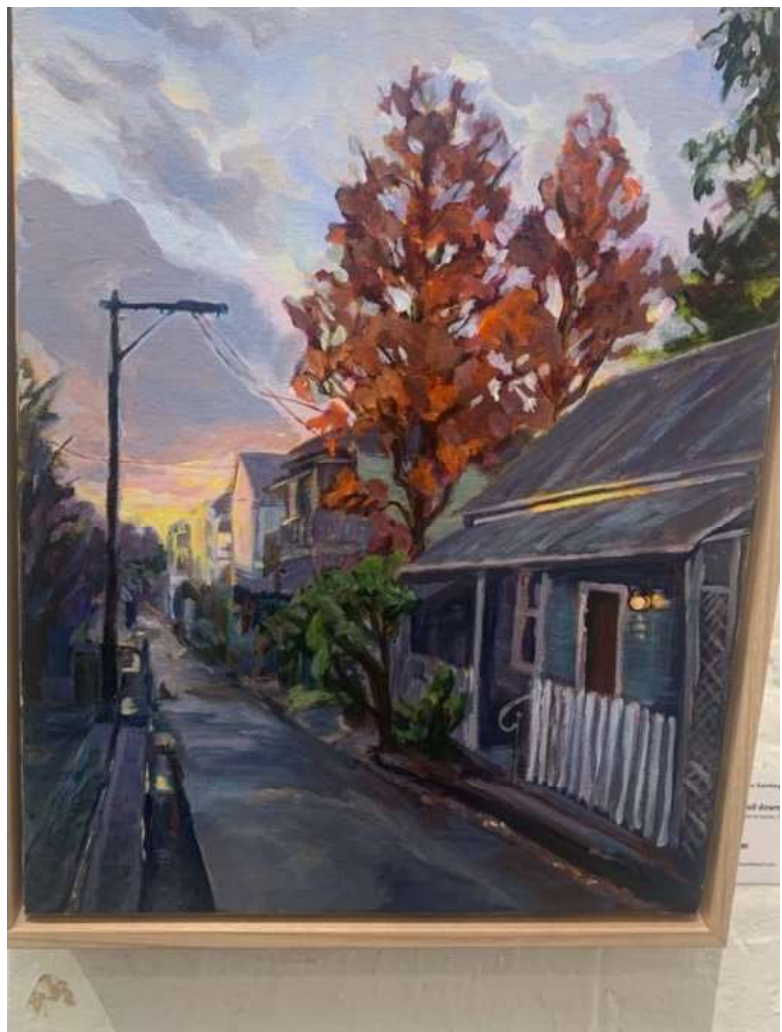
We met Nicole, one of artists, who offered us a glass of wine and told us about the exhibition.

It was 'Scene' In the Neighbourhood – street scenes around Balmain, the inner city and some house interiors. All very interesting.

The other artists were Jane and Fangmin and we chatted to both of them as well.

Entertainment was provided by singer, Sara, an old schoolfriend of Jane's and certainly added to the atmosphere.

It was a very enjoyable interlude on our way home and I would encourage all of you to check out the exhibitions at the Watch House!



Stroll down Gladstone Street by Jane Sankey.

What's on at the Watch House

Please check the Balmain Association website www.balmainassociation.org.au for up-to-date information on art exhibitions.

ExtraTexture

ExtraTexture return in September with their new textile and mixed media exhibition. This time the five are exploring their connections to place. They are looking at the strong links we have to the land, to country, to the plant and animal life that lives on it. It is also an opportunity to think about those who came before us and their relationship with a particular part of the land. We celebrate those places that give us a sense of belonging and peace, our 'happy place'.

Saturday 15, Sunday 16, Friday 22, Saturday 23 and Sunday 24, September. Open from 10am to 4pm.

Meet the artists: Saturday 15 at 2pm.



Reflections of time

Craft NSW is a group of artisans creating quality collectable and wearable handmade craft. The society has a long history, dating back to 1906. Australia's oldest craft association. With the ongoing aim to support, encourage, and share creativity while acknowledge craft making is ageless and timeless. Engaging in a wide range of traditional crafts their makers create contemporary, intriguing and at times whimsical products to wear or display, continuing to push boundaries in their respective mediums. Its website, www.artsandcraftnsw.com.au allows browsing with online shopping and view to its informative newsletter *Telopea* that contains exhibition detail, artist interviews and so much more. As collaborative group, it welcomes emerging craft artists to join its membership. The group exhibition is a showcase of creative artists joining together to exhibit their exploration of a common theme. Time is precious. Spare time is rare. Time to create is joyous. The visual idea is personal, the learning and developmental journey is at times, challenging but ultimately exciting. With fellowship and mutual respect Craft NSW present its interpretation of **time**. The process of sharing dissolves the many hours to achieve the artist's result. The exhibition dates October 6 to 15 from 11am to 6pm daily. Free entry.



What's on at the Watch House

Crossing the evening bridge

Sue Hanckel is a contemporary printmaker of unique large scale works on paper. In her solo exhibition Crossing the Evening Bridge, Sue has collated her bold abstract prints inspired by mythic narratives and the night sky. Her art practice is a journey of conjecture and fictional mapping across imagined spaces on paper. There is a central recurring theme in her work – the question of how we find meaning and orientation when confronted with experiences of transience and absence. Her large sheets of Hahnemuhle paper become metaphoric spaces for her to construct complex and layered works with stencil, cut-outs and collage. Each of her works is unique - some are vivid and dynamic, others are quiet and contemplative, all of them inviting curiosity. In 2023 Sue has been able to further develop her printmaking skill as an Artist-in-Residence in the Creative Studios at Gallery Lane Cove.

Email: sue@suehanckel.net Instagram: [@suehanckel](https://www.instagram.com/suehanckel)
Thursday 26 to Sunday 29 October 2023, 10am to 4pm.
Opening Saturday, 1pm to 4pm. All welcome.



A love of watercolour

Our exhibition opening on 17 November 2023 to 19 November 2023.

The name of our exhibition is “A love of watercolour.” We are five women artists who feel watercolour is an underrated medium. It is something everyone tries but few conquer.

Our exhibition will feature different subjects painted here and overseas.

Please come and visit us just to see the variety possible in watercolour paints.

Retrospective: Justin Parker local art exhibition

Opening night: Friday 8 December 2023 6pm to 9pm

Viewing: 9 to 10 December 2023 10am to 5pm

“My favourite spot is where I meet people drawn together by a common desire – artists in glass, sculptors, painters.”

Justin was dedicated to his art, exploring different styles. He was a master at watercolour, painting with a proficiency that showed his understanding of the intricacies of that difficult medium. portrayals of life in the inner west.

He was a winner of the Glebe Art Show, and his painting is hanging, much to his amusement, in the mayor's office.

