



the balmain association

LEICHHARDT TOWN PLAN COUNCIL MEETING TUESDAY · 2 MAR, 76

The future of Leichhardt Municipality as a residential area will be decided at this meeting

PLEASE ATTEND!!

Many people will remember the lengths to which the 1971-1974 Leichhardt Council and its Town Planning Committee went to involve the residents in the formulation of the Leichhardt Outline Plan. These efforts culminated in 1974 in the submission to the State Planning Authority (now the N.S.W. Planning and Environment Commission) of a plan which was widely acclaimed for its enlightened and realistic policies and objectives.

Residents were dismayed when, as well as sacking the forward planning staff, the current Council attempted to withdraw the Outline Plan. The State Planning Authority fortunately thwarted this attempt, and suspended its review of the plan until this council had examined it. A series of amendments were proposed by the Consultant Town Planner, Mr. A Kenna, in April 1975 and the comments of the Planning and Environment Commission are shown below:

"... 3. It would, however, appear that there are three issues of regional significance that require further consideration by the Council. They relate to conservation, density control of residential development and development of foreshore land.

4. The revised policy on conservation does not appear to go far enough. No "actions" are indicated with regard to conservation and rehabilitation of historical precincts and areas of significant townscape and environmental quality. No reference is made, for instance, to density control over historical buildings and buildings in proximity to them to focus their significance and to ensure their proper maintenance. These "actions" are of particular importance to the Municipality of Leichhardt on account of its history, the variety of its activities and the special quality of its environment.

5. As regards density of residential development, it is noted that the Council desires to encourage higher densities in new development. It is not clear in what areas these higher densities will be permitted and on what basis, considering that the street system in Leichhardt is inadequate to deal with the increased volumes of traffic resulting from high density development. Both aesthetic and environmental factors would also have to be considered.

6. The quality of the foreshores of Leichhardt suggests that the Council should ensure the dedication of open space for public use in conjunction with all new development."

Now, the amended plan is before the Council again. Little has been done to correct the gross planning deficiencies listed above.

In summary, the zones described in the 1974 scheme have been retained, but the population densities have been doubled. In zones where residential development is to be allowed, the amendments will permit flat buildings between three storeys and greater than eight storeys to be erected. Readers are referred to a map published in the Leichhardt Local, Feb. 17, for details.

In other words, the municipality of Leichhardt is being handed to developers on a silver platter. Detailed implications of the scheme are discussed later in this issue.

The matter was raised at the Council meeting on Feb. 3. Mayor Rodwell vacated the chair (strange) for his honourable deputy, Danny Casey during the debate which resulted in deferral of a decision until March 2.

It is essential that Balmain residents register their feelings on this vital issue. Inform your neighbours and friends and attend the council meeting at Leichhardt Town Hall, Tuesday March 2, 1976, at 7.30 pm.

BACKGROUND TO THE TOWN PLANNERS' PROPOSALS AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

The 1974 Planning Scheme for Leichhardt not only recognised the clear indications of the many residents, who were consulted during its preparation, that they did not want substantial changes to their localities, but was also based on sound economic and social principles.

Quite clearly these principles are not understood by the present planning staff of the Leichhardt Council who have proposed what are, in terms of current thinking, quite ludicrous changes to that scheme. It is only to be hoped that a majority of the aldermen, at least, can be made to realise the error of the Town Planner's ways and not adopt his proposals.

There are great difficulties in briefly discussing town planning issues (and particularly the issue of redevelopment in residential areas) because there are many pitfalls in any generalisations. However, it is true to say that the experience of many western cities, here and abroad over the past 20 years has demonstrated that attempts to redevelop, or permit the redevelopment of densely populated urban areas has rarely, if ever, produced the results which were desired. Leichhardt is one of the most densely populated areas of Sydney.

Clearly there are situations of great dereliction and of poor building stock offering low standard accommodation where, probably, redevelopment is an answer to existing problems, but such conditions do not exist to any significant extent in Leichhardt.

Redevelopment schemes or encouragements to private 'piecemeal' redevelopment (which is what the Leichhardt Town Planner is advocating) are traditionally justified on the grounds that they "eliminate slums", "improve local amenity", "provide low income housing" - for of course the existing residents also, "make economic use of land" and "halt declining populations".

In practice they have, more often than not, even when expertly guided with the best of intentions:

- produced more 'slums' than they replaced (and one only has to look at some of the examples of shoddy, poorly-planned flat buildings built in Leichhardt in recent years to see this)
- downgraded existing environments by destroying their scale, character and amenity.
- resulted in flats, which, as they are built for and sold on the going market, are outside the reach of the low income earner.
- Have created insecurity for and displacement of existing residents.
- Loaded extra demands onto public facilities the costs of which have to be met by the local community. Such costs include road widening, provision and maintenance of open space, etc.

- . Resulted in little, if any, gain in population: This is because the number of people living in each new dwelling is less than in those they replace, and because other demands on land generated by people living at higher densities begin to use up land previously in residential use.

For these reasons most publicly funded urban renewal programmes now concentrate on the rehabilitation of existing dwellings, redevelopment of only those dwellings which are in extreme delapidation and development only of vacant sites and land which is undergoing a change of use.

Similarly, intelligently conceived planning controls over private development, such as those now in operation in the City of Sydney, (in areas such as Newtown and South Paddington which are very similar to much of Leichhardt Municipality) are concerned with conserving existing sound housing stock (by only permitting low redevelopment densities) and identifying specific and often very small locations or sites where redevelopment might be desirable and placing controls on those sites which will ensure that their development does not adversely affect existing residential areas.

This was the approach of the 1974 Planning Scheme.

The present Council have before them a totally contrary proposition which will permit redevelopment over most of the municipality - apparently much of it in high rise buildings.

A comparison of the Town Planners proposals with the 1968 planning scheme, which permitted the significant quantity of inappropriate redevelopment already blighting parts of the Leichhardt Municipality is significant. It is significant because the planners present proposals, if adopted would indicate to developers that the Council was permitted to and apparently willing to approve high density high rise buildings (*see footnote) over even more of the Municipality than the 1968 scheme permitted.

In addition to this, the densities proposed for most of the rest of the Municipality will indicate to developers that the Council is permitted to approve buildings of three storeys or even more (*see footnote) over practically all the remainder of the municipality - areas in which previously no flats at all were permitted.

Where, or even whether, in the current economic climate and the high value of existing houses (which makes their demolition a very expensive proposition) developers might take advantage of the densities which would be

permitted, should the town planners proposal be adopted, is very hard to predict. However the fact remains that the aldermen would have the discretion to approve virtually anything anywhere and that if it is approved there is a high probability that it will be very wrong for its location.

Apart from the fairly obvious facts that aldermen, and local government town planners enjoy discretion (in many ways) and that this "laissez-faire" approach to planning is much easier than deciding in advance where certain things should or should not be permitted, it is hard to see why the aldermen should want to take what is bound to be the politically risky course of adopting the town planner's recommendations. And in this context it is worth trying to predict what effects its adoption might produce.

1. Although it is impossible to predict, without some kind of crystal ball, what the economies of development might be, over the next few years it is possible that some sites might change hands for redevelopment purposes at prices which will cause the Valuer General to increase valuations in those areas within which high density redevelopment is proposed. Should this happen, and this is apparently what the town planner hopes will happen, the result would be to increase rateable values in many of the 'poorer' areas of the municipality, such as Rozelle, Lilyfield and parts of Leichhardt, Annandale and Glebe. On the other hand the rateable value of properties in the more expensive parts of Balmain, Glebe and Annandale would be less affected. In other words, the rate burden would tend to be shifted onto the poorer residents of the municipality.

2. It is possible that some projects might actually be built. There is nothing in the proposed planning scheme to suggest that the Council would have the power to refuse applications for buildings such as the eight storey blocks in Nicholson Street, Balmain and other similar ones in Lilyfield, Rozelle and Glebe.

It is fairly clear that 'hardliners' are waiting in the wings for development approvals on major buildings in Fitzroy Avenue, on Glebe Point and at Marion and Flood Sts. Leichhardt (to name but a few). It is also impossible to tell what other parcels of land have been quietly amalgamated in expectation.

3. As the level of large-scale building activity increases (and this is what the town planner apparently wishes to encourage) so will the degree of insecurity of residents increase. In the longer term this of course means less concern about the condition of existing houses.

The Mayor in a number of recent statements has indicated that he supports the planners proposals, so it is likely that despite what residents might say the council will adopt them. As they are certainly not in the interests of the residents, one can only ask why?

* Footnote: State Planning Authority Technical Bulletin No. 3 (Nov. 1972) - Planning Control of Residential Development, describes population densities between 250 and 350 persons per hectare (Town Planner's proposed zones 2(a1), 2(b1), 2(c2), 2(a2), 2(b2)) as high/medium density, comprised either of low rise flats covering high proportion of site or high rise flats, and describes population density of 500 persons per hectare (Town Planner's zones 2(a3)) as high density, mainly high rise with multi-level parking.

council report

LEIGHARDT COUNCIL MEETING - 3 February, 1976

Contrary to what this News Sheet has said in the past, it is not free entertainment that is provided at Leichhardt Council meetings.

It is costing us money and plenty of it.

The General Rate has been fixed for 1976. Once again a substantial increase has been imposed upon the ratepayers.

What is happening to our money? Part of the estimates for 1976 include these figures:

Mayoral Allowance	\$4,500
Aldermen's Fees	\$6,000
Aldermen's Travelling Expenses & Allowance	\$4,600

These items represent just a small part of the cost of conducting council meetings. In addition, there are the salaries of council staff in attendance, cost of lighting, air conditioning, suppers for the aldermen and so on.

No-one could quibble at the amount spent on council meetings if they were conducted in a proper way, with debate taking place on important issues and genuine attempts were being made to come to grips with the problems facing Leichhardt. Problems such as the threat of expressways and high rise development, the lack of open space (which places us 35th on the list of forty local government areas in Sydney) and the enormous rate burden on residents.

We can complain, and bitterly, if our money and council servants' time is wasted in the manner it was on 3 February, 1976.

Deputy Mayor, Dan Casey's comment aptly summed up eleven out of the twelve aldermen's attitude to council meetings.

"We're not here to explain to you people".

One wonders why they are there. Ald. Casey seems to regard council meetings as a forum to publicly air his opinions of members of the public gallery. Whilst chairing the meeting he took the opportunity to describe members of the press and gallery as "scum" and "liars".

Paradoxically, Ald. Casey seemed not to want to hear what he had to say. On being asked "speak up please Mr. Deputy Mayor, we can't hear you", he promptly called for the removal from the gallery of the person who spoke.

Not surprisingly, the gallery member refused to be removed for such a ludicrous reason. Ald. Casey then threatened to call the police and have a summons issued in the morning, adjourned the council meeting and challenged the speaker to "step outside".

The aldermen left the council chambers and filed into an adjoining room where supper and liquid refreshment were laid out. The residents were left with no indication of when the meeting would be resumed.

Most of those present in the gallery were there because they wanted to hear discussion of the Town Plan. It was not discussed. Others were there because they wanted to register their protest against high rise development. They were not heard. Still others were there in the vain hope that they might learn just what is happening in Leichhardt.

Perhaps all these people feel that they received a good night's comic entertainment. A little reflection on how much it is costing them might take the humour out of it.

DEVELOPERS' BONANZA

In the last month, we have had a taste of what is yet to come.

Without any discussion, the following developments were approved at the last two Council Meetings.

- . Parkes Developments - to subdivide a large parcel of land on Blackwattle Bay for the specific purpose of commencing residential development.
- . Parkes Development - to erect 150 2-bedroom flats in Glebe Point Road.
- . Dunbar International - to erect 20 town houses on land fronting Mort Bay between Nicholson Street & Duke Place.
- . L. Tang (Architect) - to erect 15 town houses between Cove and Rose Streets, Birchgrove.

TILBA AVENUE MARINA

The long battle against the establishment of a marina on the Parramatta River, below Tilba Avenue, is not yet resolved but the future looks grim. The proposal by Mr. J.H. Stride was examined by the M.S.B. at the end of January and the whole project was approved. It now remains in the hands of the Council to show if the opinion of local residents is of any significance - what are the odds?

COUNCIL BIAS IN ADVERTISING

Municipal Councils each year allocate a sum of money for advertising in the local press. Naturally each well-circulated paper would be used for these purposes.

Alderman Nick Origlass produced some interesting figures at the last council meeting. Of the \$6,000.00 allocated for advertising in 1974-75, \$5,000.00 went to the Glebe Weekly, and of the \$8,000.00 for 1975-76, \$3,200 has already gone to the same "rag".

One must surely ask what hold this publication must have over the council, and how long will the aldermen subjugate themselves?

quotes of the month

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

- It was reported that an applicant for a small development had stated that "Les Rodwell is a friend of mine, he will see it goes through"
The Mayor blushed magnificently
Comment from the gallery
"the Mayor's turning Red - you'd better ban him".
- Mayor Rodwell, to the gallery
"What would you know about democracy".
- Danny Casey
"I call Peter Manning a liar"
- Local solicitor complaining of delay in the processing of his application for new premises
"Next thing I'll be soliciting in the street."

projects and activities — reports

MANAGEMENT CHANGES

In the last few weeks, we've had two changes to Management, one gain and one loss.

Margaret Dobson, who was co-opted as Acting Secretary for two months while Evelyn Walker was on holidays, has been persuaded to stay on and share the Secretary's load and assist Management in general. Welcome back Margaret.

Pauline Shelley has gone "back to school". Pauline has been accepted for a 3-year course at Bathurst C.A.E. and is reluctantly leaving Balmain's shores for that period. Over the past 10 months, Pauline has given of her time unstintingly to attend Council meetings and done a magnificent job of reporting their antics. Thanks, Pauline, we wish you well.

balmain garden walk - 76

We have just about finalized the two routes for our garden walk on Sunday, April 11.

Full details will appear in the next News Sheet, but in the meantime, anyone wishing to obtain their tickets before the big day can do so by sending \$2.00 per ticket and a stamped self-addressed envelope to: The Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041.

Also, if you can help on the day Ken Dates would like to hear from you, telephone 82 0576.

cricket day

For those who receive their News Sheet in time, we have a last-minute change of venue for our challenge match with the Glebe Society on Sunday, February 29. As Birchgrove Oval was not available (because of a build-up of postponed grade matches) we have had to switch to Jubilee Park at Glebe Point.

Malcolm Garder (82 1686) will reserve a place for anyone interested, or furnish any extra information. Please come along!

BALMAIN IN TIME

For those of you who have recently become members, we would like to draw your attention to the publication "Balmain in Time". This book, written by Peter Reynolds and Robert Irving and published by the Association, is a record of historic Balmain and some of its buildings. A brief history of the beginnings of Balmain is given and there are some 60 photographs and illustrations of buildings you will recognise, together with details of their construction and former occupants. The price of this soft-backed 40-page publication is only \$2.00 and can be obtained by forwarding your cheque to the Balmain Association, P.O. Box 57, Balmain, 2041. Delivery in the Balmain/Rozelle area is free.

watch these dates !!!

February 29, Sunday 10.00 am

Balmain Association vs. Glebe Society
Annual Cricket Match at Jubilee Park,
Glebe Point (See note this issue).

March 2, Tuesday, 8.00 pm

A POSITIVE MUST!!
LEICHHARDT COUNCIL MEETING, TOWN HALL,
NORTON STREET, LEICHHARDT -
THE FUTURE OF LEICHHARDT MUNICIPALITY WILL
BE DECIDED.

March 5 & 6, Friday & Saturday, 8.00 am
Balmain Theatre Group Revue "Theatre
of the Cream".

March 16, Tuesday, 8.00 pm

Leichhardt Council Meeting.

April 7, Wednesday, 8.00 pm

Balmain Association General Meeting at
the Watch House, 179 Darling Street,
Balmain. All members and friends welcome.

April 11, Sunday 10.00 am and 2.00 pm

Balmain Garden Walk - 76. (See note
this issue).

CITRUS TREES

Only citrus fruit trees are worth growing in Sydney coastal areas, the conditions being unsuitable for deciduous fruits, as the winters are not cold enough, and the summers are too hot and too wet, with resulting fungus diseases, and, of course, fruit fly proliferate if soft types of fruit are available for them.

Grapefruit grows well and bears freely, followed by mandarins, of which Ellendale is the best-flavoured. Oranges such as Jaffa, Parramatta and Valencia are satisfactory. Avoid Washington Naval as it seldom bears well near the coast, also Limes are not worth their keep.

Eureka lemon is the best variety; Meyer lemon is too susceptible to fruit fly. Citrus like light soil, with good drainage. Fertilise twice yearly, in Aug. - Sept., and Feb. - March, with general mixed fertiliser. Use liberally, in a wide band around tree out to the drieline of branches. Keep the fertiliser away from tree trunk. Water in the fertiliser well. No need to dig around the tree. To avoid collar-rot in citrus, keep all grass etc. well away from trunks of the trees; lemons are particularly susceptible to this ailment. Best month to plant out new trees is September; this gives a chance to become well established before the hot weather.

If buying in containers, smaller ones sometimes better, as larger ones may be root-bound, and never make good trees. Ideal age is one year from when it has been grafted. Do not plant any deeper in the ground than it was in the container.

Little pruning is needed for citrus beyond going over for dead wood, useless twigs and a little shaping. Do not cut out the centre as it needs all its foliage as protection against sun scald. Watch for scale invasions (two types, red and white). Spray in December and repeat in two weeks.

J. Murray
Balmain Garden Club

membership form

I wish to open/renew my membership with the
Balmain Association and enclose \$.....*
subscription.

Name.....

Address.....

.....Telephone.....

Send to:

The Hon. Secretary, The Balmain Association, P.O.
Box 57, Balmain, 2041.

*Subscription rates: Single membership \$2.00
Family \$4.00
Pensioner / Junior \$0.20

next general meeting

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 8.00 pm

WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING ST., BALMAIN

ALL MEMBERS PLEASE ATTEND

FRIENDS ALSO WELCOME

TEA and COFFEE PROVIDED