



NEWS SHEET

148

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

EDITORIAL

This Newsletter contains several articles published on behalf of Action Groups concerned with specific current issues - Mort Bay Action Group, Clontarf Park Action Group and East Balmain Residents Action Group.

The Balmain Association is publishing these articles as they are relevant to one of the aims of the Association, namely to improve the living, working and recreational amenity of our area.

The existence of a large number of Residents Action Groups in the area (those listed above are but a few) indicates the level of concern that local residents have for the future of their suburb. The people involved in these groups include "oldies" as well as "newcomers", who all feel a need for direct action to be taken.

Despite certain statements by various elected leaders at Local, State and Federal levels of Government, Balmain does not have a disproportionately high number of ratbags and stirrers in its population. There must therefore be some other explanation for the concerns which are being expressed.

These concerns are centred on noise levels, traffic congestion and loss of open space for an increasing population. When one considers the combined effects of each proposed development - all of which are being fought over as individual issues - then it is hardly surprising that residents are worried.

An overall plan for the future development of Balmain would surely be a better way of assessing what is needed.

Norman Bull
PRESIDENT

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING COMMUNITY LIAISON

Minutes of Meeting held at the Balmain Watch House,
Tuesday, 14 January 1986 at 7.30 p.m.

INTRODUCTION:

The primary purpose of the meeting was to provide: information to a group of residents' associations, the Department of Housing design process and the DEP's open space plan. This information would be taken back to respective resident groups.

PRESENT:

The Community Liaison Consultant, Representatives from the Department of Housing, Architectural Consultants to the Dept. of Housing, DEP Representatives and a Landscape Design Consultant to the DEP.

Members of the Balmain Association, the Mort Bay Action Group, the Clontarf Park Action Group and other members of the Balmain community.

PART 1: SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES RAISED BY RESIDENTS.

As an overriding objection, Mort Bay Action Group (MBAG) reiterated their demand for the site to be 100% open space and stated that in view of the environmental problems already existing in Balmain, it is up to the Department of Housing to demonstrate that even one dwelling is acceptable.

Issues arising from the discussion are as follows:

1. **PARKING:** It is the opinion of the MBAG that the formula used to calculate car spaces, while being the "official formula used in all housing commission developments", is not adequate for the Balmain area. An increased number of off-street car parking spaces should be provided as there is virtually no on-street spare available now.

2. **DESIGN OF OPEN SPACE AREA:** Some objections were raised to the landscape proposal i.e. lack of B.M.X. bike track, inclusion of kiosk, small number of car parking spaces and inability to estimate how many people will be using the park (this would affect traffic and parking).

3. **OPEN SPACE:** The privately owned land (subject to re-zoning) will not adhere to the 50/50 ratio of open space to housing.

4. **FUNDING FOR OPEN SPACE:** Can funding be found for open space in the area now privately owned and being zoned for housing development through resources other than the Department of Housing?

5. **HOW MUCH LAND WILL BE AVAILABLE:** As the availability of the privately owned land is not yet certain this means that the plans for the Yeend Street site cannot be finalised. How soon can this question be resolved? Land or leasehold interest currently owned by the Maritime Service Board should be transferred as soon as possible and private land purchased by the Dept. of Housing to allow integrated planning of the whole site.

6. **VISITS TO SIMILAR DEVELOPMENTS:** In response to a question by Anne Catling a bus trip to various Department of Housing sites was proposed.

7. **PRIVATE HOUSING:** There was strong opposition to any private housing development on the site.

PART 2: SUMMARY OF MEETING.

Mr. Peter Melser, the Community Liaison Consultant, chaired the meeting. His firm MSJ Keys Young has been briefed to gather community opinions on the development proposed for Mort's Dock. He felt that there has not so far been good communication between "authorities" and residents and the Department of Housing had not been involved in planning before October 1985. However the Department of Housing wishes to listen to residents' opinions, so that it can make satisfactory progress with its investment in the land.

Jean Lenane (MBAG) tabled a position statement on the development.

NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 5TH MARCH 1986

7.30 PM AT THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN.

Ald. N. Origlass made a brief statement stating that all progress on the site should be stopped as it is against the wishes of the electorate and this would be demonstrated if a public meeting were held.

Ald. I. Wyner stated his objection to the nature of this meeting and said it should have been a public meeting, and emphatically stated his desire for the site to be 100% open space.

Peter Melser replied to Messrs. Origlass and Weiner and said he planned to hold a series of these small meetings so that residents' concerns could be systematically worked through, rather than a public meeting which would be disorderly.

Peter Melser then distributed a list of "issues of concern".

Jean Lenane read the MBAG "Position Statement" and specifically requested Peter Melser's delegated powers from the Department of Housing be clarified e.g. can he make changes to the proposal?

Peter Melser replied that he had advisory role only and decisions would be made by the Department of Housing.

Graeme Romans (Clontarf Action Group) read a letter from Mr. V.E. Helby, Chief Executive of the former Housing Commission expressing concern at the "gentrification/invasion" of inner city suburbs. Graeme Romans stated that this is a political statement from a bureaucrat heading a non-planning government body.

Nick O'Neill replied that Graeme Romans' concerns in this regard were irrelevant.

Jean Lenane asked Peter Melser if he would be in favour of an Environmental Impact Study on the development.

In response to the questions by Lionel Glendinning it was stated that the Department of Housing cannot negotiate the relative areas of open space and housing as these were Cabinet decisions and the site had been put together by the State Government with the intention of developing it for housing and open space.

Warwick Hatton introduced Tim Schwager (Schwager Brooks and Partners Pty. Ltd) who outlined the plans for the Mort Street/Cameron Street site which are summarised briefly as follows:

- Area approx. 1.25 hectares
- Considerations are character of landscape, size of apartment blocks, vistas to be kept through the site and integration with existing architecture.
- Mixture of family housing and pensioner housing
- Pensioner housing on Cameron St. side.
- Total of 85 - 94 units
- Pensioner units 14-40
- 1 bedroom units 0 - 19
- 2 " " 0 - 9
- 3 " " 28 - 35
- 4 " " 10 - 13
- Total residents 220 to 290 (including 90 children)
- Parking allowed for 75 vehicles (approximately)
- Parking space formula allows 2, 3 & 4 bedroom units to have 1 space per unit plus 1 visitors space per 5 units. Pensioner units and 1 bedroom units are allowed 1 space per 5 units (at this point this formula was objected to by residents and is listed now as a "Main Issue").
- Cost not including land value \$6-\$7 million depending on the number of units.

Ald. Origlass pointed out that Council's parking code varies widely from the Department's formula.

- Average height 9 metres wall height plus roof (11 metres for 3 storey buildings and 8-9 metres for 2 storey buildings).
- Cameron Street to have 100% 2 storey buildings.
- Mort St. to have 83% 2 storey, 17% 1 storey.
- Front doors on street.
- Maximum 8 units per block.
- Centre of site to have both 2 and 3 storey buildings.

Ken Maher (Ken Maher and Partners Pty. Ltd.) outlined plans for the Yeend St. site which are summarised as follows:-

- Area approx 2.1 hectares
- Ideas still very "general"
- 2 Basic proposals based on different site boundaries
- Would be influenced by availability of privately owned land
- probably 130 to 160 dwellings in total
- 4 bedroom units 20 (approx)
- 3 bedroom units 65 "
- 2 bedroom units 15 "
- 1 bedroom units 55 "
- There will be some pensioner units
- Total residents 425 (including 195 children) (approx.)
- Parking provided at same ratio as Mort St./Cameron St. site.
- Site should be connected to existing street system
- Council to pay for road upkeep within site.
- Cost does not include land value of \$7-\$10 million depending on number of units
- Substantial start made by 1988.

The favoured site for initial development is the Mort St./Cameron St. site but the Department of Housing so far owns only the Yeend St. site.

Tony McCormick (Land Systems Pty. Ltd) presented the landscaping proposals which are summarised briefly as follows:

- D.E.P. acquiring all open space. It already owns some and M.S.B. owns remainder.
- \$1 million dollars is available for development but additional proposals would bring total to \$2.5 million.
- Public and private space will be divided by denser trees and changes in ground levels.
- Stage 1 to be finished by early 1987 (Yeend St.)
- Objectives include staged development, provision of facilities allowed by zoning, freely available to public, promotion of maritime heritage and integration with water.
- A mixture of passive and active uses to be provided for.
- The complete \$2.5 million proposal would include kiosk, swimming enclosure, deck along water edge in Thames St. area, children's playground.
- Parking near Thames St. Wharf to take up lower Mort St. and Thames St. Wharf Park.
- No specific forecast on number of people using the park.

After discussion of the open space landscaping had finished the lack of 50% open space in the privately owned land was raised as a Main Issue of concern.

There was some discussion on merits of having the land zoned for private development versus maritime industrial zoning.

Anne Catling asked if finance is available to provide open space in this site and requested that all possible options be examined.

Anne Catling also asked if the exact status of the availability of this site can be determined for the next meeting and if other similar housing developments can be visited by residents. A bus trip was proposed to visit these sites.

There was discussion on availability from Leichhardt Council of residents' objections to existing proposal. It was generally felt these would be unavailable.

Further questions were raised regarding the percentage of public housing already existing in Balmain and involvement by the National Trust (in view of classification of Balmain by the Trust).

Next meeting to be on 21 January 1986 to concentrate on "Main Issues" to be expressed by residents.

MEETING CLOSED 11.50 P.M.



MORT BAY ACTION GROUP

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER APPOINTED
TO QUELL IMPENDING RIOT IN BALMAIN

The Department of Housing has recognised the fact that a large proportion of the community is against a major housing development in Mort Bay. They have appointed Mr. Peter Melser from the firm MSJ Keys Young Planners Pty. Limited to speak with residents and community leaders regarding the proposed development.

The Project Architect, Mark Singer and Peter Melser are having regular meetings with interested people. Should you wish to participate in these small informal meetings please contact Carol Bennett (Tel: 810 3978) and place your name on the list.

Residents should take advantage of this unique opportunity to express their views to Mr. Melser and Mr. Singer who, unlike most of our elected representatives, are prepared to at least listen. Whether the opinions of residents will have any influence on matters other than the colour of the roofs remains to be seen.

As no Department, Authority or Politician will approve an environment study, the Department of Housing will prepare a statement of environmental effects based on the issues raised by residents. The residents have to be the professionals and experts in predicting the impact such a development would have on our community.

RAFFLE

Dinner for two at the "Manor House Restaurant" or a Flight in a tethered hot-air balloon are prizes being offered in a guessing competition sponsored by the Balmain Association. Entry forms will be available at the Watch House and from members of the Management Committee: Norman Bull, Frances Heathfield, Paddy Draper, Tikwis Begbie, Debby Nicholls and Bob Nicholls, among others.

Tickets are only \$1 each.

"MAINTAIN BALMAIN" EAST BALMAIN RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP

The "temporary" Heliport at Piers 22-23 Pyrmont

August 28 - Mr. L.J. Brereton issued a Press Release advising that a Heliport was going to begin operations at Piers 22-23 Pyrmont. He stated that this was "a temporary site."

August 28 - That same day, residents of Balmain were aghast to hear the terrible and continuous levels of noise created by helicopters landing, taking off, and warming up. Weekend flights were often 12 and 15 in an hour, and normal residential quiet was destroyed.

Local Member Peter Crawford appealed to Premier Wran, who announced that 'Joy Flights' at the Heliport were to cease at this time. The number of flights dropped dramatically, to about 5 or 6 a day, which seems to indicate that the main purpose of the Heliport is to support commercial Joy Flights run by private companies.

December 5 - The Leichhardt Council took the matter to the Land and Environment Court, and the Chief Judge, Justice Cripps, ruled the Heliport as illegal because it was built without first obtaining and considering an environmental impact statement "as required by law". The Government claimed that the Heliport did not need an environmental impact statement "because the Heliport was established for temporary purposes".

January 22 - All major Sydney newspapers carry an official government advertisement advising:

"The N.S.W. Government proposes to establish a permanent heliport at Berths 22-23 Pyrmont ..."

Copies of the Environmental Impact Statement can be inspected at the Maritime Services Board of NSW Head Office and other places.



Objections should be in writing to The General Manager, The Maritime Services Board of NSW, GPO Box 32, Sydney 2001.

PLEASE WRITE BEFORE FEBRUARY 28. A short letter saying that the study does not take into consideration the residents of Balmain and the stultifying effect the heliport will have on their normal expected life-style. It offers no control on type of flight to be offered (Joy Flights, commercial, etc.), no control on night flying (which is already being requested) and no control on noise limits or light problems. PLEASE WRITE.

A public meeting was held on Wednesday 5 February to discuss the issue. A report on this meeting will be forthcoming shortly.



CLONTARF PARK ACTION GROUP

c/o 22 adolphus st balmain 2041

The fight to save Clontarf Park in Adolphus Street, Balmain, is now in its fifth year. During this time the Clontarf Park Action group has collected nearly 3000 signatures on 3 separate petitions, has taken its case to the Lands & Environment Court (settled but not resolved out of court, in our favour) and helped in the successful election of independent aldermen in favour of our park.

Despite this ample evidence of our bona fides Leichhardt Council has been able to proceed with its plan to allow a Housing Commission development on Municipal parkland WITHOUT even providing justification in planning terms. It is enough, we are told, to describe it as a "political decision".

Now the same argument (this time it was a "cabinet decision") is being used to justify the development of Mort Bay. No one, no planner or bureaucrat has any responsibility to assess the impact of this huge housing development on the historic Balmain peninsular!

Balmain was never targeted by state planners for Urban Consolidation.

Yet A.L.P. political expediency has ensured that developers, both private and public, now have the opportunity to do to Balmain what they failed to do in the building booms of the 50s and 60s. Instead of pursuing the popular plans to "green" Balmain which has been in operation for some years (and for which it had a mandate) the A.L.P. controlled Leichhardt Council has seized upon a decline in population to justify a move against parks and open space, in favour of public housing. In doing so it has conveniently ignored the rising demand for pre-school and kindergarten places and is pursuing policies which will ensure the continued movement of families out of Balmain in search of space for growing children.

Balmain is situated on a peninsular and its historic "village" environment is a fragile one. Allowing for the decline in population it remains one of the most densely populated suburbs in Sydney. Yet at the same time it also has one of the lowest ratios of public open space per head of population despite its limited private open space. Even if A.L.P. policies succeed in cramming another 2000 people onto the peninsular they will have done little to relieve the rent crisis or reverse the urban sprawl. But without proper planning controls the character of Balmain will be destroyed, completely and irreversibly.

"AROUND BALMAIN"

- a 56 page illustrated book about some of the houses and buildings in Balmain - is now with the Standard Printing Company in Rozelle. A book launch will be held at the Watch House on Friday 14 March 1986 at 6 p.m. to which all Balmain Association members will be more than welcome.

The book, - a sequel to "Balmain in Time", will sell for \$9.95 and will be available from the Watch House on and after 14 March. Requests for mail orders will be accepted but \$1.00 per copy is required for postage.

Do note the date on your calendars and keep the book in mind, not only for yourself, but for everyone on your gift list for the year.

MUSIC 2041 - Promoting music in Balmain

The 1986 Subscription Concert Programme contains a wide variety of programmes:

5 April: the Renaissance Players - a well-known group that were pioneers in the field of medieval music in this country. Great appeal for children.

17 May: an evening of song with Elizabeth Campbell (mezzo-soprano) and Tony Fogg (accompanist) with works by Purcell, Schumann, Ives, Poulenc, Grieg, Grainger, Quilter and Delius.

21 September: Sydney Jazz Quintet. Music 2041's annual Family Concert.

29 November: Capella Corelli - baroque music on authentic instruments of the 18th century.

To subscribe to these concerts, write to P.O. Box 132, Balmain, N.S.W. 2041

"FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE WATCH HOUSE"

The Watch House is now open every Friday night from 8 p.m. for a social evening ...B.Y.O. drink and unwind in the unique atmosphere of Balmain's first lock-up ... members and local residents welcome.

JOIN the balmain association

meaning BALMAIN BIRCHGROVE ROZELLE

OUR AIMS ARE TO:

- * improve the living working and recreational amenity of our area
- * maintain all features having natural architectural and/or historical value
- * compile and record the history of the area/ keep a permanent collection of items of historical interest
- * seek the co-operation of everyone concerned in the realization of the above



the balmain association

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(OPEN/RENEW)

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (including News Sheet delivery in Balmain Birchgrove Rozelle)

Single	\$ 4.00
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Organization	\$12.00

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