



OCTOBER 1986

NEWS SHEET

155

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

the balmain association

FOUNDED 1965

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

As reported in News Sheet No. 153 (August 1986), the Association wrote to Messrs. Unsworth, Carr and Walker and offered its services as a mediator with the hope of reducing some of the confrontation that occurs over developments such as Mort Bay and Clontarf. Mr Unsworth's office replied that he was too busy to see us and that his letter had been passed on to Mr Walker. The latter did not reply at all, either to the letter sent to him in the first place or the one forwarded from the Premier. However we are pleased to be able to say that Mr Carr invited us to see him to discuss our concerns - this resulted in a meeting of one hour's duration in which several issues were discussed. The meeting is written up on page 2 of this news sheet.

Following our request (also in News Sheet No. 153) for a coffee table, or similar, for the Watch House we now possess an excellent tea trolley kindly given by Mrs Grainger - which will be put to good use. Now, does anyone have an old refrigerator in good condition? Does anyone have a small truck or ute that could be used to move a refrigerator? If your answer to either of these questions is "yes" please contact the Association either by phoning the contact numbers listed later in this column, by writing to us at P.O. Box 57, Balmain or by calling in person at the Watch House any Friday night after 8 p.m. or any Saturday between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

The "Ghostbusters" party held at the Watch House on Saturday 20th September was a happy gathering for all who came - report page 3.

We would like to promote the Watch House as an Exhibition Centre. Any interested artists, potters, sculptors etc. who would like to investigate the possibility of organising an exhibition at the Watch house are welcome to contact Steve South on 810.1411 a/h or Norman Bull on 810.1611 a/h. The Watch House can also be made available as a meeting place for local organisations, by arrangement with the Committee of the Association.

Should you wish to contact the Association on any matter:

Norman Bull, President - 810.1611 a/h
Debby Nicholls, Secretary - 810.7391 a/h

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME!

Anecdotes of Balmain life; letters to the editor; notices of local events of interest, publicity for other local groups and so on - we would be pleased to publish them for you....free of charge!

LEARN TO TRACE YOUR FAMILY TREE!

"THE A TO Z GENEALOGICAL HANDBOOK"
by Janet Reakes
publisher Methuen Australia

will be launched on Thursday 23rd October
at 7.00 p.m.
in conjunction with
Leichhardt Municipality Historical Display
in the Meeting Room of Balmain Town Hall
370 Darling Street Balmain

Organised by Leichhardt Municipal Library as part
of their celebrations for Australian Library Week
17th - 25th October 1986.

Enquiries: Leichhardt Municipal Library 560.9346

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

UPDATE ON MORT BAY - COMMUNITY SERVICES PLANNING

The following article has been received from the Department of Housing. Would any Association members like the opportunity to discuss their ideas on how the Association could assist the Community Services Planning Team? We can put this topic on the Agenda for our November monthly meeting. If you would like this to be done then please contact us on the 'phone numbers listed under "Association Activities" on this page.

With the approval by Leichhardt Council of the Development Application for the public housing at Mort Bay, the project has entered a new phase. The architects are now preparing working drawings and tender documents for construction. On the site, the blacktop is being removed in readiness for the development of the park and housing. In relation to the social dimensions of the project, the process has begun to establish a Community Services Planning Team (CSPT), whose task it will be to assist the social integration of the new residents into the Balmain community and to help ensure that both old and new residents have access to the community services they need.

The development approval represents an endorsement by Leichhardt Council of the Department of Housing's proposal. The development approval conditions represent an agreement between the two parties as to the actions that need to be taken to integrate new residents into the existing community, without reducing the level of services or the amenity of the neighbourhood. These agreed provisions include a corner shop proposed at Mort and Cameron Streets, landscaping works, requirements concerning fencing between housing and the public park, as well as all aspects of the architecture of the scheme. It has been agreed that the Department of Housing will contribute on a pro rata basis to the cost of traffic management procedures locally to enable new traffic to be absorbed without any increase in traffic congestion or reduction of street safety.

Perhaps the most important requirements of the development approval concern community services.

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NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 1986

7.30 P.M. AT THE WATCH HOUSE, 179 DARLING STREET, BALMAIN

MEETING WITH THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

On Tuesday 2nd September a delegation from the Balmain Association met with the Minister for Environment and Planning, Mr Bob Carr. The delegation consisted of Norman Bull (President), Debby Nicholls (Secretary) and Michelle South (committee member). This meeting was made possible by the Minister after we wrote expressing concern at the lack of communication between government and local resident action groups and offering to help, as an Association, to improve the situation.

As a result of meetings and discussions with members of the Mort Bay Action Group and the Clontarf Park Action Group a brief written presentation was prepared. This document was used as a reference during the meeting, and also formed a concise record of the purpose of our visit.

Additional copies of this written presentation were subsequently made available to Mr Peter Crawford, the Mort Bay Action Group and the Clontarf Park Action Group.

The following is a reproduction of the contents of the presentation:

"1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION

The Balmain Association was formed in 1965 and has as its aim the following objectives:

- to improve the living, working and historical amenity of Balmain;
- to maintain all features of Balmain having natural, architectural and/or historical value;
- to compile and record the history of the area and to establish a permanent collection of items of interest; and
- to seek the co-operation of the residents, existing industries and others concerned in the realisation of the above aims.

The Balmain Association was originally formed to save the historic Balmain Watch House from demolition. This building is now a National Trust property and is the official headquarters of the Association. It is also used from time to time by other various groups in the area.

The Association publishes a Newsletter at approximately monthly intervals, in which other local groups and individuals are free to publish their particular points of view.

In early 1986, the Watch House was used by the Department of Housing for four Community Liaison meetings in relation with the Mort Bay Proposal.

2. THE NEED FOR IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

There is a need for improved communication in regard to developments such as Clontarf Park and Mort Bay. This need can be demonstrated by the following:

A Present Situation of Conflict in Balmain

There is an increased divisiveness in the Balmain community on the issue of proposed housing projects. In brief, the essence of this division is the belief by pro-development groups and individuals that the resident action groups are against public housing, per se, in the area. In turn, the residents action groups perceive that their opponents are prepared to proceed without consultation and at any cost.

This situation can only lead to extreme polarisation if the Mort Bay project proceeds in its present form.

B Examples of Concerns Held By Balmain Residents:

1. The loss at Mort Bay of one of the only remaining pieces of undeveloped foreshore of Sydney Harbour.
2. The lack of a development plan for all of Balmain.
3. The expense and scale of the Mort Bay development.
4. The different sets of statistics in current use by different groups.
5. The feeling that they are being "bullied" by the government.
6. Lack of response when Ministers are asked to meet with residents action group representatives.
7. The use of terms such as "selfish trendies" and "yuppies" to describe opponents of the Mort Bay and Clontarf Park developments.
8. Police intervention and arrests at Clontarf Park in June of this year.

3. PROPOSAL BY THE BALMAIN ASSOCIATION

In general terms, the Balmain Association can offer itself as a neutral intermediary. We could be of assistance by providing a meeting place for discussions (i.e. the Balmain Watch House), by acting as a go-between if appropriate, and by providing impartial chairmanship of meetings.

In specific terms, however, the following two items would go a long way towards alleviating the present situation and preventing an increased level of conflict should the Mort Bay project proceed:

A. Meeting of Various Interested Groups

We suggest that a meeting be organised with the following:

- Balmain Association - 3 representatives
- Mort Bay Action Group - 3 representatives
- Department of Environment and Planning - Minister and 3 staff members
- Department of Housing - Minister and 3 staff members
- The Member for Balmain

The objectives of this meeting would be to discuss the following issues:

- (i) The establishment of a common set of statistics for measuring such factors as population, open space and percentage of public housing in Balmain, the Balmain Peninsula, Balmain/Rozelle, the Leichhardt Municipal Council area etc.
- (ii) The unit cost of the Mort Bay development compared to:
 - (a) buying old, existing houses in Balmain and refurbishing where necessary;
 - (b) the cost of the Mort Bay development compared to buying other available land;
- (iii) The reason for Mort Bay proceeding immediately while land already owned by the Department of Housing remains undeveloped;
- (iv) Procedures for determining allocation of public housing and the policy of long term tenure

of such housing.

B Environmental Plan For Balmain/Rozelle

The Balmain/Rozelle Peninsula is a unique area for a number of historical, architectural and geographic reasons.

Each separate development in the peninsula, whether private or public, brings a separate set of problems such as traffic congestion, possible loss of heritage aspects and changes to environmental factors such as streetscapes and open space.

There is a need for a detailed environmental plan for the area so that guidelines for future development can be established."

The meeting with Mr Carr was much longer than anticipated - one hour - and was a positive step in opening communications between Balmain residents and the Department of Environment and Planning.

While Mr Carr stated that Mort Bay would go ahead now in any event, and that any approach to the Department of Housing to reconsider the design of the project would have to be from Peter Crawford rather than himself - a possibility that has since been rejected by the Premier - he agreed in principle to the idea of a meeting with residents. There would have to be some pre-conditions for such a meeting to be possible, however, as follows:

- both the Mort Bay Action Group and the Department of Housing would need to be prepared to compromise
- Mr Carr said he would not be able to discuss matters of policy at a meeting which included a political opponent such as Dr Jean Lennane
- pro-development people would need to be included at any such meeting
- the format and agenda of the meeting would have to be agreed upon in advance by all participating parties.

As it appears that the Department of Housing is proceeding at Mort Bay despite the efforts of local residents and Peter Crawford to have some reasonable concerns discussed, such a meeting is not likely to occur.

However, as regards our statement that Balmain-Rozelle needs an overall environmental plan, some positive action arose from the meeting. Mr Carr agreed in principle that the area needs some kind of consideration, and at his suggestion some members of his staff will be visiting Balmain to do a preliminary survey. Mr Carr suggested that it may be a feasible project to paint the Balmain shopping area in heritage colour schemes, as has been done in Glen Innes.

The effectiveness of Leichhardt Council's LEP 20 as an environmental control was also discussed.

Mr Carr stated that his department will be constructing the open space portion of Mort Bay and that in his opinion there should be no marina included in the development.

It is anticipated that the next edition of this News Sheet will include a report on the visit of the members of the DEP staff to Balmain.

HISTORICAL QUESTION AND ANSWER

Our last two editions have had a history column which has proved popular. This month it will not appear as our sources are busy researching a very grave matter for inclusion in the next issue.

"GHOST BUSTERS" PARTY

The event was publicised in the last two news sheets and by word of mouth. The committee organised things to nibble on; local estate agents Goldsmith Thompson lent an "open for inspection" sign to attract attention; the banners were hung on the front of the Watch House; the coloured lights in the jacaranda tree were turned on with a flourish ... and all ten people who came had fun. Somehow the donated prizes were forgotten, but they can be used on another occasion.

The Charge Room, suitably darkened and with fire lit, provided the right atmosphere for some ghostly story-telling.

The police vehicle parked outside - on the bus stop with hazard lights flashing - had us worried for a half-hour or so until its crew of two emerged from a little restaurant just up the road and sped off into the dark. We would have invited them in but they moved too fast. Oh well, bus stops, police cars ... its all government property anyway.



MORT BAY ACTION GROUP

On Saturday 20th September the Mort Bay Action Group held a motorcade through the Balmain shops. The purpose of the motorcade, the second such event organised by the Group, was to publicise the extra traffic load which will be generated by the Department of Housing project at Mort Bay. About forty cars drove in a continuous loop around the already clogged streets of Saturday Balmain.

After the motorcade, a barbeque was held on the actual Mort Bay site. As the site is now completely fenced off, this did cause some mild concern to the security guards who are charged with the responsibility of keeping people away. The guards called on the police to attend the disturbance; the police decided that no harm was being done and allowed the event to continue.

The purpose of the barbeque was not purely social as it was held to honour local independent aldermen Nick Origlass and Izzie Wyner. Their support has been of great assistance and encouragement to the Mort Bay Action Group.

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE BALMAIN WATCH HOUSE
179 DARLING STREET BALMAIN

IS OPEN AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES:

FRIDAY - FROM 8 P.M.

This a BYO social evening - the night out you have when you don't feel like "going out"

AND ALSO

SATURDAY - 1 P.M. TO 3 P.M.
Coffee and conversation available (free)

BALMAIN ASSOCIATION MEETINGS ARE HELD
AT THE WATCH HOUSE AT 7.30 P.M. ON THE FIRST
WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH - ALL WELCOME

BALMAIN GARDEN CLUB



The Garden Club meets on the first Saturday in each month (except December and January) at 1.15 at the Watch House, 179 Darling Street Balmain. Good gardening library available for members. All interested welcome.

The Garden Club's stall at the Balmain Hospital Fete was enormously successful again, with over \$1,000 being raised. Thanks to all those who gave their time and energy to support the Garden Club's efforts.

ELIZABETH FARM 70 Alice Street, Parramatta

Make a date in your diary for a visit to the above property, which was Macarthur's first farm, built in 1793.

The Heritage Roses members will be filling the rooms with the old-fashioned roses again this year, on the weekend of 8th and 9th November, and there will also be plenty of old-fashioned roses plants in pots for sale, ready for planting out and also other plants.

This house has been meticulously researched for authenticity for the period, even to patterns on materials on curtains and covers etc., and the beds each have the three mattresses of straw, horsehair and feathers, of the types used in Elizabeth Macarthur's time.

Ruse, who grew the first wheat in Australia, had his property in the next street, Ruse Street, and this is also usually open to the public, so you may be able to see both houses in the one day.

JESSICA MURRAY

Continued from page 1

The Department of Housing had proposed the establishment of a community centre with facilities for youth activities, child daycare, general community meetings and community service providers. There was also a proposal in the Department's Development Application for a Community Services Planning Team, and for the appointment of a community worker for at least two years until the new community arrangements become established. These proposals were also accepted by Council and the process is now underway for them to be put into action.

The CSPT will allow residents of Balmain a direct voice in the planning of the community centre, and in identifying and advocating any additional services or improvements that may be required as a result of the project; and to ensure that present and future residents have the facilities that they need for a healthy community life. Represented on the CSPT will be local residents (at least four people), service providers such as the Education Department, Health Department, Urban Transport Authority, other State agencies, local community organisations and Leichhardt Council. Representatives of the new residents will join this team as they move in. This CSPT will be serviced by the Housing Department community worker and by

Leichhardt Council.

The CSPT with its membership of both residents and service providers offers a unique opportunity for residents to influence the design of new community services.

Since the structure of this planning team is currently being discussed now is an ideal time for local organisations like the Association to discuss how they would make representations to the team. The Department of Housing welcomes any submission you have, as an organisation or as individual residents, to make on this topic.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

The following are available at the Watch House. Your purchases will assist the Association and help you learn more about this interesting suburb of ours!

AROUND BALMAIN	\$9.95
HALF A THOUSAND ACRES	\$5.00
BALMAIN WALKS	\$0.60
THE BALMAIN WATCH HOUSE	\$0.60
BALMAIN PLACES 1. MORT'S DOCK	\$0.60
BALMAIN PLACES 2. COAL MINE	\$0.60
BALMAIN PLACES 3. GLADSTONE PARK	\$0.60
LEICHHARDT HISTORICAL JOURNAL NO. 14	\$8.00

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)

PO BOX 57 BALMAIN 2041

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: (HOME) (WORK)

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

Single	\$ 4.00
Family or Household	\$ 6.00
Pensioner or Student	\$ 1.00
Organization	\$12.00

Add \$3.00 to above rates to have News Sheet posted.
Cheques made payable to "The Balmain Association"