

the balmain
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news sheet

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Balmain Heritage

In considering the aims of retaining streetscape values in the draft Leichhardt Town Plan, the NSW Department of Urban Affairs & Planning (DUAP) proposed Urban Design Significant Areas as an alternative to larger Heritage Conservation areas. A significant difference is that while demolition will require consent in both, a single replacement dwelling in an Urban Design Significant Area will not require consent.

The issue of heritage must be given greater contemplation than just streetscape values. The term cultural significance is the quality that makes a building, monument or site worth preserving. It includes items that contribute to the individuality and character of the area and are irreplaceable. Buildings that are not individually significant can collectively contribute to creating a unique sense of place. Stephen, Goodsir and Mansfield Streets are excellent examples.

The original purposes of the structures represent uses that interpret former social customs. Change threatens the fabric of a place when the uses are no longer viable. This is not to say that change should not take place. However, change should be constrained to conserve heritage values.

An examination of the maps enclosed in the draft Town Plan shows that proposal from DUAP would drastically reduce the Conservation area to a fraction of the Urban Design Significant area. The schedule of heritage items has serious omissions. For instance only one building in Ann Street is listed. There are deficiencies in Adolphus, Jane and Elliott Streets as well as many others.

To this time the small lots and the high price of land on the peninsula has deterred many developers and supported heritage conservation. There have been few opportunities similar to the large houses in Drummoyne that have been developed into immense apartment buildings. Only the former industrial sites offer a good return on investment. However, a trend to be watched is that emerging in the eastern suburbs where adjacent residents have been urged by estate agents to combine to increase the value of their holdings.

In consideration of the future effects of the Integrated Development amendments to the Environment and Planning Act it is essential that the protection of heritage be strengthened rather than limited.

Below. The Strand, Darling Street c1898

Balmain in the 1890s

The attraction for the worker's to Balmain, was being able to walk to work in the shipping, timber, chemical and allied industries and the meat works. Churches, schools, hospital and hotels were firmly established. The main thoroughfares had an array of retailers, shoe shops, booksellers, drapers, tailors, milliners, fruiterers, grocers, newsagents and butchers.

The many corner stores were mainly managed by women, provided ham, devon sausage, milk, butter, sugar. All the goods then came in bulk and so the proprietor had to weigh the goods into paper bags. When money was short, credit could be asked for to be "put on the slate" or given "tick".

The shop buildings in Darling Street were mainly established before 1900. Pre 1890, the section from Booth Street to Palmer Street, had been built of deal timber packing cases and were replaced in 1891 by what is there to-day, minus the lovely verandahs, although two verandahs have been replaced recently. (see photo on this page).

The 1890s depression put a great strain on the Balmain Council, to provide for the growing number of unemployed men to maintain and repair roads and footpaths and to do kerbing and guttering. The Council income for 1897 was £207,500, but borrowing to undertake the public works was £69,000. Part of the debt was the cost of the new Council Chambers. On the site of the cottage hospital, the architect and then mayor, Edward Buchanan opened the Town Hall Chambers in 1888, at the cost of site and building of £6,500. A lending library of some 600 books was included, but the competition of other libraries, some with 6,000 books, forced the closure of the library in the 1920s. It was not until 1978 that the local Council library was returned.

The Post Office and Court House had opened in 1887 and the civic buildings precinct was completed by the 1894 Fire Station, at no cost to the Council. (continued on next page).



It was pleasing for Mayor Alexander Milne and his 11 Aldermen, in 1897 to report on the new industry in White Bay of Lever Bros and Kitchen, the Coal Mine, Iron Cove and major reclamation works on Snail's Bay.

One of the Council staff was kept busy. His title was Inspector of Nuisances. The abattoirs were on Glebe Island and there were constant complaints of the noxious trades of boiling down works and tanneries (I recall travelling along O'Riordan Street, Alexandria, in the 1980s and can remember the odorous smell) and the stench from cow yards and sewage. Balmain Council meetings spent much time discussing, what to do with the night soil. After one meeting, it was decided to leave it (the problem) in the mayors hand. So a decision was made to load the night soil on to punts to dump it out to sea. Associated health problems were alleviated in 1888 when the city and inner suburbs were connected to the Nepean water supply and that, night soil problem, by the underground sewerage system connected to Bondi in 1897. The water was restricted at times for use on only 3 days a week. This was also overcome some 15 years later with the reservoir in Gladstone Park.

Transport

Steam ferries and horse driven vehicles were in use from the early days. In 1891 the horse bus service would take an 1 hour to the city via Glebe as the Glebe Island Bridge connection was a toll way. Horse cabs for those who could afford them. Some 900 horses were stabled on the peninsula in the 1890s, keeping the Inspector of Nuisances busy coping with the street pollution from the working horse.

The demise of the horse for transport began with the arrival from the city of the steam tram, introduced as far as Gladstone Park in 1892. A red letter box was attached to the front of the tram for the travelling public. On Sundays at the Gladstone Park terminal, the tram stopped operating between 10am and noon, so as not to interrupt the Church service at St Andrew's, by the huffing and puffing of the steam engine.

Lighting

A gas supply came from a works in Mansfield Street in 1875 for cooking and lighting. Gas street lamps were installed in 1877 with lamplighters lighting the 200 lamps at sunset and extinguishing them at dawn. In 1897 the lamps had been replaced by clockwork

control that had to be wound once a week. Penny-in-the-slot meters also introduced at this time, when a penny bought enough gas to last approx. 3 hours. Free meter installation came with a kit of standard fittings of bracket and a pendant for lighting and a boiling ring for cooking although the fuel stove continued to be the main source for cooking well into the 1920s. Electricity was introduced in 1911.

Sport

Sport was mostly for men it would appear. The Balmain Bowling Club was formed in 1880, Elkington Park Baths in 1884, women only, were allowed in 1906, on certain days of the week. There were also floating baths at end Johnston Street (photo) and harbour baths at end Nicholson Street. Boating, cricket, boxing, athletics and the Balmain soccer team emerged as premiers in 1895, 96 and 97. Concerts, brass bands, church outings, picnics and of course the pubs. There were 40 to choose from in the 1890s. Rowing had a huge following and races on the Parramatta River and Iron Cove, would draw huge crowds to the shores, also to view the Annual Balmain Regatta.

The women were too busy washing the clothes in the copper, ironing with a heavy flat iron which was heated on the fuel stove, dressmaking, cooking and stoking the chip heater for bath water, as well as having many confinements. Those were the days when "a women's work was never done".

There were organisations for the betterment of the workers. The School of Arts on corner Ewinton and Darling Streets, now demolished, Odd Fellows Hall, corner Jane Street and the Working Men's Institution, Darling Street. Membership provided libraries, meeting rooms for lectures but the most popular, was the billiard room.

This article has been very selective in the historical facts and there were two things that happened in the 1890s that should be mentioned.

First, the Balmain Branch of the Labor Electoral League was formed in 1891 which eventually became the Labor Party. This was about the time that Billy Hughes would practise his oratory at his shop at 16 Beattie Street.

Second, the departure of the ship, the Royal Tar, from Balmain in 1893 to Paraguay to establish the New Australian settlement. On board the second contingent for the new settlement was a young women, Mary Cameron who married William Gilmore in 1897.

The 1890s proved to be a very fruitful time in Balmain's history and they had embraced the new technology, as a public telephone had been installed at the Post Office.

What will the history books say about Balmain in the 1990s?

Kath Hamey

HOMES FOR THE PEOPLE.

It is difficult to understand why struggling people continue to pay rent, when for a small advance upon the amount now going to the landlord, they can in a few years realize

THEIR OWN FREEHOLD!
for their own profit and that of their families after them.

The undersigned offers a choice from some hundred of well-situated
VALUABLE BUILDING ALLOTMENTS IN BALMAIN

(the most advancing of all the suburbs), commencing

at £4 cash, and
21 QUARTERLY PAYMENTS OF £2.
Giving immediate possession,
and will **SUPPLY TIMBER, &c.**, to those desirous to build.

PAYABLE by TEN SHILLINGS WEEKLY.

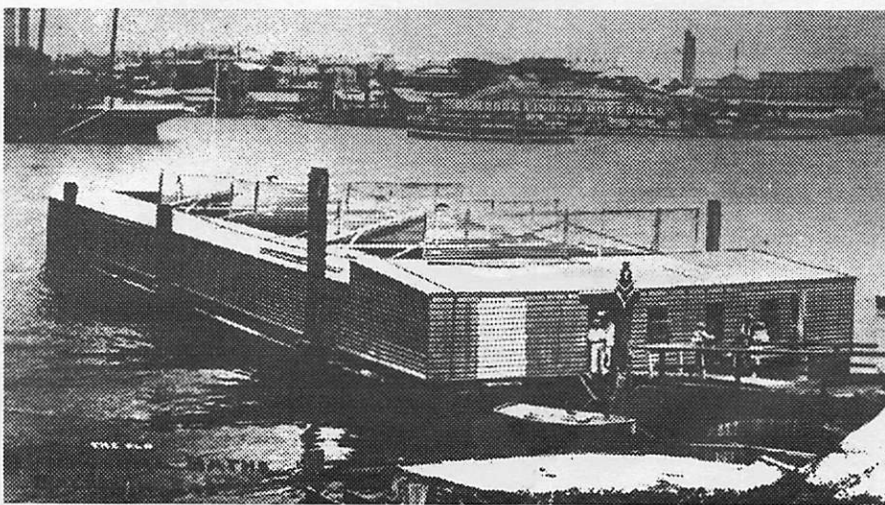
For those having no present intention of building, an undoubted opportunity of immense profit is evidenced by the fact of the astounding progress of Balmain during the past six years, and it is impossible that the present chance can ever recur after this working out of this transaction.

SCHEME FOR WORKING MEN.
There are no law costs, no compulsion to build or lease, and the

TITLE is guaranteed INDISPUTABLE

HANCOCK AND CROSS.

Morton Estate and General Agency Office
Beattie-street, Balmain, near Dick's Hotel



1990s Building Boom

Throughout the peninsula, there seems to be numerous builders skips in the streets, building material delivery trucks and the pounding of an excavator is becoming common background noise.

The intensive building phase of the last couple of years with the development on the redundant Coal Mine, Monsanto, Colgate Palmolive and Unilever sites, will produce some 1200 dwellings. Two more developments are pending on Ampol, White Bay and the Balmain Power Station, Iron Cove. These two developments will also produce many hundreds of buildings. A conservative estimate is that some 2,000 dwellings will be built on the peninsula in the ten-year period to the year 2,000. There seems to be a case of history repeating itself.

The following paragraphs are from "Leichhardt on the Margins of the City" by Peter Reynolds and Max Solling (This

excellent publication can be purchased at the Balmain Library for \$30).

"Between 1836, when the first land sales were held and 1851, development in Balmain was confined to the east of Darling Street and around Waterview Bay (Mort Bay). Following the death of John Gilchrist in 1841, disputes over his will in English courts meant his assets were frozen and no additional Balmain land could be released. The court's decision in 1852 was sufficient to free the land for sale. Charles Edward Langley's plan of Balmain subdivided the remaining 400 acres of the Gilchrist's Balmain estate, into 47 sections. This land was disposed of in an intermittent way between 1852 and 1882".

"The most intensive house building phase in Balmain was between 1871 and 1881 when 2,039 new houses were constructed. The so-called building boom of the 1880s saw another, 1,122 dwellings added to the landscape but

residential expansion in Balmain West (Rozelle) meant that house building activity between 1891 and 1901 was in fact a little more intensive than in the preceding ten-year period. Although during the major phase of local domestic building between 1871 and 1901 some 4,400 new houses were erected.

The 47 sections were broken into 316 lots, with the final land sales from the Gilchrist Estate, realising £70,000, not a bad return for the outlay of 50 shillings".

The development of Balmain, Rozelle and Birchgrove was rapid after the 1850s as will be seen in this chart.

Date	Population	Houses
1846	337	296
1884	20000	4000
1894	30000	5200
1910	32600	6570
1933	35500	7100
1947	30000	7300
1994	18900	9150
1999 (est)	22950	11150

Help Please

On the open space end Gilchrist Place, Mort Bay, there are three ships propellers and a large gear wheel. The area was part of the former Chapman's Slipway. Scratched on the two large propellers is: *Cedric*, 1876, Shaw Savill and an obscure date which could be 14-7-10, could be read as 1910. The third propeller is much smaller and has no identifying marks.

The Shaw Savill directory has an entry for a ship of that name which was built in 1952 and was scrapped in 1977.

Log of Logs vol 2, includes a *Cedric the Saxon*, clipper ship, built 1875. The reference "Home from the Sea" by Capt A Roston, 1931, was not available at the Mitchell Library.

Any information please contact, phone/fax, 02 9818 4954.

Information is requested by Mrs J Porter about her father John Alexander Faulkner. Mr Faulkner was born in Canada in 1892 and was a seaman, profession rigger. He enlisted in the Australian Army in Sydney in 1917. Served in England and France with the

11th Field Company Engineers and returned for discharge in 1919. John Alexander Faulkner was living at 8 Isabella Street, Balmain, when he married Louisa Gundry of 4 Caroline Street, Balmain, in 1927. Mrs Porter was only four years old in 1931, when her father was killed while working as a rigger on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The death toll was high during the building of the Bridge claiming 16 lives.

Contact, Mrs J. Porter. 173 Empire Bay Drive, Empire Bay. 2257.

Parks Name Change

In August, 1996, the Leichhardt Council resolved to refer all requests for naming or renaming roads, parks, etc. to the Aboriginal Consultative Committee for their recommendations.

The Geographic Names Board of NSW, produces a publication called "Guidelines for the naming of roads", which indicates that: 1, the name should be appropriate to the physical, historical or cultural character of the area concerned, 2, preferred source of names to include Aboriginal names, local history, early explorers, pioneers, settlers and eminent persons, thematic names, such as flora, fauna or ships.

A list of Aboriginal names is being prepared, that can be used by develop-

ers for new roads, developments, parks, etc. The list will give the meanings of the name, language group from which they come and any geographic issues. The NSW Dept of Fisheries has been contacted for current sightings of fish and other maritime species in the Balmain waters. The Council will actively encourage the naming of new developments and the renaming of streets and public parks, where opportunities exist to utilise EORA and Dharruk words and phrases.

A request has been made for the new road on the Colgate Palmolive site between Colgate Avenue and Cooper Street, to be called Harrington Road. Thomas Harrington was a Councillor for the Balmain Council 1923-1928.

The Council supports the application to rename White Bay Park with the Aboriginal name Birrung, which means stars.

In 1994, Long Nose Point was renamed Yurulbin Park, meaning, swiftly flowing water.

Illoura Reserve, Peacock Point, Balmain East, was created in 1970 to commemorate Captain Cook's bi-centenary.

Paringa Reserve, Elliott Street Wharf, Iron Cove, was part of the 1859, Hazelmere Estate. The house, the home of G R Elliott, 1859-1878, and was demolished in early 1950s for the building of the Housing Commission Apartments

In Your Garden

Herbs in a Pot

A pot of aromatic edibles is very important if you enjoy cooking. All that you need is a 45cm pot with drainage holes and a saucer, Perlite, terracotta potting mix and pine bark inside your pot. Plant Purple Sage in the middle, deep enough for the roots to provide support as the sage grows. Purple Sage is ideal for pasta sauces.

Add Dill and Rosemary. Dill can be grow as high as 1m and features tiny greenish-yellow flower clusters. The seeds have a stronger flavour than the foliage. Rosemary is an evergreen shrub. Parsley is planted at the edge of the pot. Oregano and Thyme are also planted near the edge of the pot. They will spill over the rim. Thyme is a hardy, aromatic herb that will come again year after year.

When all are planted, water the entire pot and place a layer of mulch around the plants. Place the container

in a sunny spot that is sheltered from the wind.

Aftercare. Herbs in containers need warmth to develop their tastes and scents. However, due to the long exposure to direct sun and wind, they tend to dry out quickly. Water once a day or twice if the weather is very hot. Fertilise the plants weekly with a liquid organic plant food to aid continuous growth.

Bonnie Davidson



A Clustering Herb

Family Tree Software

The Cumberland Family Tree is a superb genealogy program for Windows 95 that allows a comprehensive database of your family history. It is able to generate indexes for each individual including photographs as well as charts and reports. Standard Gedcom files can be imported. Download from <http://www.cf-software.com/cftwin.htm> and it gives you 45 days to evaluate before buying for US\$50. There is an agent in West Australia.

Watch House Exhibitions

- Arty Ms 10th Annual Exhibition Feb 14-Mar 1.
- Hartstart Studio 15-16 Mar.
- Gary Notaley-Smith 11-19 Apr with Rowena Gibbs.

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The Balmain Association Inc

representing Balmain, Birchgrove, Rozelle.

Our Aims Are To:

improve the living, working and recreational amenities of our area, maintain all features having natural architectural and/or historical value, compile and record history of the area & keep a permanent collection of items of historical interest,

seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above. The Watch House is open every Saturday from 12 to 3pm. The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Watch House 179 Darling Street, Balmain. Our editorial phone/fax is 9818 4954.

Interested artists, potters, sculptors, etc. who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 9810 1411.

Annual Subscriptions:

Household \$16, Pensioners & Students \$7, Organisation \$21.