



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Town Plan Update

The Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning, Dr Andrew Refshauge, has directed Leichhardt Council to re-exhibit the draft Local Environmental Plan 2000. The original plan was submitted to the Dept in January 1999 but Council has negotiated with DUAP to address changes and these will be exhibited from 26 July until 23 August. It is necessary to ensure the community is aware of the alterations made since the previous showing in March 1998.

The Minister is the consent authority for Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 26 (Port land and Rozelle goods yard) and has removed the area from the Plan.

Floor space ratios are now 0.5:1 for Leichhardt/Lilyfield, 0.6:1 for Annandale and 0.7:1 for Balmain/Rozelle and Glebe. Industrial is 1:1 for all areas and Business is 1:1 - 1.5:1. Landscaped areas for all residential sites to be a minimum of 40% of the site. On the positive side additional heritage items have been introduced and the Urban Design Significant Areas have been deleted.

Provisions for exempt and complying development have been introduced as a result of changes to the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979. A list of permissible uses in each zone has been revised and the zoning of some properties has been changed. The provisions for Affordable Housing and Boarding Houses have been removed as these are dealt with under State legislation. Provisions have been introduced for Adaptable Housing to better suit persons with a disability.

The Plan has been redrafted by Parliamentary Counsel into a legalistic version without altering the intent. As a result sections and clauses have been re-ordered and re-numbered. Other changes may be inspected on the Council's Web site or at the Balmain Library.

Written submissions can be made until 25 August to; Town Plan 2000, Leichhardt Council, PO Box 45, Leichhardt 2040 or by fax 9367 9111 as well as Email:

townplan2000@lmc.nsw.gov.au



Congratulations to National Treasure and Balmain's Own Dawn Fraser on receiving the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust Award, Best Female Swimmer of the Century in November 1999. The former Olympic Swimming Star is the holder of 8 Olympic and 8 Commonwealth Games medals and has also held 39 World Records. Dawn has always given her time freely in promoting the physical and educational qualities of sport. Thanks Dawn.

Sydney 2000 Olympic Games will be the 24th since the Modern Olympics was introduced in Athens in 1896 where there were 9 sports, 13 countries with 310 athletes. Sydney will have 28 sports, 200 countries with 10300 athletes.

Australia's sole representative at the Athens 1896 games was from Melbourne, Edwin Flack, who won the 800 and 1500 metre track races. Australia and Greece are the only countries that have attended every Olympic.

The Paralympic Games were introduced in 1960 at Rome with 8 sports, 23 countries with 400 athletes. Sydney Paralympics will have 18 sports, 125 countries with 4000 athletes.

Four of the Association Committee will be among the 70,000 volunteers to assist with the games, such as assistance with the yachting, uniform distribution and two as drivers. We hope Sydney 2000 Olympics are the best, safest and the most exciting ever held.

Photo :Mirror Telegraph Publications.

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the Balmain Association will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 6 September 2000 in the Watch House 179 Darling Street.

35th Anniversary

Can you believe it that another five years have passed since the last anniversary gathering. It is only with your support that the committee continues to invest their time and energy with the aims of the Association and the restoration of the Watch House.

You are cordially invited to the 35th Anniversary of the Balmain Association at the Balmain Watch House on Saturday 7th October 2000 from 6pm-8pm. As daylight saving will have begun, an inspection of the recent restoration work can be viewed. For catering purposes please contact 9810 5185 for acceptance. Please indicate if you should require transport.

A pre-anniversary occasion was held at the Watch House on Thursday 22nd June. The Association's first President, John Power, had contacted us to say he would be in Balmain after an absence of fifteen years and he wished to meet any of his old friends still in the area. A phone call or two soon found many current and earlier members of the Association, who were only too willing to once more meet with their old friend. It was an opportunity for him to be introduced to the current committee.



John Power, right, with friends

Present were first Vice President, Alan Harding and Treasurer Richard Wakefield. Other former Presidents attending were Robert Irving, Bill Haesler and David Porter. There have been 16 Presidents and many committee members.

We hope to attract as many members as possible to attend the 35th Anniversary on Saturday 7 October. Make it a date to enjoy and remember.

Christian Brothers' School, Balmain

On Thursday 22nd June 2000, a plaque was dedicated, noting the transition of School building and grounds to private housing of 34 apartment called *The Sanctum*. The plaque is situated at the former entrance to the school building in Thames Street.

Balmain Architect, James McDonald, designed the original, single storey building on this site in 1883 for use by St Augustine Parish School, then located in Thames Street. Here the Christian Brothers' opened their first school in New South Wales in April 1887. The building was extended in 1925. A declining school age population in the area brought about the closure of the school in 1990. For more than a century, the Christian Brothers' and their lay co-workers educated boys of working class Catholic families from the Balmain Peninsula and beyond.

Edmund Rice became a prosperous man as a Ship's Chandler in the Irish port of Waterford. He later used the wealth he gained from sea commerce to help found many schools and charitable works. The first school had a faltering start in 1802.

In the 1840s the Christian Brothers' arrived in the growing colony of New

South Wales-this foundation also proved to be a faltering one, until the arrival in 1868 of Brother Patrick Treacy, known as the founder of the Christian Brothers in Australia.

Patrick Treacy was born in 1834 in the County Tipperary and attended a local Christian Brothers' school. Brother Treacy landed in Melbourne without a penny, so he became the Busking Brother, playing his violin in bush towns and remote settlements to raise money for Australia's first network of Christian Brothers' schools.

From 1868 to 1899 he founded 30 schools and colleges with the help of the Cremona violin. He would play the traditional music of his homeland, with the jigs, airs and ballads, and the mainly Irish parishioners would contribute generously.

The first school in New South Wales was in Balmain. The large and rapidly expanding Irish population were mostly employed in the district's booming waterfront industries, something that both Treacy and the order's founder Edmund Rice could relate to.

In 1887, Brother Treacy trudged the streets of old Balmain with his pen, ink and blank cheque forms. He collected £1400, bought a disused quarry overlooking Mort Bay, renovated an old hall on its eastern boundary and opened a school. The 1887 school register lists the parents' occupation such as ship-

wright, sailmaker, fruiterer, carpenter and lamp lighter. The levelling of the quarry for the playground was completed in 1915 when 6000 loads of filling was obtained from Mort's Dock and the Gladstone Park reservoir.

The Christian Brothers' education prepared generations of boys for a vocation linked to the sea. For years the main employers of Balmain were Mort's Dock Engineering, Cockatoo Island, the various tug, ferry companies, associated repair and slip facilities dotted the shores in the vicinity.

A new storey was added in 1925 with a manual room and science laboratory set up with three distinct subjects, woodwork, metalwork and science. Sports of volleyball, basketball and rugby league premiers for some years played a big part in the boys curriculum. But times are a changing and the school closed in 1990 after 103 years of education for boys in Balmain, with the remaining students transferring to the St Mary's Cathedral School near Hyde Park, Sydney.

Extracts from Vision, Dreams & Memories. Michael Warner C.F.C.

Other successful building recycling for housing in the area has been the former Amusu Theatre, Return Services League both in Darling Street and Colgate Palmolive in Colgate Avenue.

Transport Services

The ferry wharf at Yurulbin (Long Nose Point) Park abruptly closed in November 1999 as the structure was in need of repair, but who was to pay? There had been many short term closures for repair since the wharf opened in 1916 due to the position, at the section of the meeting of the Harbour to Parramatta River where the current can be difficult at times, resulting with the ferry colliding with the wharf. Local residents formed the Birchgrove Ferry Action Committee who worked with Leichhardt Council to bring about a happy conclusion of 'who was to pay'. A tripartite funding of State Transport, Waterways and LMC provided the \$150,000. This is a short-term measure, as future location of the wharf needs to be addressed. Ferry service resumed on 19 June 2000.

Ferry services to Balmain have a long tradition. The Balmain Ferry Fleet operated by Henry Pedriau from 1841 to 1882, running to Millers Point as often as every 10 minutes in the daylight hours. Some vessels' names were *Gipsy Queen*, *Waterman* and *Pet*. Waterman rowed passengers privately at other times. One of note was McKenzie of 12 Darling Street.

The Balmain Stream Ferry Co acquired the fleet in 1882 and the fare of 3cents each way or seven tickets for 10 cents, was considered too expensive. A co-operative was formed with the purpose of reduced fares and increased comfort and the Balmain New Ferry Co. offered fares of 1 cent.

The 20th century brought to Darling Street the ferries such as *Karingal*, *Karabee* and *Kameruka*. The latter was only half a metre longer than Captain Phillip's flagship, *Sirius*.

Prior to WW11, two ferry services operated from Balmain to Erskine Street. Nicholson Bros service went from Thames, Yeend and Darling Streets and Hegarty Bros service from Bald Rock, Stephen Street. Kiosks were available at all wharves with the exception of Yeend Street.

The introduction of the steam trams almost created a major revolution in the habits of residents who formerly relied on the vagaries of horse omnibus companies. An hourly tram service started operation in 1892 from Bridge Street, City via Forest Lodge, Rozelle, along Darling Street, terminating at Gladstone Park. There was no tram service on Sunday mornings during church hours due to 'the rowdy whistling motors'. Around the turn of the century the line was converted to electric operation and was extended along Darling Street to the ferry wharf in 1903. The final slope down to the wharf was achieved with the aid of a

large counterweight, which controlled the speed of the tram from Nicholson Street to the wharf and gave a helping hand to the tram on the way up the steep hill. The Canterbury tram service also terminated at the Darling Street wharf. Grove Street Birchgrove received the first service in 1917.

A private owned bus service operated from Loyalty Square via Montague Street to the City. The black and white buses were garaged in Watson's Lane, known as 'bus shelter lane'. In the late 1930s a government bus service to Coogee operated on a Sunday during summer months until mid 1950 with a break during WWII. There was a terminus at Loyalty Square and Cove Street. A waiting bench can still be found in Cove Street. In 1954/55 buses replaced the trams to the city from Birchgrove, Canterbury and the Darling Street Wharf.



1920s bus in Montague Street

Museum Items

The Association is frequently contacted by the public inquiring of our acceptance of a donation of family memorabilia. Due to lack of storage space at the Watch House we are unable to accept items other than photographs or documents.

Last week a resident of long standing needed to remove six boxes of timber patterns left from the closure of Morts Dock Engineering in the 1950s. All of the Sydney museums were contacted but none was interested in the pieces of maritime history.

The boxes are in temporary storage. Is there anyone who can help find a home the patterns? Contact 9818 4954.

Mort Bay Land

The Planning Minister, Dr Andrew Refshauge, has criticised Leichhardt Council's rejection of the government's application to subdivide and strata title the Mort Bay housing estate. He threatened to back out of the promise to sell the 1.4 ha of Site C to Council for \$1. The Dept of Housing wish to sell the estate and use the proceeds for public housing in other areas.

The Council has concern for the tenants of the estate although the Dept means to offer renters the opportunity to remain. The Minister threatened to strip the Council of its consent authority and approve the application.

Sydney Harbour Trust

The Senate has prohibited the Howard Government from selling any land that was formerly a part of defence land on the harbour foreshore.

Tom Uren said that the proposed Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Bill was in many aspects a devious and deceptive document. \$96 million was to be allocated to the trust of which \$56 million was to go to the Defence Dept and \$40 million was to be allocated for the rehabilitation of Cockatoo Island. All other rehabilitation was to be undertaken by "commercial activities".

Why should we pay the Defence Dept to buy back our land? They should be responsible for the rehabilitation

In Your Garden

Choosing & Planting Roses

Roses are suitable for a range of garden situations. The most popular are the hybrid tea roses with perfectly shaped flowers ideal for picking and which may be grown in beds and borders. However, for a good supply of colourful long-lasting blooms you should select floribunda roses. Although individual flowers are smaller than the hybrid teas they give massed colour effects.



For brightening up a dull wall or fence use can be made of the climbing roses. They are not self-supporting and therefore must be attached in some way. Trained on wires, climbers can be useful for screening. Miniature roses are fast increasing in popularity and are ideal for pots, baskets or low edgings along paths.

Roses love sunny and open positions and five to six hours of sun each day are required for them to flower well. Soils should have good drainage with organic matter worked in before planting. Keep soils moist over dry months. Never plant roses where other roses have grown as they are such heavy feeders that they thoroughly exhaust the soil and this can lead to a condition called "rose sick". Newly planted roses don't like strong fertilisers around their roots. Best time to feed roses is August and February.

My favourite rose is a lovely yellow one named Diamond Jubilee. It is a large double with truly wonderful perfume

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- Warringah Printmakers
12-20 August
- Facets of Light & Color
Yvonne West 26 Aug-3 Sept
- Local watercolors & oils
Helen Ross & others
9-10 September
- In the Spirit of Yesteryears
Chris Vella, Roger James &
Ann Garbutt 30 Sept-1 Oct
- An Artist Spectrum
Pierette Rootliep 13-15 Oct
- Judy Brownlie 21-29 Oct
- Kings Cross, Nado Milat
4-5 Nov
- Lilyfield Watercolour Group
11-12 Nov
- Watercolour 2000
18-19 Nov

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Birchgrove NSW 2041
2001/12

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 of the area and keep a permanent collection of historical interest; seek the cooperation of everyone concerned in the realisation of the above.

The Balmain Association meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm in the Watch House 179 Darling Street Balmain. The Watch House is open every Saturday from 12 to 3pm. Our editorial phone/fax is 02 98184954. Email: valham@value.com.au. Our Web site: <http://member.rivernet.com.au/swsouth/watchhouse.htm>

Interested artists, potters, sculptors, etc who would like to organise an exhibition in the Watch House are urged to contact Steve South on 02 9810 1411 or on email swsouth@rivernet.com.au.

Annual subscriptions:
Household \$16, Concession \$7,
Organisations \$21.