



the balmain
association
incorporated
news sheet

The Peninsula OBSERVER

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Glasshouse Work

Work has at long last commenced on the restoration of the Balmain Glasshouse. The first stage involves removing the glass and the timber structure that is unserviceable. An internal brick veneer will be added next to support the new window frames and roof structure. The foundations were found to be strong

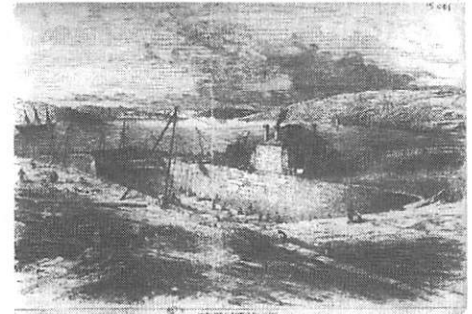
enough for the new work. Later stainless steel benches will be installed for the propagation receptacles.

The project has had great community support with pledges towards replacement glass roof panels. As the Council is funding the restoration of this unique building, the donations will now be used for facilities for the propagation of

indigenous plants to be planted in local parks. Volunteers will be most welcome upon completion of the restoration. It will be a useful addition to the Rozelle Bay Community Garden facilities.

Enquiries:

Ring Kathleen on
9818 4954



Mort Dock under construction 1853

Then and Now

An interesting photographic display of recent acquisitions contrasting with the images from our archives of streetscapes and industrial heritage in the Balmain area. The photos illustrate the development of Balmain from the first industrial suburb to its present day residential. The exhibition is helpful in understanding the heritage review that is proceeding.

At the Watch House on 9 & 16 April 11.30am to 4pm. Free admission. Enquiries 9818 4954.

Parking Controls

Over the past few years there has been a major shift in government policies towards the reduction in private vehicle usage and promoting more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Achieving sustainability requires focus on the movement of people and goods rather than the movement of vehicles and maximum accessibility – the ability to undertake a range of activities with a minimum of travel.

The cost and availability of parking influences the choice of transport mode. Even with good access to public transport, centres with abundant free or very inexpensive car parking will attract private car use. Car parking can occupy a large amount of space in developments, be unsightly and

reduce amenity. Cars are only in use for 5% of their life. The rest of the time they are taking up space.

From 1981 to 1997 the population of the Leichhardt Municipality increased by 20% but car ownership increased by about 47%, car trips increased by about 34% and car use jumped 58% measured in vehicle kilometres travelled.

The number vehicles per household has grown faster than population, at 2%pa from 1989 to 2002. The number of vehicles per household in the Sydney SD is 1.45. In 1997, the average vehicle occupancy per trip was 1.5 persons and only 1.2 persons for commuting trips in the Sydney SD.

Public transport use was 10% of all trips as against 70% in private vehicles. In 1996, 55% of people who travelled to Leichhardt to work drove a car. Only 44% of Leichhardt residents drove a car to work. Both

figures are rather low for Sydney. On Census Day 2001 in the Leichhardt LGA, 0.9% people travelled to work by train, 18.5% took a bus and 3.6% took both train and bus, 44.3% travelled by car either as the driver or as a passenger and 8.8% either rode a bike or walked.

The main aims of the Council's car parking controls are to ensure the parking standards and controls promote a substantial approach (socially, environmentally and financially). Ensure to the greatest extent practicably that parking controls reflect the principles of integrated land use and transport planning. Ensure the adequate levels of residential, business and visitor parking provide a reasonable level of residential amenity and viable businesses. Determine whether the current car parking standards and rates are suitable in certain areas.

The Winner of the Development Game Is?

In "Umpiring the Development Game" in the previous issue we reported that Peter Woods was undertaking a review of the way in which development issues are handled by Leichhardt Council. Peter Woods has now submitted his confidential report to Councillors. We understand he has made about 70 recommendations. In the interest of a wider discussion of development issues we would like to present 42 (the answer to life, the universe and everything!) points that we believe should be considered by Council and the community.

The matters we think should be considered are:

1. That Council enforce existing regulations and development consent conditions.

2. The number of changes that can be made to a development using s.96 applications (development creep) during construction should be limited to properly established errors in the original DA.

3. Consideration should be given to using development controls similar to those in San Francisco where the number of developments in a given area and time is limited and those given approval are judged to be the best of those submitted within, say, a six month period. The "judgements" should be by a panel that includes community representatives.

4. Neighbours should be shown a physical model of a proposed development and their properties so that they can understand the implications of the development. The model might also be useful for Councillors and Council staff.

5. For small "ads and alts" there should be a clear statement available, before the lodgement of a DA, of all fees payable to Council and at what stages and what money is refundable, under what conditions and when. These fees should not exceed 10% of the cost of the work to be undertaken.

6. That Council makes representations to the State Government to provide a percentage of the revenue that the State Government receives in stamp duty, on the sale of properties, to the local council

concerned. Sales activity is a good measure of development activity in an area and an indication of the administrative load council's face in dealing with developments. The financial burden of this activity should not have to be borne by the ratepayers in the area who are usually disadvantaged by the developments.

7. There should be better control over the performance of PCAs. They should not be paid directly by developers. Work on a site must not start until details of the PCA are displayed on the site boundary.

8. Residents should be offered briefings and/or written information on development issues such as what to expect, what rights and obligations they and developers have, what issues Council and other organizations can and can't deal with, and who should be contacted if there are issues of concern.

9. "Pre DA" meetings should be held, to which community representatives and neighbouring residents are invited to give comments and suggestions and negotiate an acceptable development in the presence of Council officers. In proposing this we make the point that this would not obviate the need for on-site meetings and consideration of post-DA submissions, for some proposals.

10. That Council require the payment of a surety or bond that, besides covering damaged footpaths and trees etc, covers possible damage to neighbouring properties, including gardens.

11. That the tree preservation policies of Council cover the "moving" as well as the "removing" of trees. At present it seems that if a tree is moved, even if it has minimal chance of surviving, a Council need not be informed. Perhaps tree moving as well as removing should require a DA.

12. That Council should take note of resident concerns and use resident expertise in Land and Environment Court actions. If Council decides not to contest actions in the L&E C it should put on public record its reasons.

13. That Council makes representations to the State Government to change the way in which the Land and Environment Court operates so that DCPs are given the same recognition by the Court as LEPs and that non-complying

existing developments not be used as precedents for ignoring planning controls.

14. If a developer or Council supplies or acts on incorrect information in a DA then Council should take action to ensure an innocent neighbour does not suffer financially or otherwise.

15. That development progress reports be issued each month to neighbours giving an expected date of completion and an indication of work to be done in the following month.

16. Rights-of-way must be maintained at all times and cannot be excavated or occupied. It should not be up to those who have right of way over land to take legal action to defend those rights.

17. That Council insist that staff put more emphasis on preserving the rights, amenity and environment of existing residents (as stated in LEP 2000) and less emphasis on helping developers.

18. That Council put size limits on excavations and enforce them.

19. That Council ensure the first work to be completed after an excavation is to ensure that neighbours have their land restored i.e. that retaining walls and safety fencing are built on the property being developed before work begins on a building.

20. That before an Occupation Certificate is issued all development consent conditions have to be complied with and both the PCA and Council must sign off on the OC. This condition needs to be enforced as, at present, buildings are sometimes occupied before the issuing of an OC.

21. That there is pro-active punitive action taken to prevent work being undertaken without development consent.

22. DCPs should contain provisions limiting the change to a property over time.

23. That Council require an independent costing of a DA. There is ample evidence that the real cost of developments is often four or more times the DA stated cost.

24. There should be an opportunity to bring forward or postpone consideration of DA because of the absence or illness of an affected resident/owner. Council should not assume that silence means consent. Where submissions for or

against are not made, Council should establish that the person notified about the DA is aware of the implications of the proposed development.

25. There are a disturbing number of cases where neighbours claim that they were not notified (or given sufficient notice) of a DA or s96 submission or when the matter was to be considered by Council. Neighbours of a development should be given hand-delivered notifications. Council also needs to check that the local chosen paper for placement of Council notices is reaching residents. In Birchgrove many residents do not have the "Courier" delivered despite Council and Courier staff being notified.

26. Times of operations and noise and dust levels should be checked and these issues should not be left to residents to deal with. Quality Assurance principles should be applied and the developer should be required to take measurements.

27. That Council guarantee response times action by rangers when the out-of-hours telephone number is called.

28. That construction hours and times, within the 7:00am to 5:30pm limits, should be negotiated with neighbours, where special circumstances can be demonstrated by neighbours.

29. There are cases where developments do not comply with the BCA (Building Code of Australia) eg windows located on or close to a boundary that should be picked up at the development approval stage rather than at the Construction Certificate stage.

30. That a stop-work order stops work on the whole site and not just on a particular aspect of the development that is considered to be not in compliance with the development consent.

31. That fees for DAs to be dependent on the size of the development/property. The fees could be a fixed percentage of the independently assessed cost of a development.

32. That Council consider widespread consultation with the municipal community about the adoption of a DCP, for the whole of the municipality, which prohibits all residential development above two stories and preserves the existing historic single and two storied

buildings. This approach was used, for the "Abbey" site in Glebe, by the Sydney City Council.

33. Consideration should be given to setting up neighbourhood development watch committees that can advise Council and residents on development issues. Precinct committees could possibly fulfil this role

34. Council staff should not be permitted to gain employment, with developers and planners that they have dealt with as Council officers, for a period of 12 months after leaving the Council. A precedent for this is in State Government where ministerial staff is restricted in their employment in this way.

35. Rather than specifying particular aspects of a building which should comply, a points system should be considered for use in developments prior to DA submissions. In such a system more points would be awarded for smaller (rather than larger) buildings, greater setbacks, hip or gable (rather than flat or skillion) roofs, inconspicuous garages etc. A minimum number of points would need to be obtained before a development application was accepted.

36. Council's records appear to be incomplete with drawings and letters concerning developments not on file. Loss of records seems to be common given Council's requests for further copies of drawings and documentation already supplied. Council should set up a system where the responsibility for loss of information can be identified.

37. A comprehensive survey of residents should be carried out to determine the acceptability of facades of contemporary buildings for a local area.

38. A photographic record of streetscapes should be made so that better informed judgements of the acceptability of a proposed development can be made now and in the future.

39. A prize should be given for the "best" streetscape façade of a contemporary residential building to encourage better designs. The winner should preferably be determined by residents, rather than architects, though it would be interesting to have determinations made by architects, planners and Councillors as well. An award for the

worst building design would also be worth considering.

40. The use of s.96 applications after work has been carried out should require a much higher fee than for changes not yet undertaken. Such a fee should not be tax deductible.

41. A s.96 application must not be approved for work that was previously refused.

42. That Council consult with other councils to seek support for the issues raised above.

. . . no decision yet as play continues while fans skirmish on the hill.

Fergus Fricke, Jean Lennane, Roger Parkes, Jeanette Sullivan, David Liddle, June Lunsman, Val & Kathleen Hamey, Jocelyn & John Morris, David Norrie, Issy Wyner,

Editor Required

In March 1988, Bob Nichols handed over the production of the Association News Sheet to Val and Kathleen Hamey. They have published 126 issues of the Observer in seventeen years and have now tendered their resignations.

Wanted! A budding editor for the bimonthly Observer. Publishing assistance and distribution will be forthcoming. Contributions to the paper are welcome.

Contact Val on 9818 4954

Clontarf Cottage

Visit the elegant 1844 sandstone cottage that was saved and retored by community action and now operates as a community centre.

Afternoon tea is available. 16 April 12pm to 4pm.

4 Wallace Street Balmain. Free. Enquiries 9810 3986.

The Clontarf Cottage Committee

Ballast Point Clean Up

Commencing on 31 March heritage items will be removed from Ballast Point to White Bay to secure them prior to remediation if the site by Caltex.

Items removed during this time are not being scavenged or looted.

Direct any questions to Richard O'Neill, Stakeholder Manager Major Projects, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. Tel 9240 8891

In Your Garden

Choosing and 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 or borders. However, for a good supply of colourful long-lasting blooms you should select floribunda roses.

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.

Rose love sunny and open positions and five to six hours of sunlight each day is 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 been 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. The best time to feed roses is February or August.

Bonnie Davidson

What's On

Watch House Exhibitions

- **Photographs Then and Now**
From our archives.
9 & 16 April 11am-4pm
- **Artworks 30 April-1 May**
Helen Bailey & Rosalind Friday
- **Rosalind Friday 7-8 May**
- **Intertwining Group**
Arts & Crafts May 14/15 & 21/22
- **Paintings May 28-29**
Peter Mottershead
- **Jamie Williams**
June 4/5 & 11/12

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The Peninsula
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Birchgrove NSW 2041
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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 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 5.00pm 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 :vhamey@tpg.com.au.

Our Web site::

<http://balmainassociation.aussiehosts.com>

Annual subscriptions:

Household \$20,

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Organisations \$30.