

Reports to the 2005 AGM



Planning

This year has been dominated by two major development proposals. The first, for the Abbey site in Bridge Road, had been continuing all through 2004 and reached its denouement on 16 December, when Mr Justice Lloyd handed down his judgement following an inspection on site, during which he heard evidence from residents.

The Abbey judgement was a triumph for the Society, which had organized two public meetings and made a number of submissions. It was also a significant achievement for residents around the site, who made a very valuable contribution, and a vindication of the strategy of the City Council, who took the risky decision to overthrow the Development Control Plan devised by Leichhardt Council on which the application was based.

Of course it is all very fine, and indeed essential, to defeat an over-development. It is quite another matter to find an acceptable solution for a site neglected for far too long. I wish to thank Roelof Smilde for his efforts to find an alternative. There is good news, too, from Peter Mayoh and Richard Mackay, who appear to have persuaded the owners to submit a DA with a reduced impact. This revised scheme was presented to a small group on Monday, 24 July, and appears to be the same as the one presented to the Committee on 13 July and the Planning sub-committee

on 16 July. The Society will make an appropriate response when it is formally advertised.

It has always been a challenge for the Society to find suitable solutions for heritage sites. This problem is not, of course, unique to Glebe. All historic areas have to face the problem of finding alternative uses for structures that need to be preserved, especially when the original use is no longer an option. In some ways Glebe is fortunate, because many of its important buildings can be relatively easily adapted.

The City Council has taken its responsibilities in this regard to heart: the One Stop Shop installed in Glebe Town Hall has proved to be a great asset, and the two Glebe Place Managers, Marcello Massi and his successor, Jenny Underwood, have made a very positive contribution to the community. The City has recently appointed Glebe's most distinguished heritage architect, Otto Cserhalmi, to draw up a Conservation Management Plan for the Glebe Town Hall.

Likewise the City has developed a proposal to restore *Bellevue*, in Blackwattle Bay Park, due to begin in September. The restoration of the Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator, to be handed over to the City as part of the open space on the Australand site at the bottom of Forsyth Street together with its sheds and garden, is nearing completion.

Glebe is also fortunate that its institutions are often in what were once private dwellings, and consequently can revert to that use. The purchase of the Historic Houses Trust Headquarters, John Verge's *Lyndhurst*, by Glebe Society member Tim Eustace as a home for his family is a good example.

Not all adaptive reuses are so welcome and felicitous, however. The *Max Factor Building* in Glebe Point Road received approval for a residential conversion in the face of strong resident objections. So far it has not proceeded.

The second major development proposal is also of this kind, only even more objectionable. In January a company called Murlan applied for what is essentially a residential tower block to be built in part of the historic Tramsheds, next to Harold Park Paceway, the largest surviving example of what was once a very extensive public transport system. Research undertaken by the Society, and since refined and extended by Ted McKeown, established the Tramsheds now belong to the Paceway through a series of most unusual financial dealings. A previous proposal, to use the Sheds as a fitness centre, was withdrawn on 2000.

Many Society members feel this heritage building should be kept for community use, and on Thursday 28 July, the Central Sydney Planning Committee agreed with them and refused the application. The application is flawed in many ways, but it is still possible for the applicant to appeal to the Land and Environment Court. I understand this would be the first time such an appeal was lodged against a decision of the CSPC. The City would oppose the appeal on behalf of the CSPC, and I believe they could mount a very strong case against it. However, even if an appeal is refused it is widely acknowledged it will not be easy to find an alternative use, because the building is very large and has been allowed to deteriorate for a long time, and will be expensive to restore.

These two decisions mean 2004-5 has been one of the most successful for the Planning Sub-committee in recent years. This success is due mainly to the very high levels of public concern and participation, as evidenced by the attendance at the public meetings convened by the sub-committee and the large number of written objections.

The Subcommittee organized a meeting with John McNerney, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the City's

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Planning Committee, on 17 March. The resulting discussion was extensively reported in Bulletin 3/2005, so I will not recapitulate it here. One result has been the formation of a new organization to make representations on behalf of Glebe residents and businesses (see Bulletin 3/2005). Another result has been to make clear the need for a new Town Plan.

Cr McInerney gave an undertaking that there would be public consultation over the new Town Plan, and it would build on the work done for LEP 2000. The heritage controls in LEP 2000 were out of date even when it was written, and the authors' minds were on suburbs further west rather than Glebe. It should be possible to produce a group of documents that produce a better result for our suburb. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that the best way of ensuring a good result is to have close cooperation between the community, business, the Society and Council. The Society has been working hard to achieve this and I will certainly be calling on wide participation from the membership when the time comes to draw up the new Plan.

There are many challenges facing Glebe in the coming year. Applications for sites on the Bays are certain to be lodged, and will require a strong response. There are proposed extensions for the Broadway Centre, advertised until the end of August, and these may prove controversial. Glebe's famous repertory cinema, the Valhalla, has closed and the building is under threat. Proposals for Broadway, Parramatta Road and the Children's Hospital site may cause problems. Developments in Forest Lodge continue to cause concern. It is quite possible we will look back on the past year as a high point. As we have done in the past, we can draw inspiration from our achievements, and learn from our failures.

- Neil Macindoe

Convenor, Planning Sub-committee

Bays and Foreshores

Rozelle Bay Developments

There are currently two major developments proposed for Rozelle Bay. Both are in accordance with the Master Plan for the Bay which was signed off by the then Department of Planning in September 2002. However, both developments will impact directly on the peace and tranquility of Rozelle Bay. The proposal for a Dry Boat Storage facility will have additional major impacts both on water traffic and safety, and road traffic and congestion.

Dry Boat Storage Sheds for 670 Boats

This proposal has been modified from the original concept of dry boat storage for over 1000 boats. In its third iteration, the number of boats proposed is now approximately 650-670 depending on the size of the boats. As well, the scale of the development in terms of height has been reduced.

The proposed development comprise:

- Two dry-boat storage buildings with heights over 29 m which is over three times the height of the existing NSW Maritime Building.
- A commercial retail facility and plaza and public access to the waterfront.
- A multi-level car park which will accommodate 265 cars.
- Berthing facilities and piers.
- Workshop facilities.
- Recreational boat refueling facilities. With this facility there is always the danger of oil/fuel spillages, killing wildlife.
- Pump-out sewage facility with the associated risk of raw sewage in the Bays.
- Four boat-launching lifts loading boats into the water in five minutes. These lifts would have the capacity to launch 90 boats on a weekend, over 3 hours and then another 3 hours to store them at the end of the day. This operation would result in traffic jams on both the waterways and the roads.

The facility would:

- Operate 10-12 hours per day, 7 days per week depending on the weather winter or summer, with a proposed 24-hour operation to manage special events e.g. New Year's Eve.
- Churn up toxic silt at the bottom of the Bay by the boats creating a 'washing machine effect' in the most unflushed part of the harbour.
- Create smoke and oil pollution as well as noise which destroy the serenity of the Bay walk because the majority of boats stored will have outboard motors.
- Endanger existing passive recreational boating and working harbour vessels and create gridlock in the Bay and at the Glebe Island Bridge.

Boat Repair and Maintenance Facility

This development whilst, in the context of a working harbour, is supported in principle, is still a major problem in terms of its proposed hours of operation. These are totally unacceptable

The proposed development would:

- Be comprised of buildings and sheds up to 14 m high and approximately 50 m long on a site the size of 2.5 football fields. Following negotiation, these specifications are an improvement on the original proposal.
- Operate 24 hours, 7 days a week, generating significant noise that will travel over water extremely easily and be heard especially in the still of night.
- Risk the introduction of tributyl tin and other anti-fouling toxic material to the already excessively polluted bays.

The Current Situation

The Development Application for The Boat Repair and Maintenance Facility was submitted to NSW Maritime for Landowner's Consent over 6 weeks ago. This still has not been given. Following this consent the proposal will be submitted to

SHFA for exhibition and assessment.

The Development Application for The Dry Boat Storage Facility has not been submitted as yet to NSW Maritime for Landowner's consent.

Blackwattle Bay Developments

The Coal Bunker and Charter Vessel Wharf.

- A DA has been lodged for the Coal Bunker. The DA has been exhibited and is currently being assessed by SHFA.
- Following the DA approval, an Expression of Interest will be run for the Coal Bunker and Charter Vessel Wharf. The EOI will seek uses that are in accordance with the current Master Plan for Blackwattle Bay, as well as in accordance with the DA approval for The Coal Bunker. Anticipated date for EOI process is September/October.
- SHFA and NSW Maritime have engaged a consultant team to prepare a design for a boardwalk connection between the Sydney Fish Market and The Coal Bunker.

Bank Street

A draft Master Plan for the Bank Street foreshore went on exhibition earlier this year.

It is understood that No.1 Bank Street, which has been used as a residence and studio, is currently on the market for sale. The property is zoned open space.

Plan of Management

Two forums have been conducted by the City of Sydney to outline the updating of the Blackwattle Bay Park Plan of Management (1999) and incorporating the adjacent open space from the Australand development between Cook Street and Ferry Road (which will be a new public park). The Plan will document guidelines for the development, use and management of these parkland areas and heritage buildings, addressing uses for *Bellevue* and

The Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator. The latest plan for *Bellevue* (February 2005) includes minor changes, mostly to comply with new legislation relating to disabled access. All four toilets (one upstairs, three downstairs) will be disabled equipped. The gallery/café concept has been retained for the first floor area as a basis for submissions from the public.

Foreshore Walkway

- City of Sydney has allocated in the Budget for this financial year \$15 million for this project which includes the restoration of *Bellevue*.
- Council hopes to go to tender for the Walkway later this year.
- the DA is pending on the restoration of *Bellevue*. Council is awaiting the Heritage Office's decision, which should be in by October/November.

There will be opportunity for discussion of these matters at the Glebe, Forest Lodge and Camperdown Community Forum (6-8.30pm, 29 August at The Glebe Town Hall)

- Susan Cleary and Bob Armstrong

Foley Park

The story so far ...

June 2003 - The Glebe Society proposed an upgrade of Foley Park to the City of Sydney Council.

May 2004 - Council engaged consultants to undertake a Draft Plan of Management and Master Plan for the Park.

June 2004 - An Open Day and Workshop was held with the community.

April 2005 - The Draft Plan of Management was exhibited; the Society's detailed submission dated 29 April was received by Council.

August 2005 - Council responded to the Society's submission in a detailed 4-page letter. The Plan of Management will be adopted by Council on 12 September 2005 and the proposed capital works will be staged over time.

The next steps:

We met with a Council Officer on 18 August to find out what happens next. We were told that Council is committed to the upgrade of Foley Park and that:

- submissions from the community have been taken into account, and the Plan of management is scheduled to go to the September meeting of Council for adoption – details will be available in Council papers.
- funds have been set aside for the design development which should occur in the 2005/06 fiscal year, and will include community consultation.
- when the final Master Plan is completed by the consultant and adopted by Council, funds will be committed for Park expenditure in the capital works program.
- physical transformation of the Park should start in January 2007, and the upgrade completed in 2008.

**- Bobbie Burke
For the Foley Park Working Group**

Please bring these reports to the AGM on Sunday 28 August.

The President's Report and more sub-committee reports will be published with the next Bulletin.

Glebe Point Road Revitalisation Project

The Glebe Point Road Revitalisation Project has now been presented to all stakeholders in Glebe, including the Glebe Chamber of Commerce. Feedback from various groups identified that there are some major issues impacting on Glebe. These include unclear positioning, lack of coordination between the various groups and agencies, uncoordinated efforts and depressed commercial activity.

Since these presentations have occurred, several changes have happened. The new CEO of the City of Sydney has been appointed, there is a new policy for the development of business and community partnerships and a change has been made in the administration of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Glebe Chamber of Commerce. Given that the philosophy of City of Sydney is that action and initiatives be driven by the community, it was seen as important to set up a group that is representative of both the community and commerce in Glebe. The aim is to have a direct link with council and develop strategies that have input from residents and businesses in Glebe.

This has resulted in the concepts and ideas that were developed through the Glebe Point Road Revitalisation Project evolving into actions through the setting up of the newly formed group, namely **COGG** (Coalition of Glebe Groups). The membership of **COGG** consists of representatives of the Glebe Point Residents Group, Glebe Residents Action Group, The Glebe Society and the Glebe Chamber of Commerce.

- Jan Wilson

Convenor, Glebe Point Road Revitalisation Sub-committee

Transport and Traffic

Traffic and parking issues continue to be active matters in the public mind. The parking meters in Glebe Point Road attract a wide variation in comments, with differences of opinion between the Chamber of Commerce and some residents. The Society has made submissions to Council on this issue. We appear to have reached a position where the current situation needs to be monitored over time.

Through traffic in Glebe became a hotly debated matter when a public forum was held on 8 June 2005. A large number of residents plus Council staff and Councillors were in attendance to hear options for downgrading Bridge Road, as well as concerns raised about the potential impact of the Cross City Tunnel. The points made on my behalf at this meeting were:

- The Cross City Tunnel development consent requires traffic flows on Glebe streets to be monitored before and after the opening, and if increased traffic occurs in residential streets, the proponent of the tunnel will be responsible for traffic management measures to reduce the impact of any such increase
- Glebe Point Road would be better managed as Glebe's "High Street" if it had a 40 km/hr speed limit
- In its vision as a City of Villages, Council should initiate a traffic and land use study of Glebe, and develop appropriate plans for all modes of transport, taking into account major roadworks such as the Cross City Tunnel and the M4 East Link.

To ensure that the community has an informed opinion on the implications of the Cross City Tunnel, the Society commissioned independent traffic counts of the "Before" situation in Glebe, and will follow up with "After" counts, for comparison. As well as providing specific information to assess the impact of the Cross City

Tunnel, these counts provide a good basis for review of traffic conditions in Glebe and along Glebe Point Road, to provide more information when reviewing through traffic issues as well as issues relating to improvements to Glebe Point Road.

Development matters often require feedback on traffic implications. Proposals such as the dry boat storage facility on Rozelle Bay and the Tram Sheds over-development have required responses on traffic implications. Assistance will be provided to Neil on these issues as they arise.

- Chris Hallam

Convenor, Transport and Traffic Sub-committee

Infrastructure Defects Reporting

Council has already undertaken the repair or resurfacing of certain roads, lanes and footpaths in Glebe. In some instances, this has been a direct response to alerting Council to unsatisfactory and unsafe surfaces. Additionally, I understand that Council is in the early stages of preparing a proactive program for the progressive repair and/or restoration of all the footpaths in Glebe. Concerns about street lighting and faded line marking for parking spaces are generally attended to promptly. However, reporting infrastructure defects of immediate concern will continue to be relevant.

- Margaret Sheppard

Environment

In 2004, the City of Sydney released for public comment and then adopted its *Street Tree Master Plan for Glebe*. The Environment Subcommittee met with the City's consultant prior to the release of the *Plan* and thus we were able to ensure that the Society's knowledge and ideas were included in the final document. The Subcommittee also attended and spoke at the City's meeting with residents in the Glebe Town Hall in December 2004. The Society congratulated the City on the *Plan*, as it not only provides an overview (street by street) of existing plantings, but also recommendations for the future. The good effects of the *Plan* are already being seen with the many recent plantings of street trees.

Also, the City of Sydney has established a *Significant Tree Register* for our suburb. As a first step the City accepted the Society's recommendation that all trees previously listed on Leichhardt Council's significant tree register should be transferred to the *Register* prepared by the City. It will be possible for residents or the Society to nominate additional trees, either individually or in groups, for inclusion in the *Register*. If you would like to nominate a tree, please contact the Society for advice in preparing your submission to the City.

In March, over 40 residents of Glebe and surrounding suburbs participated in *Clean Up Australia Day*. At low tide, we collected over 40 bags of rubbish from the harbour foreshore at the northern end of Glebe Point Road. Residents also brought with them 11 shopping trolleys that had been dumped in the local streets - they were subsequently collected by the Coles Myer contractor. Many thanks to all those who attended, worked so hard and helped to keep our suburb free of rubbish.

In February 2005, the President and Secretary of the Society and the Convenor of the Environment Subcommittee met with the Manager of the Coles Supermarket in the

Broadway Shopping Centre in an attempt to solve the problem of the **200 shopping trolleys that are dumped in Glebe each day**. Despite the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Coles Myer stating that his company "takes our responsibility in regard to trolleys very seriously" there has been no improvement in the situation. The Society has asked that Coles Myer implement a key-lock system, requiring a \$2 deposit, for all its trolleys at the Broadway Shopping Centre. It is disappointing that one of Australia's most successful and profitable public companies has so little regard for the environment and the amenity of the suburbs surrounding its supermarkets. The solution to the problem now appears to lie in regulations to be adopted by the City of Sydney that will force such Coles Myer to respect the environment. Alternatively, the City could follow Burwood Council's initiative and fine shoppers up to \$220 if they dump a shopping trolley in a street of the suburb.

We never thought it would happen in Glebe, but it did! Sometime in August 2004, more than **20 mature trees, planted when the Blackwattle Bay Park was established, were poisoned**. The death of the trees resulted in the foreshore residents having an uninterrupted view of Blackwattle Bay and the city skyline. The Environment Subcommittee wrote a draft policy on Poisoned Trees and, after its publication in the Bulletin for comment by members, it was adopted by the Society in March 2005. The City of Sydney quickly acted to determine the cause of the poisoning (a herbicide) and based its own policy on that of the Society. The City has left the poisoned trees in place, and erected two large banners in the dead trees asking for information about the poisonings and stating that the fine for poisoning a tree is a \$1 million. The replanting of the trees has also commenced. Unfortunately the saga continues with the recent poisoning of a street tree in Lodge Street.

In concluding this report I wish to acknowledge the assistance given by

Fiona Campbell, Judy Vergison, Judy Christie, Roberta Johnston, and Hilary Wise, and also especially Asa Walquist who undertook much work on the poisoned trees issue and who, with Hilary Wise, looked after the Subcommittee whilst I was overseas.

-Andrew Wood
Convenor, Environment Subcommittee

History of the Glebe Society

A fairly detailed subject survey of the first ten years of the Society has been completed. This, together with the indexes of later years prepared by Lyn Milton and Edwina Doe, will be the basis for a first draft of the History. Writing has commenced, though in a rather more modest fashion than I had hoped, with the beginning of the year proving more demanding of personal time than I originally anticipated. The first chapter is under way, covering the foundation of the Society, its original aims and structure. I look forward to resuming the work following my recent return from holiday.

- Jeanette Knox

Please bring these reports to the AGM on Sunday 28 August.

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please turn over ...

Heritage

This year's subcommittee stands at 10, with an average of 7 attending our monthly meetings.

Looking over last year's annual report, we find most items are still on the books! Wheels turn slowly and on the whole this is the nature of our endeavors. Mostly the pace is set by others, for instance Council with their slow but sure processes. It is also the pace of voluntary committees like ours, where members are involved with other interests and commitments.

But our success may also be measured in friendships formed about common interests, in the swapping of experiences and ideas, and in formulating strategies to advance the cause.

So what of the past year?

- ◆ The Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator - the restoration is nearing completion but an adaptive reuse is yet to be found. (See Bulletin 7/2005.)
- ◆ *Bellevue* - others in the Society have worked on this and the forecast is for completion of the restoration between June and October 2006, with a user/lessee hopefully found by that time.
- ◆ Stronger Heritage Conservation controls - Council advised in July 2004 of the plan to appoint Consultants by October 2004 to develop the legislation, and of the intention to make Glebe "first cab off the rank". They also accepted this committee's offer to survey all of Glebe for buildings and streetscapes, additional to the 160 already listed, with the potential for heritage listing. This big job, undertaken by 6 teams, produced some 450 photographs, each with a short description. These photographs, together with a copy of "Glebe's Treasures", were submitted in late December.
- ◆ *Lyndhurst* - prior to its sale, we were given the opportunity to stage an open day at *Lyndhurst*,

for many the first, and perhaps the last, opportunity to see inside this grand old villa. Over 300 came, a great success.

- ◆ The palisades - a history of the extensive sandstone wall supporting the excavation of Parramatta Road by the University, was compiled as background to our request to Council for the restoration of the palisade fencing along its top.
- ◆ "The business of building Glebe" - an illustrated talk by Max Solling and Michael Foster was presented to some 60 members at St Scholastica's in October 2004.
- ◆ The Commonwealth Productivity Commission - in looking into the conservation of Australia's heritage, the Commission sought submissions from any party. The Society replied with 8 pages of succinct facts and viewpoints.
- ◆ Future plans - a tour of Glebe's secret gardens, oral histories, pre-settlement Aboriginal heritage, the production of a calendar on Glebe and how to put "Glebe's Treasures" on the Web were among the numerous topics considered by the group for future action.

- David Mander Jones

Convenor, Heritage Sub-committee.

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