



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

MARCH, 1977

TREE SCHEME FOR QUEEN STREET

Woollahra Municipal Council has evolved a comprehensive tree-planting scheme for Queen Street, following the association's offer of a \$4000 contribution from its Queen Street Fair surpluses.

The scheme was outlined to members of the association committee at a meeting with the Council's Visual Improvements Committee on February 16.

Total cost of the scheme would be approximately \$10,000, with the other \$6000 coming from the Council.

If approval is given, the new trees would be planted this coming winter.

Under the scheme, sixty-five advanced Eucalyptus Calophylla Rosea and Fraxinus Raywoodii trees would be planted along the length of the street, with the aim of providing colour throughout the year.

New plantings would be most extensive between Moncur and Oxford Streets.

At the other end of Queen Street to Ocean Street, existing Liquidamber and Tristania trees would be retained, and there would be some new plantings of Liquidamber.

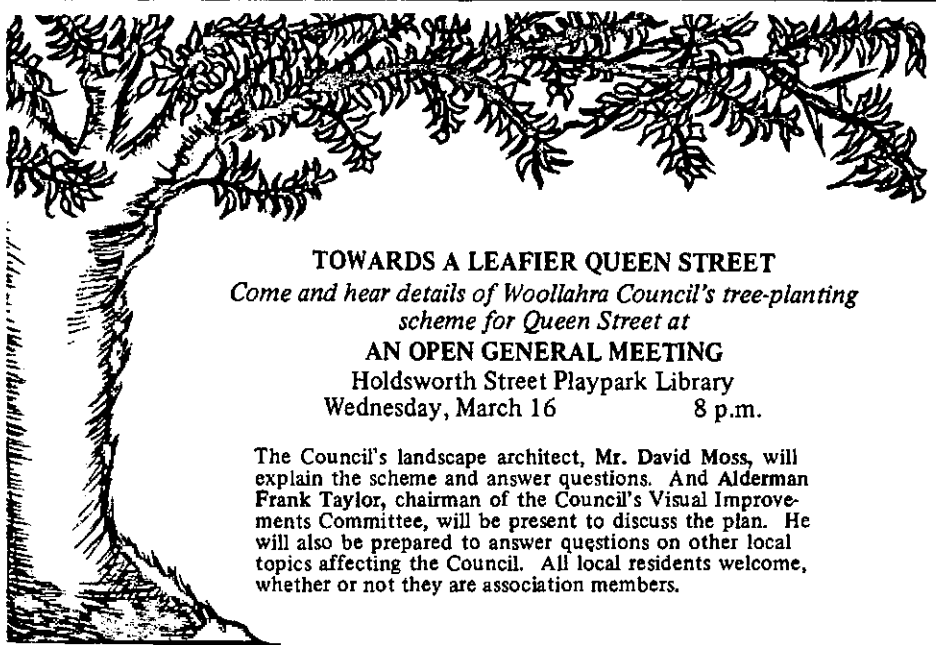
Designed by the Council's landscape architect, Mr. David Moss, the scheme is completely different from the association's proposal that Illawarra Flame trees and Jacarandas should be planted alternately along the length of the street.

However, we have told the Council that we would not reject the proposal because it differs from our own, and have asked for a little time to consider it.

We also feel that the proposal is sufficiently important for all local people to examine it and make comments.

Accordingly we have called a general meeting of our association — open to all local people — about which a notice appears on this page.

We have invited Alderman Taylor, a local ward alderman who is chairman of



TOWARDS A LEAFIER QUEEN STREET
Come and hear details of Woollahra Council's tree-planting scheme for Queen Street at
AN OPEN GENERAL MEETING
Holdsworth Street Playpark Library
Wednesday, March 16 8 p.m.

The Council's landscape architect, Mr. David Moss, will explain the scheme and answer questions. And Alderman Frank Taylor, chairman of the Council's Visual Improvements Committee, will be present to discuss the plan. He will also be prepared to answer questions on other local topics affecting the Council. All local residents welcome, whether or not they are association members.

the Visual Improvements Committee, and Mr. Moss, to explain the scheme to the meeting and answer questions.

We also intend that this meeting should be a "local forum" where residents can raise other matters with the association and Alderman Taylor, possibly including the vexed question of parking in Queen Street.

The \$4000 which the association has offered the Council is made up of the \$1000 balance of the surplus from the 1975 Queen Street Fair plus \$3000 which is almost the entire surplus from the 1976 Fair.

COUNCIL SPARE THAT TREE?

Several local residents have expressed dismay at Woollahra Council's plan to cut down a lovely Camphor Laurel tree outside Roderick Palmer's shop at the corner of Victoria Avenue and Queen Street.

Council consider the tree dangerous and

have decided to replace it with a Pink Flowering Gum.

We raised the necessity of this action at our meeting with the Council's Visual Improvements Committee on February 16.

It was explained to us that in addition to pushing up the footpath, the roots had caused damage to underground services in nearby properties for which the Council had been obliged to pay compensation.

By the day we met the committee, the Council had received two letters in defence of the tree and one wholeheartedly endorsing the decision to remove it.

We asked that no action should be taken for two weeks, and the Visual Improvements Committee agreed.

This will enable us to get an independent report from an arborial expert on whether the tree's wayward roots can be prevented from causing further damage or the execution should proceed.

We hope to report further at the public meeting on March 16.

DEMOLITION BY DELAY

It is now four years since that dramatic day when the outrage of local residents halted the demolition of the splendid Georgian property, Helen Keller House, in Waimea Avenue.

The Royal Institute of Architects and the National Trust have continued to share our concern for the future of the building, and in November the Premier referred in Parliament to our work in preserving it.

It has always been the association's wish that the Royal Blind Society of N.S.W., who own the building, should sell it to somebody who will restore it faithfully to its original condition.

So far this has not happened, and the association has decided to make the future of Helen Keller House its major project for 1977.

Our concern now is that unless restoration starts soon, time will complete the destruction which the bulldozer started.

A member of our committee elaborates on this theme:

In a society becoming increasingly aware of the wholesale violation of its manmade and natural environments, ownership of historic properties might reasonably be thought to carry with it certain responsibilities.

These are, at least, to ensure that the building is adequately maintained and not allowed to slide into delapidation.

Unhappily, owners who view an historic house as a burden often think otherwise, in which case they tend to adopt one of two courses of action.

One is rapid and hopefully unnoticed demolition. The other is abandonment of the property, suitably vandalised, to the elements.

More dramatic measures are sometimes employed. In the case of the shell of one of England's finest neo-classic houses, for instance, the owner, a millionaire whose sense of social conscience was obviously less developed than his incendiary tendencies, threatened to blow the building up.

While the Royal Blind Society has been less dramatic in its approach, it has nevertheless combined the two most favoured methods of destruction.

First demolition, happily halted. Then the slow lingering death by decay, neglect and studied disinterest.

Concern for the future rehabilitation of the building and undoing the damage done by the attempted razing seem to date to run only to the placement on the outside wall of a sign warning the curious that it is unsafe.

Unsafe it may be, but irreparably damaged? Not yet.



One of our committee members described it as looking like a Chinese takeaway and a lady (who shall be nameless) thought she recognised sexual symbolism in the design of the new Bank of New South Wales building in Queen Street. Several other local residents feel disappointed that the exterior design is so out of keeping with the traditional Queen Street streetscape, particularly when it is remembered that Australia's oldest bank usually has such a sensitive touch in matters architectural. The architect had a problem – to provide a satisfactory visual link between the interesting fenestration detail of Queens Court on one side and the sweeping arches of the shops on the other. But did the solution have to be so monolithic? Comments – including those of the bank itself – would be welcomed.

The National Trust still has hopes that the iron will of the Royal Blind Society will prove more flexible than it has of late.

Offers made for the property have been rejected as not substantial enough. What the Society regards as substantial enough remains their secret.

That the building is standing at all is entirely due to the efforts of members of the Queen Street Association who not only halted the bulldozer but also placed the temporary roof on the building, paying for it with association funds

supplemented by the generous help of Keith Whatman.

Blame for further deterioration of the building would lie fairly and squarely with the wise gentlemen who form the committee of the Royal Blind Society.

Shame, sirs, that your concern for those without sight is unmatched by a similar concern for those of us fortunate enough to see but unfortunate enough too to see what you are doing to this splendid building.

1976 QUEEN STREET FAIR Preliminary Statement of Accounts

	\$	\$
INCOME		
Revenue from stall rentals	13,595	
Donations and concessions	630	
	14,225	
EXPENDITURE		
Hire of stalls, stages, bins and toilets	4,083	
Cleaning and security	1,695	
Printing and stationery	1,003	
Promotion and entertainment	772	
Insurance (including pluvius cover)	1,091	
Telephone, postage, office costs	294	
Salaries and wages	1,680	
Miscellaneous	349	
	10,967	
		14,225
		3,258

\$3258 SURPLUS FROM FAIR

The preliminary accounts published in this *Village Voice* show that the 1976 Queen Street Fair, held on November 27, resulted in a surplus to the association of \$3258.

This is considerably better than our 1975 surplus of \$1768, an improvement principally due to the committee's success in trimming and controlling costs.

Our best-ever year was 1974 when there were almost 300 stalls in the street and our surplus was \$5131.

Afterwards it was decided to limit the number of stalls to just over 200, with consequent reduction in revenue. And it is now essential to pay somebody to handle the administrative work, which has increased our costs.

Given these factors, we are well pleased with the financial success of the 1976 Fair, particularly as it took place in the middle of a petrol strike which prevented many people from attending.

Artistically, we believe there is room for improvement.

Some interesting and unusual merchandise was sold at the 1976 Fair and there were several imaginative displays — but we could do with more of both.

It is difficult to know what more the association can do to encourage stallholders to display the sort of originality which would make Queen Street Fair even more exciting.

For various personal reasons, several stallholders who have shown imagination in the past have decided not to participate again. And it is very difficult to assess in advance from a new stallholder's application whether their stall presentation will knock your eyes out or depress you with its drabness.

We have had some very pleasant surprises in the past — and shocks, too.

Happily some of the worst offenders — such as the horrible mock auctions — have now been weeded out. But we would like more to be happening on the constructive side.

At the 1976 Fair, we again provided awards for display in various categories. Winners were:

BEST CHARITY OR COMMUNITY SERVICE STALL: The Nimrod Theatre with its fascinating "Cosmic Face Painting Factory", quite the most original feature of the Fair.

BEST COSTUMES WORN BY STALLHOLDERS: The Smith Family, Town and Country Committee, who raised more than \$1000 with a well-conducted saté stall. Attendants were dressed in bright gingham.

BEST COMMERCIAL STALL: Mrs. Maureen Christie, of Hunters Hill, with a stall selling bread baskets.



Queen Street Fair, 1976. Above, Barbara Walker and the bikini girls who helped her again win the award for the best presentation by a Queen Street shop on Fair Day. Below, satisfied clients of the Nimrod Theatre's Cosmic Face Painting Factory. (Pictures by courtesy of Ian Heathcote.)



BEST DRESSED SHOP IN QUEEN STREET ON FAIR DAY: The House of Edward Bear, proprietor Barbara Walker.

We would like to offer our particular congratulations to Barbara Walker who won the shop award for the second year running.

She went to a great deal of trouble not only with her own shop but also with the stall outside which she was allocated as a previous year's winner.

Judges of the competition were the newspaper and magazine personalities Babette Hayes, Janise Beaumont and Mike Gibson to whom our special thanks are due.

Inevitably at this time of year we start

to receive inquiries from prospective stallholders for the next Fair.

Application forms will probably be sent out in September, and last year's stallholders will receive them automatically unless we were dissatisfied with their presentation.

If you would like to receive an application for 1977 and were not a stallholder in 1976, send a note to the Secretary at the address on the back of this newsletter, preferably accompanied by a foolscap size stamped addressed envelope.

And please remember, it is the association's policy to give preference to charities and local people, i.e. people living in the Woollahra and Waverley Municipalities and the Paddington-Darlinghurst area.

THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, N.S.W.

Address: Box 16, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

Subscription: \$3.00 a year. Life membership \$25.00.

President: Robin Brampton
Vice President: Leo Schofield
Treasurer: Anthony Sernack

Committee: Austin Chapman, Mark Crittle, Douglas Gordon, Michael Magnus, Marcel Piat, Grant Roberts (co-opted, October 1976).

Chairman of the Architectural Committee: Douglas Gordon

Secretary: Mrs. Anne MacCallum, 387 3207

Auditor: Michael Gilovitz

Village Voice is published approximately every six months. Letters and other contributions on local topics are invited. The editor is Robin Brampton (357 1488 day, 32 4475 evening and weekends).

AN INVITATION TO JOIN US

Every home in the area covered by the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association gets a copy of *Village Voice*.

If you're reading this and you're not a member of the association, please join us by filling in the coupon below.

We need your support, both moral and financial, in our constant fight to preserve the architectural heritage of our area and ensure that it always remains a pleasant place to live.

THE QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

ENCLOSED IS MY SUBSCRIPTION OF \$3 FOR ONE YEAR.
IF YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN A MEMBER, PLEASE PUT A TICK HERE

NAME

ADDRESS

POST TO: The Secretary,
Queen Street and West Woollahra Association,
PO Box 16,
WOOLLAHRA, NSW 2025.

LIGHTS AT THE CORNER

After representations in which the Queen Street Association took part, traffic lights are to be installed at the junction of Queen Street and Moncur Street.

The news will be welcomed by motorists and pedestrians who are both victims of the confusion and congestion which rules at the spot.

In our last *Village Voice*, we reported that although we were concerned about safety at the junction, we were reluctant to make a positive recommendation until we had done more research.

Our subsequent assessment showed that the traffic volume and congestion are now so heavy that the present methods of traffic control are inadequate.

So at the beginning of December, we wrote to the Minister for Transport and Highways, Mr. Peter Cox, requesting that traffic lights be provided.

Two of the particular problems we pointed out to the Minister were:

- (a) The speed at which traffic travels down Queen Street from Oxford Street towards the intersection, especially in the evening when there are fewer vehicles in the street.
- (b) The constant bank up of traffic seeking to turn right from Queen Street into Moncur Street which is unable to proceed because of the stream of traffic coming in the opposite direction along Queen Street.

Concurrently with our representations, Mr. John Barraclough, MLA for Bligh, was making similar representations on behalf of local residents, shopkeepers and shoppers.

As a result of the representations, the Department of Main Roads informed

Mr. Barraclough in January that the intersection had been listed as a "recognised site" for the provision of traffic lights.

When they will be installed depends on Departmental priorities and the availability of funds.

However, Mr. Barraclough is making representations to Mr. Cox for the Government to give them high priority.

CINEMA PLAN REVIVED

The owner, Mrs. Notaras, has not given up hope of being able to turn the delapidated Diamond Horseshoe nightclub building in Oxford Street, opposite Centennial Park, into an elegant bijou cinema principally showing Australian films.

In the last *Village Voice*, we reported the failure of her appeal to the Lands Tribunal against the refusal of Woollahra Municipal Council to grant planning permission.

The Tribunal considered that car parking would be inadequate for the project.

Now Mrs. Notaras has submitted a revised scheme, reducing the number of seats in the cinema from more than 300 to 210.

This allows a ratio of just over seven seats to every off-street parking space she can provide behind the Diamond Horseshoe building - a ratio which she believes will be acceptable to the planning authorities.

Woollahra Council has circulated residents in the immediate locality for their views on the revised scheme.

Several residents in the immediate locality of the building opposed the original scheme, and one of them, Mr. D. G. Stewart, a barrister who lives in Victoria Street, gave evidence at the Lands Tribunal hearing.

Their objections are based on the fear of additional traffic and parking congestion, and noise.

Although it has expressed concern that parking should be adequate, our association has given its support in principle to the scheme.

One of the association's aims, as stated in our constitution, is to prevent buildings in the area becoming a threat to the amenities through neglect or prolonged delay in restoration or redevelopment.

This is most definitely what has happened at the Diamond Horseshoe. But apart from the urgent need for restoration of this interesting Victorian building, we believe the proposed cinema would be a useful cultural amenity in the area.