

The Glebe Society **BULLETIN**

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GLEBE: A CONSERVATION AREA

Glebe is a history of early Australian urban architecture; as a townscape it is handsome, coherent and largely complete. The scale and character have been little disturbed by modern intrusion.

It has been built up over a century and a half, but the architecture is predominately late nineteenth century with some excellent examples of early twentieth century Federation style. It was built for a wide range of different classes of people. Consequently there is a very large range of housing types from the Regency mansion, suburban villa, the large terrace, the small terrace to the small cottage.

Glebe contains the largest numbers of 1860-70s cottages and terraces forming one continuous townscape in Australia. This area of 47 acres was in the ownership of the Church of England from the late eighteenth century until 1974 when it was acquired by the Australian Government. The area is being renovated and restored with the intention of preserving the townscape.

Although there are certain areas of particularly high quality, Glebe is fairly homogeneous in the standard and interest of its townscape and is always visually and architecturally interesting. For the most part there is a strong grid pattern with wide regulation width streets, lanes and tree planting which combine with the low and regular profile of the buildings to form a distinctive unity and an agreeable domestic environment. The formal nature of the streets with their fixed building lines and iron railings is enlivened by the occasional twisting street (such as Ferry Road) but principally by the topography of the ridges. Many streets terminate at the water or a cliff face so that the views outwards form a significant element in the environment. Also the views of Glebe and its mostly original skyline are especially significant from Annandale, Rozelle and Ultimo. Glebe is also fortunate in its many mature trees particularly in its streets and parks but also in private property.

There are many buildings of interest in Glebe. The following is a list of some of the more important:-

Church of St. John the Evangelist (St. Johns Road) 1868-70

Architects: Edmund Blacket and J. Horbury Hunt

High Victorian (Romanesque) Gothic (A significant element in the St. Johns Road streetscape; the tower is the highest point on the Glebe skyline.

Former Presbyterian Church (Pyrmont Bridge Road) 1876-81

Architect: Thomas Rowe. High Victorian Gothic

(An important skyline element)

Chinese Joss House (Edward Street) 1914 (not of great architectural importance, but historically interesting)

Lyndhurst, (59 Darghan Street) 1833-35

Architect: John Verge. Regency

Toxteth Park (now St. Scholastica's College - Avenue Road) 1829-31; 1877-81 (Architects: John Verge and George Mansfield) (The tower is an important skyline element; the house which is kept in excellent condition has a handsome garden)

Calmar (128 Glebe Point Road) about 1863
Architect: Edmund Blacket

The Lodge (9 Toxteth Road). Possibly built as The Lodge or Gatehouse when Toxteth Park was enlarged between 1877 and 1881. Picturesque Gothic.

Margaretta Cottage (6 Leichhardt Street) about 1861.
Architect: possibly Michael Golden. Post Regency.

Briarbank (233 Pyrmont Bridge Road) about 1862. Post Regency

Rothwell Lodge (24 Ferry Road). Possibly before 1851. Post Regency.

Tranby (13 Mansfield Street) 1850s?
Post Regency.

Bidura (357 Glebe Point Road) about 1860.
Post Regency.

Reussdale (160 Pyrmont Bridge Road) about 1868.

Architect: Ferdinand Reuss.
Picturesque Gothic.

St. Barnabas Rectory (35 Arundel Street) about 1875. Post Regency.

Kirribee (now Camden College - 55 Hereford Street) 1889. Italianate

Montana (36 Boyce Street) 1892.
Federation.

The Glebe Town Hall (St. Johns Road) 1879-80.

Architect: Ambrose Thornley Jnr.
Italianate.

The Courthouse (St. Johns Road) 1889.

Architect: James Barnet
Italianate.

The Police Station (St. Johns Road) 1883.

Architect: James Barnet
Italianate.

Record Reign Hall (St. Johns Road) 1897.

Architect: Edward Halloran
Federation.

The Fire Station (75½ St. Johns Road) 1906.

Architect: Walter L. Vernon
Federation.

The Post Office (Glebe Point Road) 1888.
Italianate.

St. Johns Village (St. Johns Road) 1964.

Architects: Hely, Bell & Horne

Extracts from the submission to the National Trust for the classification of Glebe, by Tony Strachan. The Editor feels she should point out that readers should remember it is not just individual buildings that should be preserved, as the demolition of surrounding buildings often detract from the overall picture.

NATIONAL TRUST CAMPAIGN FOR
LEGISLATION TO PROTECT
HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES

The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) seeks your help in its campaign for new laws to protect historic buildings and sites in this State.

Such law has existed for many years in Western Europe, North America and other "developed" nations. In Australia, the Governments of Victoria and Western Australia have already legislated to protect our national heritage within their State boundaries.

As early as July 1973 The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) forwarded thoroughly researched proposals for legislation to the then Premier, Sir Robert Askin. In October 1973, one month before the last State elections, the Premier announced that his Government would establish a committee to advise the Government on the preservation of historic buildings and sites.

The Committee did not meet until early 1975, and the Government has not yet introduced any legislative measures.

Meanwhile, the demolition of historic buildings continues; the shameful neglect of historic buildings continues.

The National Trust is campaigning for the urgent introduction of legislation which provides for:

- (a) Compilation of an official list of historic buildings and sites in New South Wales;
- (b) Controls over the demolition of listed buildings;
- (c) Adequate fines for breaches of demolition regulations;
- (d) Financial assistance for owners of listed buildings.

You can help the National Trust in this campaign by writing to your local Member of the New South Wales Parliament, drawing his attention to the urgent need for legislation and the provisions which the legislation should include.

ENVIRONMENT

The United Nations has declared June 5th World Environment Day and the slogan for 1976 is "The Environment where you Live".

Glebe is our most immediate environment, is the place about which we know the most, and is the place where we can take the most effective action.

The Glebe Society's Environment Group can provide a vehicle for this. However, your participation is essential. See 'For Your Diary' for details of the next meeting.

Ralph Kaye

MISCELLANY

The Society has received a letter from Leichhardt Council informing us that Harbour Lighterage are not proceeding with their application for a Container Terminal in Federal Road for the time being.

Glebe After School Activities Group needs volunteers to supervise the children. Contact 112 Glebe Point Road if you can supply labour or materials (paint, wood, nails, etc.)

Do you think twice about posting a letter at 18 cents a time? All correspondence for the Society may be addressed to us, enveloped, and left at 295 Glebe Point Road.

TRANSPORT PLANNING



THE CASE AGAINST FREEWAYS

What follows is an attempt to faithfully reconstruct, albeit in encapsulated form, an address by the author to the Australian Institute of Traffic Technology on Monday, 9th February. Two weeks later the URTAC report was released. The two facts though coincident, have no obvious connection.

This address falls outside the "normal" run of traffic technology. It is given by an economist, but the qualification which "justifies" it is the title of Secretary of the Glebe Society. From this standpoint one becomes, after years of struggle to be heard by the Society and others, a pretty well educated layman. The Glebe Society, "trendy bearded gourgous", holds dear the history, the buildings, the environment and the amenity of Glebe. An expressway through our heart affects us.

HOW?

1. The expressway, tunnelling notwithstanding, effectively divides the suburb in two. While this may not affect people much elsewhere, in a close knit community like Glebe this is a real attack upon us.
2. For all the years of "planning" and for the long periods of construction there has been and would be, respectively, very severe disruption to the life of the suburb. The Planner's Blight in the path of the North-Western is an object lesson to all. Perfectly good housing (in short supply) has been allowed to decay and the areas become a hazard which have already taken lives.
3. A stock of useful buildings, for housing and industry has been destroyed, and historic townscapes allowed to lose their beauty and notable (even classified) buildings allowed to fall down while in Government hands.
4. The long programme of progressive buying in the path of the monster has successfully removed and dislocated many of the older and longer-standing residents (often tenants), sadly most often the least able to defend themselves, the poor and the old.

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE FREEWAY CASE

1. The Central Business District (CBD) is the focus of planning and growth.

This is just not true; people have voted with their feet, offices to the north industry to the west south and north. Radial plans simply choke up the centre. If Sydney central is to be an asset to the greater city it must not become a highway interchange. It should have the choking removed. Plan for it.

2. The main highways must pass through and be joined.

Why not pass by? What a terrible waste of high cost land?

3. The pattern of settlement at, say, Pennant Hills is preferable to that at Glebe.

This assumption explains why the homes of inner city dwellers need to be sacrificed for a shorter journey for those outside. We naturally challenge this right, and would even go so far as to suggest that that lifestyle is wasteful of the resources of the city. The economy depends on the capacity of land labour and capital to operate together. To make their communication long-distance is clearly to reduce the effective operation.

4. Roads have priority in land use.

When the priority exceeds the true need and displaces purposes with higher economic

and social value, as roads do, at least in the minds of their planners, then a serious mistake is being made.

5. The car is the basis for future transport planning.

This is very wrong. The car, as the most mobile, personal and expensive mode, is best suited to operation at the periphery. The centre should be occupied by the rail, mass movement modes. The modes should complement, not compete.

6. "If you build a better road the congestion disappears."

Would that it were true. The evidence suggests that new roads quickly fill to capacity where no other alternative modes are available. Even if it were true, why should roads continue to expand at the expense of all other land uses. Perhaps a congested road and a park for children to play in, is better than an engineered freeway and no park.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH FREEWAYS

1. They enshrine an inefficient use of scarce energy resources. In terms of effective movement, buses and trains are many times more efficient. Can we afford to be so profligate. As it gets more expensive, who suffers?

2. They are expensive. SATS and Premier Lewis counted 180-320 miles of expressway at a cost of \$6000 million which adds up to \$20m/mile at the least. Conservative estimates put the cost of the Glebe section of the N-W Freeway at \$100 million, the Glebe railway could be upgraded to commuter standard from the city to Leichhardt for \$35m.

3. The freeway means more cars, more cars means more pollution, of the air, noise pollution and the ugliness of the freeway sprawl. Who says aesthetic matters are not important?

4. Though expensive the roads have received, and would receive with the freeways, the lions share of the funding, and are subsidised at the expense of the community at large, while public transport has had very little support. This money is needed to preserve the existing public transport infrastructure and rights of way, which have been wasted in NSW over the last decade.

5. Freeways are fixed inflexible structures, much use of well-nigh impossible to demolish prestressed concrete. How will we be rid of them when no one can afford to drive a car? Other modes occupy less land and are more amenable to change.

6. When the cost of the freeways is assessed the social costs of the emphasis on the car mode of transport are not counted. The burden on hospitals, the drain on police resources, the dead and injured (3400 and 91,000 respectively in '71/72). Other forms of transport don't have such a cost.

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE NORTH-WESTERN EXPRESSWAY.

1. There was no consultation with the people affected. Protest against the North-Western Freeway in Glebe has been underway for nine years, and access to planning and discussion has been denied. To date there has been no official meeting between the D.M.R. and residents, of whom we are an articulate sample. Public participation in planning works; one need look no further than the 1974 Leichhardt Outline Plan to see that "amateurs", with professional help, can achieve good results, let alone have some affect upon the environment that they live in - a desirable goal in anyone's language.

2. Despite all sense, the radial plan for Sydney was persisted with. The assumption is that the CBD is a desirable place to funnel traffic into, often whether it needs to or not, let alone whether it should.

3. The cost is outrageous - the tunnel through Glebe alone would cost \$50 million, alternative routes for the purpose would have been cheaper, and alternative modes of transport could have been developed more cheaply.

4. It was argued that a replacement must be found for Pyrmont Bridge. Indeed, as it is falling down, but miles of expressway are a very expensive replacement. The Victoria Road Gadarene swine deserve a better deal, and the only viable deal is off the roads or in buses. The north-western corridor needs a transport solution but there is not room for a car based one.

5. Then the present route saved the dog track at Wentworth Park, but further alienated this park dedicated last century for public recreation, one of the lungs of Sydney. This dedication has been flouted by the Railways, the Maritime Services Board, who alienated the waterfront with coal and cement loaders, and now by the DMR. The few hours of racemeetings are to be undisturbed, but the historic heritage of Lyndhurst is sacrificed, as is recreation area for park starved Glebe.

PROPER PLANNING

1. With the wide range of competing uses, it is an urgent necessity to introduce comprehensive and integrated land use plan-

ning. Priorities must now be set with all the factors taken into account. Factors such as the social cost of disrupting old communities, and breaking up long-standing social patterns must be taken into account. The need for accommodating a wide range of life styles must be seen, and the quarter acre-motor car-high energy consumption modes of life should perhaps be discouraged rather than being accepted as the social norm. In transport this means sane choices of the right solutions to individual problems - for some the solution may even be the car!

2. An economic and social system needs to utilise all its resources to provide the best result. All modes of transport have their place. For example, the renaissance of the bicycle shows that there is a place even for the humblest mode of locomotion. Indeed, in mechanical efficiency, space economy, lack of pollution, and positive contribution to health the bicycle should be a winner. Where then are the bicycle tracks from the inner suburbs to the city? Each mode should take its apt place, each has its special contribution to make to the communications of the economy.

3. The development of Public Transport must be integrated and sane. All resources available, in terms of infrastructure and rights of way should be used. There should be less competition and more complementing of one service by another - interchanges for car and rail, rail and bus, provision for the bicyclist.

4. The people must be consulted and allowed to take part.

5. Undue influence must be put in its place. The example of the influence of the roads lobby - the membership of the Australian Roads Federation reads like a multinational petrol and vehicle conspiracy. The destroyers of the Californian rail system, convicted of conspiracy were fined \$US 2,000, a trifling sum by comparison with the millions they made out of it.

MESSAGE OF HOPE

Despite the gloomy story outlined above, and the heretofore lack of any apparent moves in the right direction, there is some hope. The present Minister (Max Ruddock) has made a statement suggesting that the car has ceased to be paramount in the Government's transport thinking. Good news indeed. In a letter to the Glebe Society he has agreed to our holding a train ride on the line that now hosts a little goods traffic through Glebe but which we have suggested could be relatively cheaply upgraded to commuter standard to the City from Leichhardt.

Jim Coombs

GARDENING

We are now making arrangements for an inspection of some of our gardens in the spring and a provisional date has been set, namely, Sunday, 19th September. The inspection will probably take place during the afternoon and members of nearby metropolitan garden clubs will be invited.

I should be pleased to hear of any garden which would be of a standard worthy to be included. There must be many good gardens which we don't know of and I look forward to having a long list to choose from.

The Chiswick Garden Club has invited us to join in any of their events and this generous and friendly gesture is much appreciated. It would be nice if some of our members could attend. The following are the events of the more immediate future and I will keep members advised of further activities.

May 11 - A talk on chrysanthemums by Mr. J. Gibson, a well-known expert on this subject.

June 8 - A talk by Mr. Stan Peck on a topic of his choice.

Both these events will be held at the Presbyterian Church Hall, College Street, Drummoyle at 11.00 a.m.

July 13 - A visit to Waterhouse's Camellia and Azalea Nursery at Miranda.

Anyone wishing to make this visit please contact me regarding travel arrangements.

Gwen Knox and I attended the annual President's Day function of the Garden Club of Australia. This proved most interesting and was addressed by the directors of the two most important organisations - the Keep Australia Beautiful Council and the City of Sydney Festival.

There are now seventy-one affiliated clubs and the organisation appears to be full of life. Several events should prove of interest to us and I shall keep members advised as details come to hand.

Theo Ahlston

DONATION

Ex-member of the Society, Penny Ferguson, has very kindly donated a Norman Lindsay lithograph, Benevolence, for raffling in the cause of the defense of the Glebe Lands. Watch the Bulletin for further details.

HISTORY

The transformation of the greenfields of Glebe into bricks and mortar was gathering momentum over a century ago. Since then the neighbourhood has had its ups and downs. Some think it is a most ordinary suburb. But like so many ordinary things it holds a mystery - the mystery of its origins and first makers and denizens, for Glebe is the product of the unconcerted labour of many people.

Who were the occupants of your house since Victorian times? What do we know of them and their life styles? Do we have to grope and burrow in a mountain of forgotten print to unearth something of these earlier generations? Many of the fascinating and perpetually haunting questions that suburbia poses can be answered if the local enthusiast is aware of the catholic array of source materials that can be tapped.

For those interested in discovering the sort of things that will be useful to the researcher at a local level a forum will be held on local history in the perfumed garden of Margaretta Cottage, 6 Leichhardt Street, the home of Dr. Vincent Sheppard, on Sunday 27th June, weather permitting.

The Agenda will be in two parts. The morning session from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. will be devoted to discussion and the afternoon session, starting at 1.00 p.m., will be concerned with practical participation. A comprehensive paper on local source materials, their accessibility and value will be distributed. Discussion will begin with specific illustrations of how to date a house and ascertain who lived there at a given time, how to research individuals and prepare family histories. The scope will then be broadened to discuss sources useful in research on such things as local churches, pubs, schools, sporting organisations, businesses and so on.

In the afternoon field research will involve the study of the tombstones of a collection of Glebe citizenry from about 1860 to 1930 and their importance from a local historical point of view. As Rookwood Cemetery has by far the best selection of headstones in Sydney, it will be visited. Each stone is a piece of dated folk craft, bearing unique historical information about changing family life, occupations, religious beliefs, hopes and fears and decorated with various ornamental devices which all also change with the passing years.

Late in the year it is intended to arrange an afternoon for those interested in recording and documenting various local historical sites and buildings in some detail.

Max Solling

LETTERS TO THE MANAGEMENT

SYDNEY

11th March, 1976

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you as the Minister responsible for the administration of the legislation concerning public holidays in New South Wales.

It has been put to me that Anniversary Day should be restored as the official name of the January 26 holiday in New South Wales, in place of Australia Day.

While I personally see merit in this suggestion, since the name Anniversary Day is still in very wide use and was the official name of the holiday in this community for several generations, I could not consider taking any action along these lines unless I felt that such a move had the support of public opinion and of concerned organisations such as yours.

It would be a help to me therefore if you would be good enough to raise the matter with your Society and let me have your view on this matter.

I should stress that the proposal is simply that the holiday have a New South Wales variation in its name based on local traditions, and that in all other respects, including its name in the other States, it would be observed in the usual way.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Coleman

Note from the Editor: The Management Committee are replying that no change should be made to the name Australia Day.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday, 31st May. Gardening Club coach trip to Dapto. For further details ring Theo Ahlston (660.1083)

Monday 31st May 8.00 p.m. Environment Group meeting at the home of Ralph Kaye, 62, Toxteth Road. All welcome.

Saturday, 5th June A combined coffee morning and gardening group meeting at Marion Harris's 280, Glebe Point Road. Coffee, tea and biscuits will be served from 10.30a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Price 20 cents.

Sunday, 27th June. Delving into history, see elsewhere in the Bulletin for details.