

Woolwich Consultative Committee

Adopted Minutes for the 2nd Meeting, 6:00 pm Wed. 28th Feb 2001

a. Attendance

Present:

Jim Barrett, Andrew Curtin, Mayor Sue Hoopman, Timothy James, Philip Jenkyn, Peter McMahon, Liz Newton, Phil Renouf, Alysoun Ryves, Barry Smith, Gil Wahlquist
Nick Hollo, Bob Clark, Kate Langford, Colin Menzies

Apologies:

Geoff Bailey, Cl'r Jenny Scotford

b. Pre-meeting celebration

Phil Jenkyns, Sue Hoopman (on behalf of Hunters Hill Council) and Alysoun Ryves kindly provided champagne to celebrate the passing of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act. The meeting started a little late.

c. Minutes of the last meeting

The revised minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated with amendments proposed by Consultative Committee members incorporated (with additions underlined and omissions ~~struck through~~).

Resolved: The revised minutes are accepted as a true and correct record.

d. Activity since last meeting

Legislation

Phil Jenkyns reported that an amended Bill had passed the Senate and the House after a great effort by community and other parties. This has "*secured in public ownership these magnificent sites*" with the possible exception of Markham Close. The "self-sustainability" clause had been deleted so the Trust would now be funded through an annual appropriation, with a commitment by the Commonwealth to remediate or rehabilitate these lands and hand them back to the public in good condition. There remain concern among some community groups about the length of leases and the non-applicability of State laws. The Defenders of Sydney Harbour Foreshores groups at this time will support the Trust and its work. Sue Hoopman added that Hunters Hill Council was *more than delighted* in the legislation.

Asked about income for the Trust, Nick Hollo reported that the Trust had a \$40 million allocation from the Federation Fund for remediation on Cockatoo Island, which the Trust hoped to be able to use partly for some preventative maintenance to prevent further contamination (eg from broken asbestos sheeting). The eventual cost of remediation was unknown because that was dependent upon usage.

Nick was asked if funds for Cockatoo Island could be used for other sites. He replied that Cockatoo Island was the most dilapidated of the sites and may be leeching contaminants into the harbour. He was asked what the cost of Trust works would be – this was not known yet.

Geoff Bailey's thanks were conveyed to all the community and Council members who had lobbied to stop the sale of harbour lands, promoted the Trust as a new mechanism to manage the Defence sites, and argued for improvements in the Bill. Sue Hoopman replied that Council was grateful for the approach of the Trust, with whom they had found very easy to work. She was glad the government did listen to the community over the Bill. Phil Jenkyns said that what had turned around the cynicism of the community after the previous planning exercise was the Trust and its staff: The quality of the staff gave confidence to treat the Trust with trust.

Nick Hollo commented on some of the contentious issues in the legislation. He was happy with the leases clause because some uses (eg maritime industries on Cockatoo Island) would require large capital investment and require longer leases to attract this. The Act placed many controls on leases. Because the Act is subject to the Conservation of Endangered Species Act it was stronger than comparable State legislation. In regard to State legislation, he noted that Planning law did not apply to the NPWS as they have their own Act, but the Trust aimed to cooperate with relevant State agencies and be consistent with the EP&A Act and NSW policies on Sydney Harbour.

e. *Planning Progress*

Planning Report

Nick Hollo reported on the current state of the management planning process. Although the Act allowed two years for management plans, the Trust hoped to have draft plans by the end of the years. The Exhibition planned for Customs House in May was additional to the planning requirements under the Act.

Bob Clark reported on his review of previous studies. On the whole, they were carried out in the proper manner. The Higginbotham Conservation Plan identifies many places of significance which are mainly archaeological remnants from the early land grants and the Atlas and Morts periods. Bob is currently assessing the site values under the Burra Charter and National Heritage Charter approach, but finding that these criteria do not uncover all the values of the site, particularly the relationship between places. There is a need to incorporate Clarke's Point into the planning for Woolwich Dock to properly interpret both sites. It was strongly suggested that the relationship to Kelly's Bush was also important.

Bob asked committee members to e-mail him their views on values and significance, particularly on the social and cultural aspects (bob.clark@ea.gov.au). It was suggested that this would be easier if Bob sent out a draft list to stimulate thinking.

Some committee members were uneasy about the quality of previous reports, some of which had never been released. Committee members were invited to visit the Trust library and read reports held there. There was a summary of most of the reports which could be made available.

There was concern about an earlier report by Mary Dallas that found no significant Aboriginal sites when one had been recorded in the Horse Paddock for many years. Bob replied that the Aboriginal heritage of all sites was of importance to the Trust and this recorded site would be followed up

Nick Hollo saw significance in several aspects of the site:

- ◆ The fact that it reflects the patterns of development prevalent around the harbour;
- ◆ The unique opportunity to provide maritime industry – and its relationship to maritime heritage sites around the harbour
- ◆ The value of providing a place where people can enjoy water aspects like nowhere else in Sydney;
- ◆ The compactness of the site illustrating the working harbour near a small ridge village;
- ◆ The recreational values that might be improved through planning the site as a whole.

Nick then reported on key concepts in the emerging plan, showing a draft plan of the proposals. He stressed that these plans were still evolving:

- ◆ Making linkages – the Dock is central to the site and walkways around it and across its mouth are important for appreciation and varied experiences. The link through the Horse Paddock to Kelly's Bush is also important. A path along the old shoreline is proposed.
- ◆ Facilitating the interpretation of the old Morts slipways by reopening the cutting to the site.
- ◆ The important visual corridor to the village centre atop the ridge may cross archaeological sites from early subdivision. It could be transformed into a series of cascading terraces.

There was some discussion over the evolution of the “village” on Woolwich Road. Nick said that the way the village developed was inter-dependent with the Woolwich site. However, members noted that it was a difficult economic environment for shops and the corner shop had recently closed. Barry Smith said that Council would have to think further on this.

There was discussion over water access to the site. A ferry terminal was possible. It was suggested that the eastern sea wall used to have mooring places for small boats, which could be reinstated.

There was discussion over the sawtooth building, which some residents felt was visually intrusive. Nick felt the building had significance for the whole harbour but the issue needed further exploration. The building had significance as an asset that could be used to support the “working dock” concept. The building may contain a clash between values – the working harbour Vs foreshore bushland – and these would occur during the planning.

Gil Wahlquist observed that education about the site was important for getting people to accept the plans. The significance of the site was that it enshrined past engineering skills – locomotives were built on the site as well as ships. The site has its own story to tell.

Nick was asked if the Trust had called for any Expressions of Interest in the site. He replied no, the Trust wanted to document its intentions first rather than chasing value.

Nick said that the demountable waterside corrugated buildings (Bailin sheds) could be reused or replaced by more appropriate waterfront buildings. There was an option of replacing some of the sheds behind the sawtooth building to provide places that are more useful for maritime industries. Nick asked what scale of re-building might be appropriate, suggesting criteria such as no taller than the remanent knoll behind and keeping the cutting open. It was suggested that more detail on the heritage and other values of buildings was needed.

In terms of the relationship with Clarke's Point, Nick suggested that the barrier fence might be removed. The current car park and access road could be re-modelled so it provides less of a blockage between the sites. The planning for Woolwich dock offered an opportunity to review the landscaping of Clarke's Point. It was suggested the planners could investigate options for the sailing club, which was poorly located for calm waters. Alysoun Ryves said the club would prefer to be on the eastern side. It was noted that the club had a big youth membership and needed additional parking space.

The committee suggested that in future all the land could be managed together, to which Nick replied that future management options were an issue to be examined by the Trust.

Nick suggested that a short-term project might be to construct a bridge over the dry dock and walkways linking the Goat Paddock to Clarkes Point Reserve. This could possibly use the northern rail track so it could be moved along the dock. Opening access to the site was an important theme for the Trust.

f. Future activities

Public participation

Colin outlined that the Trust aims to have Concept Plans for the sites available for public consultation during May /June. Customs House has been booked as an exhibition venue. We would like to have a variety of participatory activities to involve people from across Sydney in the sites over these two months. Ideas for the Consultative Committee would be appreciated, particularly about local consultative activity.

Suggestions included:

- ◆ The committee needed to read text on the site planning so it could better assimilate the plans.
- ◆ Linking to Sydney Harbour week from 28th April was important (Nick responded that this was occurring).
- ◆ Guided tours
- ◆ Put a boat such as the James Craig in the dock.
- ◆ Put a temporary bailey bridge across the dock mouth.
- ◆ Have ferries from and to Circular Quay from nearby Woolwich Wharf.
- ◆ Linking with the announcement of a Memorandum of Understanding between Local Government and the State over Sydney Harbour planning.

It was **agreed** that the planning text would be circulated before the next meeting.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday 10th April from 6-8 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:20