

HIGH RISE ON QUEEN STREET

Residents at first hearing of a supposed Woolworths/Big W development were excited and couldn't understand Crs Jones and Hockley's opposition to this development.

But by now, all residents should be fully aware that this development application isn't just about a proposed Department Store, Supermarket and 39 specialty shops.

It is really about:

- **A permanent 12 storey, high-rise building towering over Harrow Road.**
- **A huge increase in traffic problems in an already congested area.**
- **The permanent loss of a community asset and amenity.**
- **A hindrance to the adjoining Ambulance Station with possible increased response time.**
- **A lack of social and physical infrastructure to support the families in the 359 flats above the shops.**

Why does Auburn need high rise flats over its shops when there is no such residential, let alone high rise over successful centres such as Big W/Woolworths at Chullora, and other complexes at Bass Hill Mall, Bankstown and Merrylands? Bankstown and Merrylands, like Auburn, are near railway stations too!

How did all this happen in the first place?

The development in its present form was presented to Council in September 1997 when two issues arose:

- Closure and sale of Queen Street
- Height of the residential towers

Before the development application was lodged a traffic study showed that traffic problems would become worse, particularly around the western overbridge. Despite these findings, Councillors voted 7 to 3 to start proceedings to close Queen St.

The original height restriction of 3 storeys was changed in March 1998 when Cr Lam successfully gained the support of the ALP together with the Liberal/Independent block in removing this restriction (*Cr Curtin was the Mayor with the casting vote*). Crs Jones and Hockley were the only opponents to this deregulation. Had this not happened, we would not be dealing with any high-rise developments!

Prior to the last Mayoral election in August/September 1998, the ALP moved that Queen Street be closed with a view to leasing it only if a major anchor tenant came with the development.

At this time the development was for 460 flats above the retail component. The ALP had the power to veto any further attempts to close Queen Street regardless of lease or sale motions but failed to do so.

What is the present situation!

A formal development application was lodged in November 1998. After a number of meetings the application has been approved with 12 amendments presented by Cr. Moore (being supported by Borluk, Chantiri, Lam, Saddick & Mayor Keegan).

The amendments, which included the leasing of Queen Street did not address the Independent Town Planner's damning 40 page report (**which recommended refusal of the application**). Whilst the height will be reduced to 9 storeys above Harrow Rd., this can easily be increased later. These amendments will actually reduce the retail area which is only one third of the size permitted on this site. The residential towers are twice their permitted size.

One would wonder how these councillors supported the amendments when it is blatantly clear that they have not addressed the enormous impact on residents, Trinity Catholic College, traffic flow and the main shopping strip. It seemed to be a Band-Aid attempt just to get the development approved.

Recent Council Meetings have been informative, as the public and some councillors became aware of a meeting of Queen Street Site Developers, Crs Lam, Saddick & Moore, and Trevor Hassett of the Auburn and Kim Appleby of the Liberty Plains Chambers of Commerce (who are supportive of this overbearing development) and others. The Chambers appear to have little understanding of the impact such a development would have on our residents and shopkeepers.

It should be noted that Woolworths were interested in the northern side only of Queen Street in 1995 (no road closure) before preferring South Granville. Will Woolworths or any other major retailer now come to Auburn?

Local Government is not a cat and mouse game, nor is it an arena for arrogance & inflated egos because making decisions impact on real people.

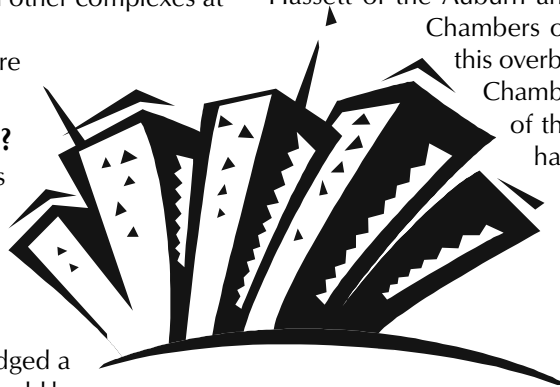
This article isn't about "bagging" councillors - it is about:

- Clarifying issues which are of paramount importance to the community
- People who once had the power and opportunities to stop the current debacle from happening in the first place.

The two elected RAGAA councillors can't change the direction of the current council by themselves. RAGAA needs more like-minded councillors who will stand firm on overdevelopment and high rise.

**Whether the road is leased or sold,
it is still lost to the community!**

RAGAA Councillors Jones and Hockley have been the only councillors to consistently say "NO" to the closure of the road.





ARE YOU AWARE OF COUNCIL'S DECISIONS

Lidcombe Highrise

Another application for high rise development on the Cnr of Swete and Church Streets, Lidcombe was submitted to council in June. These 8 storey flats will impact on traffic, local residents, the church and the child care centre. They will be as over bearing as the monolith nearing completion on Rawson Street, Auburn. Will RAGAA councillors be the only ones to care when making a decision?

Berala & Regents Park Rezonings

Residents of Berala and Regents Park appear to have lost the battle to retain the amenity of their single dwelling area and to save their lifestyle.

The Issues Papers proposed rezoning some streets on the Eastern side of the railway from 2a (houses) to 2b (town houses). Despite a petition against this move, the rezoning is in the Draft Local Environment Plan being rushed through Auburn Council before the upcoming September election.

The Minister for Planning was blamed in an attempt to justify this rezoning. Those residents who wrote to the Minister received a reply stating that "it was a matter for Council to decide."

Once again, it was the two RAGAA councillors who led the fight against this impost on residents.

Lidcombe Parking Fiasco

Auburn Council by a majority decision, has accepted a town planner's report and approved 2 new reception halls to be built on Olympic Drive near Bridge Street. This development is 78 parking spaces short and the report justifies it on the assumption that the public car park in Bridge Street is used little on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. As a trade off the developer will provide 2 security guards in the Council Car Park three nights a week (presumably whether they are trading or not).

Parking is at a premium now around Bridge, Joseph and Vaughan Streets when Grand Westella, New Westella and the other Function Centres are being used.

The Olympic Sprint Train has compounded this lack of "off peak" parking with park'n'rail patrons using streets as far south as Victoria Street because the Council Car Park is full.

Two questions need to be asked:

- 1) Why are some Councillors so generous to developers whilst ignoring the public interest?
- 2) Will 78 spaces be reserved for the Function Centre in the Public Carpark?

Overdevelopment at Woodburn Road, Berala

Auburn Council recently approved, by 9 votes to 3, a combined commercial and residential flat building on the corner of Woodburn Rd and Elizabeth St, Berala. (*Adjoining the hotel carpark*).

The building will be 4 storeys plus basement carpark. It is essentially a flat building with some shops to comply with planning requirements.

Council had previously refused this development. Following are some of the reasons why this occurred:

- The proposal was an overdevelopment of the site
- The development failed to provide functional parking
- The proposal would give rise to congestion due to increased on-street parking
- The proposed residential density was excessive
- In terms of bulk and scale, the development would adversely impact on the visual amenity of the area
- In the circumstances of the case, the proposal is contrary to the public interest.

Amended plans which altered the parking provision, but did not address the other issues were subsequently presented to and approved by Council.

The following fact still remains:

Had the height of the development been reduced, almost all the Council officer's concerns would have been addressed.

The fight is still not over

We urge residents to contact the councillors (*whom they voted for or intend to vote for in the upcoming election*) to let them know that you are not supportive of changes to any of the 2a zonings.

Regardless of Council's subsequent decision to approve the development, (*after supporters of the developer attended the Council meeting bearing signs which read 'Berala needs more shops' and 'Berala needs more flats'*), it would appear from discussions with local residents that most do not, in fact, support this development.

Unfortunately, the reporting in the local paper of comments made by Cr Jones was not particularly accurate. Judy and Erica said that while they supported the concept of improving the site, they were not supportive of overdeveloped sites and subsequently, voted against the development.

Berala shopping centre has declined as the number of flats and town houses has increased. There are already 771 flats and town houses within a 500m radius of Berala railway station, with many more across Park Road.

Obviously, more flats are not the answer!

The Mayoral Election

(What Really Happened!)

Three candidates stood for Mayor last September. Many people aren't aware that Pat Curtin, Terry Keegan and Judy Jones all stood for the position. Judy Jones only gained two votes - from Erica Hockley and herself, just one less vote than the previous year (*when they also voted against Cr Curtin's leadership*).

As you can see, they did vote but not for the other two candidates.

As stated many times in the Review Pictorial, they had no preference for either Cr Curtin or Cr Keegan as Mayor and refrained from further voting.

West Auburn Rezoning 2B or not 2B

Do you live in a 2a area (single residential)? Do you want your block rezoned to 2b (townhouses/villas)? Just ask Cr John Moore (developer).

Cr. Moore has moved to rezone the block south of Kennington Oval and bounded by St Johns, Chisholm and Kirkham Roads from 2a (houses) to 2b (Townhouses).

This is being pushed through by the Independent/Liberal Councillors against the planner's advice, before the council election and without advising landowners and residents.

A door to door survey carried out by Irene and Brian Simms indicated that 90% of the 45 households interviewed do not want to be rezoned. (A further 8 households were not contactable even after further visits).



RAGAA'S POLICY
is to oppose
the downgrading
of any area.

A search of Auburn Council's records showed that four identical letters were received proposing rezoning. Three were from the owners of 5 properties in the block concerned and one from an adjoining area. The Department of housing also requested that a couple of their houses be rezoned.

It was attempted to justify this request by noting that the block to the East was zoned for Town Houses (it is of course closer to Berala Station and shops and different zones have to meet somewhere) and claiming that the 2a (houses) area to the North was being built out by flats and Townhouses.

In reality there are 8 lots of Town Houses or Flats, built or approved under Government sanctioned loop holes in an area of about 700 houses. Most of these are by the Department of Housing but one approval has been granted to Councillor John Moore (Developer)!

Redevelopment of the former RAAF Base to the south has always included houses facing Kirkham Road to compliment the existing ones, this rezoning will upset this balance.

It is also proposed to Rezone Norman Avenue and the southern side of Cornwall Road from 2a to 2b just to tidy up the boundary between these zones.

A MAJOR VICTORY FOR RESIDENTS REGENTS PARK RAAF SITE

On April 7th this year, Erica Hockley put a motion to Auburn Council to have the vacant land (former RAAF Base) at Regents Park zoned:

70% 2a (freestanding houses) **30% 2b** (allows townhouses).

This motion was passed unanimously by Council. (Cr John Moore was absent). However, the following Council meeting (April 21st) Cr Moore, along with Crs Saddick & Lam tried to have the 'unanimous' decision overturned. This attempt was narrowly defeated! Had Cr Moore and his cohorts won, the site could have approximately 250 flats and 700 townhouses!

It is unbelievable that these three councillors as well as Crs Keegan and Borluk, believed that the Auburn LGA needed more flats and townhouses!

The final success of Cr Hockley's motion will go down as a time when the residents of Auburn Local Government area scored a major victory.

The Auburn LGA needs a balanced housing development which caters for both present and future needs of residents. The economic downturn of the area can only be turned around if new development concentrates on good quality, up market single dwellings. The proposal, of 70% single dwellings and 30% medium density should bring owner occupiers to the area.

While RAGAA recognises the need for urban consolidation, we believe that this council has done more than 'its fair share'. Let's face it, the great Australian dream is still to own one's own house with both a back and front yard!

The proposed development of the former RAAF base at Regents Park has the potential to turn around many of the difficulties experienced in the Auburn LGA. If the development is done carefully, correctly and thoughtfully it will help create a more dynamic and diverse local community. It will provide a solid basis for economic development and infrastructure provision.

The location of Auburn LGA as the geographic centre of Sydney, with reasonable transport corridors and rail system enhances its desirability as an up-market suburb.

FRANCES STREET TRUCK BARRIER

Like them or not, bluffed by their size or not, this truck barrier was the centre piece of the Local Area Traffic Management 1 (LATM 1) Plan. The barrier was essential to stop trucks driving through the local streets of Lidcombe.

A barrier is vital to stop trucks driving through our local streets

This LATM area extends from Parramatta Road to Church Street, and from Nyrang Street to Birnie Avenue. **Its primary function is to restrict heavy vehicles and speeding cars from entering residential housing areas.** It is the first stage of reducing the traffic volumes in local streets which we are sure all residents would applaud.

This barrier did not just protect Frances Street, but it stopped unnecessary traffic entering the rest of the housing area only to use it as a short cut to exit on the other side causing congestion, noise and reduced safety for ourselves, the elderly and the children.

Why did Councillors Lam and Saddick want the barrier removed?

Why did the barrier go? Possibly because of a townhouse development built opposite it. The barrier was constructed in May 1998 & the townhouse Development Application approved later in July 1998.

The two councillors who put the motion to remove the barrier were Crs Lam and Saddick. There is much speculation as to why they become so adamant that the barriers should go but it should be acknowledged that Crs Lam & Saddick are the real estate agents selling the townhouses which are directly opposite that barrier!

The majority of residents living in Frances Street wanted the barrier to stay. It made the street safer and quieter. Yes they were daunting but there was plenty of room for cars both large and small to get through. (no more difficult than negotiating your own front gate)

Saturday 11th September 1999

COUNCIL ELECTION

Voting is compulsory for all residential electors

**Make a decision and vote
for councillors who care about you!**

RAGAA Councillors Report



Cr. Erica Hockley

In this term RAGAA have achieved major successes for our residents. Through consultation with experts in town planning, changes were made to the Development Control Plan for townhouses and villas. While these changes were not as great as we would have liked, if adhered to they can set higher standards for developments.

Other, and less public change, has been through Council support of a variety of social initiatives. The latest one being the Purple Ribbon promotion, which aims to foster community awareness of Child Protection.

Change only comes about in small steps, anything too radical often frightens those set in their ways. Change also needs the support of the local community. To all those residents who support RAGAA giving their time and encouragement during the difficult periods, I give my heart felt thanks. It has been of huge importance to me when people stop me in the street and offer their thoughts, or simply their encouragement.

As councillors, Judy and I have maintained the original platform established by RAGAA, and have not compromised our principles. The support and expertise of the RAGAA Team has ensured our knowledge is as close to full as is humanly possible. We understand the ramifications of the decisions taken by Council. (*Queen Street being a prime example).

Finally, I'd like to see many more like minded councillors elected. Judy and I have fought many battles for residents. It is upsetting to fight for any individual's right to privacy and for the individual's right to maintain the amenity of their home/area only to lose.

The past term has been extremely difficult fighting battles for residents on all fronts. It hasn't been easy losing 10-2 most of the time especially when you put your heart and soul into trying to achieve residents' expectations.

Many people have lost their quality of life resulting in our long time residents moving to other suburbs for more peaceful surroundings at great personal expense, whilst others can only grin and bear it.

I only hope that on September 11, people will vote only for those with real policies, with a proven track record, and not for those with part-time or no policies.

Look at the past 3½ years - You be the judge.



Cr. Judy Jones

Which Auburn Councillors Have Looked After You?

The 2 hard-working Residents Action Group?

The 1 Developer?

The 2 Real Estate Agents?

The 3 who don't live here?

The 1 who only lives here part time?

The 3 others?

And who will do so in the future?

South Lidcombe Rezoning

The residents of South Lidcombe should be congratulated for their efforts in banding together to oppose Council's Draft Plan to rezoning their predominantly 2a area (houses) to 4c which would have allowed townhouses, villas, commercial and manufacturing.

From the onset the only councillors supporting the residents viewpoint were Crs Jones & Hockley.

The ALP obviously did not support the residents' concerns when Cr Curtin stated "I think the people of Lidcombe have gone off track. It might actually make their lifestyle better." (quote from Review Pictorial 20.5.98)

The residents were content with the current zoning and had to wonder who these changes were to benefit. Again, it would seem it would only benefit the developers & not the residents.

Most residents that are long time home owners or younger families, are quite happily living in their quiet residential streets and did not want to move out for the "Fast Buck"

As a direct result of the good fight to save their little bit of 'paradise', Council's resolve was to allow the existing housing area to remain 2a, but with some trade-off as seen by many residents.

In view of what Council first wanted, this was a major victory.

**You cannot afford to be complacent.
If you do, then the whole area will become
a developers' paradise!**



Fundraising B-B-Q

Saturday 28th August 1999

Commencing 1.00p.m.

Auburn Community Picnic Area

Killeen Street, off Chisholm Road, Auburn

Please phone: 9649 5934 or 9646 4529 for tickets

Admission is by **TICKET ONLY**

*All funds raised are for
Residents' Action Group for Auburn Area's
September Election Campaign*

\$12.00 Adults

\$10.00 Pensioners/Concession

Steak & Salad Supplied

Kids under 12 - Free Sausage Sizzle

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