
**MONDO AND MORE:
THE 20TH C GREENING OF LEICHHARDT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
2011**



Photo: Streetside Garden, Bates Street, Balmain
Roslyn Burge, September 2011

ROSLYN BURGE

LEICHHARDT COUNCIL SUPPORTED THIS PROJECT BY THE AWARD OF A
LOCAL HISTORY GRANT TO ROSLYN BURGE

CONTENTS:

t **REPORT ON THE PROJECT**
 10 NOVEMBER 2011

t **TWELVE INTERVIEWS**
 RECORDED :
 2009 HEATHER PEARCE
 2011 ROSLYN BURGE

SUMMARIES & LOGS OF INTERVIEWS

PHILIP BRAY

JANICE CAVE

BONNIE DAVIDSON

DAVID FONTEYN

DAVID AND ANN LIDDLE

SARA MAKKINGA

JOHN & JOCELYN MORRIS

PENNY PIKE

LORRAINE SHANNON

IRENE THOMAS

PATTY TODHUNTER

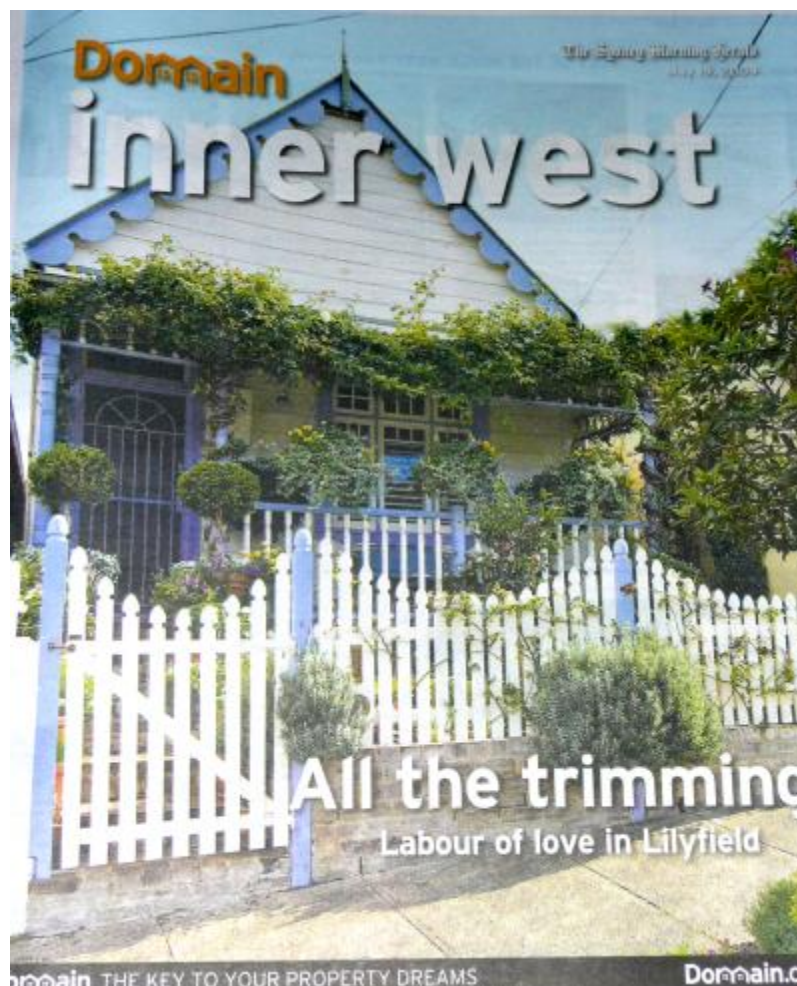
JAN WOOD

MONDO & MORE: THE 20TH CENTURY GREENING OF LEICHHARDT

ALL MATERIAL FOR THE PROJECT IS DIGITISED ON DISC :

- AUDIO FILES - for each interview
- VIDEO INTERVIEW – with Jan Wood
- PHOTOGRAPH - of each interviewee
- LOG - of each interview (and the video with Ms Wood)
- ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS - supplied by interviewees which include images of gardens, houses and pamphlets - as well as copies of Council reports and plans donated by Penny Pike.
- CONSENT FORMS – All interviewees have signed consent forms and no restrictions were placed on the use of the material, as defined in the Consent forms. Original signed copies are delivered with this Project. A copy is included with each interviewee's log.
- BIBLIOGRAPHY - an extensive collection of various articles and images sourced from the web or scanned articles from my own archives.
- GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHS - of district views, roadways, laneways, garden decorations, pavement and public and community gardens, and quirky advertising billboards highlighting "greening"... Photographs were taken by Heather Pearce, her son, Bowen, and Roslyn Burge.
- PRESS CLIPPINGS - approximately 200 press clippings have been sourced during the period of the grant. This is an eclectic collection of advertisements, articles about greening cities, vertical gardens, opening of new local parks as well as contested local issues relating to vegetation.
- PENNY PIKE COLLECTION – reports and documentation donated by Penny Pike
 - Leichhardt's Outline Plan 1973
 - Report on Public Planning Discussions, 19 June 1973
 - Open Space in the Leichhardt Municipality, Technical Report No 8, December 1973
 - Open Space in Glebe, Technical Report No 8, amended April 1974
 - Local leaflets: *Community Commentary*, Nos 1 and 2, 1974
 - Submission to the Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate, Sydney Harbour Foreshores, Municipality of Leichhardt
 - Photocopies: numerous newspaper articles, and copies of Ms Pike's correspondence with Leichhardt Council
- CONDITION OF THE PROJECT – I request that any use made of the recordings and/or logs also includes the summary and photos of individuals.

MONDO & MORE: THE 20 TH CENTURY GREENING OF LEICHHARDT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT				
NAME	DATE OF INTERVIEW		LENGTH OF INTERVIEW	AREA OF ASSOCIATION OR RESIDENCE
		ROSLYN BURGE [RB] HEATHER PEARCE [HP]		
Philip BRAY	28 September 2011	RB	30 mins	BALMAIN & COUNCIL
Janice CAVE	6 August 2009	HP	1 : 25 hrs	GLEBE
Bonnie DAVIDSON	29 July 2009	HP	38 mins	BALMAIN
David FONTEYN	28 November 2009	HP	1 : 36 hrs	LEICHHARDT
David and Ann LIDDLE	1 September 2011	RB	1 : 21 hrs	BALMAIN
Sara MAKKINGA (nee Emerson)	19 September 2011	RB	38 mins	LILYFIELD
John & Jocelyn MORRIS	23 July 2009	HP	33 mins	BALMAIN
Penny PIKE	25 October 2011 8 November 2011	RB	3 : 20 hrs	COUNCIL
Lorraine SHANNON	4 December 2009	HP	53 mins	ANNANDALE
Catherine Irene THOMAS (nee Moffat)	1 December 2009	HP	1 : 00 hrs	BALMAIN
Patty TODHUNTER (nee Muntz)	7 September 2011	RB	52 mins	LILYFIELD
Jan WOOD	22 July 2009	HP	34 mins	BALMAIN
12 INTERVIEWS			13 : 30 HOURS	



For sale:
James Street
Lilyfield
May 2009



The light green tree is the last of the Camphor Laurels planted in the mid 1970s by David and Ann Liddle
Photo: Roslyn Burge September 2011



Informal community garden, Grafton Street, Balmain
Photo: Roslyn Burge September 2011

MONDO AND MORE: THE 20TH CENTURY GREENING OF LEICHHARDT

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

All summer long we live in a green cave ¹

there was enough of the right people in the right place at the right time
to achieve an enormous amount ²

The most evident elements of the present landscape are a substantially
treeless suburban sprawl with degenerating commercial ribbons.³

1. INTRODUCTION

Leichhardt Council funded this Project through the award of a Local History Grant in 2008 and I am grateful for Council's support. Library Manager, Marilyn Taylor, Bruce Carter and Amie Zar have been helpful throughout and patient as the Project 'drifted' towards conclusion.

The Project sought to record individuals' understanding of the way their gardens have changed, memories of childhood gardens (for those who grew up in the municipality), how they planted their garden spaces, and how the changing use of domestic gardens and public parks has altered the appearance of the municipality

Two particular influences on the development of this project were:

- **1940S AERIAL PHOTOS OF BROUGHTON HALL**

Broughton Hall was the most densely planted area in the municipality in the 1940s. The contrast between this richly verdant landscape and the small-scale residential housing sitting tightly on small blocks surrounding it was stark and unambiguous.

Lands Department, 1943 – Aerial map at Leichhardt Library
Broughton Hall is the dark, vegetated area, in the centre
Callan Park to the right



- **1970S VIEWS OF BALMAIN FROM VICTORIA ROAD @ WHITE BAY**

1970s vista from White Bay, at Victoria Road towards Balmain was one of houses huddled across the hillside, with the occasional tree in sight. Today's view is reversed – trees predominate on that sweeping green hillside.

Twelve interviews were recorded. Ms Heather Pearce recorded seven interviews, all completed in 2009, and I would like to record my appreciation for her interviews and photographs for this Project, and her swift production. The last five interviews I recorded in September and October 2011 and any delay in delivering the Project is mine.

¹ David Liddle, referring to his vine covered timber terrace on the first floor of his home

² Philip Bray, describing the Independent Council elected in 1971

³ James Semple Kerr, Master Plan for Callan Park, 1990, B1, p48, referring to the surrounding suburb

INTERVIEWEES

PHILIP BRAY
JANICE CAVE
BONNIE DAVIDSON
DAVID FONTEYN
DAVID AND ANN LIDDLE
SARA MAKKINGA
JOHN & JOCELYN MORRIS
PENNY PIKE
LORRAINE SHANNON
IRENE THOMAS
PATTY TODHUNTER
JAN WOOD

BRIEF STATISTICS

12 INTERVIEWS
10 WOMEN] INCLUDING TWO COUPLES
4 MEN]
AUDIO: 13 : 30 HOURS

To all these people who participated in this Project - who gave of their time, shared their reminiscences and provided photographs and copies of garden designs, pamphlets and Council Reports – I would like to express my appreciation for their time and generosity. Their recollections will provide a rich resource for the community, for researchers today and the future.

The recollections echo their diverse ages, experiences and influences and interviewees' memories range across broad themes:

- Irene Thomas, Bonnie Davidson and Jan Wood each recalled childhood memories of a very different landscape growing up in Balmain and Rozelle;
- Sara Makkinga described her response to the canopied streetscape of Glover Street, Lilyfield (adjacent to Broughton Hall), and her contemporary designs for a completely renovated formal garden in Lilyfield.
- Patty Todhunter recounted her expectations for, and informal creation of, her garden of native plants designed to attract birds.
- David and Ann Liddle, and Philip Bray, recalled a very different Balmain in the 1960s and 1970s. Memories of conversations with older residents reach back to the first half of the twentieth century and capture a very different working place as David recalled the ladies who worked in the Unity Hotel telling him: *as little girls they would look out at 3 o'clock and see the street **black** with men just pouring out of Mort's Dock.*
- Lorraine Shannon and David Fonteyn, each part of the global movement creating community gardens, spoke about their work and influences.
- Janice Cave and John & Jocelyn Morris have all battled to secure public open space and heritage sites.
- Penny Pike – the only non-resident interviewed, recalled her role at Council as the Chief Forward Planner engaged in 1972 to co-ordinate the different threads of community groups working to save the municipality from wholesale demolition and expressways imposed by the government, swathes of 8 storey flat development imposed by the Leichardt Plan of December 1967 - and actively plan for open space and harbour foreshore parks.

DOCUMENTATION

The Greening of Leichhardt Oral History Project comprises:

- FINAL REPORT – 10 November 2011
- AUDIO FILES - for each interview [13 : 30 hrs]
- VIDEO INTERVIEW – with Jan Wood
- PHOTOGRAPH - of each interviewee
- LOG - of each interview (and the video with Ms Wood)
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Above 2011 (with thanks for access to Uniting Care)

Below 1963 (Courtesy: Mitchell Library taken at the opening of the Broughton Hall Day Clinic)





Billboard at cnr Robert Street and Victoria Road, White Bay, March 2009

2. RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

THE GRANT APPLICATION STATED THAT THE PROJECT AIMED TO:

1. Explore the changing patterns of use in small domestic gardens in this municipality and how that has changed the landscape of Leichhardt. It will consider the shift from growing vegetables for domestic consumption to 'lifestyle gardens' and decorative plantings. The project will consider how these changes have influenced in the way residents utilise domestic gardens. And
2. Also consider the development of community gardens (such as those at Whites Creek and other Bushcare groups), the increased planting of native vegetation (such as Bruce Mackenzie's work at Illoura Reserve) and the way these movements have transformed public spaces and their impact in Leichhardt.

Among the influences important to consider in this investigation will be those of different cultural groups; the contemporary yearning for 'lifestyle' and how that is represented in gardens; the ways in which a new wave of contemporary residents is changing the design of domestic gardens.

The concrete garden is still well represented in the Leichhardt municipality, as are gardens not yet 'renovated' and 'revitalised'. It is important to record these testaments to a different mode of suburbanisation, and also a different way of using domestic spaces and utilising time.

Gardens and domestic outdoor spaces often appear as the background to images of people and places. It will be important to research photographs (aerial, newspaper, Local Studies Collections), undertake observation of gardens by walking a sample of streets in the different suburbs of the Leichhardt LGA. The scholarship of Dr Peter Reynolds and his publication, *Leichhardt Historical Journal*, will be an important element in researching this project, as will photographic collections - such as those of John Park at the Macleay Museum, and Bruce Mackenzie's writing.

UNIQUENESS OF THE PLAN (A QUESTION ASKED IN THE GRANT APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION)

In the neighbouring municipality of Marrickville a study of gardening (*Marrickville Backyards*, 2001) explored the way in which a number of residents incorporated different cultural styles in their gardens and the Marrickville Historical Society has been particularly important in recording gardens.

Public interest in Colleen Morris's exhibition, *Lost Gardens of Sydney*, at the Museum of Sydney, indicates the scale of community engagement with the idea of gardens and a new understanding of the beauty of lost domestic gardens in Sydney.

The curtilage of Leichhardt's cottages is also of civic importance; and by exploring the significance of these spaces to owners - and how they have changed over time - this project will provide a local record and resource for the future - and national focus through the work of the Australian Garden History Society.

Gardening practices and public vegetation have been largely overlooked in the history of Leichhardt. Migrant communities reworked their familiar gardening practices; people find novel ways to utilise small garden spaces.

Older residents recall Leichhardt's industrial past but for the newer community of residents spaces now transformed from industrial use (or general disuse) to green space (such as Illoura Reserve, Iron Cove shoreline or Whites Creek) are an accepted, unquestioned, part of life.

This project will highlight the dramatic changes that have occurred in Leichhardt's greening urban landscape - in public places and domestic gardens.

3. RESEARCH

Research was undertaken at the Local Studies Collection, Leichhardt Library, the Mitchell Library, and the internet where there are extensive academic and informal reports on gardening and landscaping. Much of this material is included as attachments within the Bibliography file rather than a discrete list.

4. PUBLICITY

The *Village Voice* interviewed me about the project and published an article titled *Treasure of Trees*, May 2010, p9. Only three people responded to the article: Philip Bray telephoned and offered to be interviewed; V Bisset of Leichhardt wrote to the Editor recommending I look at the real extent of trees as shown in the publication *Balmain To Glebe*; and a friend who lives in the Lilyfield Peninsula wrote a long email remedying my perspective on the treelessness of the district and describing the extensive planting of vegetable in back gardens, and roses tended with great care in front gardens in Lilyfield in her childhood.

Trees are evident in Joan Lawrence and Catherine Warne's publication, *A Pictorial History of Balmain to Glebe*, however, many of the images were taken in the late 1800s and early twentieth century. In some gardens (including school gardens and adjacent to Gladstone Park) tree clumps are visible yet by the 1940s whatever vegetation might have been growing, trees were distinctive by their absence across many residential blocks throughout the municipality. Perhaps the title, *Treasure of Trees*, was misleading.

5. SOURCING INTERVIEWEES

The interviewees were all known (or recommended by others) to Heather Pearce and myself. Efforts to contact a number of individual householders whose gardens, visible from the street, appealed or families who converted formal flower gardens to chook yards or residents of units who utilised voluntary help in developing curbside gardens – all proved fruitless.

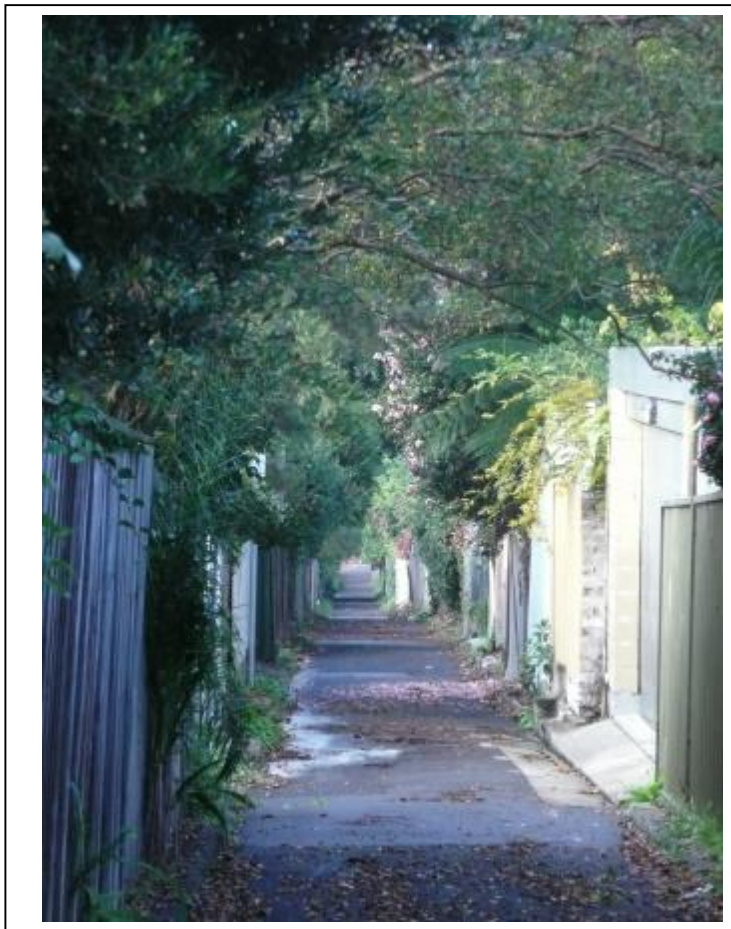
Acknowledgements: A number of people helped with connections to potential interviewees and thanks to Meredith Walker, Fergus Fricke and Philip Bray.

6. INTERVIEWS AND LOGS

Interviews were digitally recorded on Edirol R09 and Edirol R09HR digital recorders (WAV or MP3 format). A photograph of each interviewee is included with this Report.

All interviews have been logged.

NOTE: Every endeavour has been made to check the spelling of the names of people, places and sometimes plants referred to by interviewees. However, it is imperative that the original audio recording is played to verify the expression before any secondary use is made of this resource. Silences and emphasis may bring different understandings to expressions.



7. INTERVIEWEES

All interviewees:

- Signed a form consenting to be interviewed and these signed original consent forms are included with this Report. A scanned copy is included in each log.
- Received an audio copy of their interview together with a printed copy of the log of interview and a copy of the Final Report to Leichhardt Council (and a CD with these documents and photos used in the Project).

Left: Lilyfield laneway 2009

REFLECTIONS

The idea for the project began with the idea of looking at domestic gardens and community spaces, however, the outcomes have richer potential for Council and the community. Interviews conducted by Paula Hamilton, whose Oral History Project, *Transforming the Local*, conducted under the same Local History Grants program, were among the research tools for this Greening Project. Speaking at an Oral History Association of Australia seminar on 5 November 2011 Professor Hamilton referred to her preference for working with the “local rather than the national” which allowed for the “detailed textures of everyday life and engagement” to emerge. Her term, “the Ribbons of Life”, captures the sense of fluidity and form and focus that is the local - and most people’s lives, as well as the communal networks which Professor Hamilton highlighted in *Transforming the Local*.

According to Penny Pike the dramatic changes occurring locally across the municipality in the 1960s and 1970s were reflected globally: *part of the whole western world worrying and concerned about open space*.

Oral history is becoming increasingly valued as a primary resource for historical reports and writings. It is also one tool: no one interviewee will provide all the information about any aspect of the Greening of Leichhardt. It has been a privilege to be entrusted with so many stories for this community project.

8. THEMES OF THE PROJECT

◆ COMMUNITY HISTORY

As the Project developed it became apparent that the Greening of Leichhardt occurred through changes in domestic and community spaces, and the extraordinary battles the community has fought repeatedly to secure open space and restrict development by developers and the government.

The motivation for change was sometimes gradual, but the effort required was communal, persistent, time-consuming, and drew on the commitment of industry professionals, and made more powerful by the collective voices of many individuals in the community.

Inevitably there were occasions when “one time” is the “last straw”, as it was for David Liddle. David and Ann live opposite the Mort’s Dock site, close by a number of pubs: he recalled the *enthusiastic leasee of the William Wallace* who played loud rock music and attracted large contingents of motor cycle gangs who would park all over the pavement. One night David went to go out his front door but was blocked because a Landrover was parked so close (with two large dogs inside) and he thought *that’s the end of it for me – I’m not going to put up with this. So I went out and I chipped out 50cm square on the footpath in the bitumen and put I in two trees. Although it’s legal to park in the footpath you can’t outside my house because I put two trees there*.

When David bought the house there were structures (taller than his own home) across the road as part of Mort’s Dock. The house sits right on a corner, with no front garden (but two driveways, each a rarity in the municipality). In time David dug out a small section of the bitumen pavement and planted Virginia creeper vine beside the house. It grows prolifically and covers the house in summer when David ‘gives the house a haircut’ every fortnight. In winter the house looks like it’s



wrapped in a bird's nest. He brought in soil 'barrowed from nearby building sites' to build up the corner behind the house and palms grow prolifically in this sheltered darker garden. The general living areas are on the first floor and David has constructed a timber deck off that, with a structure allowing five different grape vines to cover it and *All summer long we live in a green cave.*

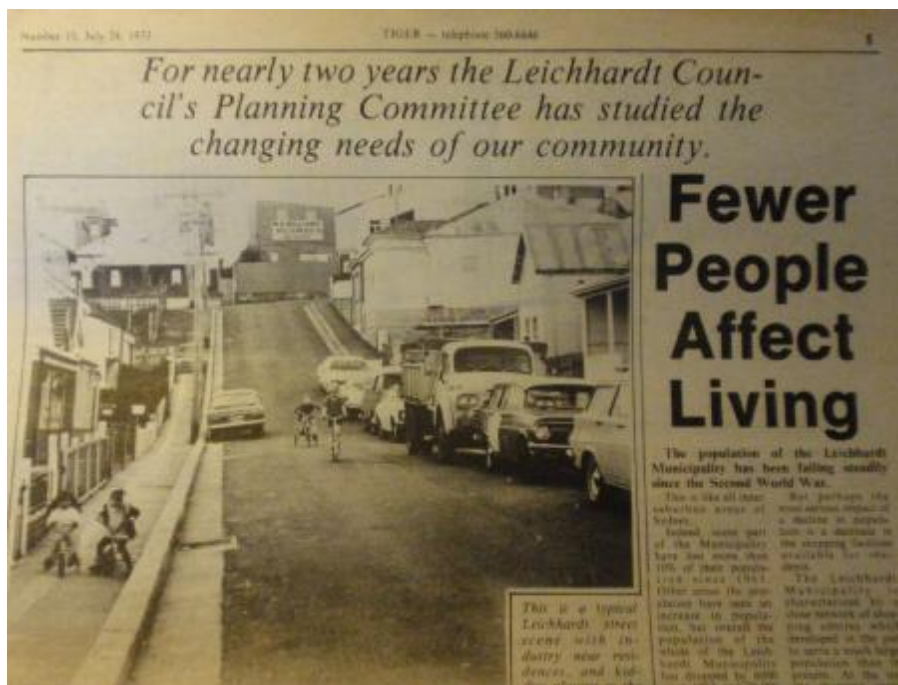
◆ SOURCING PLANTS AND TREE PLANTING

Irene Thomas grew up in Balmain during times of stringent economic hardship. Now in her late 70s Irene recalled her mother's vegetable garden with beans and peas and other vegetables planted so that the children could benefit from fresh food, *Because nobody had anything.* Irene derives as much pleasure from working in as looking out to her garden filled with decorations and plants. *I love my garden here, not that I've bought anything much. I don't think I've hardly bought anything.* She enjoys swapping plants and cuttings with neighbours. A restricted income has not restricted the development of a lush and pleasant front and back courtyard garden.

When David and Ann Liddle set about greening the swathe of land alongside Victoria Road on the approach to the Anzac Bridge –in the 1970s, they eventually bought a large box of camphor laurel seedlings from a man in Lismore (at the suggestion of the man in the nursery along from the PCYC in Darling Street, Balmain).

Council formed a Tree Planting Committee and Philip Bray recalled ... *I've been told that we planted about 30,000 street trees over the next three years.*

Local Newspaper: *Tiger*, 24 July 1973, p5



◆ COMMUNITY GARDENS

One of the earliest Community Gardens in the country is the Glovers Garden, within Broughton Hall/Callan Park precinct.

Whites Creek Community Garden: Lorraine Shannon talked about the range of people involved in the Whites Creek Community Garden – its members vary in their attitudes towards gardening and garden practices. For Lorraine it's quite meditative as she goes about tending her plot whilst others are more energetic. The popularity of Community Gardens means there is a big waiting list for the Whites Creek Community Garden so, conscious of the need to keep weeds and seeds in check, the management committee has become tougher on people who are "lackadaisical" in their gardening practises.

Glover's Garden: David Fonteyn said the Glover Street Community Garden has changed a lot over the 11 years he has been involved in it. When he started there were 3 people involved, one of whom was doing an apprenticeship at the Royal Botanical Gardens. There is an informal arrangement by which the Botanic Gardens support the Glover Street Community Garden. After two years David said active gardeners were dwindling away from the Garden and its future looked dire. It is now thriving.

◆ LEICHHARDT COUNCIL

The 1967 Plan for Leichhardt's development showed considerable areas of the municipality were destined to be demolished and replaced by flats. Areas such as the Lilyfield peninsula, Rozelle, Annandale, Birchgrove blister red on the map below.

A new independent Council was elected in 1971 and in 1972 Penny Pike was appointed Planning Officer Co-ordination, the Forward Planner. Her role was to draw on the work already begun to fight this development by organisations such as the Balmain Association and the Glebe Society. She sensed she had a job to do – to get a new revised Plan through. During her time at Council (1972 until 1974) Penny held nineteen precinct meetings. Not everyone attending was an activist, some were long-time residents who were *all for preserving the townscape, because they didn't want change. The new people liked it and wanted it to stay. Two different approaches – both wanted same thing. Not difficult to get whole of community wanting to change 1967 Plan.*

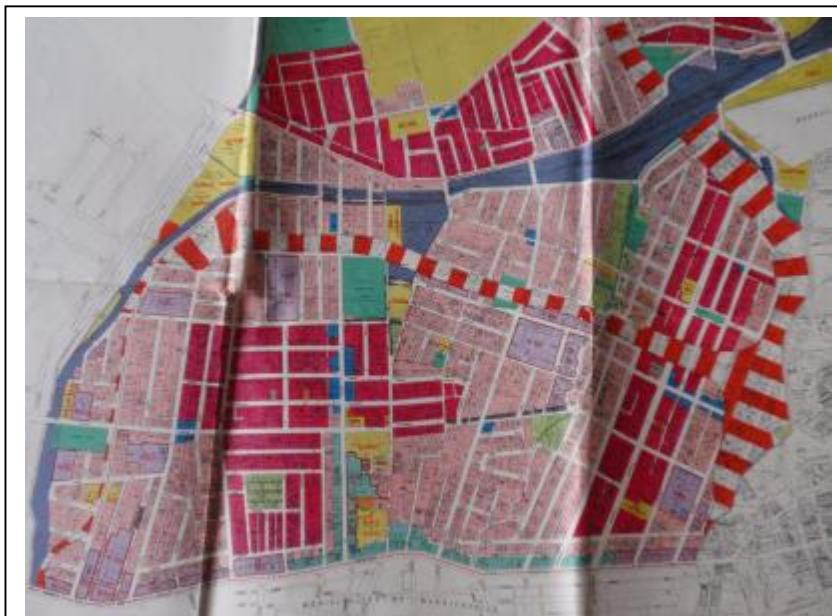
LEICHHARDT PLANNING
SCHEME:
December 1967
(courtesy Penny Pike)

Bold red = flat

Yellow = Callan Park &
Broughton Hall

Red & white ladder to
right and @ top and
across centre =
proposed expressway.

Blue = railway and
Rozelle Goods Yards



◆ SAVING HERITAGE AND OPEN SPACE

John Morris was Honorary Secretary of the National Trust in Tasmania before moving to Sydney from Hobart. About this time the NSW National Trust was approached by the newly formed Balmain Association seeking assistance to save the Balmain Watch House from demolition: John recalled the early Balmain Association which appealed - *"Help us save the Watch House. Leichhardt Council wants to pull it down and use the stone for retaining walls."*

Janice Cave discusses some of the many battles required to secure and expand open space along Rozelle Bay and to clean up and plant out pocket parks and public spaces within the area. A year after moving to the district in 1982 she began working on the Save Rozelle Bay campaign.

Philip Bray, as elected official and Deputy Mayor, and Penny Pike, Forward Planner on Council staff, worked within a formal structure to harness and reflect the views of the very active community groups in the municipality working to ensure less density and more trees in the early 1970s. Residents old and new were *all for preserving the townscape, because they didn't want change. The new people liked it and wanted it to stay. Two different approaches – both wanted same thing. Not difficult to get whole of community wanting to change 1967 Plan.*

David and Ann Liddle began planting the small park nearby and greening Mort's Dock in the 1970s – more than three decades before the Mort's Dock Community Garden proposed for this site. Without community input to securing this as open space, the government's plan to construct dozens of houses or the Army's plan for a waterside depot would have occurred.

◆ DESIGNED GARDENS

Patty Todhunter completed a degree at the Sydney College of the Arts (then located in Balmain) between 1979 and 1981: *I remember driving down into the smog from Normanhurst ... I could see it enveloping me as I drove down.* Repudiating the suburbs, Patty came to live in the area to continue her potting and wanted a garden of native plants. From her house Patty can see the city's buildings which look beautiful as the setting sun strikes them, but the view of her own vegetation and the sky are much more important to her. She loves native vegetation and has endeavoured to make a bird-friendly garden.

For John and Jocelyn Morris, their proximity to the harbour in *Kenilworth* requires careful plant selection. The exposed maritime aspect of the garden and the shadow thrown from Kenilworth demand that any plants needed to be tolerant to both shade and gale force wind conditions - the amount of shade in the garden has been the biggest influence in how it has developed. Over time they have endeavoured to let the view flow on so that the garden and the harbour are integrated: in the front portion of the garden where there is an iron picket fence they have low plantings to create the effect of borrowing the view from the harbour.

The newest garden created among those interviewed for the Project was Sara and Greg Makkinga's garden in Glover Street, Lilyfield. Sara and Greg bought the house in 2005 and sold it in 2010. Sara recalled her first impressions - driving down Glover Street the streetscape with houses on one side and open space and trees on the other were appealing and the height and scale of the established 40+ year old London plane trees provided a sense of a canopy. Her mother is a horticulturalist and magazines at home were always house and garden (never fashion). Strong horticultural influences provided Sara with the confidence to create a particularly structured garden of different heights. *I like the idea of designing a space that makes it liveable and aesthetic so ... my first garden ... was very structured and quite formal ... the back garden was tried to be an outdoor room whereas the front garden was all about trying to make the façade stand out and be ... pretty, welcoming front of the house.*

With a young son the house grew too small (and parking had become increasingly pressured) and Greg and Sara sold a year ago. Reflecting on her first garden Sara said, *I really enjoyed doing it – loved the planning of it and seeing it all come to fruition and over the stages of it being a freshly planted garden. ... when you first plant a garden everything seems separate – everything's its own thing and over time they all bring together and it becomes like a whole and that's a really amazing thing to see.*

◆ PUBLIC PARKS

The greening of the Leichhardt municipality which residents enjoy today was energised by the global social trends of the 1960s and the engagement by Council with the community in the 1970s. Among the PENNY PIKE COLLECTION of materials donated for this Project includes a *Report on Public Planning Discussions*, (19 June 1973) which captures a very different road system:

Council's proposal to close Balmain Road opposite Orange Grove School was enthusiastically received by most residents ... it would appear that lights may be necessary there in a few years time. ... this matter (will) be further examined by the Planning Committee so that the improvement can be carried out. p16

Orange Grove Plaza Playground was developed in recent years but formally opened in 2010.



◆ DECORATIONS

Almost every gardener interviewed for the Project has ornaments and decorations in their garden. Patty Todhunter has a pottery bilby and Jan Wood has a quirky collection of ornaments which are the legacy of a competition she has with her daughter to see who can buy the *kitchest birthday present*. Among the flamingo, parrots, lion is a pond with ornamental crocodiles, and orange and black striped Koi fish which Jan calls her *Balmain Tiger Fish*. She put them in the pool the day after the Balmain Tigers won the grand final in 2005.

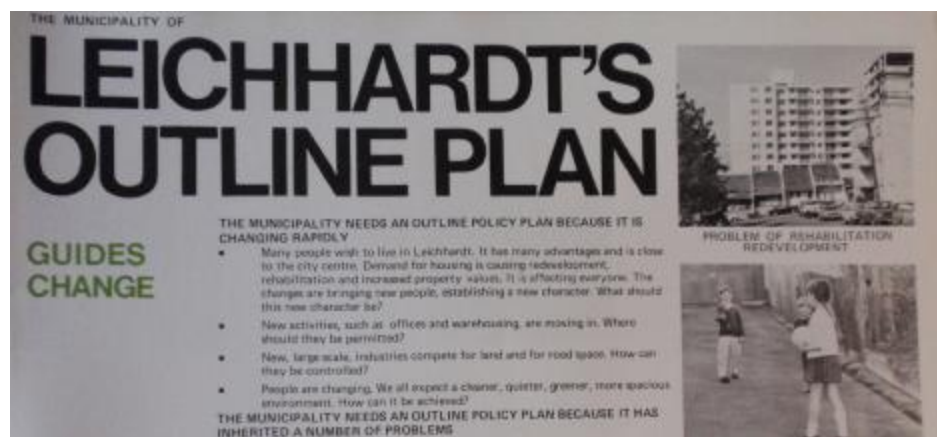
◆ DEVELOPMENT

Appointed Deputy Mayor in 1971 Philip Bray recalled *There was a group of us on Council and I think we were very fortunate in that there was enough of the right people in the right place at the right time to achieve an enormous amount. There were lots of challenges – town planning challenges ... we introduced a blanket ban temporarily on anything over two storeys on the entire municipality. This essentially saved the Balmain Peninsula from being covered in 3 and 4 storey walk up red brick flats.*

The community was happy but developers were not. *It was the first time a Council had really taken a state government on – head on It was a very big battle which we won, he said.*

◆ LEICHHARDT'S OUTLINE PLAN

Penny Pike has generously donated a number of items to the Leichhardt Library Collection and among those is the 1974 *Leichhardt's Outline Plan*. The idea of greening is not new, of course, and one of the recommendations for the community nearly forty years ago was the need for the Plan because the municipality was changing rapidly. According to the Plan, *the changes are bringing new people, establishing a new character.* And asked: *What should this new character be?* People are changing. We all expect a cleaner, quieter, greener, more spacious environment. How can it be achieved?



Leichhardt's Outline Plan, Leichhardt Council, 1974

9. THE 20TH CENTURY GREENING OF LEICHHARDT

...places where people plant, weed, prune, and harvest flowers, fruit, or vegetables; raise and slaughter animals; sit alone or chat with friends; where the old teach the young how to plant, how to cook, how to eat, how to survive, how to be. There, people cultivate not only plants and friendships but also values and tastes. Gardens help people feel peaceful, self-sufficient, useful, healthy, and in touch with the living earth. They give people something to look forward to, a sense of ownership and responsibility. Garden products go far beyond edible plants to include social networks and healthy environments, economies, and people.

Maria Elisa Christie, 'The Cultural Geography of Gardens',
Geographical Review 94, 3, July 2004

This Project set out to look at domestic gardens and community spaces and it has achieved that – in part. Any future project could expand upon this idea and included detailed listings of plants and vegetables, garden design and the environment (shady,

sunny, maritime and windblown, as John and Jocelyn Morris work with in their garden at Kenilworth, where the amount of shade in the garden has been the biggest influence in how it has developed).

What these interviews capture and highlight most importantly is not only the enthusiasm individuals have for their own particular garden space (for individual plants, developing their domestic spaces or discovering and working on their historic garden) but also the “communal” collective energy. Some interviewees worked in community gardens, some worked quietly, privately, to save and plant barren untree-ed areas. And a number worked within the political system of Leichhardt Council to push for change and to save and green open spaces for the wider community.

Penny Pike and Philip Bray, working on Council, articulate this most keenly. Penny Pike donated a number of Council reports from 1973 and 1974 which highlight the condition of the streetscape and the community’s eagerness for more public space, parks, children’s playgrounds, and treeplanting.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Leichhardt Council generously supported the *Greening of Leichhardt Oral History Project* under its grants scheme. Collectively projects funded by such grants comprise a significant expenditure of ratepayers’ funds and profile the municipality’s rich history.

- t Pocket Parks is the front page headline of the *Inner West Courier* (3 November 2011) referring to four small parks to be opened by the City of Sydney. “Pocket Parks offer a break from the city hustle and bustle”, according to the article.



RECOMMENDATION #1 PUBLICATION #1:

PARKS AND POCKET PARKS

Leichhardt residents and Council were looking at pocket parks nearly four decades earlier, in 1973 (according to the *Report on Public Planning Discussions*, donated by Penny Pike). Council could produce a small publication utilising the slice of history that is the *Greening of Leichhardt Oral History Project*.

Real estate values go up and down across the country, but in Balmain they only go up, according to David Liddle. That real estate boom continues and a new community of residents and ratepayers may welcome learning more about Leichhardt’s history.

RECOMMENDATION #2 PUBLICATION #2:

GREENING OF LEICHHARDT

Leichhardt could promote its history by publishing a variety of small publications which capture different aspects of Council’s history and the community’s robust activism. Once again – utilise the material in the project that is the *Greening of Leichhardt Oral History Project*. The *Greening of Leichhardt Oral History Project* could be reworked and published as a small publication to augment the books sold through Leichhardt Library.

[\[www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/LH-Books.html\]](http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/LH-Books.html)

t GREEN CONFERENCE:

LEICHHARDT LGA GREENING CITIES CONFERENCE

In November 2011 the fourth Greening Cities Conference was held in Darling Harbour. Leichhardt Council could host its own Greening of Leichhardt Conference highlighting the remarkable achievements the Council and community have achieved in greening the municipality.



The hard work is done! Research, the recording of oral history interviews as a primary resource have eased the task of building on the work of Local History Grant.

Council's investment in developing a series of inexpensive booklets on aspects of local history which emerge from these grants would be very modest. The Heritage Committee of Council could commission and oversee the development of such a series.

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'Green' advertising- Catherine Street, Lilyfield 2010