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SUMMARY OF ADDRESS BY ALDERMAN A.M. CLAYTON - CHAIRMAN OF THE  
PLANNING COMMITTEE, WOOLLAHRA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - GIVEN AT A  
MEETING HELD AT 8.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 1970 AT  
WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

THE ROLE OF COUNCIL & ITS CITIZENS IN THE PLANNING FOR  
DARLING POINT

Woollahra Council recognises the function of town planning as one of its most important functions. This is because town planning involves the control and we hope the improvement of environment within the municipality. As any vital civilised society is either going forwards or backwards but never stopping still, so the trends and stresses which shape its urban environment are forever changing. This requires constant vigilance on the part of town planners who seek to recognise and cope with these trends and stresses and plan for future development.

Darling Point is one area of the municipality where a combination of geographical, social and economic factors have resulted in unprecedented development. As was stated in the circular dated 5th December, 1969, distributed to all residents, ratepayers and electors of Darling Point, many aspects of the increasing trend towards residential flat development in the Darling Point area have become matters of concern to residents, ratepayers and electors of the Peninsular and of equal concern to the Council. The adequacy of existing planning schemes affecting the area to cope with current trends is open to question. Therefore to ensure that Darling Point remains as one of Sydney's finest residential neighbourhoods, your Council has had recourse to a provision of the existing scheme which permits it to adopt by resolution a detailed plan for any defined area.

Accordingly, the Council has engaged the services of an independent Town Planner, namely, Mr. George Clarke of Messrs. Clarke, Gazzard & Partners to prepare a detailed plan for the guidance and control of future developments within the Darling Point area bounded by the Harbour, Rushcutters Bay Park, New South Head Road and Ocean Street.

Mr. Clarke has begun an intensive study of the population structure, buildings, traffic systems open spaces, views, natural features and other significant amenity characteristics of Darling Point. He will ultimately prepare for Council's consideration a detailed plan. Before adopting any part of this plan, Council will publicly exhibit it and invite public criticism, questions and comment which will be taken into account when considering the plan.

But even before Mr. Clarke prepares any plan for submission to Council, Council believes that the citizens of Darling Point should be invited to assist and participate in the study and evolution of the plan to be submitted. Council believes it is essential to the successful formulation and implementation of any plan to preserve and enhance the special character of Darling Point, to have the fullest possible co-operation and participation of the citizens of Darling Point.

Accordingly, last December Council distributed to the residents, ratepayers and electors of Darling Point the circular I have mentioned advising them of Council's intention and inviting them to participate actively in the planning process. Public participation was sought in three ways, namely:-

FIRSTLY - at-home discussions with a statistically selected random sample of households in Darling Point using a questionnaire form to give a consistent basis for discussion and supplemented by invitation to anyone not selected in the random sample to request and receive a copy of the questionnaire for him to study, fill in and return.

SECONDLY - any person wishing to give his opinions and state his problems in writing independently of the questionnaire was invited to do so.

THIRDLY - those willing to participate in discussion groups to meet directly with the Consultant Planners were invited to indicate their willingness to do so.

The first two stages of public participation, that is, the at-home discussions with the random sample of households and the request for written statements have already been successfully launched and are nearing completion.

The total population of the Darling Point Study Area is 4,900 people and the original invitation of 5th December, 1969 was distributed not only to the ratepayers of the area but to every person on the Darling Point Electoral Roll and placed in every letterbox.

The population of Darling Point lives in 2,250 households including both houses and flats. Of these households, 450 were included in the scientifically selected random sample to be interviewed. To date, the Consultant Planners have succeeded in interviewing more than 340 of these in their homes.

In addition to the random sample, representatives of 80 households have to date telephoned the Consultant Planners and requested that questionnaires be sent to them.

This represents a total of 530 households out of 2,250 or a percentage of 23%.

In addition, approximately 60 representatives of households have submitted written statements and we look forward to receiving more of these.

Thus it will be seen that at this early stage of the planning process, 590 out of the 2,250 households in Darling Point, that is 26% have already had the opportunity to participate actively in the planning process by recording and registering their opinions and views with the Planners.

The information and opinions received through these procedures is currently being analysed and studied.

Postal questionnaires and written statements are still being and we hope will continue to be received. Persons wishing to complete the questionnaires may still do so by telephoning Miss Bartlett of Messrs. Clarke, Gazzard & Partners at 27-3633 and a questionnaire will be posted to them. Persons not wishing to complete the questionnaire but wishing to forward their written statements are invited to do so by posting them to the Council marked for the attention of Mr. Clarke.

The meeting to-night is called for the purpose of commencing the third stage of citizen participation in the formulation of the Darling Point Plan. Over 60 persons have, pursuant to the invitation of 5th December, 1969, indicated their willingness to join discussion groups. These discussion groups will participate with the Planners in informal, open-ended discussions on the matters relevant to the Plan including survey information and planning ideas presented to the group by the Planners. It is hoped that these discussion groups will provide some useful ideas and enable the Planners further to assess the civic needs and wishes of the citizens required to be satisfied by any plan. It is anticipated that these discussion groups will meet, say, four times in the next four months.

It is Council's desire to establish three discussion groups at this meeting. Each group will comprise 10 people which is considered to be the maximum possible number for effective face to face group discussion. Each of the three groups will consist of seven citizens together with an Alderman as Chairman and two Town Planners from Messrs. Clarke, Gazzard & Partners.

It is therefore necessary to-night to appoint 21 citizens to join these three discussion groups. It will be appreciated that more persons have volunteered than can, in practice, be accommodated within the limits of time and cost which Council can afford to allocate in detailed planning in Darling Point. Planning costs money and Mr. Clarke is working within the limits of a specific allocation of finance voted by Council for this purpose.

It is proposed to accept for nomination for membership of the discussion groups in addition to the 60 that have already nominated, nominations from any other persons present to-night who are on the Electoral Roll for the Study Area.

The 21 members of the three discussion groups will then be elected by lottery from all the nominations then in hand.

It is felt that not only is election by lottery the fairest method but it will result in random representation on the discussion groups and so reveal a wider cross-section of opinion than might otherwise be the case.

Those who are not appointed to the discussion groups to-night should not feel as though they have been passed over. As indicated earlier, they will have the right to submit any further views they wish to express by means of written statement forwarded to the Consultants. If they have not already done so, they can complete the questionnaire. They can approach and confer with any member of the discussion groups, and, of course, before the Council adopts any part of the scheme ultimately proposed by the Consultants, the scheme will be publicly exhibited and facilities will be made available for all persons to comment, criticise and question the Plan and for their opinions to be taken into consideration by the Council in conjunction with the scheme.

A.M. CLAYTON.

Alderman - Woollahra Municipal Council