

# Wolli Creek Update

FROM THE WOLLI CREEK PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC.

JULY 2000

## Plan threatens our most important historic house

Historic Tempe House is under threat from a proposed redevelopment of the North Arncliffe area.

Rockdale Council has now exhibited a local environment plan (LEP) and a development control plan (DCP) for the proposal. These are on exhibition at Rockdale Council and comments will be received until 4 August.

The layout and scale of development proposed by the Interciti group in the vicinity of the Tempe House and the foreshores of Cooks River are totally inappropriate and are out of keeping with the heritage and landscape value of the area. The proposal to build apartments right up to the river's banks contravenes best environmental practice.

Tempe House is of national significance. Designed by John Verge and built in 1836, it is unique and elegant Georgian villa, still surrounded by open

space. It retains vistas across Cooks River to the north and Wolli Creek to the west.

The house was built for merchant Alexander Brodie Spark whose diaries are an important record of the local landscape and the social life

of the early colonial period. Spark's garden was regarded as the finest private collection of plants in the colony. Tempe House was painted by most of the major colonial artists including Conrad Martens, John James Clark and Samuel Elyard. Spark named the area Tempe, after the Vale of the Gods of Greek mythology. The small rocky outcrop to the east of the house was later named Mount Olympus.

After Spark's death, Caroline Chisholm used the house as a girls' boarding school from 1863 to 1865.

### What you can do

- **Make a submission** to Rockdale Council's Development Control Plan (DCP No. 45) for North Arncliffe. Submission close August 4. Send to: The General Manager, PO Box 21, Rockdale NSW 2216. A model submission is available from the Society. Ring Gavin on 9567 8502 after 24 July.

- **Write to Premier Bob Carr** protesting against the Interciti proposal. Tell him that Tempe House's environs and Cooks River foreshores should be protected from high-rise development. Address to: Parliament House, Macquarie Street NSW 2000.



Tempe House, built in 1836, was designed by the celebrated colonial architect John Verge

The later use of the house as a wayward girls' institution by the Good Samaritan Sisters preserved it in exceptional condition and the sisters added a very fine chapel to the grounds in 1888.

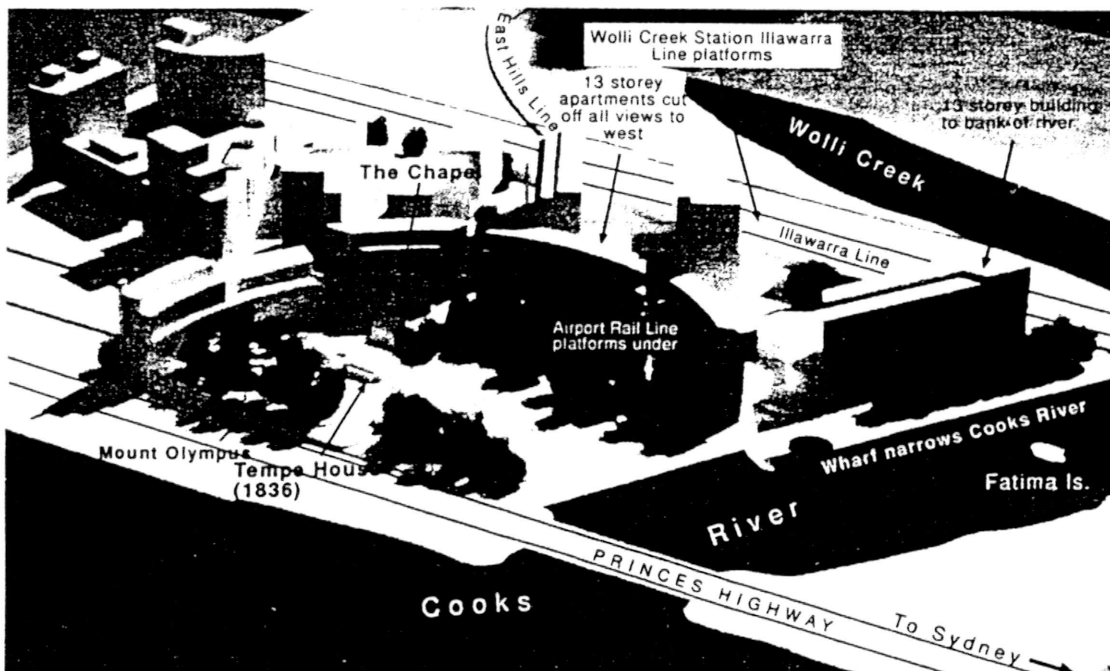
The integrity of this historic precinct would be ruined by the scale of the proposed development which would see a 'curtain wall' of apartments up to 13 storeys tall built in an arc close behind Tempe House, the chapel and Mount Olympus. At the north end, these apartments would abut Cooks River, and a wharf which would narrow the river significantly is proposed along the southern bank of the river between the Illawarra rail line and Princes Highway.

The proposal would create an extremely bad precedent for the rail village concept, and one which would bring this potentially

progressive urban consolidation measure into bad repute.

The Preservation Society believes that an alternative plan which respects the heritage and landscape value of this area should be developed with the fullest public consultation. Any new plan should preserve all Cooks River foreshore lands and views to the west from Tempe House.

SEE the WCPS website:  
[www.brushtail.com.au/wolli.creek.html](http://www.brushtail.com.au/wolli.creek.html)  
for links to historic paintings of Tempe House and more on this issue as it comes to hand!



# Government still stalling on Wollie Creek Regional park

The NSW Government has still not gazetted the Wollie Valley open space as a regional park. We have written to the government expressing concern at the delay in gazetted the park and the illegal clearing of land mentioned in our last *WCPS Update*. The following response, dated 9 May, has been received from the Deputy Premier, Andrew Refshauge:

*I note the concerns raised by you. I am advised that this [land] is being considered for inclusion in the proposed Wollie Creek Regional Park. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is currently working on*

*the delineation of the boundaries for the proposed Park and is planning to put the Plan of Management for the proposed Park on exhibition in June 2000.*

To date the Society has heard no news as to when the plan of management is to go on display.

The land at the end of Unwin Street Undercliffe (28a Bayview Ave), where the clearing took place, was recently put up for auction. However it appears that the auction was cancelled due to an offer being received.

## Lodge your objection to RTA Cycleway along Wollie Creek

The RTA is still proceeding with its plans to construct a cycleway along the southern bank of Wollie Creek.

The Nature Conservation Council (NCC) is now fully behind our campaign and recently sent a strongly worded letter to the Premier calling for an immediate halt to any further design or development work on the proposal, pending a full public consultation process regarding the proposed and alternative options.

Members of the committee have lobbied local MP George Thompson and Rockdale Council. As a result of an enquiry from Rockdale Council a letter was received by the Society from the RTA (dated 7 June) indicating that plans are proceeding regardless of opposition from the community. Once again it appears that there will be no EIS. The community will not be consulted until after the RTA has completed its plans.

From Bexley North the RTA plan involves construction a 3.5 to 4 metre-wide pavement (equivalent to a single-lane roadway of generous width) for 700 metres along a flood plain between the south bank of Wollie Creek and the East Hills rail corridor. This will require extensive sheet-piling and infilling along the banks of a naturally flowing creek. The RTA plans reveal that between Bardwell Park and Turrella:

- over 100 metres of the cycleway is to be constructed on piles set in the Wollie Creek itself;
- 200 metres of the cycleway will encroach on wetland used by the migratory Japanese snipe and
- impact on an important habitat for the golden headed cisticola, a species which is

uncommon in the Sydney region.

The cycleway will then cross Wollie Creek on a 50 metre-long bridge before again running along the creek bank for a further 50 metres.

Such solutions contravene both NSW government policy and good environmental practice, wherein the aims are to restore, not destroy, natural creeklines.

The proposed route is extremely costly, lacks access except at each rail station and has personal safety problems due to isolated nature of the route. Because the proposed route is flood-prone, the RTA has acknowledged that it must provide an alternative all-weather route.

**We urge you to object to the RTA's ill-conceived plan. Please write to any or all of the following:**

- The Hon Andrew Refshauge MP, Minister for Planning,
- The Hon. Carl Scully MP, Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads,
- George Thompson MP (Member for Rockdale)  
All above at:  
Parliament House, Macquarie Street Sydney 2000
- Rockdale City Council  
The General Manager  
PO Box 21  
Rockdale NSW 2216
- Canterbury City Council  
The General Manager  
PO Box 77  
Campsie NSW 2194

To contact WCPS  
Gavin Gatenby or Lee  
Hoffmann 9567 8502 (AH)

## COMMITTEE NEWS

### Tempe House Development

WCPS committee members are now involved with several other groups in the Tempe House and Foreshores Alliance which has been formed to put a stop to the inappropriate development proposed for the land around historic Tempe House. (see front page). We urge that you lodge your objection to the proposal NOW.

### M5 East Ventilation Stack

Three RAPS members were among the nine community representatives allowed to attend the RTAs International Tunnel Workshop held 7-9 June. RAPS was highly critical of the process for setting the agenda and the restricted nature of workshop participation. In addition no media was invited. A draft report prepared by the facilitator Mr Arnold Dix, a Melbourne barrister, is now available. RAPS is concerned that it does not accurately reflect the proceedings and has prepared a detailed response. For more info visit the RAPS website: [www.nostack.8m.com](http://www.nostack.8m.com).

### The GST and tax-deductibility

The Society's committee has decided to apply for an ABN but will not register for GST. Our income is well below the level required for registration and we consider that it is not worth getting caught up in the onerous administration required.

This means that we will not be able to retain our environmental group tax deductible status, however we hope that our major battles are over now. Tax deductibility has been useful in the past and provided an avenue whereby our supporters could donate to our activities and obtain some rebate.



**Wollie Creek  
Preservation  
Society Inc.**  
MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION

Yes, I would like to join the Wollie Creek Preservation Society Inc.....

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode..... Phone No.....

#### PLEASE TICK

- |                |                          |                  |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Family \$10    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Concession \$5   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Individual \$7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Donation \$_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

By mail to: WCPS, PO Box 270, Earlwood NSW 2206