

36

39 Leslie Street
BLACKTOWN NSW 2148.

Phone: (02) 9622 4753

9th March 2011

Dear Sir or Madam,

re: Proposed Sydney Wet'n'Wild Theme Park at Prospect

I am writing this communication to strongly protest about building on any of the land at Prospect, between the M4 Freeway and the Prospect Reservoir (Sydney's back-up water supply), because of the historical value that this last section of the original road west from Sydney had in the early days of settlement.

This area should be revered for it's historical attributes. The Cricketers' Arms Hotel was restored by the State Planning Department about 18 years ago and is currently an elegant place to visit for a meal and entertainment. This building was originally the toll house on what was originally called Old Western Road, (recently this road's name was changed to Reservoir Road) for anyone wishing to travel west and east to and from the western parts of Sydney. In fact the Cobb and Co Stages used to stop there. After some years it became an hotel, a local store, and then it was left derelict until the State Government restored the building to it's original state so that it could be leased out as an hotel again.

A lot of people living in this area probably don't know that William Lawson, together with William Charles Wentworth and Gregory Blaxland, were the first explorers to find a route through the Blue Mountains. His grave and many graves of members of his family are at St. Bartholomews Church. It is very difficult to get into the church

grounds now because of the roundabouts, roads and highways which have isolated the Church on top of the hill.

Obviously we, the people of this area, have never taken the trouble to object to the RTA's plans in the past to prevent roads being built all around this beautiful old restored building and graveyard.

This proposed wet'n'wild project may well go alright and make money for the enterprising people wishing to build it for that purpose – forget the comments they make of “helping the people of Blacktown and the west to a well needed attraction”. Just how many people from this area would be able to take their whole family to something like this at a cost of \$99 each ticket, useable a few times in that year?

Our area has a lot of unemployed people walking around the streets any day of the week, you see them just filling in time. Most of us with children would not be able to afford to take the kids to something like this very often.

It might drag a few thousand people to it for the first couple of years but, mark my words, when the profits start to drop off and it's not achieving the results that are required, bingo!! They'll sell it off, just like Wonderland, and then because it's been a commercial business, lordy, the government will then rezone it and then we will be able to enjoy the enormous factory buildings which will then be built where all this wonderful stuff was!! Personally I would prefer to see the grass and the animals that are agisted there with the natural bush as it is presently.

On part of the property where the car parking areas will be for this attraction, there are a few very old Norfolk Pine trees and a very old building which was the first Policeman's cottage in this whole area. The company proposing to build this attraction knows how this needs to be preserved for posterity because of existing orders over both the trees and the building, so they are going to fence them off for people to see. Personally, if I was going to a swimming attraction, I wouldn't have much interest in seeing an historical building or trees.

An alternative to building this wet'n'wild at Prospect, could be the OTC land at the corner of the Great Western Highway and Doonside Road, where the public had been advised that that land would be used for passive recreation parkland for the people of the area. It currently has two growths of houses being erected at the intersections of Douglas and Doonside Roads, and Bungarribee and Doonside Roads.

O.K. it's a flat landscape, but I have no doubt that as the topography of a lot of other sites around our suburbs have been transformed to from what they were, e.g. Wonderland, which was completely flattened after it was sold and now is wall-to-wall factories - it's quite devastating to see. This may well be the the answer for all parties concerned - the land useage at Prospect shouldn't be changed from what it is currently. We need to keep the history of our area for future generations to see and understand how things were in the very early days of settlement.

If you take the time to think about it, not many people want to come to Blacktown from Sydney, because of the inadequate public transport system. Trains don't seem to ever run on time, buses wouldn't help much either and the congestion of traffic on the M4, Great Western Highway, Reservoir Road, Prospect Highway and most other roads in this area is almost impossible to negotiate with safety.

My father lived at Paddington in Sydney and he used to say that he wouldn't go this far for a holiday. You see, during the 2nd world war, he was stationed at Blacktown and all he remembered was the Robin Hood Hotel (now gone); the original railway station (now gone) and lots of space. He probably would be very surprised now if he were alive to see the "progress" which has invaded this city!

Our area has already had some spectacular disappointments with big time events happening here, e.g. the Eastern Creek Raceway - the greatest racing track in all time, bla, bla, bla. Whoops, the only part of that raceway now making money, is the newly built Drag Racing facility when it is used. Incidentally, I wonder how the noise from the Drag Racing will affect the noise from the wet'n'wild. I can hear the noise from the drag racing track at my home in Blacktown that that's about 8 miles away from the track.

Of course, there is the Go Cart Racing track, privately owned of course, operating on the newly named Brabham Drive (previously known as Reen Road), with some success, or so it seems.

The Olympic Park was a success story and was sorely needed for the various sporting activities in this area, but already the AFL complex has been downgraded by most people around Sydney who are involved with AFL, and I suppose it won't draw large crowds to watch games when our team actually starts in the competitions. I sincerely hope it works for our area though.

The Royal Show grounds at Homebush are a bit of a problem to get to from our area by train (change at Lidcombe and go to another platform) and the return trips (again, change at Lidcombe and go to another platform) - personally I feel that when the Showground was at Paddington it was much more fun to attend the Easter Show than the sterile current Homebush site. Those grand old historical buildings at the original showground were really worth going to and looking at. Of course they are all now privately run facilities for the privileged few able to afford to attend events there.

Now is the time to take a stand and stop this development happening. The Greater Union Theatre's Drive In at Prospect, (another company under the same umbrella as the Sydney wet'n'wild), has already put in a DA application to build a three storey horrible looking hotel at the back of the Cricketers' Arms Hotel - this should not be allowed even though Greater Union owns the land where the drive-in is.

Anybody else in the corridor who owns their own properties have been instructed that they have to go through the State Planning Department to obtain approval of their private plans, before they can do any improvements to their own properties. So, if it's good for the goose, it should be good for the gander, one would think.

What's history anyway? Once it's gone, it certainly won't be coming back.

Jan McGowan (Mrs.)

cc. Blacktown Council
Planning NSW
Blacktown Advocate Newspaper
Blacktown Sun Newspaper