

# Grey Lynn Residents Association Inc.

**Committee report for 2022 Annual Meeting: 6 March 2023**

**Held at the Grey Lynn RSC, Francis Street, Grey Lynn, 7 pm.**

It has been another purposeful year for the committee of the Grey Lynn Residents' Association. We have not met perhaps as often as is ideal but a great deal of work has been done via email.

We were not able to hold our AGM in late 2022 and so this report covers activities for 2022.

## **Planning issues**

These have continued to loom large.

In May 2022 Auckland Council began the first stage of consultation on changes to the Auckland Unitary Plan in response to central government's National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS UD) and Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS). Through the NPS UD and MDRS councils in New Zealand's larger urban areas are required to change their unitary or district plans to allow three dwellings, three stories high, on most residential sites, and also apartment buildings at least six stories high in areas close to the CBD and metropolitan centres, and also around rapid transit stops (train station and bus stations).

Working with the five other inner city residents' groups, which have many years of deep planning expertise, in May we provided feedback on Auckland Council's preliminary response to the government's intensification directive. We were pleased that in the resulting proposed plan change 78, Auckland Council proposed exempting certain areas from being upzoned due to qualifying matters – these included special character overlay (much of which was retained in Grey Lynn), infrastructural constraints (including insufficient wastewater capacity), flood plains, notable trees.

We submitted in support of these qualifying matters and requested a reduction in the city centre and Ponsonby Road walkable catchments where apartment buildings would be allowed. We also argued that the Grey Lynn shops had been incorrectly identified as a large local centre and therefore should not have a 200-metre apartment zone around it. In addition, we requested that zone rules be refined to consider neighbours' amenity, and that structure plans be undertaken for areas rezoned for apartments so that redeveloped areas are well-functioning and attractive.

In January Auckland Council invited further submissions – these are submissions in support or opposition to other submitters and we lodged a number of these. It was heartening to see many further submitters supporting GLRA submissions.

The next stage in the process is the hearings, which are being held in the coming months. We have been fortunate in being part of a group of five inner west residents associations who have shared knowledge and expertise on various issues in the past - their help was invaluable in getting to grips with the implications of proposed plan change 78 and we will no doubt be supporting each other and sharing ideas through the hearings process to come. We are also grateful for the help and support former GLRA committee member and heritage expert, architect Graeme Burgess, who has shared his expert knowledge.

*Tania Mace and Nicola Legat*

## Environment

GLRA members Jo Hurst and Nicola Legat continue to be very active in the group Friends of Grey Lynn Park. Through a series of working bees this group has transformed the Rose Road Gully from a weed-infested wasteland into an area which is being rehabilitated into a thriving ecosystem. Work will spread to other areas of the park in the next year. The involvement of several of the key members of the Hakanoa Reserve group is greatly appreciated.

## Cycleways

The election of a new mayor and council; the post-pandemic economic crisis and Auckland Council's heavy debt load coalesced in the last quarter of 2022 in the discussion of budget cuts and delays of cancellations of some cycleway projects. The planned cycleway from the was paused for review. In January the GLRA joined 40 other community groups, including local schools, to call for the cycleway project from the K Road end of Great North Road to Point Chevalier to continue and be completed.

In late February (slightly outside the timeframe of a 2022 report but noted here to keep members abreast of developments) we wrote to both AT and Council affirming our support for the proposals. At time of writing, the GNR and Pt Chevalier ends of the cycleway have political support to proceed but the middle section, through Surrey Crescent and on to Westmere, is on hold pending Waka Kotahi funding support.

## Other local issues

- During 2022 WLB member Alex Bonham continued to share resource consent applications with us on a regular basis so that we can flag any concerns. We very much appreciate being able to have this input.
- The draft Council budget so speculated upon following the election last year is now open for consultation and we will be preparing a submission.

## Western Isthmus Water Quality Improvement Programme

Local resident Paul Shortland continued to act as our accountant and also as our representative on the Western Isthmus Stormwater and Wastewater Upgrades Community Liaison Group, the working group formed by Watercare to provide resident input on the Western Interceptor project. We are very grateful to Paul.

Paul is not able to be at this meeting to update us but this is the status as per the Council website, published in an abridged form for members' interest:

The Western Isthmus Water Quality Improvement Programme is a joint initiative between Watercare and Auckland Council aimed at reducing wastewater overflows and improving stream and beach water quality across the city's central western isthmus, including the Safeswim beaches of Herne Bay, Home Bay, Sentinel Beach, Masefield Beach, and St Mary's Bay.

The programme includes the Central Interceptor extension from Western Springs to Grey Lynn, along with local network upgrades and catchment-based sewer separation projects. It aims to significantly reduce the frequency and volume of overflows in the Western Isthmus from 239 to 10 wastewater spill locations.

These projects were part of the earlier works focused on separating the old, combined stormwater and wastewater pipes directing stormwater to the environment and wastewater to the Māngere Wastewater Treatment Plant via the Ōrākei main. The project included a new public wastewater network, storage and a new pump station at Point Erin as well as private

property drainage separation and connections. Work has been progressing for the past 18 months on the design and approvals for the St Marys Bay separation works.

The St Mary's Bay and Herne Bay wastewater and stormwater separation projects have been heavily impacted by escalating material, labour and traffic management costs. These increases, coupled with further costs identified in the design stage to accommodate geotechnical risks, and further learnings taken from the recent separation project at Okahu Bay, put the most recent cost estimates for the project at \$278m -- double the original forecast of \$136m. This scale of change is unaffordable and as a result Watercare and Auckland Council have been exploring a new, more cost-effective way to deliver the same water quality outcomes within the agreed timeframe.

This involves an extension of the Central Interceptor wastewater conveyance and storage tunnel from Tawariki Street in Grey Lynn to a new drop shaft in Point Erin. This will be supported by a new Herne Bay wastewater pipe and a revised programme of sewer separation. The tunnel extension will ensure combined overflows are picked up and conveyed to Māngere Wastewater Treatment Plant for safe treatment, reducing overflows to the environment and improving the quality of waterways and swimmable beaches by 2028.

The Watercare Board has asked staff to engage with key stakeholders regarding the revised proposal and both Watercare and Healthy Waters have been liaising constructively with mana whenua and the local liaison groups and residents' associations. The aim is for the 4.5m diameter tunnelling machine to be able to continue towards Point Erin from Grey Lynn without disruption when it arrives in 2025.

To achieve this, contractual agreements, detailed design, landowner and statutory approvals need to be started as soon as possible. Further project updates and engagement will be provided when more information becomes available. Design and consenting work are expected to get underway as soon as possible.

The Central Interceptor is expected to arrive at Tawariki Street, Grey Lynn around 2026, where it will continue the final stage to a new shaft site constructed at Point Erin. Everything going well, the project is expected to be completed later in 2026.

## **Great North Road Community-led Vision Project**

Work by David Batten and Brandon Wilcox has continued on this ambitious and important project. They report:

- We presented the completed Great North Road Community-led Vision to the GLRA committee and the Waitemata Local Board (WLB) in March 2021. Since that time our role has been to give effect to the community's vision.
- The recent change in the political landscape has meant an institutional knowledge vacuum at local government level. In recent months David and Brandon have been in hot demand by all levels of the local body political and NGO community as perceived experts on Great North Road.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

- Grey Lynn Business Association (GLBA, aka Grey Lynn & Around) has given us its full support and hosted further very successful business meetings where we and AT were able to present and answer questions relating to AT's Great North Road improvements project. We have since jointly attended and spoken at a number of meetings hosted by AT.
- We were asked to present at a recent WLB meeting by Board chair Genevieve Sage and deputy chair Greg Moyle. It was unfortunate to see the lack of caucusing and sharing of

information amongst the WLB members, but the ultimate outcome of reconfirming the project with further consultation by AT with us and the GLBA was an appropriate outcome.

## ***Auckland Transport (AT) Engagement***

- We have had some 14 meetings with AT. Their willingness to consult has been exemplary but their intransigence has been withering to deal with.
- We (together with GLBA) have won installation of car transporter loading zones (not just to provide for the businesses, but to increase safety for road users), and two more loading zones for the other 1.3km of GNR, some extra trees and plantings, and introduction of paid parking at the top of some of the side streets to provide short-term parking for customers of local businesses.
- During the period of consultation, the business community has seen the planned loss of initially 35 parks on GNR, then 60 and now 140+ (82% of all on-street car parks on GNR). Although a relaxation of AT's 'sight lines' implementation may give rise to another ten. This conflicts with the community's desire for ground floor commercial premises to be included in new apartment developments in order to activate the street frontage and provide for a "friendlier" GNR. We have advocated strongly on behalf of the community on this matter.

## ***Green Space Development - NZ Army***

- The Army land on Great North Road was identified as a potential community pocket park. However, our constituent MP Jacinda Ardern and Ministers of Defence (Ron Mark, Peeni Henare) have shown no interest in any land-use change. During meetings with Cr Mike Lee and Cr Julie Fairey, both were confident that the new Minister of Defence Hon Andrew Little would be more amenable to the proposed land use so we are pursuing opportunities for a presentation.
- David Batten has spent considerable time on historical research and piecing together compelling evidence for the commemoration of Newton West School war dead and the still living community members who are able to confirm key dates and the age of the now-gone tree.
- We wish to thank Hon Nicky Kay, military historian Chris Pugsley, and RSA President Graeme Gibson for their assistance to date.

## ***Planning and Developer Community***

- We are indebted to Prof Bill McKay from Auckland University for his support and advice on both Great North Road and the Army pocket park concept. He has proposed a student design competition for the Army pocket park concept, and we believe his input will prove pivotal.
- Following a meeting with Ockham Residential's architect for the 7-storey Feynman apartment building at 339-359 Great North Road, we are pleased to report that as a result of our deputation they have altered their plans to increase the amount of awning cover along the front of the building. This will provide much needed weather protection for pedestrians, and is important given the Feynman's ground-floor business focus. We were also surprised to learn of design restrictions that were of AT's making.

## ***Support for Intelligent Density***

- In line with community feedback as articulated in the Great North Road Community-led Vision, we have supported intensification in areas where such intensification makes sense, and resisted it in areas where heritage and special character need to be protected.
- We are therefore pleased to see Ockham's new 8-storey mixed residential and commercial development The Greenhouse on the corner of Pollen Street and Williamson Ave across the road from Countdown taking shape with impressive street activation, and complete weather protection around the building frontage. The Greenhouse is due for completion in early 2025.

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- Ockham's 7-storey Feynman apartment building at 339-359 Great North Road, as discussed, has increased the scope of weather protection following our deputation.
- The Hadlow development at 406-428 Great North Road is a relatively low-rise development soon to be completed. We congratulate the developers, Conrad Group, which has also understood the requirement for street activation with provision for ground-floor business, and full weather protection along the blocks.
- We are seeking consultation with architects Paul Brown & Associates who previously designed The Crest and now The Grey on the corner of Northland St and GNR.

*Brandon Wilcox and David Batten*

## **Social Media**

- Arch Hill Matters currently 385 Facebook Likes/Followers which is stable.
- Grey Lynn Residents currently 567 Facebook Likes/Followers which is an 11% increase over the period.
- Regular posts include Waitemata Local Board and Urban Ark newsletters or other items of interest otherwise mirroring GLRA newsletters.

*David Batten*

## **Arch Hill Community Advocacy**

- Home Street Reserve: The growth of ground cover and creeper over the fence seems to have mitigated previous adjacent residents' concerns over the reserve usage. Parks and Reserves manager Adriana Christie regularly maintains contact regarding any issues.
- Cooper St Reserve: It was pleasing to receive notification that the reserve space had been retained following a successful community advocacy. I would like to thank former WLB member Adriana Christie and WLB member Alex Bonham for their support and presentation. I would also like to particularly acknowledge the time spent in meetings and site visits with and compelling presentation on the three inner city sites in question by Parnell resident Luke Nui, supported by Jo Malcolm, that was particularly praised by the presiding commissioners.
- GNR enabling works - Potatau Street. Investigations by Watercare have indicated that the storm water infrastructure will not be able to cope with the apparent extra strain that the GNR upgrade will generate plus the current load on the street's infrastructure, hence a 3-month construction and remediation programme requiring the closing of the street. David has been advocating for an improvement to the water supply pressure of a small number of houses (including his own) to be included in the works.

*David Batten*

## **Email Management**

- Our email/membership list currently stands at 497 contacts of which 391 are current subscribers, slightly up on last year.
- Five emails were published in 2022.

## **Website**

- Brandon Wilcox manages the technical aspects of GLRA website and provides technical advice to Nicola Legat, the content writer/editor/publisher.

## **Finances**



# Grey Lynn Residents Association Inc.

A small deficit was recorded for the period. No new membership income was received for the year. There was no sponsorship income.

The assets of the society are comprised of the bank account with a balance of \$1725 at balance date offset by the liabilities being unused grants. See note 3 page 7 for the movement of the grants. Only the grant amounts equivalent to the expenditure on the programmes has been released.

*GLRA Committee  
February 7 2022*