

REPORT ON "LITTLE MILTON"

Members will be extremely pleased to hear that preservation of this our last significant old residential building in the inner-city area, is at last receiving close attention from the appropriate authorities.

A suggestion has been made within the City Council that the best way to preserve the building is for Council to acquire it, including the whole of the real estate, because no other such piece of land is available in such a central a situation, quite apart from the historic value of the improvements. This suggestion came from Alderman Tom Ward, and all our members will assuredly be with him to the utmost.

So the Lord Mayor, Alderman John Parker, called a conference of Aldermen, Council officers and representatives of our Society, when by courtesy of the Trustees an inspection was made. For our part, this confirmed more than ever the urgency and sheer necessity for preservation and preferably acquisition by Council. Naturally, Aldermen had to be more cautious, but in order to assist them in their deliberations, the Lord Mayor suggested that the National Trust be asked to make a specific, up-to-date minute evaluation of the property from both aesthetic and structural point of view. Supported by a letter from the Town Clerk, the Society has arranged this. At time of going to press we await advice as to when the National Trust will be calling to make its inspection.

Meanwhile, it is indeed heartening that the Council recognizes that it

is imperative for it to be fully advised on such matters by experts. If this far-seeing attitude had been adopted years ago, Wollongong would be the proud possessor of a number of fine old buildings as a reality, and not of a mere memory. Incidentally, as a matter of further interest, the Society has received from Council a request for information about all our historic buildings. One confidently hopes that this and the Lord Mayor's request for a new National Trust evaluation of "Little Milton" mark the beginning of a new order which may well save our heritage from being reduced to a pile of rubble. Like "Cormiston", for instance!

And yet! - and yet there is still no time to spare. The auction date for "Little Milton" has been set for 28th September. The three charities (Greenacres, Crippled Children and Chesalon) and the other beneficiaries from the sale of the property have all stated that, whilst very properly requiring the sale to reach the true market value, they would not oppose a reasonable postponement to ensure preservation of the house as far as practicable. It is to be hoped that those having the ordering of the auction will recognize this fine spirit and give the community at large a chance through our City Council, to preserve an irreplaceable community asset.

STOP PRESS:- The Society has found that the Federal Government's committee of Enquiry into the National Estate, a division of the new Department of Urban and Regional Development, could be interested in this sort of thing. Perhaps the Council will make a submission to the Committee, but if not, this Society will. And perhaps, too, Mr. Rex Connor M.P., could now intervene with the Minister in charge of the Department. We simply cannot afford to leave any avenue unexplored.

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Edgar Beale