

Received 7/27/77

Members file

Chris,

Timber ceiling, House 17.

As you are aware, Peter Bell believes that Stocks have not allowed for a timber ceiling right through House 17. Looking at the Specification I can see that this is probably so.

Peter will prepare an architects instruction to ensure that the ceiling is built as required and in order to help sort things out when or if Stocks come up with a 'variation' price, I will set down my recollection of what has happened.

When we were in House 23 we requested a sloping timber ceiling & after protracted & unsatisfactory delay finally got a price in Stocks' letter of 25/11/75.

By that stage we had changed to House 17 and were initially to have the same ceiling. After hunkering about I decided to have a flat ceiling though the kitchen/family/bedroom end to save on heating - but the roof was still to be timber. I discussed this with Brian Cullum at the time as I recall and perhaps with Michael. I can see now that the ^{description in the} specification doesn't really cover adequately a part sloping ceiling, part flat, with timber.

The basis of the price in my contract is that I took Stocks' price for Hawks house since this was the only house with a comparable area of sloping ceiling. That price with timber boarding was to be \$1700. My house was to be slightly simpler to build since the kitchen/study and dining/family walls were designed to be on the same line (on Brian Cullum's suggestion). On top of the \$1700 I \$400 to account for the difference between flat & flat timber on the area required - this was a

basis of enquiries I made as to relative prices and was a reasonable amount as I recall (although I believe it is costing stocks more than their estimates to do the ceilings).

The present situation then is that I still require the ceiling to be in timber (except, at Peter's suggestion, over the bathroom). Peter will see that the house is built that way and we will have to think about the price if or when Stocks take any action. I can't see that my contract and the specifications or addendum specifications help much either way.

Geoff Mettling
7/2/77

P. Bell to seek a VPR ;
when this is available, the Alfie's position should be re-assessed. It will need to be chased up so that progress on the house is not delayed.

JM
10/2/77

P Bell informed 4/12.

Member file.

Chris.

Brickwork on House 17.

(Could you pass on to the architect or Bill Lewis ^{a.s.l.p.} my belief that the quality of the brickwork in my house is deteriorating again, in some respects.

Two examples are:

(1) the wall between bedrooms 2 and 3 which is bad on the Bedroom 2 side. This seems to be because the bricks are of differing widths so that a wall which is evenly laid on one side (bed 3) turns out uneven on the other. On occasional bricks this might be acceptable but the wall in question has many such occurrences. As far as I'm concerned they can throw the bad bricks away. I certainly won't accept it on walls around the living room such as the wall between living room and main bedroom. Could Bed 2 be checked?

(2) the mortar thickness and trowel work on the wall between bathroom and family room which is getting worse as it goes up. (this is probably because one of the bricklayers is not as good as the others).

A further potential problem is mixing of the bricks since they seem to be using bricks from quite dark red-brown to quite pale grey-brown. I wouldn't like the walls to get too mottled and certainly wouldn't accept stripes.

Thanks "comrade"

Bell has attended to these matters. I understand Geoff McAlpine
10/2/73 February.

Chris, can you
write a short reply to this

Dear Alastair,

I am addressing this letter to you rather than Chris both to give him a rest from my frequent notes but also to underline the fact that this letter requires serious consideration by the Board and a prompt reply. It concerns the completion date of House 17.

The residual amount of money required to finance the house is to be provided by my bank. When arrangements were originally made some nine months ago the completion date provided by the Society was October (it had earlier appeared even possible that it would be September). By October the "official" date provided (and passed on to the Bank) was November. The final "official" date for 1976 was given in November as 22 December. As 1977 dawned the month of March was talked about for House 17 and since then I've heard April - but I don't think the Board is giving much status to these dates any more. From my following of correspondence between the Board and the builder I believe that "May" is the latest given for House 17. However none of these last few dates has been passed on to me, despite requests in at least two letters as I recall.

The Bank is understandably less than happy but, so far, patient and considerate, - ~~but~~ This situation may change since they cannot be expected to keep loan offers on the books indefinitely under such stringent economic circumstances.

Therefore despite my most urgent efforts to sell my house last September, my early securing of finance and my willingness to strike out the "subject to finance

Clause when the Board required unconditional contracts, protracted delays may cost me my loan. I almost certainly will not then complete my contract.

What I now require is a firm and believable completion date and an undertaking that the Board will make the best possible efforts to see that speedy completion is achieved. With all due respects to the actions of some members of the Board, I frankly do not believe that proper attention has been paid to House 17 and other Houses in Group E, all sold to long standing members.

In 14 building weeks this year House 17 has seen the following things happen: — roof framing and tiling (not 100% complete), internal brick walls (about $\frac{1}{2}$ completed in 1976), some further plumbing rough — in (still partly unfinished, and incorrect), some further electrical work (lighting rough wiring) and installation of flooring. There are probably a few other items. But they are far outweighed by the detailed work (and rectification) still to come. — and yet there are only 6 more building weeks before June.

I repeat that I cannot believe that this represents the builders' best efforts, nor is it in the Society's best interests (and certainly not mine). House 18 is in exactly the same state of course. I have no need to say again what distress and financial loss this has meant for Sheila and I. A potential overrun of up to 40 weeks in an allegedly 16 to 20 week building cycle is increasingly unfunny. I wish I could do more than write letters about it —

Geoff McAlpine
14/4/77

Note for file

House 17

Re VPR #10

Stocks : Provide shelf & rail only \$41.00
: Delete w/ robes - credit \$540.00

McAlpine accepted the \$41.00 + 7½% = \$44.00.

Re VPR #8

Stocks - provide 75 in lieu of 50 mm batts : \$105.

McAlpine accepted this \$105 + 7½% = \$112.90.

CM Lang
29.4.77.

Members file.

Dear Mr Lang →

I am writing to seek permission from the Cooperative, under the terms of my contract, to occupy unit 17 for the purposes of installing floor coverings and other attachments.

I would like occupation from 28 May and would envisage settling on my house ~~on~~ on 30 or 31 May if the Society is able to provide a Certificate of Fitness by that time. (I understand that all the necessary inspections have been carried out satisfactorily).

G. M. Alpine
27/5/77.

I approve the above

CM Lang
(Secretary)
27 May 1977.

Legal

ABBOTT TOUT CREER & WILKINSON
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TELEGRAPHIC & CABLE ADDRESS
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TELEPHONE: 49-7788

CANBERRA DOCUMENT EXCHANGE 22

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO
P.O. BOX 828
CANBERRA CITY, A.C.T. 2601

YOUR REF.

OUR REF. RM.7833

9th June 1977
15/6
L

The Secretary,
Urambi Co-operative Community Advancement
Society Limited,
P.O. Box 666,
CIVIC SQUARE A.C.T

Dear Sir,

re: SALE OF UNIT 17 TO McALPINE

Settlement of this matter took place on Wednesday the 8th June 1977, and a settlement statement is enclosed. Rates on the unit were not adjusted at settlement and no doubt you will sort this matter out with the purchaser in due course. We have notified the Department of the Capital Territory of the change of ownership of the unit.

We enclose a memorandum of our costs and disbursements.

Yours faithfully,

ABBOTT TOUT CREER & WILKINSON

Per:

R.M. Moloney

c.c. Stocks & Holdings (Canberra) Pty. Ltd.

Members file.

L 30/6.

Written reply to Geoff 30/6.

House 17.

Dear Chris,

I am writing to remind the Society of certain unfulfilled obligations on its part in the contract between myself and Urambi.

As you will recall, I made settlement on the house as soon as possible after issuance of the Certificate of Fitness. The contract obliged me to do this and, in any event, I believed it to be in the Society's interest. I would have settled even more promptly if the Builder had passed on the Certificate of Fitness at an earlier date. At the time of settlement I wrote to you to the effect that settlement was made on my part without prejudice to the Society's obligations to fully complete the house in accordance with plans & specifications. I understand that at least one other person acted to insure their interests by withholding part of the contract sum but I felt that this indicated a certain lack of faith at a time of difficult negotiations between all participants in the project.

Now that relationships between the Builder and the Society have been reconstituted I believe I have a right to insist on prompt completion of my house (other than maintenance items at the appropriate time). The most important outstanding items are insulation and the fireplace and hearth, the urgency of ~~which~~ whose need is made more pointed by the weather (and which represent some \$800 paid a month ago)

Would you inform me of the Society's proposed actions?

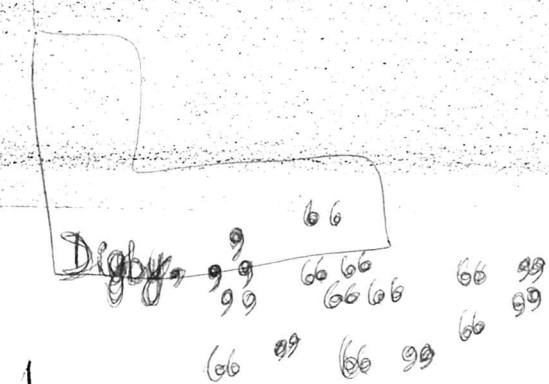
Yours sincerely
Geoff Mettling

1/11/82

See Hans Janda re quote for CC carpentry
viz. cupboard doors
latches on ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{enclosures}

Let Barry know

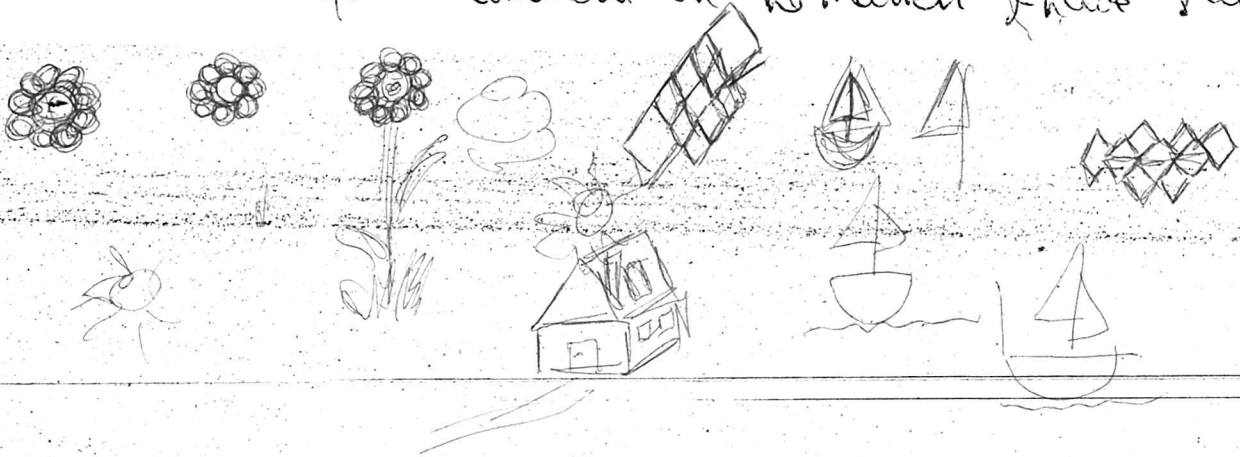
= Notice for working bees
Put in Leah pot



Digby,

Attached are some matters that I had
 wished to discuss at the 4/10/82 meeting - but no one
 else attended the 4/10 meeting. I have now heard that it
 was actually held on 5/10 - it's a pity that Wambi-news had
 date wrong and that one of the BCC members (Terry) didn't know
 about the meeting change. - Hope this year's committee isn't going to
 exceed last year's record for accessibility! Do I now have to wait
 until November for a comment on the matters I have raised?

Geo



1) Urambi Village
1 October.

Dear Hugh,

I don't think it would be fair if your Committee were the first not to get a letter from me — besides I could rapidly lose whatever reputation I have as a "nuisance" if I don't work at it. Hence this letter which will cover a multitude of subjects.

Electrical work .. I understand that we have a bill approaching \$2000 for new lights and lighting repairs. There are two aspects I want to comment upon. As far as I can gather, (including from attending some of the last BCC meetings when electric work was discussed) there was no intling that a bill of such magnitude would come forward. Naturally, changing circumstances sometimes mean that the final cost often exceeds an indicative quote but in this case the extent of this overrun seems unacceptable. I don't think that we are properly managing our affairs if we don't get realistic quotes, approve any increases that turn out to be necessary and, thus, end up with a bill of around about the expected amount: it would not be proper to spend large amounts of other people's money in any less careful a manner (no matter how frivolously some might dispose of their own money!). The second, equally serious, aspect of this matter is that it doesn't appear to me that an appropriate item to cover the bill appears in either this year's or last year's Budget. It shouldn't be necessary for a general meeting to approve every item of expenditure, but when they get up near the \$2000 mark I'd certainly like to know about them and debate as necessary.

Levy collections I guess that the unexpected bill is connected with the comment in the last 'Urambi News' about slow payment of levies. Prior to that comment it had always been stated that, with a few exceptions from time to time, Urambi village residents were far-better-than-average levy payers. I don't believe that it is reasonable to expect —

and count on a prompt payment for the first levy of the year. After all the AGM isn't until late July, people don't know who the Committee members will be, what they agreed (indicative) Budget is and so on. This year's AGM, for example, approved a rise in levies to raise a further \$1000 for development work near the Community Centre. In these circumstances and with a new Committee yet to demonstrate its qualities it is not unreasonable to expect a bit of a lag in levy payments. I suggest then that 'Wamli News' exhortation (even in friendly terms as this was) should be kept ~~at~~ for more serious cash-flow situations (or the reasons for the problem more honestly explained?)

Sewerage: To my knowledge there have been two or three blockages in the sewage system in recent weeks. One of the occasions gave the tenants of House 15 an unpleasant time - part of the problem was a Casuarina tree planted virtually on top of a sewage manhole and not unexpectedly blocking the sewer with its ^(The other part of the problem was large number of 'disposable' nappies and nappy liners) water-seeking roots. The culprits can go unnamed on this occasion but the planting was certainly fairly stupid. Perhaps there are other manholes around the site which, similarly, have trees planted too close and which are liable to give trouble. The cause of the blockage near Watson's - although there were nearby shrubs - appears to be something different although I suspect all the blockages are not unrelated. The BCC should locate all manholes and check that they are accessible and clear. Once-upon-a-time I had plans for all the services (recovered from a 'Stocks-and-Holdings rubbish bin') but some of them have been removed - but I do have one plan which shows sewer manholes. A related and perennial issue - and potential problem - is the location and accessibility of individual and common taps and valves. I believe that some people still don't know where their water stop valves are. On other occasions the problem is lack of a suitable tool to turn valves off, where they are in deep pits. ^(fuls of red-blocks!) The BCC

should remind people to be aware of where their individual values are, ~~and~~, know ^(and meet) where values on common property are and, as necessary, obtain suitable tools for turning values off. (available to all)

Mowing. Most people will be aware that "the first mowing of spring" didn't occur on common land until 28/9 (except for a few places where individual residents got sick of waiting). The place was starting to look a bit scrappy by then, and we were lucky that the drought had reduced the growth rate. I understand that the new maintenance man was waiting upon a new mower — I would have thought that hiring a mowing man without a mower wasn't too smart! — I only hope that we didn't start to pay out on his contract until he began to do the job. (Similarly with his weed-spraying.)

This leads me to raise a wider issue connected with the mowing. Marion Powell (and Keith McIntyre to some extent) looked into the mowing question some months ago and sought new quotes. I'm sure that the quotes she obtained were a fair sample (and some were amazingly high) but I'm not convinced that hiring a maintenance contractor is the most cost-effective way of meeting our needs. It is supposed to ensure regularity and reliability and reduce the administrative load on the BCC (or the maintenance warden(s)). None of those results are particularly evident, (and, as I'll come to, there are other ^{solutions}).

Part of the problem lies in the definition of the need, and this is a particularly difficult problem. For the five or so years of our existence we have, for one reason or another, undertaken ~~at~~ at general expense, to mow a considerable expanse of grass and lawn beyond Hamble's boundaries. The reasons have included aesthetics, recreation, safety (snates, fire) and perhaps most importantly, to establish a pattern of responsibility for and care about the land that might one day be part of the golf course (at which time we can say that we expect reasonable consideration because we've looked after the area all this time). Because

Golf course decisions are imminent (perhaps) it would be silly to drastically modify our pattern now. Moreover, since the new contractor has (I hope) undertaken to mow much the same area as his predecessor (at much greater cost), we certainly wouldn't reduce that area without also reducing our pay-out to him. Still, such a reduction ^{in mowing area} is something ~~we~~ might aim for in the future. Either the government or the golf course management (or nearby residents at their expense) might pick up the job - and the tab - although undoubtedly we might ^{always} expect to mow a few metres beyond our exact boundary. Let it be thought that I am quibbling about trivial things, let me say that in my estimation half of the mowing we pay for occurs outside Urambi's boundary! In our early days when Stephen Hodge did the mowing he kept a record of the time it took and the "internal" areas took about 5 hours out of a total, then, of 12 (if the grass was high) - I suspect the internal areas are less now than they were then (and, of course, the professional mowers have bigger, faster machines).

Leaving aside the question of what area we should be mowing, the major alternative to a contract mowing service is some form of 'do-it-ourselves'. The limit example of everyone doing a small patch near their homes would be likely to end up with very patchy and uneven results - so I think we have to aim at a regular system at least for the spine-path and nearby lawn areas. This could be achieved by paying someone/s (resident or otherwise) to ride a Urambi-owned mower. Problems with this system in the past included availability of the rider (Steve Hodge had academic commitments etc. which sometimes meant he mowed on an irregular basis). The other major problem was mower breakdown & undoubtedly the cause of this was an unsuitably light and underpowered machine plus, at the time, some very rough grass surfaces (mainly off Urambi on the western side). The latter problem is now pretty much cured (and could be further improved with top-dressing) - The machine problem would be solved by the right choice. As an example a Victa 8 H.P. ride-on, electric start, trail

type mower is around \$1800. So we would have \$1800 capital
 outlay, ^(once in say 8 years) negligible running costs, some expectation of maintenance & repair
 costs, and, say, 120 or so hours operation at \$5 to \$8 an hour
 depending on the chosen operator (The machine could also be 'hired' to
 those who want to mow way beyond Uramli land). I suggest this
 would total about \$2800 compared to the mowing component of
 the current contract which is probably about \$4000 (allowing
 an extremely generous amount for spraying — another area we
 could cut drastically). The capital cost is only occasional — so the 1983-4 etc cost is lower.

I therefore suggest a Royal Commission (or an IAC Inquiry)
 into mowing — otherwise I'll have to call in Ombudsman Ralph!

Trailers: I hear that we are to pay \$200 for a 3 or 4 year
 old, rusty, 5x4' trailer when a new 6'x4' is \$260 — doesn't
 seem like very good buying!

Usurping of Community Land: I would have expected that
 most of the Tentorial Claims were worked out in about 1977-78
 but there are still a few examples of creeping boundaries. The ones
 which creep off Uramli land are not for the BCC to worry about (better
 not even to know). The ones which worry me are activities which close
 up what ~~are~~ to me as a person concerned with landscaping — critical spaces
 such as the gaps between groups of houses. The difficulty often is that the
 extension of gardens often is, in a sense, better than the poor grass or the
 chips etc which preceded it. The classic case is House 33 when, combined
 with House 32, the gap between houses is virtually swallowed up by shrubbery.

I believe that it is important to retain some vistas through these spaces — as
 well as not impeding the rights of people (even children!) to move through the
 area — If you agree perhaps people should be reminded not to appropriate
 areas without discussion/permission (The architect intended the gaps to remain mostly open)

Vegetable gardens: A number of people have reminded me that the vegetable gardens
 are not honouring their promises to maintain the part of the common land.

Walking beer: we must give people a fair chance to work off their
 levy at walking beer or by other means. This requires a planned program.

That's probably enough unreadable letters with insoluble problems for now
 regards. Geoff Mestepur