



MINUTE OF THE MAYOR

Dated: 30 July 2018

RE: Vale Sid Londish

North Sydney has lost a visionary and colourful resident. Sidney (Sid) Londish was one of a handful of entrepreneurs who helped to redefine the real estate business in Sydney. From the 1980s he was a North Sydney resident with a substantial portfolio of commercial and residential properties in North Sydney. His developments had a significant impact on North Sydney.

Like Frank Lowy, Londish pioneered modern retailing with a shopping centre at St Ives in 1960 - just three years after the landmark Top Ryde centre introduced car-based shopping to Sydney. Southside Plaza in Rockdale followed in 1963.

Like Harry Triguboff, Londish made a mark in residential apartment development, but specialising in blocks of luxury units rather than Meriton's large-scale mass market developments.

Coincidentally, he shared Triguboff's Chinese origins and his Russian heritage. Londish was born in Tientsin in 1924, to an English-Australian father and a Russian mother. He came to Australia as an infant. The young man he described himself as a toolmaker when, in 1942, he enlisted in the Royal Australian Airforce at the Recruiting Centre in Woolloomooloo where he grew up and his father's engineering business was based. When he was discharged in 1946, Londish was a Leading Aircraftman.

He was quick to see the opportunities that came with unprecedented affluence in the post-war years and property development was more promising than engineering. Having succeeded with shopping centres, Londish looked to redevelop his own neighbourhood of Woolloomooloo.

He bought dozens of run-down terrace houses and proposed to replace them with large blocks of flats, hotels and shops. While there had been little effective challenge to replacement of low rise precincts in the 1950s and 1960s, strategies changed in the 1970s. Union and community-based 'Green Bans' in the Rocks were followed by similar resistance in Woolloomooloo. Londish's scheme for 'the Loo' did not proceed but is often mentioned in histories of Sydney's contentious planning record.

He had more success elsewhere, not least in North Sydney. From 1980, Londish developed Tower Square Village in Miller Street; a low-rise Mediterranean-style shopping plaza replete with themed clock tower influenced apparently by Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. It sat in an odd juxtaposition with the elegant Modernist MLC building next door, once the tallest building in Australia. The unused floor space above the 'Village' was transferred to an office block in Denison Street for \$5 million in 1984. Tower Square was the work of architect Michael Standley with whom Londish would have a longstanding relationship.

As he began designing the continental plaza for Londish, Standley was also putting the finishing touches to 9 Elamang Ave, a medium density block of luxury waterfront apartments with a façade distinguished by columns, balustrades and classical pediments. In 1988, when records for property prices were being broken across the city, leased apartments at No.9 were priced at an extraordinary \$2000 per week. Also, in the late 80s, Londish developed “The Big Bear” complex at Neutral Bay.

Following the success of Elamang Ave and the completion of Tower Square Londish began developing James Milson Square in lower Alfred Street, a series of shops and high rise buildings that towered around the mid-19th century sandstone house Camden Villa – the last remaining colonial dwelling in the area. The heritage building with its Georgian portico may have appealed to Londish’s affection for columns and historical pastiche for it was to have been a focus of the courtyard area.

Further down the road at 70 Alfred Street, Londish and his associates, in particular Michael Standley, won an appeal against North Sydney Council in the Land and Environment Court in 1997 and began developing Grandview Apartments. With its concierge service and gold rococo lobby furniture it epitomised the developer’s definition of style and quality. Londish himself lived there for a time in a four-bedroom apartment sold for \$4.3 million in 2014. Londish had a policy of living in his own developments so confident was he of their style and quality. His daughter, Annette and son-in-law David Bowman still reside in Grandview.

Sid Londish once told a journalist, ‘What I want to leave is a legacy’. The man described as ‘a true pioneer of the industry’ died on 26 June 2018 at 94. His luxury apartments still attract high prices. Tower Square Village was demolished in 2018 to make way for Sydney Metro’s Victoria Cross redevelopment. The loss of Tower Square is felt by many residents and CBD workers who valued it for its human scale and sunny courtyards.

Sid Londish lived in the North Sydney Municipality and was still working in the industry he loved until his death.

I therefore recommend:

- 1. THAT** Council receives and endorses the obituary.

**JILLY GIBSON
MAYOR**