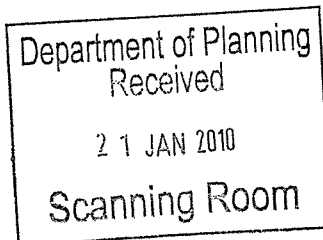




PCU002087

1 Rodd Street
Birrong NSW 2143
16/01/2010

Director, Government Lands
and Social Projects Assessments
GPO BOX 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001



Dear Sir/Madam

RE: The planning process of Potts Hill Project. Regents Park

I am writing to you to request you to consider naming a Reserve in the new Potts Hill Project, WELCH RESERVE in recognition of my mother's family. I have already written to Landcom, the local council and the Minister for Planning and have been informed that two streets have been named after former Water Board employees so I felt this may be a timely letter to you.

In your capacity as Director I am sure you receive many requests but this one is for recognition of a family who devoted themselves selflessly to the advancement of the local community as farmers, and in public life but who at the time sought nothing in return. As a grand daughter I have become aware of their enormous contribution and feel that this is a small way of acknowledging that contribution.

My **great grandparents** emigrated in the **1800's** from the UK, working as miners in outback towns and settled eventually Birrong in 1909 as mixed farmers and orchardists. They lived in a weatherboard cottage on Hill Road at first, then in a stone cottage on Auburn Road. They had five sons, one of whom was my grandfather, **Charles Arthur Welch**. As a young man he served in the first World War in the Middle East and then France at the Somme in the Veterinary Corps.. His brother Morgan Welch served in Gallipoli and then later in Middle East under General Allenby. He was mentioned in dispatches, signed by Winston Churchill, a document we still possess.

On returning from the War my grandfather bought a small farm- 10 acres on Rodd Street and Cooper Road. He settled there with his new wife from Ireland and worked hard to establish himself in the community as both a farmer, businessman and leader of the community that was growing in Birrong and Regents Park.

Over the ensuing years he entered local government, first on Auburn Council, and later on Bankstown Council, fighting hard for the poorly serviced North Ward of Bankstown. Both as alderman and later Mayor he was tireless in his endeavours and was responsible for the decision to bring electricity into the area. In total he was on Council for 15 years. In those days it was an unpaid position, so he had to run the farm and business as well.

His wife, my Grandmother, Georgina, also worked tirelessly to help women and babies as there were no services for them. Her experience as a nurse in London during World War I was often called upon when women were birthing or dying. My mother remembers a constant stream of people who had problems in the difficult times after the War and during the Depression coming to their door. No one was ever turned away from the "big house" in Rodd Street. As a local farmer he often gave food and support to the large poor families of the area who fathers had returned from the War with terrible injuries.

With the advent of the Second World War my grandparents watched both of their sons enlist and go to War. My uncle David Welch, enlisted in the Airforce and served in the Catalinas out of Darwin. His younger brother Arthur Hugh (Bill) served in the Infantry in the Pacific Islands against the Japanese.

This left my grandparents to run the farm and small factory by themselves. The sign C A WELCH & SON was well known in the area as a stock food factory for the small surrounding farms and those as far afield as Camden and Cobbity.

After the War my uncles returned to work on the farm and run the factory. By this time Birrong had grown in population and the need for land was increasing. Slowly the State Government of the day resumed my grandparents' land. At first, for the train line which connected Bankstown to Lidcombe, and finally for the school- Birrong Boys High School. The farm was the first to be resumed and then by degrees the business which was on the last acreage. The final resumption being in the 1960's. This was a devastating blow to the family business now run by both brothers. My grandfather now deceased left my grandmother and her sons dependent on the family business which they now also lost with minimal recompense.

Despite these setbacks that the family had over the years they have remained strong members of the local community and have been known as a family that has put community first.

When the Potts Hill Reservoir was first filled my family who had known Mr Cooper, the farmer whose land was resumed for the Reservoir, and were able to take photos of the construction and filling of the dam with water. In fact the family album has many photographs of Birrong and Potts Hill as it developed, many of them as a result of the photographic skills of Syd Wood, my grandfather's friend and fellow councillor.

As you can understand the family has been living now in Birrong for 100 years continuously on the same land, an achievement in itself. On my many walks around the district I note many parks named after prominent people and I would be pleased if you would consider the naming of a park after the family who have always worked so hard for the district but eschewed public attention for themselves and have sacrificed much. It would be, I feel, a fitting and timely tribute for the family of those past years.

Yours truly,
Susan Stevens.



Please send any correspondence to
5 Bonnie Doon Place BURRANEER 2230.

