



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

Volume X No. 1

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HERITAGE ACT TO PROTECT HUNTER'S HILL

- 1967: Hunter's Hill Council resolved to prepare a Town Plan.
- 1971: Draft Town Plan submitted to State Planning Authority.
- 1973: Planning Scheme certified by Minister.
- 1973-4: Display of Scheme and hearing of objections.
- 1976: Hunter's Hill Council passed the version to be submitted to the State level.
- 1981: No Town Plan, predictions of months of mapping and other paper-work.

ON JULY 3, 1981, MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED HISTORIC BUILDINGS WERE RECOMMENDED FOR PROTECTION UNDER THE HERITAGE ACT.

A media release from the Minister for Planning and Environment, headed **Historic Hunter's Hill Protected** reads: *Some 320 buildings in the harbourside suburb of Hunter's Hill are recommended for protection by an order under the Heritage Act.*

The Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr. Eric Bedford, today announced the order which prevents demolition under Section 130 of the Heritage Act.

This order requires that anyone who proposes to demolish or alter any building scheduled under such an order must first notify the Heritage Council of New South Wales, which will then consider whether further conservation of the building is necessary.

Do you have an old building which contributes to the character of Hunter's Hill? If you have not yet been notified of the special status of your home, check the gazetted list with the local Council, the Heritage Council or the Hunter's Hill Trust.

"It is important that the unique character of Hunter's Hill be conserved", Mr. Bedford said.

"Hunter's Hill is an historically significant area, both for its early development as a suburb of Sydney, and for its retention of large numbers of buildings and landscape features dating from its earliest years."

The historic peninsula settlement was developed as a suburb from the 1840's, initially by the French immigrant brothers, Didier and Jules Joubert.

It is from this period of development, up to the early twentieth century, that most of the suburb's historic buildings date. However, some properties still survive from the earlier period.

The heritage controls incorporated in the Hunter's Hill Planning Scheme will also be strengthened within the context of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979, under which the Scheme will be a deemed local environmental plan.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL'S ROLE

Already several cases have been referred to the Heritage Council concerning listed buildings in Hunter's Hill. The Heritage Council is more fortunate than Hunter's Hill Council in having the legal power to support its judgment in heritage matters. There have been cases where Hunter's Hill Council has wished to preserve the historic or landscape character of a feature, and has not been able to because the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme offered no protection. Now, protection exists for that interim period until adequate and responsible planning is in force in Hunter's Hill.

Hunter's Hill Council will assume this protective role when it completes a Local Environment Plan which adequately protects the heritage elements. This Local Environment Plan will operate in conjunction with the Town Plan, which will be a standardised document rather than one designed for an area such as this (*see The President's Report, p.3*).

The Heritage Council is donating \$10,000 (half the cost) towards the preparation of a Heritage Study to identify the significant elements of Hunter's Hill so that planning provisions may be appropriate.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

All residents, and the many people who come to view Hunter's Hill by walking or boating, benefit from the atmosphere generated by the hundreds of old buildings set in traditional surroundings. The Trust hopes that people who wish to alter listed buildings will be patient about the additional step in consideration of their plans. This additional step will, of course, be returned to the local level as soon as Hunter's Hill Council completes its planning measures.

The Hunter's Hill Historical Society and the Hunter's Hill Trust produced a map of the stone walls in the area. These walls and the Federation houses which are under consideration for inclusion in the Trust's next book, should be included as heritage features.

The Hunter's Hill Trust has been greatly disturbed by the attrition of old buildings and their surroundings which has been occurring during the years of waiting for the Town Plan. We thankfully congratulate the Minister and the Heritage Council for the real protection now enjoyed by Hunter's Hill.

CHALLENGE TO HUNTER'S HILL

The best argument against amalgamation is a Local Environment Plan which will protect the heritage features of Hunter's Hill. This will demonstrate the ability and responsibility of local aldermen in keeping Hunter's Hill an identity for the future. Would we rather be in Haberfield's position, fighting for a local preservation plan within a large, more development-oriented council?

While the Trust is relieved to see real protection for what we estimate to be approximately three hundred and fifty buildings, we feel the local Council must recognise that the case for Hunter's Hill will be won or lost as an area, as a village. It is the Trust's hope that Council will produce a Local Environment Plan which will protect groupings of buildings, streetscapes and waterscapes -- historic districts, as they were called in 1969.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN THE HERITAGE ACT (from a Technical Bulletin of the Dept. of Environment and Planning)

The Act is a very positive piece of legislation in that it clearly establishes several concepts essential to the preservation of items of heritage value.

Protection of items of heritage value is ensured through provisions to control demolition (Sections 130, 136), invoke repair orders (s.118), protect archaeological relics (s. 139), and if no other method is appropriate, to acquire items (ss.112, 114).

Assistance for the preservation of items of heritage value is encouraged through the possibility of direct loans and/or grants (ss. 105, 106), and by providing rating and taxation relief based on new heritage valuations (ss. 123-128).

Non-compliance with any directives of the Minister or Heritage Council with the intention of preserving items of heritage value can be met with penalties including jail sentences to 6 months, fines up to \$10,000 and loss of development rights for 10 years (ss. 158-160). Demolition by wilful neglect can similarly be met with repair orders and, if these are not complied with, acquisition (at substantially reduced values) is possible (ss. 118-121).

The Hunter's Hill Trust believes that the Heritage Act reflects a widespread change in community opinion, and that its use in Hunter's Hill marks the first legal protection afforded our historic character. It is a landmark in the history of Hunter's Hill.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held on May 27th; it was well-attended, and there was a lively discussion of what action the Trust should take in the coming year. The presence of the Mayor and her suggestions were enthusiastically received. Dr. Joan Kerr gave a delightful talk, illustrated, on the art produced by colonial lady painters and the insight we gain into their lives and surroundings.

Excerpts from The President's Report:

"It is my pleasure to present a report from the Committee, but it is less than a pleasure to state that our prime need is still for a Town Plan. Because the old one was not completed before new legislation governing town plans came into effect, our non-existent Town Plan is being revised. It would be hard to detail how much we have lost. "Reliable sources" have suggested that town plans are now very general documents and that ours will resemble that of Ryde, or indeed any other area. Special provisions for Hunter's Hill's architectural and landscape values have been, we believe, eliminated over the years. Now, under the new legislation, it will be necessary to go through the process of developing a town plan **again** to try for a "Local environment plan" to put back in what has been taken out. Clearly, Hunter's Hill can be lost by delay in the process, to developers of all sorts.

With all of this in mind, the Hunter's Hill Trust, with the advice of our consultant town planner and the National Trust, wrote to the Heritage Council requesting protection for Hunter's Hill until the Town Plan is gazetted, also asking them to evaluate the Town Plan's provisions to see whether they would continue the protection needed ... (see pp. 1-2).

In February, the National Trust asked if I would be their representative on the Townscape Advisory Committee. In the absence of Hunter's Hill Council's recognition of the Hunter's Hill Trust's role, this is an excellent and greatly appreciated opportunity to be involved at a constructive stage in planning.

..... Finally, our thanks are due to retiring Committee members Alan Bradfield, past president and always ambassador for the Trust, and Neil Comerford, minutes secretary, constant help and sound adviser. Our thanks go to those people who lent their houses for this year's House Inspection: the Storeys, Pam Thurlow, the van der Vegts, the Wadlands, the Whitnalls. Douglass Baglin has given invaluable help with photography

Longstanding Trust members were dismayed that their efforts to obtain a special Town Plan designed for the needs of Hunter's Hill will probably not see light of day when the Town Plan appears. A resolution was passed unanimously that the new Committee consider calling a public meeting to inform the wider audience of Hunter's Hill of the suspected inadequacies in the Town Plan. Discussion centred around estimates of the probable delay in the gazetting of the Town Plan; the Trust has briefed a consultant for fifteen months in order to be ready with an informed analysis of the Plan's provisions as soon as it is made public. A suggestion was made that the Trust investigate the secrecy aspects of the planning process.

The Mayor, Ald. Swain, stressed that Trust members must pressure their aldermen if they wish to have a local environment plan which will keep the best of Hunter's Hill.

PUBLIC MEETING

The Trust Committee is planning to hold a public meeting. This meeting will be held shortly after the gazetting of the Town Plan, but no later than October. If necessary, the meeting will become a protest at the delay of the Town Plan.

The effect of the Town Plan's provisions, and suggested additional provisions which the Trust recommends for inclusion in a Local Environment Plan, will be presented and discussed.



ACTIVITIES

CREDITS

The house at 26 Ferry Street has been restored to an earlier appearance, its verandah and general lines reinstated; the effect is excellent and the change has occasioned much praise.

Two houses in Gladesville Road have added new palisade iron fences, solving the problem of safety enclosure while remaining in design sympathy with the houses and allowing the houses to be admired by others.

THE NEW TRUST COMMITTEE

The following Committee members were declared elected at the A.G.M., and office-bearers were elected at the first meeting of the Committee.

President	Mrs. Alice Oppen	89-5175
Vice-President	Dr. Malcolm Lane-Brown	816-2553
Secretary	Dr. David Bryant	89-4139
Treasurer	Mrs. Jo Rees	816-2746
Membership Secretary	Mrs. Anne McNally	89-2035
Minutes Secretary	Mr. Michael Lehany	816-1526
	Ms. Caroline Burke	816-1526
	Mr. Tony Simmons	896-1912
	Mrs. Annette Tait	89-0708

The Committee hopes that Trust members will telephone with reports of threatened demolition, offers of help, general information.

SYDNEY HARBOUR AND FORESHORES COMMITTEE

The Annual General Meeting will be held on 12th August, at 7.30 p.m. in the Activities Room, Australian Museum (*entrance from William Street*).

A member of the Association of Environmental Lawyers will speak on some aspects of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Anyone interested in environmental legislation is cordially invited.

Enquiries: 27-4714, 981-2349.

REVIEWS

"Keeping Hunter's Hill Alive" is a beautifully illustrated description of the significant features of historic architecture of Hunter's Hill.

Houses can be renovated so that the additions do not mar or overshadow period architecture; gables, bargeboards, rooms, garages and pools have been added successfully to houses in Hunter's Hill. Douglass Baglin's photos and Beverley Sherry's text are convincing evidence that preservation does not a museum make.

An extensive appendix lists sources of further, specialised information. Published by the Hunter's Hill Trust, 1981. Available at the Hunter's Hill Bookshop — \$2.50.

"A Glimpse of Hunter's Hill, A Short Walk through History" is the first of a series of walks. This pamphlet guides walkers around the Town Hall area, with its diversity of historic buildings.

A clear map, with reference to descriptions of thirty-four key buildings, takes walkers back in history along tree-shaded streets, lanes and stone steps. A history of Hunter's Hill is included. Published by the Hunter's Hill Trust, 1981. Available at the Hunters Hill Bookshop — \$1.00.

PUBLICATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The Publication Sub-Committee consists of Marsha Martin, Diana Drake, Beverley Sherry, Sybil Blanton, Helen Hogan, Roslyn Maguire, Jenny Lockyer, Alice Oppen, Tony Coote, Douglass Baglin, Tom Farrell, and others.

Offers of information and/or documents (*preferably photocopies*), maps, early architectural drawings and plans are being gratefully received. Please contact any of these people or write to the Trust, P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill.

PAST ACTIVITIES

A House Inspection was held on April 5th, and the Trust's very grateful thanks go to the home owners, the Storeys, Pam Thurlow, the van der Vegts, the Wadlands, the Whitnalls, as well as to organiser-extraordinaire Mary Hinde and the many helpers.

Walks were conducted on the Saturday and Sunday of Heritage Week in March. Hundreds of people came to Hunter's Hill and greatly appreciated the local atmosphere and architecture.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name Telephone

Address Postcode

Willing to help with

Type of Membership:	1981-82
Single	\$ 5.00
Family	\$ 10.00
Pensioner	\$ 1.00
Student	\$ 1.00
Life Member	\$ 75.00

*The Hunter's Hill Trust,
Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110.*

Due March 1