



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

Volume XIV No. 2

SEPTEMBER, 1985

ISSN 0301-0111

MOBIL MOVE

Mobil's wise decision to leave its Hunter's Hill home of more than 80 years will greatly benefit the area, as Pulpit Point can be revitalised in keeping with a Harbour suburb and will contribute to the scenic Parramatta River foreshores once again.

The removal of Mobil's tank storage facilities to another site will also introduce a welcome quietness to Church, Alexandra and Ferry Streets and part of Woolwich Road.

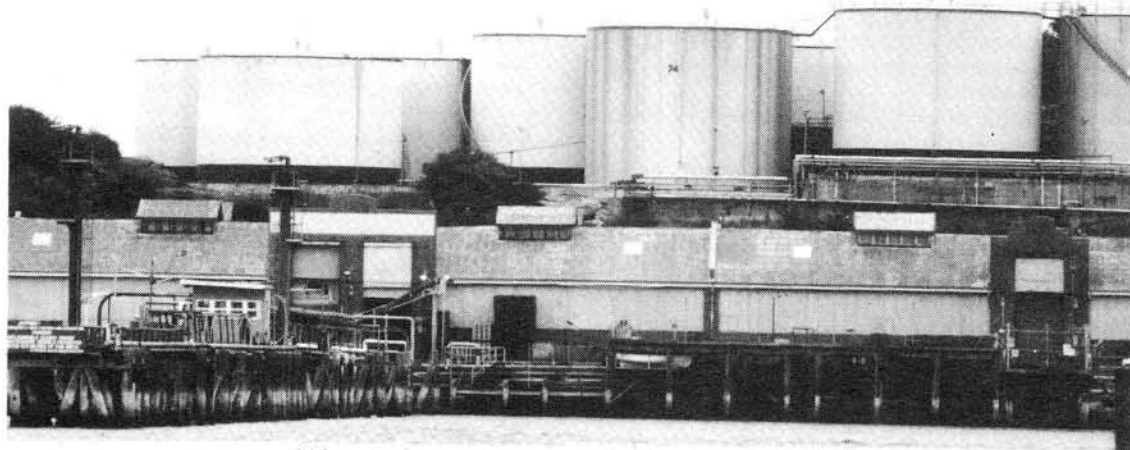
Ideally the Point would become public open space, an ideal for foreshore areas often expressed by the Premier, Mr. Neville Wran.

Naturally, Mobil's announced intention to redevelop Pulpit Point has created an excited community reaction, but there has already been some opposition to the publicised proposal to consider 'high tech' offices on part of the site.

The Trust hopes that Mobil's feasibility studies will respect existing residential standards and guidelines set out in a number of documents, including the National Trust's comprehensive **Parameters of the River**, the Department of Environment and Planning's draft **Regional Plan of Parramatta River**, and the Hunter's Hill Trust's **Recreating Parramatta River** which emphasises, among many other recommendations, the importance of a good proportion of open space and tree cover around all foreshore developments.

It is essential that all care be taken and careful consideration given to the environmental implications with regard to the National Trust's Landscape Conservation classification of Parramatta River and its Urban Conservation Area classification for Hunter's Hill.

The Hunter's Hill Trust would like to assure Mobil of its interest and support at this early stage of planning.



What next? — Photo courtesy John Fairfax & Sons Ltd.

A PLEA FOR CONTROLLED PLANNING

Submission to the Minister for Planning and Environment concerning amendments to the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (1979)

Following invitations to comment on proposed amendments to the above Act, the Hunter's Hill Trust prepared this submission to the Minister in July, 1985 stating its belief "that the protection of historic areas is a vital function of the Department of Environment and Planning, and the proposed removal of a 'prohibited development' category giving Councils power to consent, on a merit basis, for development applications threatens the natural and built environment".

[Readers Note: the removal of the prohibited development category means that Councils may ignore their L.E.P. (Town Plan) zonings, and in theory approve for example a supermarket being built in a residential area.]

We seek a State Environmental Planning Policy defining

Heritage Conservation Zones to safeguard against applications for zoning changes that may harm areas of special heritage significance.

The Hunter's Hill Trust acknowledges that the L.E.P. No. 1 for Hunter's Hill may now require updating, due to its incredibly long 'gestation period'. However, there is now a very real threat of 'de-facto' town planning at the behest of developers and speculators, which is most likely to be contrary to the public interest in the conservation of historic environments.

The Trust also believes that an L.E.P. or Town Plan is equivalent to a citizens' local 'constitution', whereby an ordered certainty of environmental quality has been the understood purpose of the town planning process to date.

(see over)

SPOT ZONING CHANGES IN LOCAL PLANNING

In keeping with the Hunter's Hill Trust's policy of publicising matters of vital local conservation interest, a public meeting was called to discuss proposed amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Briefly, these amendments (tabled for discussion in the N.S.W. Parliament and soon to be resolved), would allow spot-zoning changes to occur that would have previously been disallowed under existing Local Environment Plans (L.E.P.'s, that is Town Plans).

The whole of the Municipality was 'letterboxed', with sufficient interest being generated by the subject to ensure that the meeting was well attended.

The meeting was supported by the Hunter's Hill Trust, Save Hunter's Hill Committee, Huntley's Point Progress Association, Woolpac Committee, Henley Club, Central Ward Progress Association and Bonnefin Road Action Group.

Chairperson, Dr. Chris Coulman, invited guest speakers to present their case, the 'specialists' who spoke being: Mr. Merv Shearman and Mr. Roger Elliott from the Department of Environment and Planning; Mr. Reece MacDougall, a Senior Research Officer of Landscape Conservation at the National Trust; Dr. Stephen Harris, a Senior Lecturer in Town Planning at University of New South Wales and Chairman of Urban Conservation Committee of the National Trust; and Ms. Jean Lennane, a member of Residents for Environmental Protest Committee.

Briefly, key points as presented were:

Mr. Merv Shearman, Department of Environment and Planning -

1. Hunter's Hill has an L.E.P. showing zoning - permissible and prohibited.
2. No plan is a definite certainty.
3. Ex procedure - local Council receives proposed zoning amendments to L.E.P. from interested parties, property owners, developers etc.
 - (a) then Development Application is submitted for public exhibition;
 - (b) decision by Council to hold a public enquiry;
 - (c) Commissioner for Enquiry recommends to the Minister;
 - (d) if the recommendation is favourable to zoning change, Council processes the development application and a new zoning is approved;
 - (e) there is no right of appeal by residents or interested party.
4. Proposed amendments to the Act:
 - (a) to allow for more public participation;
 - (b) aim to reduce the Department of Environment and Planning's involvement in 'minor' matters of planning and speed up acceptable development.
 - (c) also to consider rezoning and approval for development in same process.
 - (d) 3 types of development excluded from amendments: State Environmental Planning Policies, zonings related to State Regional Plans and 'Designated Developments', for example Mobil Oil Depot.
5. The new procedure -
 - (a) application to change zoning received has to be considered by whole Council;
 - (b) if Council rejects proposal, there is no right of appeal for applicant;
 - (c) if Council considers proposal acceptable, written notice must be given to all affected parties;
 - (d) notice also required to be advertised in local newspaper and detailed notice affixed to property affected;
 - (e) appeals may be presented in 3 ways, either written, oral submission before a full Council or by public enquiry to report and recommend;
 - (f) Council obliged to conduct an enquiry upon request;
 - (g) Council must amend L.E.P. if recommended by enquiry (has discretion under present Act);
 - (h) if Council accepts change to zoning, right of appeal to any affected party, including third party.

Mr. Reece MacDougall of the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.)

- suggested the Department's dilemma is to speed up what is presently a long process;
- the proposed amendments were open to abuse so that the environment is likely to suffer;
- the National Trust made a detailed submission to the Minister for Planning and Environment;
- an unfair burden will be placed on local interest groups; and
- because of proposed direct zoning access to Council local communities will have to be much more involved in monitoring local Council matters.

Ms. Lennane of the Committee of Residents for Environmental Protest

- thought that rights of information and notification to residents of proposed zoning change is good;
- that the new proposal gives more power to Councils, so if a Council is not good ... !
- the potential for corruption could be enormous at local level, for example, financial advantages to applicants where there is to be a change in zoning from single dwelling residential to medium density.
- no system proposed to fund an independent Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.)

Dr. Stephen Harris, Senior Lecturer in Town Planning at University of New South Wales

- some sympathy with Government in trying to make sense of planning mess and simplify existing process;
- potentially good in allowing for low-key new use of old residential buildings;
- few problems if Council initially refuses application for rezoning, because of proposed 'no right of appeal' but problem would arise if environmentally unsympathetic Council agrees to proceed with bad applications;
- in theory there was greater opportunity for appeals, but could be expensive process for local interest groups, etc.
- notification of proposal should be in local and major State newspapers.

After a general discussion the main points expressed by concerned residents were

- the increase of Ministerial power in determining local planning matters;
- the harm in by-passing an L.E.P. that has taken nearly fifteen years to come to fruition in Hunter's Hill;
- the potential for corruption at a local level;
- the likelihood of exhausting already 'pressed' local interest groups and involving them in expensive legal procedures;
- the damage liable to special areas, such as the historic suburb of Hunter's Hill.

Reece MacDougall, the National Trust representative, suggested the following possibilities to aid the conservation of unique character of Hunter's Hill Municipality:

1. to make concerns known to the Minister for Planning and Environment;
2. if the proposed amendments are adopted in chosen form the local community **must have** a close liaison with local Council;
3. Lobby for planning controls so that there is either a State Environmental Planning Policy specifically for Hunter's Hill or special zones for protection are introduced.
4. Seek exemption for historic and landscape areas from proposed new amendments.

Finally, the meeting passed the following resolution:

That the Minister be requested to meet a deputation comprising representatives of the local resident groups present at the Meeting, and of the Council of Hunter's Hill, so that the Minister might be fully conversant with the heritage significance of the area and implement exclusions from the proposed amendments.

THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT, MR. BOB CARR HAS AGREED TO MEET LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Michael Lehany, at the end of his second year as President, gave the Trust's Annual Report to members at the Hunter's Hill Town Hall on 29th May, 1985. He summed up the major events and achievements of the Trust, giving special mention to **The Heritage Study's** acceptance by Council, which should result in a more active role in conservation and a careful consideration of the Study's recommendations.

A number of **submissions**, which the Trust has prepared, are aimed at influencing Governmental care of the Hunter's Hill environment *NOTE: list on page 4.*)

An impressive **Kelly's Bush Management Plan**, which has finally been drafted, is soon to be on public view and will be of special interest to members involved in the 'Battle.'

The Heritage Fair, a first for the Activities Committee, was a great success when held in April and raised \$6,000, thanks to the many helpers. A cheque for \$3,000 was then presented to the Chairman of the Vienna Cottage Appeal Committee, Mr. Philip Jenkyn.

~~~~~

A number of matters were mentioned which are of grave concern to the Trust. They were given special emphasis and close attention should be given by members since they have the potential to undermine existing heritage constraints:

1. **Changes** to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to allow spot re-zoning and a speedier approval of development applications, will reduce the effectiveness of the Town Plan. (*See page 1.*)
2. **State Planning Policy No. 5** gives blanket zoning approval for aged persons' housing, so that no controls on the number approved, and no exemption for conservation areas will apply. The policy will attract speculative,

poor quality housing and pose a threat similar to those which have occurred in Hunter's Hill in the past. Instead of an acceptable and healthy mixture of ages in a community, what could eventuate with Government approval are "aged persons' ghettos".

The Trust would not object to the concept of housing for the aged, but the new absence of controls could mean open slather for the sort of bad private developments that have, in the past, made much of the older, larger suburbs in many parts of Sydney into 'convalescent home ghettos'.

One poorly planned development has already gained Council approval for an aged-persons hostel in Gladesville Road, which has sixty rooms for residents and only four parking spaces.

3. **Medium Density Housing** policies continue to be implemented without regard to the special nature of municipalities.

Some **large-scale individual residences**, often resembling motels, are degrading the environmental character of Hunter's Hill, especially around the foreshore, obscuring natural features. Instead, careful regulations should be imposed in an Urban Conservation Area like Hunter's Hill.

4. **Bushland Protection:** Hunter's Hill is, or was, unique in having large areas of indigenous waterfront reserves, many neglected by residents and Council. If correct bushland maintenance procedures are carried out, it is most important to remember that indigenous bushland is eventually self-maintaining.

~~~~~

Finally, thanks were given to retiring members, Beverley Sherry and Sheila Andrew, and a new Committee was elected.

At the first Committee meeting, elections were held and positions for the coming year are:

President:	Mrs. Roslyn Maguire	816 4614
Vice-Presidents:	Mr. Sam Sheffer	817 1712
	Mrs. Anne McNally	817 2035
Secretary:	Mr. Michael Lehany	816 1526
Membership Secretary:	Mrs. Alysoun Ryves	816 1741
Minute Secretary:	Mrs. Jenny Lockyer	816 4922
Treasurer:	Mrs. Doreen Carter	817 3410
	Dr. Malcolm Lane-Brown	816 2553
	Dr. David Bryant	817 4139
Co-opted:	Mr. Hudson Shaw	817 2311
	Mr. Tony Simmons	816 4912

ACTIVITIES

HERITAGE DAY & HOUSE INSPECTION

Sunday, 10 November, 1985

11.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

This year our house inspection is to be held while Hunter's Hill is at its Jacaranda best and we have, for the first time, combined with the Vienna Cottage Appeal Committee and will share the profits of the day.

St. Claire in Wybalena Road, **Coorabel** and **Annabel Lea** in Joubert Street and **All Saints Rectory** in Ambrose Street will all be open for inspection between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Before the houses open for inspection a Brunch will be available at the Town Hall, where an Exhibition of Paintings will also be on view, courtesy of Priory Court Gallery. Vienna Cottage, the Historical Society's Museum at the Town Hall and All Saints' Church with organ recitals will all be open before 2 o'clock, and there may be enough time to enjoy a walk.

For tickets, please forward the enclosed application form with cheque made payable to the National Trust Vienna Appeal and a self-addressed envelope to:

Mrs. P. Chippindall,
32 Woolwich Road,
Hunter's Hill, 2110.

There are 3 ticket options available:

1. All inclusive Brunch, inspection of all houses, Museum and Church \$15.00
2. Brunch and Art Exhibition \$10.00
3. House Inspection only \$ 8.00

For further enquiries:

Telephone Anne McNally - 817 2035

Afternoon Tea available at All Saints' Church Hall from 3 p.m.

★ ★ ★



Christmas Cocktails

*Come to the Trust's
Christmas Party*

SUNDAY, 1 DECEMBER
6.30 - 8.00 p.m.

*at the Woolwich Pier Hotel
Gale Street, Woolwich
\$10.00 each*

Enquiries: Jenny Lockyer (816-4922)

SUBMISSIONS:

The Trust has prepared a number of submissions during the last 12 months in its attempt to preserve the special environment of Hunter's Hill and members are welcome to borrow a copy of the following:

Recreating Parramatta River (August, 1984) was presented to the Department of Environment and Planning. It is concerned with open space and recreational facilities on Parramatta River and was sought by the Department to assist with a Draft Regional Plan.

A Study of Clarke's Point Woolwich was prepared in February 1985 to assist in preservation of open space area known as the 'Horse Paddock'; it has been distributed to various Government Departments and Ministers.

A Plea for Controlled Planning, (July, 1985), was prepared for the Department of Environment and Planning - see p.1.

Heritage Act Review was completed in August 1985 in response to an advertised request for submissions from the Commonwealth Government Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment.

The Committee thanks Diana Drake, Alice Oppen, Greg Larkin and Helen Sheffer for their valuable assistance in the preparation of these submissions.

Copies available from Doreen Carter - 817-3410.

★ ★ ★

PUBLICATIONS:

Kevin Fahy's Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture is a superbly detailed reference book giving an unusual and fascinating new dimension to Australian history through a study of furniture and its makers. Co-authored by Christina and Andrew Simpson and published by David Ell Press - Retail Price \$159.00. Telephone 319 1155 to order.

Hunter's Hill Trust's **Heritage of Hunter's Hill** has a new retail price of \$17.50, and can be ordered by telephoning 817-3410.

★ ★ ★

MEMBERSHIP

Following a letter-box drop announcing the Public Meeting in August for a Community Discussion about "Spot Zoning changes in local planning" together with the leaflet "Is Hunter's Hill Worth Preserving??", several life members and other members joined the Trust. If you are interested in becoming a member, or if you have not yet paid your fees for the current year, please complete the form and return it to Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110.

✂

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name Phone

Address Postcode

Type of Membership:

Single \$ 5.00
Family \$10.00
Pensioner \$ 1.00

1985-86

Student \$ 1.00
Life Member \$100.00

Due 1.3.85

