



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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THE CONSERVATION OF LOCAL GARDENS

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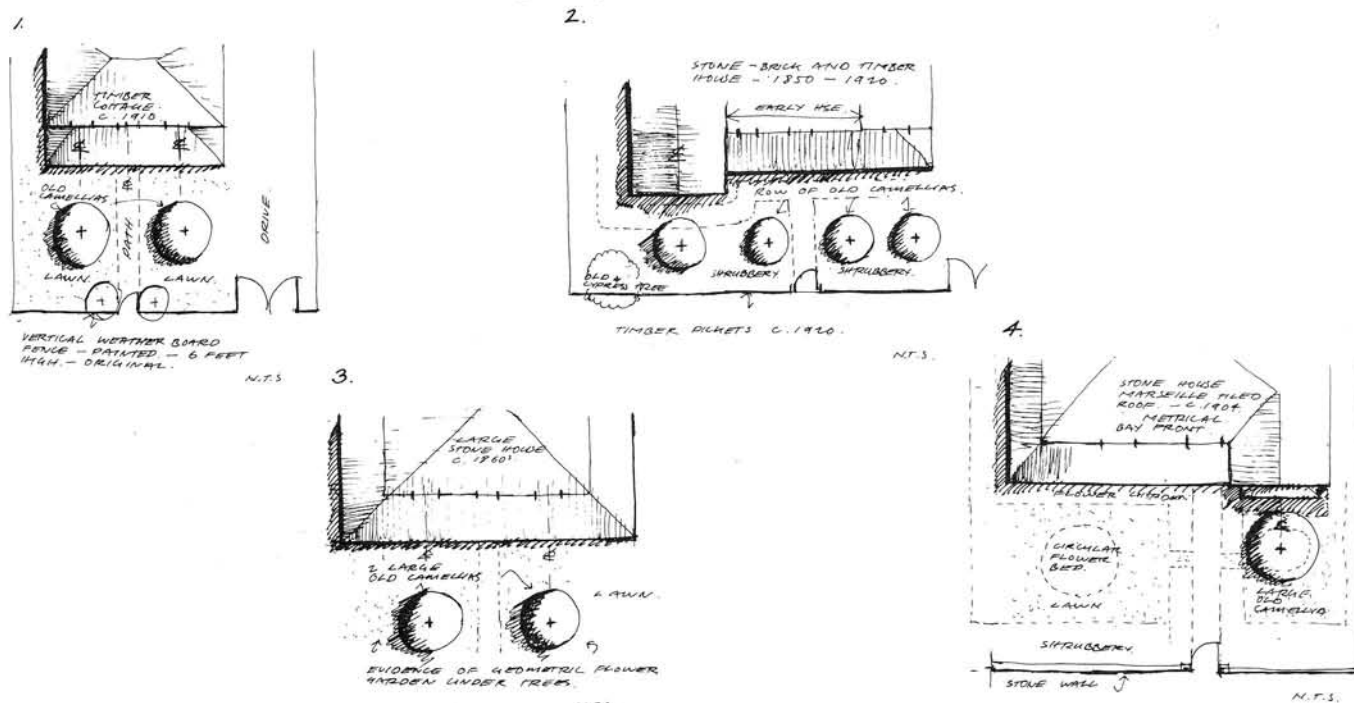
Part of the unarguable historic attractions of the Municipality of Hunter's Hill, are the garden settings of many of the buildings currently protected under the clause 19 zonings of the Hunter's Hill Local Environment Plan. However, apart from the obvious 'historic' nature of the main fabric of the property e.g. 'stone house' and 'stone wall', the more ephemeral but equally historic garden setting has received no protection. Although an owner is required by local planning law to seek planning permission for any building alterations, demolitions etc. to an historic property, there is currently nothing to stop the original garden layout from being bulldozed, provided 'trees' are protected.

In the flush of new ownership, and eager to stamp a new personality upon a garden, the broken old path leading straight to the front door is often swept away, the

ancient and 'boring' shrubs cut down and replaced by an assortment of modern shrubs.

Unfortunately much of this has happened in the municipality and it is opportune with the fashionable revival in the use of old plant species (e.g. old fashioned roses) to consider the function and character of some typical garden layouts—some of which still survive locally.

Basic to all old gardens was a sturdy front fence, and right to the end of the 19th century a symmetrical front garden was the 'norm' for the small cottage or more substantial stone or brick villa. As an example of a typical form of old garden, some plans of 'Camellia' gardens are illustrated—all survive (in whole or in part) within the municipality.



Gardens 1 and 3 are the most typical, where a single path leads to the front door (or centre of the 'garden front') and the position of the Camellia trees corresponds to the centre line of the windows (in 1) and the french doors (in 3). Although in neither does other planting survive, it is likely that geometric flower gardens, cut into lawn, were centred about the Camellias.

In garden 2, the original cottage path has been planted with a pair of Camellias and with later additions to the house other Camellias followed, one centred on the new bay addition.

In garden 4, a large Camellia emphasises the assymetrical bay window of the house (c.1904). By this date the central path often had a wriggle of 'S' curve that selfconsciously wandered to the front door.

These are only some examples of a particular form of garden, but they serve to demonstrate how the unsympathetic removal of any of these 'bushes' can diminish the historic setting to the house and the townscape in general.

(End of Part 1)

MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR KELLY'S BUSH

A BUSHLAND POLICY

Kelly's Bush is a highly significant, predominantly bushland site, one of the few remaining on the lower reaches of the Parramatta River. It was one of the major conservation battles of the 1970's and, in particular, was the first Green Ban.

Following a pre-election promise, the Wran Government purchased the 7.7 hectare reserve in 1983 and established the Kelly's Bush Management Committee to oversee the preparation of a draft landscape and management plan. This Committee is comprised of community representatives and nominees of the Hunter's Hill Municipal Council and the Department of Environment and Planning.

Most of the site is covered in Sydney Sandstone vegetation, the remainder being areas used by the Sydney Smelting Company. The latter comprised the waterfront smelting works, the slag dump above and, further back, the manager's house at the end of Alfred Street.

The aims and objectives adopted by the Management Committee, amongst other principles, maximise the regenerative potential of the indigenous vegetation. Where weeds have made inroads from the adjoining smelting work sites, from Weil Park and from rubbish dumped off Nelson Parade and Alfred Street, these areas will be gradually revegetated to the indigenous species.

In "healthier" areas where the stock of native species has sufficient regenerative potential the Bradley Method of bush rehabilitation will be used. This is the only known method of rehabilitating Sydney bushland that does not involve re-planting of species. Ashton Park (now part of Sydney Harbour National Park), below Taronga Zoo, was rehabilitated using this method pioneered by the Bradley sisters and a dedicated band of friends and followers.

The National Trust Bushland Regeneration Team has worked with many Municipal Councils in the use of this method. This team is currently rehabilitating the bushland slopes behind Vacluse House for the Historic Houses Trust, and at this early stage the results are quite spectacular.

The major recommendations made by the consultants (Travis Partners Pty. Ltd.) are listed below:

- Care, control and management should be vested in a body that includes both local representatives and organisations with expertise in bushland management. Kelly's Bush in the long term could form part of a regional open space network along the Parramatta River over which there should be co-ordinated management and administration.
- Areas of radioactive waste in the bush and the former smelting works site should be filled to make the site safe in accordance with accepted safety levels.
- The existing native bushland of Kelly's Bush be rehabilitated using the Bradley Method. The badly degraded areas of the site be landscaped to complement the existing bushland.

- Paths be rationalised and pedestrian access limited to three entry points.
- Lot 3, D.P. 549711, being the middle section of Kelly's Bush, be rezoned from residential to Open Space.
- To enable direct pedestrian access to Kelly's Bush from Margaret Street, a right-of-way be investigated.
- A landscaped pedestrian walk along the foreshore from Margaret Street to Clarke's Point be sought from the Department of Defence to provide public access from Clarke's Point to Kelly's Bush.
- Municipal maintenance services, litter collection and mowing of grass be provided and maintained.
- Local residents be made aware of the impact on native fauna by domestic animals. Bikes and horses be excluded from the bushland.
- A detailed fauna survey be undertaken and a bird nesting box scheme established.
- Aboriginal sites be protected.
- The bushland policies for Kelly's Bush be extended into the bushland area of Weil Park.

The Master Plan for Kelly's Bush, as recommended by the consultants, is reproduced opposite and it represents a concept which may be achievable in the long term. Project works are subject to staging constraints and priority may only be possible for essential works in the short term.

The Hunter's Hill Trust wholeheartedly supports the general recommendations contained in the draft management report and hopes that the State Government maintains the dedication it has demonstrated (by the initial purchase of the site as public open space) in ensuring that sufficient funds are made available to conserve Kelly's Bush.

The next major step for the State Government is to recognise that the Sydney Harbour National Park should include all major areas of foreshore bushland (including Kelly's Bush) and that the only long term method of ensuring their conservation and avoiding the vagaries of local politics is for these sites to be managed by a State body, either the National Parks Service or another body specifically set up to manage the smaller scale areas of Sydney bushland that are the heritage of all Sydneysiders.

The Hunter's Hill Trust would actively oppose the handing over of Kelly's Bush for the local council to manage. The Trust over many years has sought to encourage a bushland management policy for the Municipality, but, despite attendance at conservation seminars by relevant Council staff, it would appear that a conservation policy on bushland is yet to emerge.

FORESHORES

The disappearance of open space in Hunter's Hill over the last 15-20 years has been most obvious around foreshore areas where real estate demand is heaviest. Land subdivisions at Lukes Bay and Alexandra Bay have crowded those foreshores and severely reduced the sense of space that existed amongst properties of earlier subdivisions.

Alarmed at the prospect of more buildings on the foreshore of Alexandra Bay, this time in front of historic 'Milthorpe' (12 Crescent Street), the Trust expressed strong opposition to Council, the National Trust and the Heritage Council, requesting Council's refusal of the owner's application for subdivision to give "special consideration towards the 'Milthorpe' property as part of its protection of the historical environment and foreshore of Hunter's Hill. 'Milthorpe' could then be assured of retaining its original estate setting and space, making it a unique heritage item, instead of becoming lost, like a great many other similar historic houses, in amongst a confusion of modern buildings." (Extract of Trust's letter dated 5th February, 1985).

Lane Cove River is classified by the National Trust as a Conservation Area, recommending the 'maintenance of strict controls by appropriate authorities to protect the scenic, cultural and conservation values of these foreshores'. The Heritage Council expressed their grave concern at the loss of so much space around historic buildings in Hunter's Hill, and advised against the 'Milthorpe' subdivision.

Council's Environment and Heritage Committee (previously the Townscape Advisory Committee), recommended Council reject the application to subdivide and at the February 10th Council meeting the application for subdivision of foreshore land of 'Milthorpe' was unanimously refused.

Thorn Street Reserve

A small parcel of land owned by the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board has been offered to Council for public use as a 10 year renewable lease. The land is foreshore bushland and residents of Barons Crescent and Thorn Street are 'caretaking' the land (employing the Bradley method) while anxiously awaiting Council's acceptance of the Board's offer - an insurance problem seems to be delaying the acceptance.

The Trust commends the residents' action in the belief that any addition to urban (especially foreshore) bushland will enhance the environment and improve the amenity of the Lane Cove River and Boronia Park Area.

VISIT TO HUNTER'S HILL BY MR. BOB CARR

Following submissions made by the Trust to the Department of Environment and Planning concerning amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the Trust invited Mr. Carr, Minister for Planning and Environment, to visit Hunter's Hill.

After being driven on a tour of Hunter's Hill, Mr. Carr spoke with representatives of the Council, the Trust, Woolpac, and other local bodies.

In November, Mr. Carr announced that the Government was dropping the "spot zoning" proposals from the amendments because of strong resistance by environmental and resident groups. According to a report in the **Sydney Morning Herald** the Department had received more than 200 letters of objections from residents and 35 submissions from conservation and resident action groups.

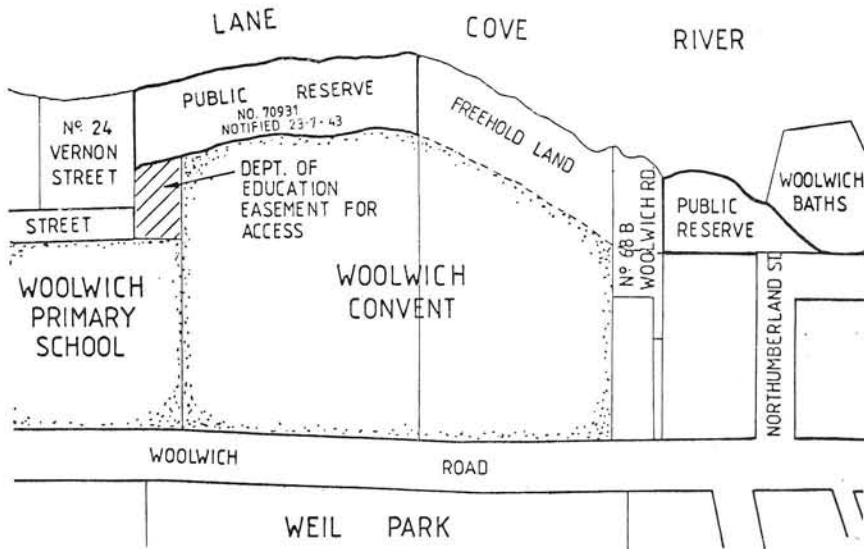
Mr. Carr has also reported that the draft **Regional Environmental Plan for the Parramatta River** is soon to be released. The Report has taken 18 months to prepare and covers green space foreshores and recreational uses of the river.

Since 1976 the State Government has acquired some 13 hectares of land for open space and recreational purposes at a cost of more than \$11 million. In addition **The Weekly Times** has reported that through the Sydney Greenspace, Commonwealth Employment Program and the Natural Areas Enhancement Scheme, \$1.8 million has been spent on provision of public facilities on foreshore land along the River and in landscaping. It is proposed that six areas be beautified under the Commonwealth Employment Program, including Betts Park, (near Gladesville Reserve), for which \$34,241 has been allocated for bush regeneration and renovation.

FORESHORE LAND AT WOOLWICH

Following a proposal put forward by Woolwich Public School Principal, Mr. Graham Lennan, that a section of foreshore land adjoining the School become available for public use, an announcement was made in August declaring the area for passive recreation. Mr. Rodney Cavalier granted an easement for access through the school property on behalf of the Dept. of Education. Council is to have the responsibility of care and control of the reserve.

Intended as a commemorative project, the Hunter's Hill Bi-Centennial Committee will allocate \$2,000 towards a foreshore walk from Woolwich school - see map below.



ACTIVITIES

A TWILIGHT CONCERT

AT

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, HUNTERS HILL

FRIDAY, 21st MARCH, 1986
7.30 FOR 8.00 p.m.

WITH

GEOFFREY CHARD

BARITONE OF THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA
Singing works by Bach, Malcolm Williamson and Ravel

THE SYDNEY WIND QUINTET

Playing quintets by Mozart and Carl Nielsen

PETER KNEESHAW

ORGANIST, CHRIST CHURCH, ST. LAURENCE

TICKETS: \$15

\$10 - CONCESSIONS

CONTACT DOREEN CARTER TEL: 817 3410

DRINKS AND SAVOURIES WILL BE SERVED
IN THE GARDENS AT 7.30 p.m.

Part proceeds to All Saints Rectory Restoration

SUBMISSIONS

The Trust prepared a submission on draft State Environmental Policy - Public Housing (December 1985), in which it requested that Hunter's Hill be exempted from the proposed changes to the Policy. This Policy has since been gazetted as SEPP 12 which enables the Housing Commission (Dept. of Housing) to erect dwelling houses in residential zones without development consent. The Trust has not yet received a reply from the Department of Environment and Planning concerning its submission.

Another Policy proposed by the Department concerns dual occupancy allowing strata subdivisions in residential zones. Most local Councils object to these proposals as does the Trust. A draft statement on this policy has not yet been published.

PUBLICATION

The Trust has received a copy of: **McLoughlin, Lynne. THE MIDDLE LANE COVE RIVER: a history and a future.** Macquarie University, Centre for Environmental and Urban Studies, Monograph No. 1(1985), \$16.75. Members may recall that Lynne McLoughlin spoke to the A.G.M. in 1984 on this topic.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANE COVE RIVER, 1904 and 1984

The Hunter's Hill Trust has completed a photographic project of the Lane Cove River 1904-1984. This series shows the lower Lane Cove River (Clarke's Point to Figtree Bridge) at two points in time and separated by 80 years. The 1904 photographs were obtained from the N.S.W. Government Printer and the 1984 ones from Project Environment (Lane Cove - Mark Trussell and Lynne McLoughlin). The series has been mounted on 7 sheets of cardboard for easier viewing and is accompanied by a general text and a numbered key to some of the older houses, buildings, sites and streets. It was on display at the Hunter's Hill Town Hall till 20th February, 1986 and the series is available for loan to persons or groups interested in this photographic record. For information, contact Doreen Carter, 817 3410 or Diana Drake, 817 4339.

GLADESVILLE SESQUICENTENNIAL

Gladesville Sesquicentennial celebrations will take place between 5 to 13 April 1986. The Sesquicentennial Association has leased premises at 173 Victoria Road, where information and souvenirs are available.

HERITAGE STUDY OF RYDE

Ryde Municipal Council has announced that the Council, in conjunction with the Heritage Council of N.S.W., have appointed Jonathan Falk Planning Pty. Ltd. as consultants to carry out a Heritage Study of Ryde Municipality. Submissions (to be addressed to Ryde Town Clerk) are invited from interested persons in respect of items which are considered to be of historic or environmental significance within Ryde Municipality.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Trust's **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Wednesday, 28th May in the Hunter's Hill Town Hall. Drinks will be served at 6.30 p.m. and dinner at 7.15 p.m. (cost \$10 a head). The meeting will start at 8.30 p.m. followed by discussion on any issues members might like to raise. RSVP Mrs. Jenny Lockyer 816 4922.

LECTURE SERIES

In the middle of the year the Trust is planning to have a series of lectures, details of which will be given in the next **Journal**. Speakers will include Kevin Fahy, Helen Temple and James Broadbent.

HERITAGE WEEK

The dates for this year's **Heritage Week** are from 13th to 20th April. The Hunter's Hill Trust will be conducting guided walks on Wednesday, 16th and Saturday, 19th April at 2 p.m. (Cost \$2 per person). Further information and bookings from Mrs. Anne McNally on 817 2035.

HERITAGE DAY AND HOUSE INSPECTION - NOVEMBER 1985

This successful event, organised by the Vienna Cottage Appeal and the Trust, raised some \$4,000.00. The Trust shared the proceeds and donated \$250.00 to the Bicentennial Committee, \$100.00 to The Rectory Restoration Appeal and \$1,000.00 to Hunter's Hill Council for the Hillman Orchard restoration.

