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Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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MOBIL REZONING

The Trust Committee and special Sub-Committee headed by Vincent Serventy have given careful consideration to the Environment Assessment Report prepared for Mobil's application for a rezoning of their site on Pulpit Point. The Trust's recommendations to the Hunter's Hill Council included the following:

- We oppose the Private Estate concept because it would create a social-geographic division within the Municipality and Council control of the area might be doubtful. Instead of a new 2d zoning, it should conform to existing codes.
- As there appears to be little consideration in Mobil's proposals for the public access, enjoyment of the foreshore areas and for preservation of the overall scenic quality of the Point, we recommended that foreshore land thirty metres above high water mark should, in accordance with the Government's policy and generally accepted practice elsewhere, be vested in the public.
- The Report wisely proposes a public open space zoning for the existing bushland on the steep western side of Pulpit Point, with its indigenous vegetation. Our recommendation stressed the need to extend that area to include a wide and elevated foreshore space on the scenically prominent southern extremity of the Point.
- In order to preserve the unique tree canopy of Hunters Hill, rezoning should limit building height on the ridge to two storeys.
- We feel that a large scale plan such as Mobil has submitted would tend to rely too heavily on design quality and inevitably create an institutional unity out of keeping with the individual and historic quality of Hunters Hill.
- Even though the Mobil Report refers to the plan as 'indicative', the Trust considers the housing proposals as hastily considered and not of a standard to be expected in a classified Urban Conservation Area.

Rather the site lends itself to a more architecturally diverse development to include some provision for retirement needs, smaller dwellings as well as some high density buildings on the sloping eastern side.

Following a Special Meeting held on 29th September, Hunters Hill Council replied to our recommendations with a copy of the guidelines which they had adopted for consideration by their consultants. These included a rejection of the Private Estate proposal, a strip of variable width of public open space extending around the foreshore and a development of a mix of housing styles in keeping with Hunters Hill. The inclusion of retirement housing units was also given favourable consideration.

So it would seem at this early stage that there are encouraging signs for the future development of the Pulpit Point area. There will be opportunity at the General Meeting of November 30, (see back page for details) for members to express their views and for a general discussion.

MILTHORPE

There has been a change in the conditions of the Interim Conservation Order placed by the N.S.W. Heritage Council on the Milthorpe property, following an objection lodged by the owner. Development of the northern or tennis court lot will now be permitted by the Heritage Council although it will have rights of control over the plans of any future building, while Hunters Hill Council retains the right to approve or reject an Application.

The Trust and many residents who tried so hard to preserve this foreshore land regret this sudden alteration to the Order, although the remaining land and house will still be protected. The Heritage Act allows for objections from owners on certain grounds.

PROPOSED SYDNEY REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN – DUAL OCCUPANCY

The Department of Environment and Planning has released a draft plan to allow Dual Occupancy of land and/or houses in the Sydney region in order to obtain greater use of existing services and community facilities. To increase the supply of accommodation the plan proposes:

- uniform controls for the provision of dual occupancy;
- permitting the conversion of a dwelling house into 2 dwellings;
- permitting the erection of a separate house on land on which a dwelling already exists;
- permitting the erection of 2 separate dwellings subject to certain conditions;
- permitting the Strata subdivision of land;
- permitting any person to occupy a dwelling erected or erected in accordance with this proposal.

Furthermore, while the proposed plan applies to all local government areas in the Sydney Region, some environmentally sensitive zones have been excluded. So far, Hunters Hill is not one of them.

- It also removes the previous requirement that the occupant of one of the dwellings be the owner;
- permits the subdivision of dual occupancies under the Strata Titles Act;
- allows dual occupancy to apply to new buildings as well as to conversions of existing ones;
- allows the second dwelling to be free standing.

The Department says these changes have been made in response to requests from members of the public.

The Department hopes that the plan will make available more rental accommodation, encourage fuller use of existing services, enable property owners to carry out the type of dual occupancy best suited to their needs and provide a way of achieving urban consolidation while maintaining the character of a detached housing area.

The Trust is alarmed at the possible effect these far reaching proposals could have on Hunters Hill. They have accordingly despatched a submission to the Department of Environment and Planning pointing out that some of its provisions would be directly opposed to the recommendations contained in the 1984 Heritage Study of Hunters Hill jointly commissioned and funded by the Heritage Council and the Hunters Hill Council.

The Hunters Hill Council at a recent meeting considered that the Plan would:

- “reduce the existing development standards applicable to all residential zones to such a degree that the character and amenity of the Municipality could be materially and detrimentally affected”
- “seriously undermine the present controls and standards applicable to the development of land upon which stand items of environmental heritage. Such items, generally historic buildings, would be seriously threatened by the provisions of the Draft Plan that will permit the erection of a separate dwelling upon the allotment of such items”

- **“the Council considers that the whole of the Municipality should be declared as an Environmental Protection Area, in line with the recommendations of the Council’s Heritage Consultants.”**

The Trust’s submission to the Department also points out that one of the important recommendations of the Heritage Council’s and local Council’s Heritage Studies was that the Department’s earlier plan for Dual Occupancy reduced plot ratios to a mathematical calculation. While such a determination would be fair and reasonable in many suburban areas, it was not practicable to apply it to subdivisions of land in an environmentally or historically significant area such as Hunters Hill. In such an area, the study contended, the land around a building could be as important as the building itself.

We have suggested until Hunters Hill has been given the protection visualised in the Heritage Council’s Heritage Study that it be declared a “Scenic Zone”. The proposed Dual Occupancy Plan provides for the nomination of Scenic Zones and we have proposed, pending the hoped for declaration of Hunters Hill as an Environmental Protection Area, that a “Scenic Zone” status will be agreed to by the Department of Environment and Planning.

The Trust has also made a Submission to the Department of Environment and Planning on their proposed policy of reduced residential allotment sizes. A copy of both Submissions are available from Doreen Carter (Phone 817 3410).

COVENANTS

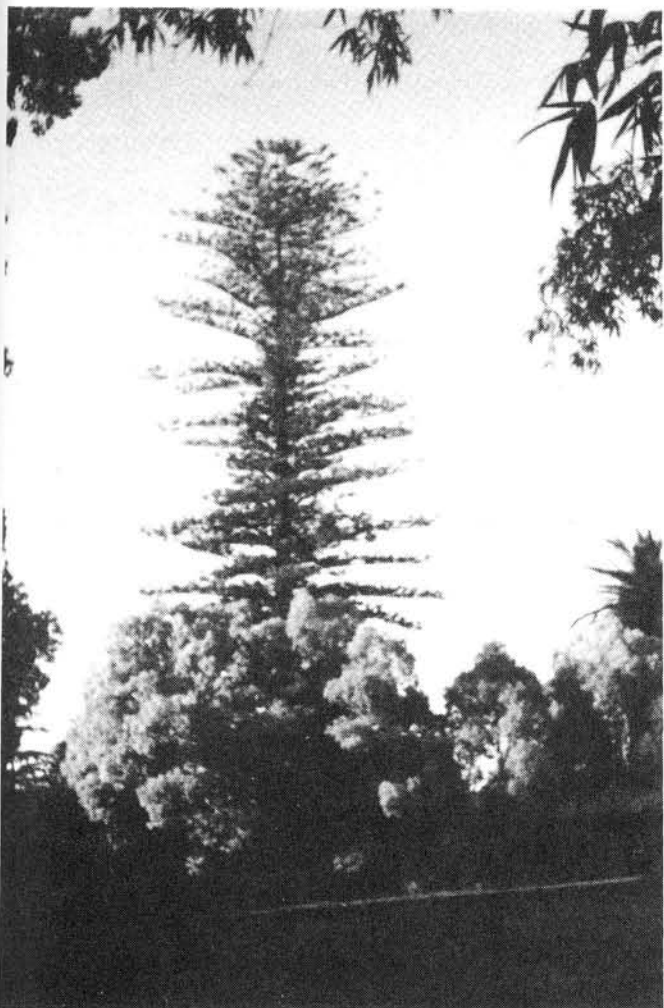
Property owners should be fully aware of covenants which control developments on neighbouring or nearby buildings as recorded on the certificate of title of their property.

Covenants which are often found on subdivisions of historic properties mainly apply to building heights or situations to preserve the outlook. The owner of a covenant may not be notified by Council of proposed developments as it is obliged only to notify immediate neighbours. Nor are Councils obliged, in approving a development application, to determine whether or not a covenant exists. They are only concerned to ensure that the proposed development complies with Ordinance 70 of the Local Government Act, 1919.

If an owner is unaware of the covenant details before it is breached by a development or extension, it would be necessary to take legal action, probably at great expense.

While it is possible to lift a covenant it should also be remembered that they were introduced as part of a town planning procedure to preserve a particular environment and careful thought and legal advice should be given before a decision is made. The Trust recently received a letter seeking help where a nearby house on which a single storey covenant existed, suddenly with Council consent acquired a second storey.

NORFOLK ISLAND PINE – ARAUCARIA HETEROPHYLLA



Photograph of the Norfolk Island Pine in 19 Madeline Street taken by Mr. Fred Stamp, October, 1986.

Height

Pine-tree, Madeline Street

Boughs of this pine are spokes that spread,
level, from hubs of stacked-up wheels
or rungs of a ladder height here scales
to infinity's outset overhead;
and either view of them blends the truth
in shapes reality doles to the eye
with mind's wonder which follows both
to the spire's point that stabs the sky.

Childhood observed of tree-tops
overlooking it through slow stir
of leafy sun, that, roused, they were
flails that would thrash to thunderclaps
and gale fury the air they fanned.
Not victims were they, beaten and bowed,
but pliant scourges that whipped the wind
and ripped sky-fabric to rags of cloud.

This was not wholly illusion. Fact,
for use, is in part the guise it wears
where sight watches and thought stares
and self and solidity interact—
as now, where height by warrant of
nods in the blue from this great pine
climbs growth to the limitless, above
summits of the world that has been mine.

by R. D. Fitzgerald.

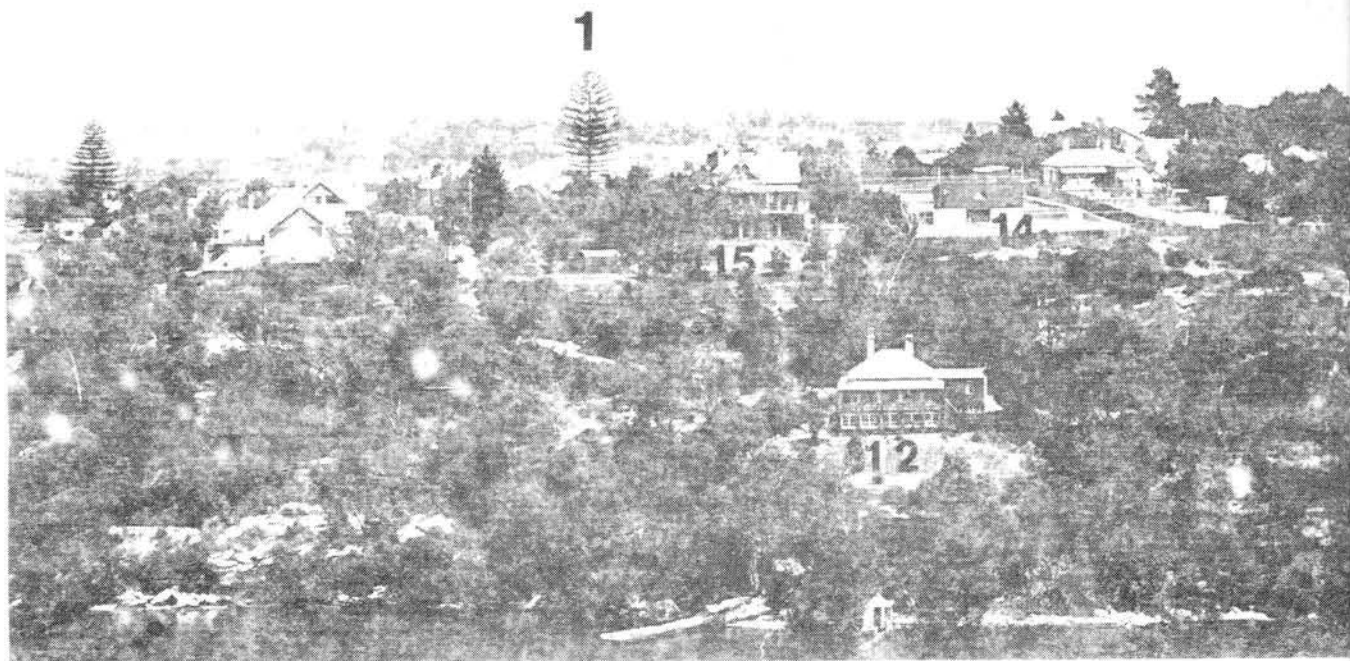
Araucarias are conifers found only in the South Pacific. The species include the Bunya Bunya Pine, Hoop Pine, Norfolk Island Pine and Cook Pine from Australasia, and the Monkey Puzzle Tree from South America.

The Norfolk Island Pine grows densely on Norfolk Island but is also native to coastal areas of north-east Australia. It is said not to seed south of Coffs Harbour; however an unusual event occurred last year when all coastal pines seeded. The Pine in the front garden of 19 Madeline Street, which is thought to be at least 100 years old, seeded for the first time. Mr. Fred Stamp of Ady Street planted some of the seeds and grew several baby Norfolk Island pines. These trees are known as Gymnosperms because the seeds are borne on flat modified leaves (held within cones) and not in seed boxes or ovaries characteristic of flowering plants. Ovules and pollen grains are borne on the leaves in the cones and pollination is effected by wind.

We are indebted to Mr. R. D. Fitzgerald, the noted Australian poet and long-time resident of Hunters Hill, for permission to reprint his poem (which first appeared in the **Sydney Morning Herald**) on the Madeline Street tree. The Trust had the pleasure of presenting one of the offspring grown by Mr. Stamp to Mrs. Fitzgerald, thus ending her long quest, and it will grow in the Fitzgerald's garden in Prince Edward Parade.

Some of the araucarias in Hunters Hill are now getting very old and it would be good to continue the tradition of planting them in our gardens. If size is a problem, the slender Cook Pine is ideal, but size would surely not be a problem in large grounds or in our parks.

Norfolk Island Pine (Continued)



*Photograph of Hunters Hill taken from Riverview in 1904.
(No. 12 is Windermere, No. 15 Ysabel, No. 14 Bowling Club)*

In the photograph of Hunters Hill taken in 1904, the pine in Madeline Street can be seen on the skyline as marked (1). Some idea of its great height in 1986 can be seen from the photo taken by Mr. Fred Stamp.

Brother Vincent Lenehan of St. Joseph's College remembers this tree as a landmark. He was told as a young boy, over 50 years ago, that if he ever got lost he should look for this pine to find his way to Ernest Street where his uncle lived.

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### THE SUBSTANCE AND THE SHADOW

A member has written to the Council expressing his concern about the "increasing number of alterations which often result in small historic houses becoming a facade or at least a mere appendage of a much larger building". Unfortunately, this is the price long term residents pay for the increasing popularity of the Hill as a place to live. Whether these alterations will "kill the goose that lays the golden eggs", only time will tell. In the meantime these pressures tend to artificially raise property costs to the detriment of the ageing population who look to these smaller homes as an answer to their accommodation problem.

### HUNTERS HILL LODGE

After many months of uncertainty and speculation, work is now under way on the retirement village alongside the Fig-Tree Shopping Centre. The massive earthworks are now complete and construction commenced. Contrary to rumour the owners, Retirement Care Pty. Ltd., intend to build the whole complex of 62 fully service apartments now.

King Street will be reconstructed to provide access for trade vehicles and residents' car parking. Each Unit will be strata titled. The stone wall and gates on the Gladesville Road frontage will be retained.

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## DAVID A. L. SAUNDERS

11 October, 1928 – 23rd September, 1986

All who live in Hunters Hill, whether members of the Hunters Hill Trust or not, owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to David Saunders, who joined the Trust soon after its formation in January, 1968. David was by profession an architect and town planner and he expressed his belief in the unique character of this municipality long before any other planner had recognised it. This vision and his expertise can be seen in what was the Hunters Hill Trust's first important public document "Town Planning, and Proposed Historic Districts in Hunters Hill", first published in March 1969 and re-issued with additions in December, 1970.

In this document, David Saunders argued the case for "district preservation" as opposed to the older idea of "spot preservation" of individual houses. His first paragraph of Section II of the above document cannot be bettered as a statement of the aims of the Hunters Hill Trust which was one of the first bodies in Australia concerned with the urban environment:

*"The concept of district preservation is applicable to those particular cases where there is something about the total effect of the elements which make up the district's character which will be lessened or destroyed by the erosion of any one of the elements. Preservation of individual buildings or isolated elements of landscape is not enough in such a case. It might even be true that each element is not the best of its sort to be found, but the total effect can still be outstanding, even unique. In the case of Hunters Hill, there are very outstanding individual examples of old houses, harbourside landscape, stone-walled streets and sandstone outcrops. There is also a total effect, made up from those leading examples and the many others in the district. That total effect, too, is quite special."*

To preserve this total effect he proposed the creation of three "Historic Districts", a **Western District**, which would have included Fig Tree House, St. Joseph's College, The Villa Maria Monastery, the Gladesville Hospital and private houses in the neighbourhood of The Avenue and Figtree Road; a **Central District**, generally the area from Mount Street eastwards to Weil Park, omitting the areas around Luke's Bay and Pulpit Point but extending to include Kelly's Bush and the group of houses near Clarke's original cottage; and the **Woolwich District** which comprised a large portion of the peninsula eastward from the public swimming baths.

In each of these Districts, which he regarded as **minimal** and **irreducible**, David proposed that both development and demolition should be regulated to maintain the preservation of its essential character, and to ensure this the Local Council should be assisted by an expert Committee representing both local and wider interests, to be called the District Preservation Committee.

The Hunters Hill Trust was in fact successful in having the First Draft Town Plan recalled, after it had been submitted to the State Government by the Council of the day, and the proposals for the Historic Districts and others were then incorporated into the Second Draft Town Plan.

Sadly this document was too far ahead of its time for the State Planning Authority bureaucrats, who virtually tore it up and sent back a bland document without teeth that could have applied to any municipality and which left the preservation of Hunters Hill at the mercy of its Council.

Some of David's other proposals that should be mentioned briefly here were: that the entire area of the Sydney Smelting Works and through to Clarke's Point should be retained as Open Space; that the northern side of Boronia Park and the adjoining reserves along the Lane Cove River, be retained as areas of natural flora; that a term be set to the continued occupation of Pulpit Point by Mobil.

He also played a part in the views put forward strongly by the Trust that controls needed to be exercised over single dwelling development as well as over home units in order to preserve the character of this municipality. Hunters Hill would be aesthetically more pleasing today had this view prevailed.

For almost the last ten years, David Saunders was Professor of Architecture in the University of Adelaide. His move to that city was a great loss to the Trust and to the many Hunters Hill friends of the Saunders family. He is survived by his four daughters and his wife, Doreen (also an architect) to whom the Trust is also greatly beholden for, inter alia, her long hours of devoted and painstaking research into the past ownership of Hunters Hill houses.

David Saunders' early death is a tragic loss to the Conservation in Australia and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

R. B. TEMPLE

# ACTIVITIES

## THE HUNTERS HILL TRUST ANNUAL DINNER & GENERAL MEETING

*will be held at*  
**ALEXANDRA'S RESTAURANT**  
Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill

*on*  
**SUNDAY, 30 NOVEMBER, 1986**  
*at 6.30 p.m.*

*Please come and participate in the discussion on  
the important Mobil development.*

### **A BUFFET SUPPER**

*will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.*

Cost of Dinner:

\$14.00 member      \$16.00 non-member

R.S.V.P. to:

Doreen Carter, 33 Mount St., Hunters Hill. Tel. 817 3410  
Jenny Lockyer, 4 Foss Street, Hunters Hill. Tel. 816 4922

**by Friday, 21 November, 1986**

*(The restaurant must have final numbers by this date.)*

## WINTER LECTURE SERIES

1. James Broadbent on Gardens in Historic areas.
2. Maisie Stapleton on Historic Interiors.
3. Kevin Fahy on 19th Century Australian Furniture.
4. Helen Temple on Historic Archaeology.

The Trust is very grateful to the lecturers for giving their time to participate in the lecture series. Following each interesting and informative lecture, they were in great demand for advice, which they gave willingly.

The Series was well received by the public, many of whom travelled from the eastern suburbs and other areas well away from Hunters Hill. In this regard, the lectures were an extremely good public relations exercise for the Trust, especially when coupled with the delicious suppers provided by Mrs. Anne McNally. We will consider conducting a second lecture series again next year. We would be pleased to receive suggestions for topics and also comments on the worth of this exercise.

## MOOCOBOOLA FESTIVAL

On Saturday, 20th September, the Annual Moocooboola Festival was held in and around the Town Hall. Brilliant sunshine and a pervading freshness, due to heavy rain the previous evening, combined with the blaze of spring colour from the adjacent gardens, brought people out in droves! The Trust's stall in D'Aram Street was well manned (by women) and patronised so that by the end of the day the many home-made contributions had been sold. Jenny Lockyer, Judy Adamo, Patricia Fraser, Liz Shaw and Committee members had every reason to be proud of the \$650 raised.

First prize in the raffle was won by Meryl and Geoff Cohen of Alexandra Street. Second prize went to Mrs. Ward of the Congregational Retirement Village.

## TREE SURVEY

We took the opportunity at the Festival to ask visitors to notify us of trees in their properties which would make a valuable addition to our register. Residents who have not responded to our requests to advise us of significant trees are asked to send a note about their own or neighbouring trees to the Secretary, P.O. Box 85, Hunters Hill, 2110.

## VIENNA - A Progress Report

The Vienna Committee have asked Helen Proudfoot to carry out the final research into the records and the family who owned the cottage for so long. It is expected that this will be completed in November. It is hoped that this research, together with work already accomplished, will enable Meredith Walker to prepare recommendations on the future usage of Vienna. It is then intended to call a meeting of all concerned to determine future policy in the use and administration of the property. Some members will be aware that N.S.W. is indebted to AMATIL for a portion of their huge "Gift to the Nation" which, in N.S.W., is shared by Juniper Hall, Cooma Cottage, restoration of a Norman Lindsay statue, and Vienna. Even with this magnificent donation, the Vienna Committee are still \$75,000 short of their objective.

## HERITAGE OF HUNTERS HILL

It is a book that every household should possess providing as it does a wealth of information on the history of our magnificent suburb and its many splendid homes. Their age, builders and some subsequent owners are recorded. An Index of houses by street address and by name is provided.

This magnificent publication would make an appreciated Christmas present to local residents or friends overseas - new reduced price \$17.50. Copies from Doreen Carter (817 3410), The Q Gallery and the Hunters Hill Newsagency.

**Congratulations** to the Hunters Hill Council for the appointment of Penny Pyke. She will prepare recommendations on the priority which should be given to implementing the many proposals contained in Meredith Walker's Heritage Study of Hunters Hill.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name ..... Phone .....

Address ..... Postcode .....

### Type of Membership:

Single ..... \$ 5.00      Student ..... \$ 1.00

Family ..... \$10.00      Life Member ..... \$100.00

Pensioner ..... \$ 1.00

Please post to The Hunters Hill Trust, P.O. Box 85, Hunters Hill 2111