

THE HUNTER'S HILL TRUST

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The Trust shall be called the "The Hunter's Hill Trust", hereinafter, at option, can be referred to in the shorter version as "The Trust".

2. ADDRESS

The official address shall be:

PO Box 85
HUNTER'S HILL NSW 2110

3. DECLARATION

The Trust is an un-incorporated body and can sue or be sued under its constituted name. The Trust shall assume a character as being non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit-making.

4. DEFINITION

Hunter's Hill means all those pieces or parcels of land situated in the Municipality of Hunter's Hill, a recognised area of Local Government in New South Wales.

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of The Trust shall be:

- i) to maintain the unique and historical character of Hunter's Hill;
- ii) to limit the spread of home units, high density, industrial and commercial development within the Municipality;
- iii) to preserve all features of Hunter's Hill having beauty, architectural and historical value;

- iv) to ensure that any planning of Hunter's Hill should pay full regard to protecting and improving the amenities enjoyed by residents; and without limiting the generality of the foregoing;
- v) to encourage high architectural and aesthetic standards within the Municipality;
- vi) to maintain the integrity of Hunter's Hill as a separate Municipality;
- vii) to cause to be maintained a planning committee of the Hunter's Hill Council responsible for conservation and heritage matters, which includes nominees of The Hunter's Hill Trust Committee;
- viii) to maintain the declaration of Hunter's Hill as a protected historic area.

6. AFFILIATION

The Trust may seek affiliation with kindred organisations.

7. MEMBERSHIP

- i) All persons who endorse the aims of The Trust shall be eligible for membership on the payment of an annual fee to be determined by the Committee from year to year PROVIDED that the Committee shall have the right to refuse or cancel membership;
- ii) fees shall fall due on the 1st day of March of each year and persons shall cease to be members if their fees remain unpaid for more than 12 weeks after that date. If any person becomes a member between the 1st day of January and the 1st day of March in any year such person shall be deemed to be a financial member until March of the following year;
- iii) a register of members shall be kept showing in respect of each member the name, address and date of commencement of membership;
- iv) the Constitution shall be binding on each member which includes Life Membership and Honorary Membership.

In the Journal of November 1988, VINCENT SERVENTY, A.O. delivered a resounding serve to those who would turn Sydney into a megapolis, to those who simplistically imagine that if a city of one million people is good, then a city of four million people is four times better. Sweden and Switzerland, Mr. Serventy wrote, are examples of countries that have achieved high living standards with modest populations.

Although the Federal Government and Opposition speak of tinkering with Australia's immigration numbers in the present economic downturn, both favour high immigration in the medium term. The Sydney area has to take the lion's share of this intake. Over recent years, Sydney has had to absorb two and a half times the population of the City of Bathurst each year. The N.S.W. Government seems happy about this influx, and it never even mentions decentralization these days. Its solution to Sydney's swelling population is to enforce blanket urban consolidation on councils.

Setting aside, for the moment, the question of whether it makes any sense to expand the population of Sydney, Hunter's Hill's former Mayor SHEILA SWAIN argues that "spot rezoning" could be acceptable if it respects the Municipality's heritage and streetscapes.

"SPOT ZONING" AND URBAN CONSOLIDATION IN HUNTER'S HILL

A PERSONAL VIEW BY SHEILA SWAIN, A.M.

Most references to Hunter's Hill cite not only the picturesque stone houses and walls, the shady streets and the beautiful gardens, but also the predominance of free-standing houses.

Over the past twenty to thirty years the proportion of free-standing dwellings has fallen, largely the result of the invasion of three-storey walk-ups after the opening of the Gladesville Bridge in 1966, and the activities of the Housing Commissioner during that period. Today more than 20% of households in Hunter's Hill live in units and town houses and that does not include dual occupancy, duplexes, illegal flats nor the sizeable number of retirement units and hostel rooms.

Hunter's Hill has always had a smattering of medium density housing. There are some delightful Victorian terraces scattered along Woolwich Road, Gale Street and Alexandra Street. There are also a surprising number of "semis" throughout the municipality if you care to look for them. For years some old houses have been divided into flats (e.g. *Villa Euthella*) and more recently some have been strata-ed (e.g. *Merimbah, Llanthony* and *The Gladstone*).

But it was the rapid expansion of units and town houses during the sixties and early seventies and the loss of a number of significant houses which galvanized the people of Hunter's Hill into taking a strong stance against the proliferation of similar developments.

The mention of urban consolidation revives other unpleasant memories in the minds of many people – the clumsy attempt by the State Government to force a high-rise development on Pulpit Point, and the subsequent proposal to impose a state-wide urban consolidation policy on all Councils throughout the State.

L.E.P. No. 1, incorporating many ideas of the founders of the Hunter's Hill Trust, delineated a limited number of sites suitable for medium density development (2b). These were considered at the time to be strategically placed, to have as little impact as possible on the overall "free-standing" 2a or 2a(1) zones. To the best of my memory only three rezonings to 2b have been made subsequently: Mary Street, Boronia Avenue and the rezoning of Pulpit Point which allowed a significant area

for town houses in that development. Some areas zoned 2b at the time have not been developed, the land apparently being too expensive in the light of the tight development standards in this zoning.

In fact, one result of the strict planning controls in Hunter's Hill has been that the amenity of the municipality has improved, land values have risen, and hence the appearance of the "mega house", free standing, but often dominating the streetscape, having replaced an older, more modest house (or houses).

As a result, some families, especially the elderly, have found the increased rates too much of a burden, understandably taking their capital gain and moving to another suburb.

A corollary of this has been the "mixed" society that is also part of Hunter's Hill heritage has now largely disappeared. The "gentrification" of Hunter's Hill – at least in East Ward and Central Ward and to some extent in West Ward – is now almost complete.

The sad thing is that while this gradual transformation has been taking place, the municipality's population has fallen from about 14,000 in the early seventies to just more than 12,000 today. And this at a time when the population of Sydney is steadily increasing and the pressure to accommodate the extra millions expected by early next century are leading to gross degradation of our urban environment. The daily papers are full of stories of air and river pollution resulting from the city's spread. What is not mentioned very often is the despoilation of the countryside on the outskirts – the rolling hills in the south-west, the virgin bushland in the north-west.

It is in this context that I suggested recently at a Trust function that both the Trust and the Council should be taking a closer look at their planning policies in relation to medium density. It seems to me that it is more important to consider whether the new building is in sympathy with its neighbours as far as bulk, scale and height are concerned than whether one or several families live there. It is very important that this decision be made at the local level rather than have a centralized bureaucracy impose its standards. hence the battle in 1989 to oppose the

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“SPOT ZONING” Continued from page 5

proposed S.E.P.P. and the continuing struggles that some inner suburbs are having with the State Government. But Hunter's Hill has always been a vigilant Council, fortunately backed by a well-informed resident action group.

Spot rezoning in carefully selected sites will not present many opportunities for extra housing, however, but should not be dismissed out of hand before careful consideration. Similarly some flexibility of development standards could be considered in some individual cases, if the outcome is a development more in keeping with the surrounding neighbourhood than one where rigid application of standards is observed.

On a larger scale, one obvious example of where Hunter's Hill has the opportunity to make a contribution (however small) to the slowing of Sydney's sprawl is the new development at the Riverglades Hospital.

Another possible opportunity is the Gladesville car park area. Now that the commercial development has apparently fallen into a black hole, Council could consider re-zoning it commercial/residential with perhaps a car-park, a shopping arcade and some “studio apartments” suitable for lower income families. The development need not be high – a stepped profile appropriate to the site would still allow residents to take advantage of views to the north and east, and not overshadow the surrounding homes.

One complaint about increasing our population density is the adequacy of services. Yet it seems strange to me that while our population has fallen over the past twenty years, we appear to have increasing problems with drains, sewer discharges into the rivers, and with traffic congestion.

Admitting that we have had a number of severe storms in recent years, the fact is that the situation has been made worse by the fact that many households connect their water discharge pipes to the sewer. Further, the amount of non-permeable ground cover has increased substantially in recent years, with paving companies making a fortune out of our growing reluctance to establish and maintain gardens (in our garden suburb?). Our new Development Control Plan will do something to obviate this, but the damage has been done in many areas. Just count the number of concrete double driveways in your street.

That brings me to the question of the ubiquitous motor car. It is frequently claimed when medium density is mentioned that our low local road system would not sustain the extra traffic. But the number of cars is a function not only of the size of the population. (Our municipality's population has fallen, yet there is more traffic on our roads.) Affluence is also a factor, and the adequacy (or attraction) of public transport. Early morning drivers battle to get off the overpass on to the expressway – already choked by cars, mainly from far flung suburbs. Yet the proprietor of our local bus company tells me that there is rarely an adult on the buses in the morning peak that travel up the peninsula to Figtree – buses which connect with a frequent, fast service to the city. Nor are our ferries exactly overcrowded!

To conclude, I believe that the Council's planning criteria should place more emphasis on the effect of bulk, scale and height of a building on the streetscape rather than the number of families that live in it; that they should re-examine the present policy of zones of medium density, rather than a mixture of single dwellings and town houses throughout the municipality; that strict standards should be applied to landscaping; that it should continue its stance on the need for planning decisions to be made at the local level in full consultation with the residents; that it should ensure that existing services are adequate, and that it should take all possible steps to see that they are maintained, improved and not abused by residents.

Hunter's Hill is the smallest municipality in N.S.W. It is also extremely important as a heritage area, with a rich history, wonderful amenity and an enlightened community. It can contribute very little to solving the enormous problem of Sydney's urban sprawl. But that does not mean that we should turn our backs completely on the problem and not make some effort to contribute in some small way to the solution of what appears to be an intractable problem.

Successful “Spot Zoning” is entirely dependent on Council having both the determination and the capacity to ensure that medium density buildings are indeed formally sympathetic to the 2a or 2a(1) neighbourhoods into which they might be placed. At present, the Trust has no policy on the concept of Spot Zoning, and would welcome the views of Members.

GLADESVILLE LUNATIC ASYLUM

Architect, Jeffery Madden will give you an illustrated talk at the Trust's General Meeting on:

The Gladesville Asylum – The First 150 years

The A.G.M. is at Villa Maria Hall, 3 Mary Street, at 7.45 on Wednesday, May 13th. The meeting will also look at proposed changes to the Trust's constitution.

A light supper will be served at the conclusion.
All Welcome.

TRUST MEMBERSHIP 1992-1993

MEMBERSHIP fees are due on March 1 each year.

Types of membership:

Single \$15.00; Family \$25.00
Pensioner \$5.00; Student \$5.00

SPECIAL OFFER! Individual Life Membership is being held at only \$100.00 until 1993.

Please post to:

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