



St John's Church hall, Woolwich, built by Ernest Clarke 1892

surviving buildings merge unobtrusively with gardens and surroundings. Steep gables, exposed walls and timber textures of others are more noticeable.

Comparisons with Balmain's terraces, semi-detached houses and small cottages are often suggested, in spite of its longer and more intense industrial history. For Woolwich it is, most of all, the timber church's strong cultural and community links, and the village's closely integrated timber cottages with almost haphazard alignments that manage to clearly convey local carpentry and timber traditions. This prominent village area particularly imparts the cultural and historic elements of Woolwich's tightly connected group of working class people whose descendants, in many cases, maintained a way of life through a whole range of local skills, employment and industrial activity.

References

1. *Statuary declarations with Primary Application 3277, Land Titles Office of New South Wales*

2. *Hunters Hill's timber traditions began more decisively with Etienne Bordier's 1855 importation of four prefabricated villas, erected on 1 acre sites at Ferry Street, and with the surviving cluster on the Carey Cottage site.*

3. *The Australasian Builder and Contractors' News, July 1 1893, illustrates a similar timber church at Fern Tree, near Hobart, Tasmania, built at a cost of 375 pounds.*

The authors would like to thank the many owners of Woolwich's old timber buildings for their assistance, Mrs Barbara Robison daughter of Basil Turner for information about Otranto, and Jan Griffith and Thea Whitnall of Hunters Hill Historical Society Museum and Archives. We also greatly appreciate Mr Wal Prott's help; over the last 25 years he has repaired and restored many of the buildings discussed here.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

- Subscriptions are due on the first of March each year.
- Current rates are:

LIFE MEMBERSHIP	\$200
FAMILY	\$25
SINGLE	\$15
PENSIONER/ STUDENT	\$5

To renew or to subscribe please post your cheque to the:

Hon Secretary
The Hunter's Hill Trust
PO Box 85 Hunter's Hill 2110

Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting
will be held at the RSL Hall

56 Alexandra St., Hunters Hill (near Ferry St.)

on Wednesday 12th May, 1993

at 8pm

Speaker: Jack Munday

Topic: Growth in Environmental Awareness

THE COUNCIL'S STUDY OF THE HILLCREST ESTATE

The subdivision known as the Hillcrest Estate is bounded by the Hillcrest Avenue/Sunnyside and Isler Streets in Gladesville. This Estate was included as part of the study of residential zones outside the Conservation Area in 1989. The study identified this area as having important historical significance and it was later included as a second conservation area as part of the gazetting of LEP No. 14 in September, 1991. The Council's present interest in the Estate is to identify in more detail its history and character so that planning measures can be prepared to conserve it.

The Hillcrest Estate is part of the original 30 acre purchase grant of William Johnson of 1798. The land was sold much later as the Hillcrest Estate in 1913, the boundaries of the original grant determining the regularity of the roads and allotments. Sydney Sands Directory first acknowledges the existence of Sunnyside Street and Hillcrest Avenue in 1915, and the following year it lists four residents living in the Estate.

The Estate underwent its greatest growth during the following war and immediate post-war period (1916–1928), when rapid suburbanisation occurred after the war. The houses reflect the value and fashions of the times and were often given Anglo-Celtic names such as "Cecilville", "Glen Rosa", "Tolanthe"; whilst other names reflect nationalistic fervour and use Aboriginal words or the names of Australian flowers, e.g. "Wirringulla", "Boronia", and "Waratah". Others reflect American influence, notably such names as "Wyoming", "The Bungalow", or "Graceville".

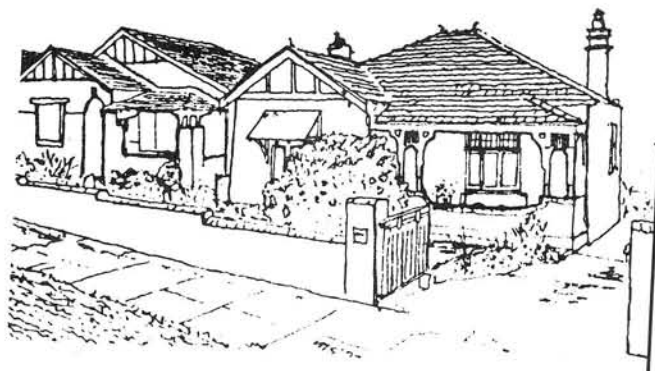
The houses demonstrate some uniformity in design though they differ in their individual architectural detailing. All were built as single storey brick houses with pitched terra cotta or slate roofs and are regularly sited from the street. They are also located asymmetrically on their allotments, to allow a narrow

access to the garage at the rear. Very few have been significantly altered; those that have, were altered during the 1960–70s. Recently the trend has been to retain or restore the houses in the area.

Council has seen a growing concern by local residents in retaining the history and character of this largely 1920s suburb. Very few of the original residents still live in the Estate and much of the local history has been lost as residents have died or moved on. To attempt to address this loss of history of the area, Council is hoping that people will come forward with photographs, letters or any relevant memorabilia that may be of interest. It is envisaged that this information will be included as part of the overall study. Please contact Michael Stitt on 816 1555 if you have any material.

While the Hillcrest Estate may appear to some people to lack the significance of the Hunters Hill peninsula, it is important for the future that we recognise its architectural intactness now and ensure its conservation as an essential element of our local heritage.

MICHAEL STITT
Conservation Planner, Hunter's Hill Council



MISS DEL AGNEW

From the mid 1950s to the late 70s Del Agnew was a leading figure in a number of enterprises in Hunters Hill. She has become one of those almost mythical figures one hears about and feels privileged to have a glimpse of. She was always busy, with tremendous drive and urgency — larger than life. There was that constant feeling about her: "so much to do, so little done". It was in March 1992 that she died (aged 70) and we still sense her inspiration and how dauntless she was in her Calling.

Del Agnew was years ahead of her time in her concern for the preservation of old buildings. Her Tasmanian upbringing no doubt had a lot to do with this. She formed Tinker Tailor Pty Ltd, with others, in the 1950s, with the object of leasing St Malo (built 1856) from the newly-formed National Trust of Australia. They restored St Malo, an outstandingly beautiful house, and used it for public functions, in the hope of rendering it less liable for demolition by the Department of Main Roads for the new expressway across the Lane Cove River. However in the climate of the time this was in vain, and Hunters Hill lost not only St Malo but other heritage treasures, The Warren (1859), Nemba (1860s), and the oldest building in Hunters Hill, Mary Reiby's Cottage, a stone house built in 1835 by Australia's first female entrepreneur who had been transported in 1815 for stealing a horse.

After the tragedy of St Malo, Tinker Tailor were involved in the preservation of Passy, Carey Cottage and the adjoining 20 Ferry Street, and Coorabel and Annabel Lea in Joubert Street. In 1967 when Magnolia Cottage at 13 Ferry Street was threatened with demolition for home units, they had it moved and re-erected in the garden of "Wellings" in Burwood, where it stands as the Wellings Gate House Museum.

CHANGES IN PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF CONSERVATION

2nd December 1992

You have asked me to talk to you this evening about changing perceptions. In the 30 or so years that I have been aware of conservation things certainly have changed. I'm not sure the word "conservation" was really used in the way we use it today. In fact conservation was only used in relation to the natural environment. The first issue I remember was in 1960 when I was still a schoolboy. It was the demolition of St Malo for the Figtree Bridge and I remember badgering my parents into taking me to see the house which was then leased to the National Trust and there were several open days before, after some protest, it finally came down. It was a lovely old house; it incorporated the columns, albeit cut down, from another sad demolition, the Burdekin House in Macquarie Street which had come down for St Stephen's Church in the 1930s. Those columns are now stacked behind, or several of them are, behind Old Government House at Parramatta.

The next sad case was, of course, soon after the demolition of The Vineyard, Subiaco, at Rydalmere for the Rheem hot water factory. That came down in 1961. As a result in May 1962 the National Trust had an exhibition. It was called "No Time to Spare" based on its first listing of what was important in New South Wales. It was a list of some 34 buildings, all ostensibly Georgian, or that's how they were described, and they were in 1963 published in a book called *Georgian Architecture in Australia* with some Tasmanian examples thrown in. Many of them, of course, in truth were built in the reign of Queen Victoria but they were buildings that people like to think were Georgian.

Taste played an important part in early conservation.

When I first got involved with the National Trust through its Junior Group in 1965 I drew the Trust's attention to buildings like Rouse Hill, which although a Georgian building built in 1817, had been heavily Victorianised. The Trust of course was not interested. I remember Rachel Roxburgh, then Secretary of the Listing Committee, saying to me "But Clive, you couldn't list that, it's so Victorian." How things have changed! We're not only now listing Victorian buildings, we are also listing 20th century buildings and fighting for them.

I think this talk was advertised as being illustrated but I really think for a Christmas Party to sit in front of a lot of slides is a touch much, so I haven't brought any slides.

Just as attitudes to listings have changed, so too has our attitude to the actual conservation of a building has changed. The early Trust restorations, in the 1960s,

Experiment Farm at Parramatta and Riversdale at Goulburn show the rather Georgian romantic view that was prevalent at that time, based really more on connoisseurship than on any proper historical research and physical examination. Buildings were painted white with green shutters and they were furnished with furniture that was ostensibly Georgian and in perceived good taste. The result was remarkably American.

The Trust's more recent work with things like your own Vienna Cottage in Hunters Hill and the Historic Houses Trust with their preservation attitudes at places like Meroogal on the South Coast and, of course, Rouse Hill which I referred to before, show that there has been a complete turnabout and a warts-and-all approach is now considered *de rigueur*. I think, to some extent, people have followed this in their own houses. There is certainly an appreciation, of course, of our so-called Georgian heritage but also Victorian buildings, Edwardian buildings and now even there are, Art Deco societies and preservation groups looking after things built as late as the 1950s. It's almost as if, as time goes on, the more recent parts become more precious, and whereas the Trust in 1960 was listing things built before 1850 or 110 years previously, it can now list buildings that were built as recently as 30 years ago. And whereas in the 1960s marvellous city buildings like the Royal Exchange in Bridge Street and the A.J.S. Bank at the corner of King and George Streets were taken down with very little fuss, now, of course, it would be impossible to get such buildings down and now we really cling to all that is left of Victorian Sydney, even to the point of some ridiculous examples of facade preservation.

To some extent I think this has been brought about by the failure of the architectural profession, by and large the man in the street is not satisfied with what modern architects have produced and the various societies that proliferate are all based on trying to keep the past in preference to an indifferent future. Things certainly have changed since I first remember visiting Hunters Hill to look at St. Malo in 1960.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very successful future for your Trust which has preserved one of the most interesting of our suburban areas.

About the Author

Clive Lucas, well known Architect, practising at King's Cross 3574811, was the Guest Speaker at the Trust's Christmas Function.

VIENNA

- The Vienna Committee is rearranging its opening days this year to match those of the Historical Museum. Vienna will be open on the 2nd and 4th (not the last) Sundays of each month from 11 am to 4 pm, and on the 2nd Saturday from 2 to 4 pm. If anyone is interested in acting as a guide on these days, please ring Sheila Swain 817 2510 for further information.
- During Heritage Week, Vienna will conduct guided walks around Hunters Hill (approx. one and a half hours duration) on Sunday 28th March, Wednesday 31st March and Sunday 4th April. The cottage will also be open with a selection of goods and books for sale.
- Our 1993 program includes our usual exhibitions of arts and crafts, quilts and the Christmas boutique, but there will be other "specials":
- ANZAC weekend 24-25-26th April - Exhibition of Bruce King paintings, including some of the Figtree area buildings, demolished for the overpass.
- 24-25th July - Exhibition and sale of antique jewellery selected by the proprietors of Micawbers Antiques, Wentworth Hotel.

Further information:
please ring Sheila Swain 817 2510

HELP WANTED

Your Trust committee needs some help. Due to various reasons we are short of members on the committee and two sub-committees. If you can help, we would like to hear from you.

— PLEASE CALL —

the President, Ian Kelley on 879 6640, or the Secretary, Len Condon on 816 2796.

A HOME FOR HUNTER'S HILL TRUST ARCHIVES?

Hunter's Hill Trust in its 25 years of existence has accumulated a great volume of valuable archives. There are historic photographs, old records of meetings and past campaigns to preserve, heritage items, copies of the journal since 1968 and voluminous correspondence. These archives have no proper home, and are dispersed through store-rooms and garages of a number of members (whose patience is wearing out), as well as in a cabinet in Vienna Cottage. The material needs sorting, cataloguing and preserving, which is difficult in view of their dispersed locations.

The Trust Committee has been active in trying to find an appropriate storage place for these archives, which comprise a valuable and irreplaceable record of the heritage of this suburb.

The Mayor has been approached and it is hoped that the Council may assist with the provision of space. There have been discussions with library staff at Ryde Library which has a Local History Resource Centre where significant items might be deposited, but it would be preferable for Hunters Hill records to be preserved and kept available for projects and historical research within the suburb.

MEMBERS

- do you possess any historic documents or photographs to add to the archives?
- do you have any helpful suggestions?
- are you prepared to volunteer some time to assist cataloguing the archives?

If so, contact
DIANA TEMPLE
ARCHIVES OFFICER
817 4941.

■ MUSEUM EVENT ■

Date: Sunday 23 May
Time: 2pm sharp
Place: Museum,
Hunter's Hill Council Chambers,
Alexandra Street, Hunter's Hill
Price: \$3 at the door

There will be stories of Old Hunter's Hill, a close look at an discussion of some interesting old items and a film on Hunters Hill. The mayor, Ald Ross Williams will present the Council's old Coat of Arms to the Historical Society and receive in turn a fine quilted design of the new Coat of Arms. All this and afternoon tea at the Town Hall as well. *Come and Enjoy...*

Enquiries: Judith Burgess 817 1994
Ivana Puren 816 1419