



Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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THE TOWN PLAN. HISTORIC BEFORE ITS TIME

For seven years now, the Hunter's Hill Trust has been making statements about our future Town Plan, in the Journal and in many submissions to Hunter's Hill Council and the State Government.

Rather than rephrase yet again those arguments which are as necessary now as they were at the outset, the Journal sets out below a history of the Town Plan Saga.

Read on, as the ponderous drama unfolds. Is this the story of the creation of a town plan? or will new legislation obviate the need by establishing strong State Government guidelines so that a town plan is superfluous?

DEJA VU

1967: *Hunter's Hill Council resolved to prepare a planning scheme and appointed consultant Town Planners.*

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

May, 1968: The Trust's aims include... maintenance of the unique and historical character of Hunter's Hill; limitation of the spread of home units, high density, industrial and commercial development; preservation of features of beauty, architectural and historic value; maintenance of Hunter's Hill as an independent municipality; declaration of Hunter's Hill by the State Government as an historic area; appointment, on completion of the town plan, of a committee including Hunter's Hill Trust, National Trust of Australia, Hunter's Hill Historical Society, Royal Australian Institute of Architects and similar bodies to advise Hunter's Hill Council.

The Trust has not been able to discover exactly what progress has been made with the town plan. Recently, the Council met in committee to discuss what is believed to be one of the final stages of the plan.

July, 1968: *The Draft Scheme of a statutory plan was presented to the public, and Council took the then unusual (it was no longer required by law) step of calling for objections before submitting the plan to the authorities. There were about fifty objections, and some alterations were made.*

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

September, 1968: The July meeting directed the Trust committee to meet Hunter's Hill Council as soon as possible. This meeting took place on August 22. The July meeting expressed its dissatisfaction with Council's draft plan because the plan increased areas for intensive development and allowed this development on sites at present occupied by individual cottages and houses.

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

November, 1968: Impressed by the weight of support for the preservation of Hunter's Hill, the Council was persuaded, first of all, to put the plan on display before it was adopted, and later to

withdraw a large proportion of its proposals for home-unit zoning. During this time, the Trust conducted a plebiscite which confirmed that a large majority of residents did not favour home units. Further representation by the Trust, supported by sympathetic aldermen, resulted in "spot zoning" of about a dozen old homes in areas marked for home units. The position at present is that the draft plan is likely to be sent to the State Planning Authority in the near future (probably before the elections). The Trust believes the plan still contains many undesirable features, and it will continue to battle to have the plan improved.

November, 1968: *At a meeting shortly before a full Council election, Council dealt with the revised Draft Scheme. Every decision had all aldermen's names recorded, and feeling ran high. It was adopted at this special meeting and referred to the State Planning Authority.*

December, 1968: *The Council elected in December immediately called for a withdrawal of the Draft Scheme. The SPA refused to send back the Scheme but agreed to consider any amendment submitted within a reasonable time. A motion was carried that the review be completed in six months. However, instead of revising only the most contentious issue, that of medium density areas, the review became virtually a new plan.*

General Meeting

NOVEMBER 26th

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THE TOWN PLAN (Continued)

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

May, 1969: The Trust Submission is in two parts. Part I contains the Trust's case against further multi-dwellings, proposals for the creation of three protected Historic Districts within the Municipality and recommendations for zoning changes designed to protect the Historic Districts and the foreshores. It also contains a brief history of the area. Part II repeats the section on the history and in addition contains approximately 230 photographs of selected houses, designed to show the wide range of architectural styles within the Municipality and to support the Trust's recommendation for protected areas.

March, 1970: The Hunter's Hill Council has still not finalised the list of amendments it wishes to make to the draft plan submitted to the State Planning Authority by the previous Council. The Trust believes that some finality should be reached as soon as possible on the Draft Plan, as it will take very considerable time to make the plan a fact, even after the Council has made its decision, and there is no evidence that this is yet within sight. The Trust's committee have met with the Council's representatives on three separate occasions to give documented and detailed answers to questions raised by aldermen resulting from the Trust's proposals. The Council has still not indicated its attitude to the Trust's suggestions... Your committee feels that unless plans are finalised and decisions made about the future of the Municipality, the Council cannot hope to make anything but piecemeal decisions and while this is happening, the particular charm and character of the area will be eroded.

May, 1970: Hunter's Hill's original nature, a suburb of villas and cottages in wooded allotments, was established in the 1840's and through the decades the unique village atmosphere of the small stone cottages, imposing mansions, tree-lined streets, leafy lanes, and hewn sandstone walls together with the natural integrating forces of the rivers and sandstone outcrops have provided a stabilising continuity of charm, tradition and history in a city of noise and concrete. There are still natural bushland areas fronting the rivers within the Sydney Harbour area. There are large tracts of mangroves, and there is a vast store of aboriginal relics and art — some of the best but least known in the Sydney Harbour area. Australia must preserve some areas of charm and history as living examples of an earlier age. We need a point of contact with the past, in an Australia of growing ugliness.

April, 1971: The Revised Draft Scheme was completed. It contained provisions on preservation and historic precinct control new to legislation. Council issued another explanatory circular on the scheme, made the scheme available to the public and the scheme was sent to the SPA by June, 1971. Then followed two years of negotiations with the SPA.

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

June, 1971: A Town Plan for Hunter's Hill has been submitted by Council to the State Planning Authority for its ratification. While matters of detail are still being considered by the Trust's Town Planning and Legal Committee, which will soon make submission to Council, the Draft Ordinance includes all of the main points urged by the Hunter's Hill Trust in Section II (The Case for Historic Districts) of its submission to Council in March 1969. The submissions stated that the ideal legislation would contain three main provisions: (1) Control over the external appearance of buildings; (2) Power to prevent demolitions and (3) Control over the major elements of the landscape. To that end the Trust nominated three extensive areas to be made historic districts and, as part of the evidence supporting this proposal, listed and illustrated 226

buildings and Mort's Dock. An important part of the Trust's proposal was the creation of a committee of independent, mostly professional, advisers to whom the Council should be obliged to refer on matters of aesthetic control and historic value. The Council's proposed Historical and Environmental Precincts adopt the locations suggested by the Trust but reduce their areas. The effect of the reductions has, however, been balanced by applying similar preservation provisions to nearly all of the 226 sites listed by the Trust and by introducing a Townscape and Foreshore protection area covering the whole of the Municipality.

September, 1973: The Hunter's Hill Planning Scheme was certified by the Minister. It was exhibited from the 5th of November for four months. Another pamphlet was issued, a series of articles published describing zonings, and open sessions were held for public discussion and explanation. About one thousand people came to the Town Hall to inspect the Scheme, and over three hundred objections were lodged with Council.

June and July, 1974: Mr. W. A. C. Dale was appointed as Commissioner to hear objections to the Scheme. He heard objections in the Council Chambers.

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

August, 1974: In June the Hunter's Hill Trust appeared before Commissioner Dale with objections to the Certified Town Plan. These verbal objections and discussions backed the long and detailed written submissions already lodged with the Authority and the Council. The Trust's comment was that the Certified Plan had enfeebled and obscured those measures in the Draft Plan which were designed to preserve the unique character of the area. In the Trust's view, the Certified Plan does not commit the Council, the SPA or any other authority to preserve the area. As a result it would be possible for a future Council to abandon preservation entirely if wished, without departing from the formal provisions of the Plan. The State Planning Authority, which is a non-elected body of public servants, has seen fit to throw out these proposals entirely. Thus the Certified Plan, which is almost entirely the creation of the SPA, makes no provisions at all for Historic Districts or an Advisory Committee.

January, 1975: The Town Clerk reported that Mr. Dale had completed his report and that Council should consider how it should deal with the report. Council noted the report.

November, 1975: Commissioner Dale's report is being processed by Council staff in their spare time, and is "under consideration" by Council.

The Town Clerk reports that another council recently submitted a plan to the, now, Planning and Environment Commission, and were told it would be sat upon until proposed new legislation is introduced, at any time now.

MEANWHILE, Hunter's Hill Council for its planning decisions is using the Residential District Proclamation, the County of Cumberland Planning Ordinance, which was last reviewed in 1962. Council tries to use the influence of the exhibited planning scheme as far as practicable. Council must take into consideration any restriction existing under the Residential District Proclamation.

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

August, 1975: In the opinion of the Hunter's Hill Trust, if the Planning and Environment Commission and the Minister really mean what is now said on Page 20 of the Blue Book ("Proposals for a New Environmental Planning System"), namely that local Councils will be responsible for the preparation of local plans, then they should take immediate steps to restore to the Hunter's Hill Plan those protective features which were deleted from the Draft Town Plan by the State Planning Authority. The Trust is anxious to take part in further discussions and to make further submissions as the proposals for the new planning system take shape. The Trust submits, with respect, that there are many areas of uncertainty in the present proposals, not the least of which is concerned with the transitional provisions which are to apply to a State where the development of the existing schemes differs from area to area. In Hunter's Hill, for example, the Council is about to consider the Certified Plan in the light of the report by Mr. Commissioner Dale who heard the objections to the draft plan last year and, with respect, many of the statements in the Blue Book would appear to be more easily applied to a State where no Town Planning Schemes at all have been prepared or commenced.

November, 1975: In answer to a question by the Mayor, the Town Clerk reported that he and his staff have completed processing approximately half of the objections to the Town Plan, although they are not yet assembled into subject order and some of the most difficult issues remain.

THE TRUST'S COMMENT

The Hunter's Hill Trust once again requests that Council give priority to the Town Plan:

1. to finalise clerical preparation;
2. to consider, with objectivity and foresight, the issues on which Council must make representation to the PEC.
3. to press to the utmost for the delegated power to lift Hunter's Hill planning above the base level preferred by the PEC.

Because of the urgency of the matter, the Hunter's Hill Trust considers that Council should once more engage its original Town Planner to assist in considering these important issues.

SHOW THAT WEST WARD COUNTS VOTE

An extraordinary election for one alderman will take place in West Ward on November 22nd. Alderman John Templeton has resigned in order to take the job of press secretary to the Premier of South Australia.

The Hunter's Hill Trust takes this opportunity to commend Mr. Templeton for his efforts on behalf of West Ward and the Municipality as a whole. Our observers at Council meetings report that he worked and voted for the removal of the transfer station from Hunter's Hill, and that he represented those who were affected by the noise and dirt nuisance, which has now ended. He took the responsibility of being an alderman as a serious social obligation, and learned a great deal in his year on Council.

There are five candidates standing for election, Messrs. Bryce, Coote, Farrant, Pietor and Sams. Several are new to the local political scene.

Mr. Tony Coote is particularly qualified from the Trust's point of view, as he has completed three years towards a town planning degree, and is an architect. He has worked on the Rocks project, among others, and would seem suitably qualified to serve on a council which must soon finalise its views on the Town Plan. He states

that he would press to have the Town Plan finalised so that Council would make decisions following principles rather than tending towards an ad hoc approach. Boronia Park has been allowed to degenerate to a state where people think of it as a dump or place where a highway might as well go through; it could be saved from this. He is in favour of child care centres.

Mr. Paul Bryce, a lecturer in Engineering shows interest in the social issues such as transport services and child care facilities. On Trust issues, he advocates that Council direct its attention to the overall beauty and character of the Municipality, and that to this end Council must direct its efforts to a unified Town Plan and avail itself of the advice of the Townscape Advisory Committee. Buffalo Creek should be for family use, Boronia Park is neglected.

Mr. Edward Pietor, an Electrical Engineer, stands for good judgement and concern — about rates, environment, transport, community services, and independence. He feels that Council should be the servant of residents, and that it is too early for him to say how zonings should be set. Council should regulate safety, health, and should set the tone of development for the area.

Rachel Henning of Passy

The Hunter's Hill Dramatic Club will present "Rachel Henning" at All Saints' Hall, Ambrose Street, at 8:00 p.m., from Tuesday to Saturday, November 25th to 29th.

This is an original play based on "The Letters of Rachel Henning" and is written and produced by members of the Club, who have done much research not only into the letters themselves but also into the history, customs, and costumes of the fifty years' span covered in the writing.

Members of the Trust will be particularly interested in the dramatisation. It depicts Rachel from the start of her original voyage to Australia in 1854. After two years, restless and homesick, she returned to her native Somerset, but in 1861 her love for her sisters and brother, Biddulph, decided her to try again, and this time the challenge and contrast of life in Queensland gave her satisfaction and excitement, and she never saw England again. Fortunately, her remaining sister in England, "My dearest Etta", kept all her letters, with the vivid comments on her experiences in Queensland and New

South Wales and later in various parts of Hunter's Hill. And then the three who started life together in Australia ended it peacefully together at Passy, in Passy Avenue.

The Hunter's Hill Dramatic Club has presented plays and readings continuously for over forty-five years and is known as the second oldest play reading group in Australia. This is their most ambitious venture and is worthy of support.

Bookings can be made at the Village Store or by phone to Mrs. Hunter at 896-1124 and Mrs. Armstrong at 888-6002.

LOST, STRAYED OR STOLEN?

It has been reported to the Trust that the old village pump has vanished. It had been in the yard of "Milano" 31 Madeline Street. The house was owned by Angelo Tornaghi, who was mayor of Hunter's Hill in 1879.

As pumps are neither light nor easily detachable, the removalist must have been extremely determined and well-equipped. We regret the disappearance of this bit of Hunter's Hill's history.

Trust Activities

Auxiliary News

The Auxiliary will be holding an area inspection of the Gladesville Mental Hospital early next year. A delightful walk is planned around the many old buildings, including the old Priory. A detailed account of the history and architecture will be provided, as well as the opportunity to picnic during the day.

The Auxiliary would be pleased to hear of houses suitable for House Inspections. Such houses ideally would be instructive in architecture and renovation, or could show the diverse ways of benefitting from the natural surroundings.

The Auxiliary would like to thank Mrs. Scrivener and Mrs. Wareham for lending their houses for a fund-raising morning tea and inspection for a medical conference.

Also to be thanked are the many faithful helpers who keep the Trust Centre running.

General Meeting

Speaker: the Mayor, Ald. L.J. Crawley
on

The Town Plan
and

Other Matters of Interest

8 p.m. Wed. November 26th
at the Hunter's Hill Tennis Club
Christmas Party

The speaker at the General Meeting, to be held on November 26th, will be the Mayor of Hunter's Hill, Alderman Leon J. Crawley. In this, his second year as Mayor, Ald. Crawley is continuing to show that a mayor who is approachable by all groups can be a strong unifying force in the community. We are delighted to have a chance to discuss interests which the Council and the Trust have in common, and to share plans for future aims.

The official business of the meeting will be short, to allow time for the Christmas Party. The venue of the Tennis Club will allow, weather permitting, for the conviviality to spill outside.

TRUST CENTRE HOURS

Tuesday	10 to 12:30
Wednesday	10 to 12:30
Saturday	9:30 to 11:45
Sunday	2 to 4:30

CARDS

The Hunter's Hill Trust has a new series of correspondence cards now available at the Trust Centre or by application to Mrs. Cousins, at 896-1067 or Mrs. King at 89-1617.

There are four designs, each depicting an early cottage in Hunter's Hill. They have been done for the Trust by Carl Romandi, in sepia on a cream background. The cards would be suitable for Christmas, and the Centre has Unicef Christmas cards as well.

RECYCLING

Because the Hunter's Hill Trust has felt that rubbish tips could progressively despoil the natural reserves and bushland we still have, a sub-committee researched the alternatives.

The State Government has relieved the pressure by refusing to allow Council to operate a transfer station anywhere in the Municipality. Boronia Park is safe — unless irresponsible residents dump their rubbish there in the mistaken belief that their little bit doesn't quite count.

There is much that we can do individually to keep Hunter's Hill's bushland green and rubbish-free. The Trust would like to hand over to a local group, the Scouts, its scheme for recycling. We hope that residents will take the trouble to recycle a little money to the Scouts, thus showing that we are full of more than hot air.

Starting on the 1st of February, three types of rubbish may be taken to the Scout yard at Durham Street:

bottles, including broken glass (cullit)
aluminium cans, preferably squashed
waste paper

Waste Recycling Ltd. will leave a truck one day a week between 8 and 4:30. They will pay \$17 a ton for newsprint and \$12 a ton for cardboard, magazines. This effort will benefit both the Scouts and the Municipality, which now pays to dispose of our rubbish. Other recycling schemes have found that because of a relatively low level of public response, the cost of waste to a community remains high. Can Hunter's Hill do better?

DON'T DELAY — BECOME A TRUST MEMBER NOW!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name.....Telephone.....

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

Type of Membership: Single — \$2.00
Family — \$4.00
Pensioner — \$1.00
Youth — \$1.00

Membership of Auxiliary an additional 50c.

Please return to: **Hunters Hill Trust, P.O. Box 85, Hunters Hill 2110**