



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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WHAT PRICE ENVIRONMENT?

The possibility of spurious environmental protection was discussed at the Trust's Annual General Meeting on May 30th, following a stimulating talk by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Total Environment Centre.

Mr. Dunphy informed the meeting that the Australian Government last year refused to send a representative to the 1978 World Heritage Committee, thus negating its earlier action in setting up committees to select areas to be nominated for preservation.

The Australian Conservation Foundation, the National Heritage Commission and two special committees recommended that the Alligator Rivers Region and the Great Barrier Reef Region be classified under the World Heritage Convention, of which Australia is a signatory.

He said, "The reasons for this omission become plainer each day as the mining industry's campaign to establish itself in the Kakadu region proceeds and as the oil companies campaign for permission to drill for oil in the Great Barrier Reef area (only part is to be protected in the recent State-Federal agreement) accelerates. Classification of Kakadu and the Reef under the World Heritage Convention would bind the Federal Government 'to ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation' of those two areas. Under the Convention there could be no question of shuffling off responsibility for drilling the reef onto Queensland."

Mr. Dunphy suggested that other States have been quick to see the usefulness of Queensland's technique of declaring vast areas as national parks, but permitting mining, logging and pastoral activities. The N.S.W. Minister for Planning and Environment announced the government's proposal to dedicate the State's second largest national park, over the

Colo River area. Then conservation groups became aware that the Minister for Mines had also made an announcement, to coal industry executives: "In some areas of parks where coal is present there will still remain a total prohibition on mining activity. Varying degrees of activity will be permitted in other areas after the most thorough environmental scrutiny....greatest care so that minimum damage to the environment is caused....every effort will be made to ensure that the public's enjoyment of our national parks is not interfered with unduly. There is no chance that our national parks will be despoiled and scarred permanently by ill-planned mines or irresponsible operators...." Members of the Trust were left trying to reconcile the two Ministers' views of the Colo area, even if the statements avowing intentions of preserving the environment were effective in practice.

Milo Dunphy continued, "Before Mr. Bjelke Petersen came up with his formula we were accustomed to parks being dedicated after ten to forty years of conservation effort and being restricted by the politicians to those areas which contained no exploitable resources. Now we seem to be entering an era of grand announcements of vast, so called parks in which the exploiters will thrive as if no park existed."

He proceeded to mention the several worthwhile advances made by the present State Government, both for parks and in the curtailing of beach mining (about 200 miles of our 380 mile coast has already been mined).

Members of the Hunter's Hill Trust at the A.G.M. were left with the feeling that there is an urgent need to let the governments know that there is an increasing number of people aware and committed to preservation of the natural environment, here in Australia.

THE PAST YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

At the Annual General Meeting held on May 30th, a report of the year's activities and efforts was given.

The Hunter's Hill Trust has pressed for a Town Plan (one adequate for preservation needs would be even better), as it has every year since the Trust's inception in 1968. The Trust has written the State Government asking whether it can justify the delay in view of the steady losses (walls and houses demolished, small cottages overshadowed by new development). Many examples show Council's lack of

planning control. When the Town Plan is brought down, there will be much work to be done in evaluating its probable effects and implications.

A House Inspection was held, centering in Bateman's Road. The inspection provided a great deal of interesting information about the area from residents and people whose families had lived there many years ago, and this has been of great value to our researchers. In addition, the special nature of small cottages was demonstrated, and several different

solutions to the problem of adding such things as kitchens and bathrooms were shown, some in progress. The Trust is immensely grateful to those people who opened their houses for inspection.

The Hunter's Hill Trust sent representatives to a meeting whose purpose was to organise groups such as ours into a Sydney Harbour Foreshores Committee. The Harbour's magnificence is still undeniable, in spite of what has been done to it in the last two hundred years. This group intends to present information and arguments to governmental bodies which will convince them that environmental planning is essential for the entire Harbour.

Especial thanks are due to:

Ewan Cheyne-MacPherson, Past President, who has done much for the Trust, including shepherding the

production and generating the idea of life membership badges which will soon be available, both tangible contributions which will be remembered along with his cheerful and tireless efforts;

Fred Hinde, Past Secretary, who somehow kept up with the Committee's letter-writing zeal as well as contributing much advice and participating in the Townscape Advisory Committee;

Liz Steenbeek and Monica King, the Gallery ladies who field enquires for the Trust at the Centre and hold a sale record for the Trust book;

Knud Knudsen, who prints the JOURNAL at cost and 'yesterday' when the Trust has deadlines to meet;

Joan Croll, Anne McNally, Kath Lehany and others - the power behind Trust functions.

NEW COMMITTEE 1979-80

Dr. Alan Bradfield
4 Lot Lane, 89-4444

Mrs. Alice Oppen
3 Madeline Street, 89-5175

Dr. David Bryant
10 Toocooya Road, 89-4139

Mr. Peter Pinson
22 Prince George Parade, 89-2235

Mr. Neil Comerford
16 Mars Street, 89-2137

Mrs. Anne McNally
14 John Street, 89-2035

Dr. Joan Croll
44 The Point Road, 89-1692

Mr. Michael Lehany
3 Venus Street, 89-2248

Mrs. Gill Reddick
10 Woolwich Road, 816-2750

President

Vice President
Journal

Secretary
Co-ordinator of
Subcommittees

Treasurer

Minutes Secretary

Membership Secretary
Recorder of 'Recollections'
Convener, Social C'ttee

Convener, Architecture
Subcommittee

Appointed as Advisers

Dr. Alec Dircks
18 Woolwich Road, 89-2110

Mrs. Marjorie Fitzgerald
4 Prince Edward Parade, 89-2147

History Subcommittee

History Subcommittee

Co-opted as Committee Members

Prof. Reg Martin
2b Margaret Street, 89-2178

Judge Richard Barbour
12 Ferry Street, 896-2470

Mr. Kerry Bennett
23 Glenview Crescent, 896-2749

Dr. Fred Hinde
15 Kareelah Road, 896-2971

Mr. Ron Barrelle
68b Woolwich Road, 896-1479

Mrs. Jenny Pinson
22 Prince George Parade, 89-2235

Mrs. Kath Lehany
5 Gladstone Avenue, 89-2248

Legal and Town Planning
Subcommittee

Architecture Subcommittee

History Subcommittee

Publicity Officer

Positions of Centre Manager and Archivist are still to be filled, and volunteers would be welcomed with delight. Please contact the appropriate Committee members with information, offers of help or suggestions.

DISASTER LIST

20 Vernon Street has been demolished.

The Hunter's Hill Trust wrote to Council notifying it of rumours that a subdivision plan before Council would result in demolition of 20 Vernon Street.

As far as the Trust can tell from records, this was the house owned by Charles Wright in 1885. More significantly, it was one of a row of three houses built in the 1880's; their appearance from the water and surrounding foreshores added considerably to the historic effect of the townscape. Demolition of the weatherboard and stone, two-story house and possible subsequent building of several structures extending towards the waterfront area is a retrograde step.

If this kind of erosion continues along the Lane Cove River, that aspect of Hunter's Hill could come to resemble the closely-built development along Luke's Bay below Lyndhurst Crescent.

If the Hunter's Hill Trust had been notified that demolition had started, the Trust could have alerted the Heritage Council, who were aware of the danger and who have the power to halt demolition. Trust members are urged to report demolishing activities to 89-5175 or 89-3035.

WATCH LIST

St. Joseph's College has recently purchased 11 Mark Street, the one remaining weatherboard cottage in that area. It has been reported to the Trust that St. Joseph's College (or, more precisely, the owners of the land they use, The Marist Brothers) has demolished or seen accidentally burn eight houses in the last ten or so years. The trend seems clear: historic houses are being cleared away to make room for the College's developing sporting complexes. It is greatly to be regretted that an institution with such fine historic buildings which it enjoys within its central grounds is destroying some of the 1880's cottages and expanding into the neighbourhood. How long will 11 Mark Street last?

23 Madeline Street, a small cottage in a row of small cottages, is to have a two-storey addition. It is a charming cottage, and whatever the additions look like, its diminutiveness and character as an 1850's cottage will be affected. Henry Glasscock, town clerk in 1862, lived there, and one room of his stone house was used as a council chamber.

Restoration and Renovation

In a series of articles, features which identify historical periods in architecture have been identified, and the suggestion has been made that much of the charm and value of the house can be enhanced by preserving such features.

The Trust has previously concentrated on buildings of the 1800's because they were a determining factor in the development and character of Hunter's Hill, but there are numerous Federation houses which deserve recognition and sympathetic treatment.

Building materials used in Federation houses were more often red brick than stone. The roofs sloped, as had Colonial roofs, but were ornamented by almost oriental ridge-cappings of red tile. Shape and massing of these houses tended to be asymmetrical, and turrets and towers were used for this. Federation houses were usually one-storey high, and changes such as adding a second storey or raising the roof line will mark the house as one which has been tampered with.

Windows, as with Colonial houses, were vertical, doublehung or casement windows; the Federation addition is coloured glass. Many antique and second-hand dealers sell Federation panels for windows and doors of great beauty and imaginative decoration. Glaziers are now trying to imitate this work, with mixed results..

Verandahs are still an important feature by the Federation period, both for the practicality of the shelter they afford and for the design interest. They tended to be dominated by ornate wooden trim, which can be repaired or duplicated with care. The woodwork is often one of the most noticeable features of the house, fanciful in an Art Nouveau style, curvilinear or geometric. It stands out, with the shadow of the verandah behind it, and is an essential feature which modernisation would bastardise. Stain did not exist, and paint should be used on trim.

For the interiors of houses, a little searching will bring great rewards. Moulded ceilings, plaster floral or geometric cornices are still being made from old moulds. Demolition yards or second-hand shops carry old fireplaces, doorknobs, light fittings, doors, skirting boards.....

Restoring an old house, whether early or late Victorian or Federation, can become an absorbing hobby (obsession?). The result is a house that has become a home by right of hard labour; the result is also a segment of history that is appreciating in value as time goes on.

Policy Statements

FORESHORE LAND: The Hunter's Hill Trust has had communication with the Lands Department, and has reiterated Trust policy that foreshore land should, wherever possible, exist in a natural state and be open to public access. Where land becomes available, through sale or subdivision, the Hunter's Hill Trust would like to see foreshore areas removed from leasing arrangements and/or donated to the Municipal Council as a Parks and Gardens contribution. The Trust feels that in no circumstances should private ownership of foreshore land be used to permit subdivisions which otherwise would not be permitted.

PARKLAND: The Hunter's Hill Trust has been approached in recent months by both the Rugby Union Football Club and the group of residents in the Boronia area which is opposed to development in the Park. The Trust's aim is to preserve parkland within the Municipality, and therefore to oppose encroachment thereon by such a building as proposed for Boronia Park. Fortunately, when the Town Hall is reopened, meeting space will be more plentiful than ever before.

BOAT RAMPS: It is disturbing to note that the Maritime Services Board, the Planning and Environment Commission and commercial boating interests have co-operated to publish a booklet of plans to expand boating facilities in Sydney Harbour and Pittwater. Conservation groups were not contacted so that they might provide a balance to commercial interests. For Hunter's Hill, there are proposals for extending existing facilities considerably at Clarke's Point (where? what existing facilities?) and for a marina at Gladesville Park. All this should come as a surprise to Hunter's Hill Council, which stated on 22 May that "the position of Council is fairly stated as being opposed to the provision of additional ramps in the Municipality of Hunter's Hill". The Trust as a member of the Sydney Harbour Foreshores Group, would like to see a study done on how much power boating the Harbour can take without further ecological damage, before boating interests expand their activities. Again it is open space reserved for passive recreation which is at risk.

Footnote: the Town clerk states that Council was sent a copy of the report and advised that the proposal for Clarke's Point has been scrapped.

ACTIVITIES

AUGUST 8th DINNER

A delegation of Trust members has reported that the French cuisine is imaginative as well as delicious and the ambience is intoxicating at the Jean Pierre Restaurant in Burns Bay Road.

We have a group booking for our own room there for Trust members and their guests. The cost is \$11 per person (bring your own wine).

Dine Magnificently
in
Congenial Company

From 7.30 o'clock
Reservations 89-2035
or P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill

PICNIC AND WALK

A picnic will be held at Clarke's Point on November 4th, starting at noon. Maps and descriptions of reserves and some houses will be available for those who wish to walk in the area afterwards.

B.Y.O. Food

NEXT HOUSE INSPECTION

It is planned that the next house inspection will be held in April, in conjunction with a photographic exhibition. To offer houses and/or photographs, telephone Joan Croll, 89-1692.

ALL SAINTS' SPRING FLOWER FESTIVAL

On September 15th and 16th, a second Spring Flower Festival will be held in All Saints Church, Ferry Street.

The glorious display last year attracted visitors from near and far and was enjoyed by all who saw it. The Hunter's Hill Trust has been asked to enter an arrangement in the display. A display of needlework, patchwork and tapestry will be on view, and music will be featured throughout the festival.

The Festival will be open each day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be available in the Church Hall. Floral items stationery, Church histories will be sold; proceeds will go to the restoration and maintenance of the Church, which was opened in 1888, having being designed in the office of Horbury Hunt.

For further details, telephone Mrs. Vincent, 89-4099.

SAY YOUR PIECE

The Hunter's Hill Trust has for years been asking the State Government for zoning adequate for our protection from unsympathetic development. Something like Paddington special zone (land use may be frozen after an unauthorised demolition), with strict controls on appearance as well as the usual size and usage restrictions is essential.

The Committee now wonders if members would like to write down their comments on the matter, together with examples of good and bad planning decisions reflected in the buildings around them. The Committee can then collate the evidence necessary to press for special zoning and historic district

Name

Address

I/We support the Trust's move for special protection of areas of Hunter's Hill

The need can be seen (where)

The following buildings, streets or areas are endangered

The following buildings, walls, streets, streetscapes have been adversely affected by lack of Council control in the ten years

The Trust should

Please send to
The Editor, JOURNAL
Hunter's Hill Trust
P.O. Box 85
Hunter's Hill

Alternatively, well-documented letters could be sent directly to Council Alderman, the Member for Fuller, the Minister for Planning and Environment.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name Telephone

Address Postcode

Willing to help with

Type of Membership:

Single

Family

Pensioner

Student

Life Member

1979-80

\$ 5.00

10.00

1.00

1.00

75.00

Due Ma

The Hunters Hill Trust,
Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110

The Trust C
The Hunter's Hill G