



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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THE SWING TO RESTORATION

Encouraging signs of increasing interest in preserving buildings as a part of our heritage and architectural history:

Books

Until recently, "how to" knowledge for renovating old buildings has been hard to come by. The *JOURNAL* has run a series of articles designed to interest readers in the features and techniques which make the difference between a trendy job and restoration. The Hunter's Hill Trust's architectural advisers (Ron Barrelle and Fred Hinde) have often referred to the publication "Restoring Old Australian Houses and Buildings: An Architectural Guide" by Howard Tanner and Philip Cox. This book gives detailed analyses of the major period styles of architecture, and explains techniques involved and remedies for the aches of age — damp, cracks, mutilation by owners, and so forth. Unfortunately, this book is now out of print and it has become a prize to be lent among the free-masonry of house restorers.

Now a new book has been published, titled "Restoring Old Houses", by Ian Evans. Written for the widening audience of people interested in "how to" authentically, the book is a masterpiece of clarity, combining discussion of past life-styles and methods of construction with practical, specific advice on how to deal with repairs. In addition, an appendix lists suppliers of building materials — such as plaster cornices and centre roses, ironwork, chimney pots, brass fittings, joinery, slate roofing . . . Ian Evans, a Glebe resident, has made his book available through the Glebe Society as well as through bookstores. The Hunter's Hill Trust strongly recommends that renovators purchase this book, as a thorough reading will make restoration not only possible, but fascinating.

Newspapers

Articles in the Sydney Morning Herald in October have focussed on the change in public attitude towards the preservation of buildings for their architectural merit and their increasing value as heritage. In effect, old buildings are becoming a fashion and their restoration an economy.

The Property Reporter wrote: "An historic home is a challenge for a buyer, whether it be a restored police station of the 1880's or an elegant early 1900's home with stained glass windows and patterned ceilings. More people are

becoming aware of the merits of buying an architecturally significant building to preserve rather than demolish or modernise. The cause is not just an interest in NSW's history — which prompted the formation of the Heritage Council of NSW last year — but also the return to fashion of older objects and the need to conserve resources."

The Environment Writer reported that the Faculty of Architecture at the University of NSW has launched a new post-graduate degree course in building conservation, offering a degree of Master of the Built Environment. He pointed out that "historic building restoration, as specialist architects such as Mr. Clive Lucas, of Elizabeth Bay House fame, have shown, is a high art form. There is a need also for sympathetic restorers of commercial buildings", and the course is meant to appeal to engineers, builders, town planners, historians, economists and psychologists. And alderman, in their 'spare time'?

Legislation

One possible reason for the increased interest in preservation of the built environment may be that the Heritage Council is now actively working, providing advice and protection on an expert level. The Heritage Council's listing of the 'Garibaldi', for example, is ensuring that the new owners of the building are receiving advice from an architect skilled in restoration work, Howard Tanner. Bodies like the Hunter's Hill Trust take heart from these multiple signs of a change in the aesthetic climate; progress is being redefined in terms of architectural excellence from all periods of building.

see inside for . . .

Stone Walls of Hunter's Hill

Black Lucy

PICNIC at Clarke's Point, Nov. 18

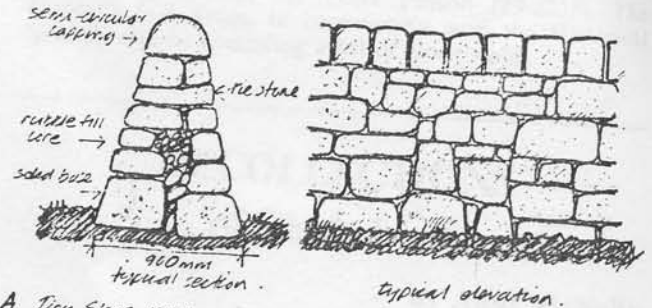
CHRISTMAS CRUISE, Nov. 28

STONE WALLS OF HUNT

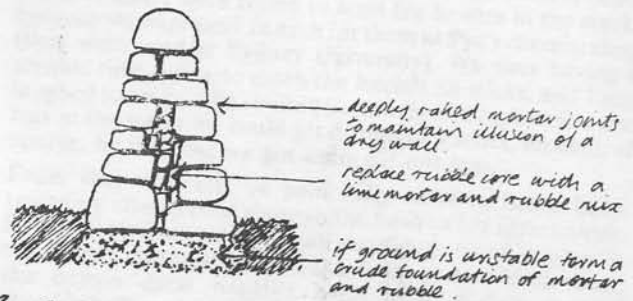
It is the stone walls together with what remains of the early tree planting that makes up the unique and attractive townscape in much of Hunter's Hill. At present, our beautiful stone walls (many still clearly defining the boundaries of the early estates) exist entirely at the whim of individual property owners. The recent demolition of a handsome long wall in a main street of the Municipality is a sad reflection of this entirely unsatisfactory state of affairs. The wall belonged to a house whose architectural significance has been severely damaged as well, and the wall, along with neighbouring walls, had formed an important landscape element. The Hunter's Hill Trust believes that virtually all stone walls in the district should be placed under a Conservation Order.

Dry Stone Walls

A Conservation Order would apply to all stone walls, whether the wall is visible as a streetscape element or, as is often the case, an old dry stone wall remaining hidden as a rear or side fence. From illustration 'A' it can be seen that these early 'dry stone' walls are built wide at the base, for stability, and taper elegantly towards the top. The internal irregular core is then protected by a capping of shaped stone pieces. Long stretches of these walls remain in Hunter's Hill, especially as side or rear boundaries to the houses built around the middle of the last century. Unfortunately these walls, often a little collapsed and dishevelled after one

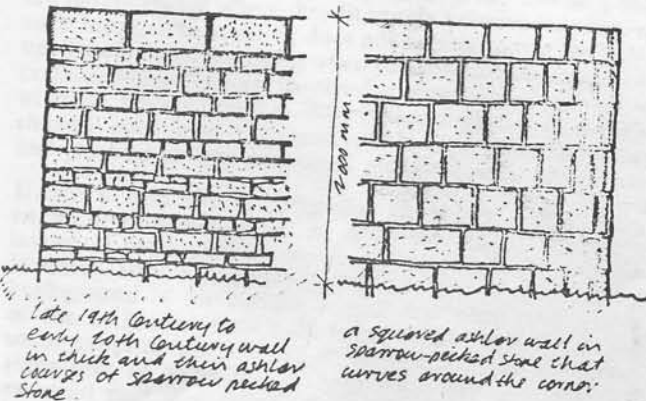
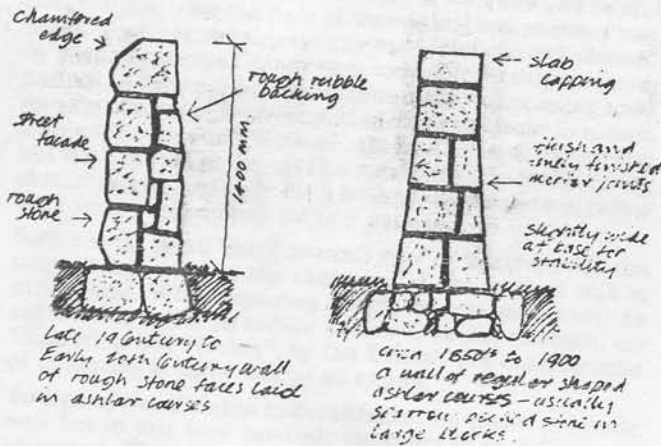


A. Dry Stone Wall. Wide at the base for stability.



B. Repairing a dry stone wall with 'hidden mortar'.

C. Walls and cappings of various types.



hundred and thirty years' service, now spread up to one metre across the base. With subdivisions becoming smaller, and side set-backs for buildings now being one metre, these walls are in the way and are often simply bulldozed down. One wall was taken to the dump only to be replaced by a standard paling fence, another was tidied away by a gardener in the owner's absence.

Dry stone walling may be repaired or reconstructed with 'hidden mortar' joints. Lime or soft mortar must be used and as illustration 'B' shows, the mortar is very deeply raked back from the outside edge or simply placed at the back under each individual stone. With either method the idea is to maintain the illusion of the stones being 'set' without the use of mortar, as in a real dry wall.

Mortared Walls

Most walls, however, are a variation on the standard mortar type wall. Some typical designs are shown in illustration 'C'. Walls of this type range from the modest one and a half metre up to where the wall forms part of the building. Examples of the latter may be seen in the beautiful old walls of the Villa Maria complex at the southern end of Mary Street and, as shown on the cover of "Old Buildings of Hunter's Hill", the wall and arch of 'Innisfree' in Ady Street. Walls of squared regular stone are usually laid in 'ashlar' courses; the individual blocks can be 'sparrow pecked', slightly 'rusticated', or smooth finished. The sparrow pecked walls are usually the oldest, dating from the first settlement, while the rusticated walls date from late nineteenth to early twentieth century. This rough stone was also used around Federation houses in combination with timber pickets, palings and horizontal members. Walls of this type may be seen in Toocooya Road and Woolwich Road between Tice Avenue and Gladstone Avenue.

HUNTER'S HILL

The stone for all of these walls was plentiful until the 1920's, when very few walls were being constructed. With dry stone walls, especially, small pieces of scrap stone could be used from material left over from house construction. The Ferry Street area is particularly rich in stone walls, especially the wharf or southern end. Many of these walls define the original property lines of the early prefabricated timber Exhibition houses built in the 1850's. As three out of the four houses have fallen prey to white ants and demolishers, these interesting old walls remain as a link with those quaint old dwellings. A tall section of dry walling, originally belonging to 'Croissy', still stands, built upon rock below the corner of Croissy Avenue. The remaining walls in the area are of mortared type or dry stone repaired with mortar. The rich variety of cappings is worthy of note.

The Correct Mortar

It is the mass of stone walls that keeps them together rather than the 'stick' of the old style lime based mortar. That is, the mortar is used as a bedding medium, not as a 'glue'. Modern cement mortar is not recommended for use in either the construction of new stone walls or for repair and re-tuckpointing of old walls. This hard, impervious mortar can often set off a series of chemical and physical reactions that result in the rapid decomposition or 'fretting' of the stone fabric. For the correct mortar to use with old masonry, see "Maintaining and Restoring Masonry Walls", a booklet published by the National Trust, available for \$5.00 at the National Trust bookshop at Observatory Hill.

Another important point to note when repairing and re-tuckpointing old stone walls is to try to determine, by careful observation, what the style of the original tuckpointing was. Small diameter metal tubing or metal rod can be fashioned by a stone mason or handyman, to enable the original lining pattern to be reproduced, or traditional tuckpointing tools may be adequate. It is essential to allow the stone to remain the dominant visual element in the finished restoration, and not the new tuckpointing. This means that the tuckpointing should remain virtually flush with the stone surface, rather than form a prominent ridging pattern.

Soft mortar (lime based mortar) ages or weathers with the stone fabric so that the character of the original wall is maintained. When repairing a wall, the new mortar may be coloured in order to reduce its new look (for methods, see "Restoring Old Houses", by Ian Evans). The exact amount of colouring is safest left to an expert.

To a good stone mason and craftsman, the quality of a stone wall lies in just how carefully the edges of each block are respected. Thus, in high quality walling, the mortar joints are barely visible where they fit snugly between the edges of each block. The pointing does not actually cover the edges up. This is understandable when you consider the amount of craftsmanship and care involved in squaring up large blocks of stone prior to laying. Where blocks have been crudely shaped, such as in mortared rubble wall, then the mortar and jointing-pattern assumes a greater design importance.

Hunter's Hill has a delightful variety of stone walls, either free standing or as retaining walls. When the layout of these walls is considered as part of the original Hunter's Hill, it is possible to get a hint of the cultural background of the French, Italian and other nationalities of the craftsmen who built them. Illustration 'C' shows some capping and courses styles that are the individual signatures of these men. These walls are thus then an essential part of our environmental heritage and deserve immediate conservation protection.

If there is a wall that you think should be noted near by, then please contact the following: for west of expressway, contact Mr Michael Leahy (816-1526), and for east of the expressway, contact Mr Peter Pinson (89-2235). The Hunter's Hill Trust, in conjunction with the Historical Society, will be compiling a list of stone walls.

RECOLLECTIONS

of Black Lucy

— by Anne McNally

My first meeting with Black Lucy was in the bush near Smithy's Pond. She was the last living member of the tribe that had been here, and she was a Princess. Several other children and I were trying to hunt for leeches in the creek, because we were paid 1c each for them at Pye's chemist shop (they were used at Sydney University). We were having a terrible time trying to catch the leeches on sticks, and Lucy laughed to see us. She showed us how by putting our feet and legs in the water we could get dozens of leeches, bloated, of course, by the time we got them off our legs.

From that time on, we paid daily visits to Black Lucy, tramping after school through the bush to her little humpy. How well I remember that small wiry figure, the skinny legs in their black cotton stockings, the down-at-heel black shoes, the cotton dress hanging from thin, slightly stooped shoulders. But more than anything I remember her pride in her people, and her love of the bush and all its creatures. Lucy would show us plants and berries that you could eat, where the best tadpoles and frogs were, and how to catch lizards and snakes. Her favourite meal was a nice young snake cooked in the hot coals. Maybe it tasted good, but the smell of burning snake skin . . .

Accompanied by several dogs (always black and white) and carrying several bunches of red-tipped gum leaves, she was a familiar sight walking through Gladesville shopping centre. The gum leaves were her payment for her "tucker", as she called it. She was impartial in her favours in dealing with the grocers; all shops received a bunch of gum leaves and she would select what she wanted, but there was only one butcher shop, Wilson's, she favoured. She would stand and argue till she got the best cut of meat and always a meal for her beloved dogs.

In her latter years, a two-roomed house was built for her, with chairs, a sofa, bed (after all, everyone agreed that her age she shouldn't be sleeping in a "gunyah" in the open). There was a little ceremony, the key given, Lucy thanked everyone with a beaming smile, then with true Black Lucy logic she chased the fowls, two goats and the dogs into the house, and went back to her bed in the bush.

The last time I saw her she was sitting on the ground telling us a story of her tribe, a little told in pidgin English, but mostly drawn with a stick in the dry dusty soil, mistakes rubbed out with a brown dusty toe.

I'm sure many people would remember Black Lucy's funeral. Shops closed, storekeepers stood silently outside their shops. All children from the Gladesville schools lined the footpath as the cortege went past on its way to the Field of Mars Cemetery. We mourned her passing, for she had given us a glimpse of another way of life entirely different from our own.

Footnotes:

Smithy's Pond was located in the bush opposite the old Peaty house, 13 Mars Street.

Lucy's house was built near the creek now the canal, at the rear of where 28 Auburn Street is now.

ACTIVITIES

PICNIC at Clarke's Point

On Sunday, 18 November, the Trust will hold a picnic on one of Sydney's newest harbourside parks, Clarke's Point, Woolwich. There is no charge. We ask people to bring their food, family, friends — even their fishing gear — to enjoy the park, with its spectacular views of the upper Harbour from Greenwich to the City, Balmain and Cockatoo Island. Later, perhaps visitors will explore some of Hunter's Hill's stone-walled streets — we hope the jacaranda trees will be in bloom.

Clarke's Point was part of a grant to John Clarke in 1834. Later it was to become part of Mort's Dock. Local residents gathered here to watch with pride new ships being launched from the slipway opposite Cockatoo Island. When Mort's Dock closed down, part of their estate was acquired by the Army, but Clarke's Point was proposed for various sorts of development by an industrial company. In 1873 the N.S.W. Government purchased it for use as a reserve, and in 1976 it was placed in the care and management of Hunter's Hill Council. After cleaning up the area, Council planted hundreds of trees and vast areas of lawn. With the care and planning of the Clarke's Point Committee — which consists of citizens and several aldermen — a beautiful park is developing. The general improvement in the Parramatta River has resulted in good catches of fish from the stone wall.

Inquiries about the picnic may be made from Mrs. McNally (89-2035) and Mrs. Oppen (89-5175). The picnic will begin at 12 o'clock, and members of the Hunter's Hill Trust will welcome visitors.

HELP WANTED column

BOATS, preferably with interested owner, for weekday photography.

PHOTOGRAPHS, of Hunter's Hill and its people; any of Black Lucy?

MEMORIES, for our Recollections file.

Have you discovered the National Trust sales counter on the sixth floor of David Jones' Elizabeth Street store? Christmas gifts available.

BOOK FAIR at Total Environment Centre, 3rd Floor, Argyle Arts Centre, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney.

The Hunter's Hill Trust's thanks go to the Hunter's Hill Gallery for housing the Trust Centre, answering enquiries and selling books, and to Hunter's Hill Horticulture (which is at the garden side of the Gallery) for professional assistance and telephone answering.

CHRISTMAS CRUISE

Now established as a Trust annual event, the Christmas party and General Meeting will take place on the MV EVE, on November 28th, a Wednesday. Christmas fare will include turkey ham, salads, pavlovas, Christmas cake — all prepared by dedicated Trust chefs (to become a Trust chef, ring 89-2035). Pre-dinner drinks will be provided; guests are requested to bring any other refreshment. Tickets are \$12, and numbers are naturally limited by the size of the boat. For reservations, please telephone 89-5175.

Valentia Street

7.00	embark, short General Meeting
7.30	cruise around foreshores
8.00	return for latecomers
10.00	return (early bird)
11.15	return (owl)

WATERSCAPE

The concept of "townscape" and the need for consideration in planning for the over-all view of an area and protection of key elements in it has gained recognition since the Hunter's Hill Trust pressed for district preservation over ten years ago.

The Trust's new project is "waterscape", the view of an area of foreshore from the water and from headlands. Much of the visual value of Hunter's Hill can be found where land and water meet, in bays, coves, expanses of bushland reserves and waterside parks, in gardens where planting adds grace to the facade of buildings. Some areas are endangered by possibilities of subdivision, access roads and buildings which will take the place of existing vegetation; some areas are endangered by overdevelopment of sites, where a man's castle must include pool, cabana, boatshed, etc.

The foreshore building line was put in the Town Plan (remember the Town Plan?) in order to protect the waterscape, and the Hunter's Hill Trust has written to Council protesting at a recent decision to allow building below it.

Because it can be difficult to evaluate some foreshore areas from the land, the Trust is compiling a photographic record from the water. Douglass Baglin, long a helpful member of the Trust, is photographing the foreshore line, which means that we will not only have an invaluable record to present to the Heritage Council, but we will have superb pictures to demonstrate the aesthetic value of some of the areas. Mac Taplin and Garth Dewsnap are acting as boatmen, and the Trust owes all three men heartfelt thanks.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name Telephone
 Address Postcode
 Willing to help with

Type of Membership:

Single	1979-80
Family	\$ 5.00
Pensioner	10.00
Student	1.00
Life Member	1.00
	75.00

Due March 1

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

The Trust Centre
 The Hunter's Hill Gallery