



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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WITHOUT THE TOWN PLAN

There are alarming signs that the delay in the preparation of the Town Plan is costing Hunter's Hill dearly in terms of development which is allowable until the Town Plan comes into force.

Planning for the Town Plan was begun in the 1960's. It is now 1980 and the Town Plan is still 'imminent' **but not in effect**. While Council in cases tries to adhere to the intentions of the Town Plan, there are naturally pressures towards developments which will not be permissible in the future.

The Townscape Advisory Committee has proved to be of great benefit in the difficult areas of consistency of design and constructive advice on proposals.

However, the Trust has been greatly concerned by complaints from residents. In the opinion of the Trust, decisions of Council should be regulated by a Town Plan.

Several problem areas stand out:

Foreshore Building Line — An application for a building extending below the foreshore building line which the Planning and Environment Commission is extending to fifteen metres was passed and one, very much more extensive, was deferred. A foreshore reserve has been cleared of low growth along the Lane Cove River near a Council-owned boatshed. A brick wall three or four feet high has been built on the water line on top of a retaining wall.

The concept of a foreshore building line is vital in retaining the natural line of Hunter's Hill's waterscape.

Building Materials — Plans for the restoration of the facade of the Town Hall have not to our knowledge been referred to the Townscape Advisory Committee, and Council has permitted itself to install plate glass windows with aluminium frames instead of matching the timber surrounds and crosspieces of the windows and doors which remained after the fire. After correspondence, a meeting was arranged among representatives of the Hunter's Hill Trust, the

National Trust and the Architect. Council's subsequent report adopts the opinion that Council "should keep an open mind on the question" until completion of the Town Hall. As changing the windows and doors later would increase the cost of change from \$7,000 to \$10,000, the Hunter's Hill Trust is dismayed at Council's decision. We fear that by this lack of action Council is placing itself in an untenable position in trying to ensure that other buildings are renovated with consistency of detail and material for the period which is to set their appearance.

Scale of Development — Plans for the "Garibaldi" have been refused by Council, and the Trust strongly supports this. The plans call for extensive additions to the side and rear of the building and thus there would be little room for parking (seven spaces for a restaurant which would seat one hundred ninety-two patrons). In the Trust's view, street parking is a part of the townscape, and developments of this scale should not be permitted. **Council should have the Town Plan to support its decision.**

Hunter's Hill Council faces a complex task, which at present is made immeasurably harder because of the delay in finalising the Town Plan. The Trust therefore calls upon Council to complete its consideration of the present draft and return it to the Minister without delay. The Town Plan must be prescribed, with provisions adequate to support the resistance needed against unsympathetic or overpowering development.

see inside for . . .

HOUSE INSPECTION in APRIL
Trees of Hunter's Hill
by Michael Lehany
Daytime Harbour Cruise

TREES OF N

by Meha

The mature trees that we see today are part, or all, that remains of the extensive gardens that formed the immediate surrounds of to the early estates of the district. There is relatively little remaining of the native tree cover in built-up areas, but remnants of it may be found along the foreshore and in small pockets of our local reserves. This, together with the trees that have grown up with the more recent subdivisions early in this Century, forms the fabric of what we have today.

The general character of the trees we see today roughly falls into several categories:

1. **Indigenous native tree cover** — trees original to the immediate locality, i.e. Sydney Harbour Fore-shore Types.

2. **Non-indigenous native trees** — these were popular with Victorian gardeners. These trees are Australian natives but they are not indigenous to the area, i.e. they do not grow in the local bush as naturally occurring species. Typical trees in this category would be Bunya Bunya; Hoop Pine; Norfolk Island Pine; Moreton Bay Fig; and the Illawarra Flame Tree.

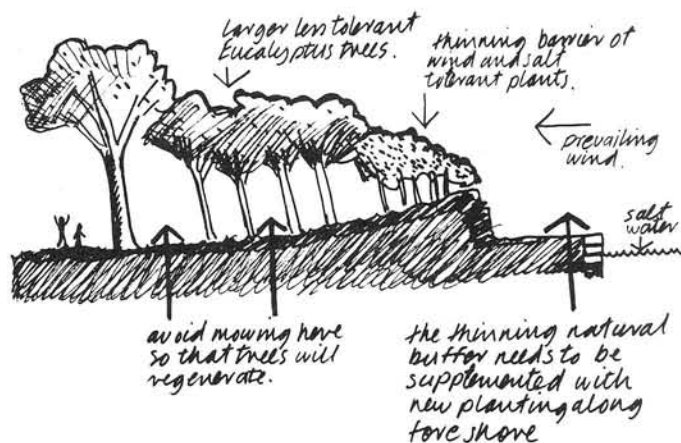
3. **Exotic trees** — trees not native to Australia and often planted by Victorians to try to recreate the Classic Italian and Romantic English gardens of the Northern Hemisphere. Trees here would include Oaks, Pines and Ashes, also the ubiquitous and highly successful Camphor Laurel originally from China.

Indigenous Trees

From old photographs of the district it may be seen that the original 'villas' were set amongst large tracts of the local bush. Immediately around the house can be seen the beginnings of the mature exotic planting we have today. Formal gardens with the popular and fashionable trees of the day surrounded the house, but blended into the native vegetation on the fringes of the estate. This bushland can be seen as a broad scale setting in which the formal garden provided the detail landscape. Here the householder could feel 'at home'.

Although the bush was considered rather alien, it nevertheless can be discerned from the literature and letters of the day that it had a special place in the feelings of the local people. A journey by ferry up the Lane Cove River to Tipperary Falls in Boronia Park was something to look forward to as a memorable outing in the wilds.

Indigenous trees can be seen in places along the foreshores. On the Northern foreshore, reserves have preserved stands of very tall Eucalyptus trees, possibly the Sydney Blue Gum, *E. sailigna*. The native bush along the Parramatta River can be quite different from the bush along the protected Northern aspects. The landform is often more rocky, and the largest trees to be found along the foreshore are the Coastal Banksias, *Banksia integrifolia*. However it is fortunate that a large stand of Eucalypts remains on Clarke's Point in Woolwich. Because these trees are in a more exposed position than those along the Lane Cove River, they are not as tall. If trees like those along the Parramatta



A. *Foreshore planting* — needs protection from winds by planting a barrier of wind tolerant plants along the foreshore.

are to survive, and regenerate, the natural buffer of wind and salt-tolerant plants along the foreshore has to be re-established. (see illustration A).

Rainforest Pockets

In all wards of the Municipality, where there is a protected environment, often at the base of slopes and rocky ledges, the remnants of 'mini rainforests' can be found. Here the natural rainwater runoff supports what could correctly be termed a 'wet sclerophyll' type of plant community.

These pockets can be found along the Lane Cove River in Boronia Park (the new walk goes through several of these), along the Parramatta River in Kelly's Bush, where good quality stands survive daily abuse from destructive trail bike riding, and, lastly, a small community barely survives the lawn mowers in the upper reaches of the Tarban Creek reserve, beyond the bridge where Bateman's Road and Gladesville Road meet.

Indigenous Native Trees to Plant for a Moist Rainforest Garden (reasonable domestic scale):

- Acmena smithii*, Lilly Pilly . . . a beautiful small tree dark green foliage and attractive creamy-purple berries or fruits
- Callicoma serratifolia*, Black Wattle . . . not a true wattle but has beautiful pale yellow wattle blooms and leaves with serrated edges
- Ceratopetalum apetalum*, Coachwood . . . related to Christmas Bush but with larger leaves and flowers.
- Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, Christmas Bush . . . an easy to grow small tree still found in the local bush
- Elaeocarpus reticulatus*, Blueberry ash . . . a small tree with attractive blue berries
- Ficus rubiginosa*, Port Jackson Fig . . . the small leaved local fig

HUNTER'S HILL

Midleahany

Pittosporum undulatum, Native Daphne . . . a small tree with shiny green foliage and fragrant cream flowers

Schisomeria ovata, Crab Apple.

Much of the character of these attractive ecosystems can be recreated in protected aspects of the domestic garden.

Some Other Indigenous Trees to Plant

Acacia longifolia, Sydney Wattle . . . very quick growing for instant screening

Banksia integrifolia, Coast Banksia . . . a handsome tree with small cream bottle-brushes

B. serrata, The Old Man Banksia . . . known for the ancient character of its trunk and seed heads

Casuarina torulosa, Forest Oak . . . with fine sheoak foliage.

Two indigenous native trees which are excellent for right on the water's edge, thriving on the salty environment are *Casuarina glauca* (Swamp Oak) and *C. littoralis*.

Other Native Trees and Exotic Trees

The trees that shape the skyline of Hunter's Hill are those that were the favourites of Victorian gardeners. The most well known is the Jacaranda Tree, *Jacaranda mimosafolia*, with its masses of pale lilac flowers in November. The Illawarra Flame Tree, *Brachychiton acerifolium*, flowers at the same time with a showy display of flame red bellflowers; both trees are traditionally planted near each other. Both trees are deciduous; the Jacaranda is native to Argentina (and is closely related to the Brazilian Rosewood used in Regency and Victorian furniture), while the Flame Tree is native to the Illawarra Escarpment on the N.S.W. South Coast.

Dominating all in stature is the Norfolk Island Pine, *Araucaria heterophylla*. There must have been at least one of these grand trees in every large estate. Unfortunately these trees are now in a state of decline, hastened no doubt by city pollution; there are a few that have survived the ravages of subdivision and roadworks.



• Typical silhouettes.....

Some Trees Found in Old Hunter's Hill Gardens

**Araucaria biddiwilli*, Bunya Bunya . . . native to Queensland, a handsome tall tree but drops large fruits up to 300mm in length, and guaranteed to knock you out on a direct hit!

**A. heterophylla*, Norfolk Island Pine

**A. cunninghami*, Hoop Pine . . . similar to Bunya Bunya

•**Brachychiton acerifolium*, Illawarra Flame Tree

Cinnamomum camphora, Camphor Laurel

•*Cupressus sempervirens*, Italian Cypress

Erythrina indica, Indian Coral Tree

**Ficus macrophylla*, Moreton Bay Fig

•**Grevillea robusta*, Silky Oak . . . a beautiful tree with golden yellow flowers

•*Jacaranda mimosafolia*, Jacaranda

Magnolia grandiflora, Southern Magnolia

•*Morus nigra*, Mulberry

•*Palm Trees

Pinus pinea, Stone Pine . . . a classic tree with the characteristic umbrella canopy

Pinus radiata, Monterey Pine

Platanus acerifolia, The London Plane . . . used as a street tree in Passy Avenue

Populus nigra, Lombardy Poplar

Quercus robur, English Oak . . . in Europe truffles grow underneath them; perhaps we haven't got the right pigs?

•*Schinus molle*, Pepper tree . . . a lovely tree with fine fragrant leaves and peppercorn seeds.

*Australian trees not indigenous to the Hunter's Hill area.

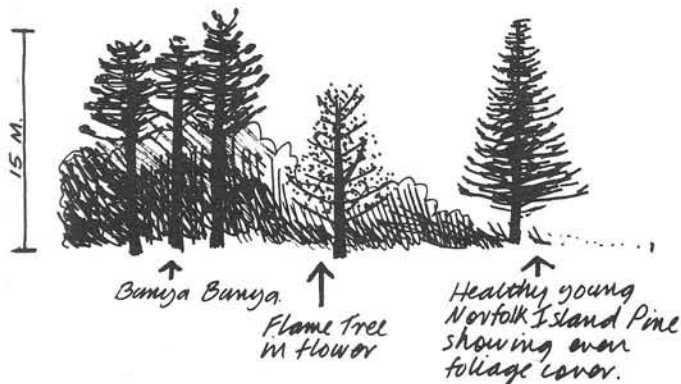
• Trees suitable for domestic gardens today. All other trees are very large and should only be planted where they may grow unhindered.

A more comprehensive listing may be found in the book 'Restoring Old Australian Houses and Buildings', by Howard Tanner and Philip Cox, Appendix III.

Books to Read:

Nature and a City — The Native Vegetation of the Sydney Area, by M. Kartzoff, published by Edwards and Shaw Pty. Ltd., 1979.

Cherish the Earth — The Story of Gardening in Australia, by Beatrice Bligh, published by Ure Smith, Sydney, 1973.



• Typical Silhouettes.....

ACTIVITIES

WATERSCAPE

Hunter's Hill foreshores have been photographed along the Lane Cove River, around the Point and up the Parramatta River as far as Margaret Street. Douglass Baglin has taken overlapping photographs which provide a detailed record of what exists now on the waterfront. He was ably assisted by Mac Taplin at the helm.

The waterscape provides great variety and a first class lesson in what not to do in landscaping and building, contrasted with foreshore reserves of great beauty. The reserves along the Lane Cove River were notable, as was Kelly's Bush, for providing a soft, irregular bush screen and varied pattern. In contrast, reclaimed land was edged in straight lines, generally had flat lawns, pools and sheds with straight line architecture.

Some of the photographs will be on display at future Trust events for those who wish to see ourselves as others see us.

Trust members should press their aldermen to seek Council acquisition of foreshore land as it becomes available through subdivision, so that our waterscape may be protected from further human encroachment. In the view of the Hunter's Hill Trust, the Foreshore Building Line and public enlightenment are essential for long-term foreshore scenic protection.

HOUSE INSPECTION

A House inspection will be held on APRIL 20th, a SUNDAY, between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.

Attractions include two old stone houses recently renovated, in Madeline Street, an exhibition of old photographs of Hunter's Hill displayed at Eulbertie, in the school grounds of Hunter's Hill Primary School, teas, the Hunter's Hill Trust Centre and Gallery.

Tickets are five dollars, with special prices for pensioners and children. Young children are not admitted unless carried. Tickets for members, four dollars.

For tickets, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Trust, P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110. For further information or in case of the usual postal strike, telephone Anne McNally (89-2035) or Alice Oppen (89-5175).

HARBOUR CRUISE

A harbour cruise for conservationists is being organised for March 9th, a Sunday. The 'Royale' will leave Circular Quay at 9.15 a.m., cruise to Bantry Bay to look at an area which should be added to the Sydney Harbour National Park, then to Garden Island for a picnic/barbeque. Those with restless children or afternoon appointments may then tour Garden Island and depart via the main gate, while the cruise continues up the Parramatta River. Commentaries on the foreshores will be given by local groups (such as the Hunter's Hill Trust!), so that there is an exchange of information among people interested in what is happening to the foreshores and the Harbour/rivers. The 'Royale' will return to Circular Quay at 4 p.m.

The cost is a nominal \$6 (\$3 for children), and the cruise is a fund-raising effort by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Committee.

Come and combine an interest in the environment with a pleasure trip on the water. Enjoy the rare privilege of being guest of the Navy on Garden Island. Support greenery along the foreshores.

For information, telephone Alice Oppen (89-5175).

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CREDITS

Sympathetic renovations are in progress in the Municipality. Mention should be made of 13 Mars Street, the old Peaty house which must date back to early settlement in the area; the shape and line of the house have been carefully preserved, as has the cottage feeling. Few old houses look better with a swimming pool than without — 31 Madeline Street has one with stone surrounds, stone-coloured tiles, bushes, all blending with the house and wall. At 34 Gladesville Road a good effort has been made to renovate a brick house with a feeling for its period.

Have we missed some good renovations? Our spies are not everywhere. Let us know.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name Telephone
Address Postcode
Willing to help with

Type of Membership:	1979-80
Single	\$ 5.00
Family	10.00
Pensioner	1.00
Student	1.00
Life Member	75.00

Due March 1

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

*The Trust Centre
The Hunter's Hill Gallery*