

**The Hunters Hill Trust  
Inc.**  
Established 1968  
Preserving Australia's  
Oldest Garden Suburb

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**The Hunters Hill**

# Trust Journal

## How Council paid up for the fence it didn't like - not an urban myth

**T**ony Coote relates  
two stories of de-  
velopments within the  
municipality of Hunt-  
ers Hill.

*Case Study No 1 (from  
Hunters Hill Council's  
meeting papers 9 Sept  
2002)*

**Property: 15 Reiby  
Road Hunters Hill**

*Development: New  
brick and metal fence  
along the waterfront  
boundary of the prop-  
erty.*

The owner of the above  
property had a fence  
built along his boundary  
to the Lane Cove River.  
It consists of approxi-  
mately 1400 high  
brick piers at about 2m  
centres which had circu-  
lar light fittings fixed on  
top. There is a metal  
grille between the piers.  
The fence was built  
without development  
consent and without a  
construction certificate.  
When this unauthorised  
work was brought to  
Council's attention, a  
Notice of Intent was

served on the owner fol-  
lowed by a Notice of  
Demolition, which re-  
quired the demolition of  
the work within 7 days.  
The reasons Council put  
forward for the issue of  
the demolition notice  
were:

*1. There has been no  
Development Approval  
and no Construction  
Certificate issued for the  
work.*

*2. The fence and the as-  
sociated work are within  
the 15 m Foreshore  
Building Line and had  
an adverse impact on  
the foreshore of the Lane  
Cove River.*

*3. The fence is contrary  
to the Council's policy  
on fencing and land-  
scaping on foreshore  
sites.*

The owners appealed to  
the Land and Environ-  
ment Court. The case  
was heard by Commis-  
sioner Murell on 10, 11  
and 12 December 2001  
(yes that's right, the case  
took 3 days).

The judgment was deliv-  
ered on 12 Dec 2001 and  
upheld the owners'  
appeal on the grounds

that:

a) The 7 days for the  
demolition was unrea-  
sonable

b) Council had not prop-  
erly heard representa-  
tions from the owner

c) The commissioner's  
own assessment of the  
merits of the fence was  
that it was quite accept-  
able and should not be  
demolished.

But wait, there's  
more.....

The commissioner noted  
that "no order of costs is  
made in planning and  
building appeals unless  
the circumstances are  
exceptional", and then  
went on to judge that in  
this case the circum-  
stances were exceptional  
and awarded costs to the  
applicant.

The owner has made a  
claim for \$22,000 costs.  
This is on top of Coun-  
cil's own court costs of  
\$20,000 (a figure which  
does not include staff  
resources).

These costs will be met  
by you, assuming you  
are a ratepayer of Hunt-  
ers Hill.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

There is a lesson here. If you can't bear the awful, boring and time consuming business of making an application and filling out a form and you can't be bothered waiting round for Council to process your application -  
**JUST DO IT!**

### **Case Study No 2**

*(from the files of the Conservation Advisory Panel at Hunters Hill Council)*

*A Reprieve for a modest 1960s house*

### **Property: 12 Ellesmere Avenue Hunters Hill**

*Proposed Development: First floor addition and double garage to an existing house.*

The proposal would have completely obliterated the existing house.

It would have more than doubled its height, destroyed the original front courtyard and placed a two car garage right in front of it.

The existing house is a modest bagged brick brick house, built around a courtyard. It is not a house that shouts and demands your attention when you walk

down the street.

External appearances can be deceptive however, because it turns out that this house is one of great significance, particularly for architects. It was designed by Don Gazzard and won the RAIA's inaugural Wilkinson Award in 1961. This award is named after Professor Leslie Wilkinson, the first professor of architecture at Sydney University and is for multiple and single housing.

The Ellesmere Avenue house was a natural progression from a project house that Don Gazzard had designed in Carlingford.

Don was then married to one of the most important ceramacists of that time, Marea Gazzard, and the Ellesmere Avenue house was built for her sister. It remained in her possession for around 40 years and was full of Marea's works.

The new owners brought their proposal to Hunters Hill Council's Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP) in October 2001 for a

preliminary consultation. They had no idea about the provenance of their house - it is not a listed heritage item in the Coun-

cil's LEP (this is one of a number of significant buildings which have not yet been included in the LEP heritage listings and it underlines the urgency of a heritage review).

At the time, the newspapers were full of the proposed moral rights provisions in the Commonwealth legislation known as the Copyright Act. How this affected the work of architects was being tested in Canberra where proposed changes to the entry to the National Gallery had been criticised by its original architect, who was then invited to contribute to the design.

The Moral Rights Amendments Bill was passed on 21 Dec 2000. Since then, all architects (and other creators) working in Australia have moral rights over their buildings and designs, whether created before or after that date. Clients may seek contract consent provisions to 'infringe' architects moral rights. These Moral rights are rights:

- (a) to be attributed;
- (b) not to be falsely attributed; and
- (c) to be consulted if the completed work is demolished, altered or treated in a derogatory manner.

CAP explained to the owners of Don Gazzard's house that they had a duty to approach him before proceeding with any work and recommended that they seek his advice.

At the meeting of CAP on 28 August 2002, a revised plan of the house was presented for further consideration, designed by Don Gazzard himself. It provides the owners with the additional accommodation they want but locates the additions at the rear of the existing house and at ground floor level. The existing courtyard and front part of the house is retained without alteration and the two-car garage deleted. CAP had no hesitation in supporting this proposal. It has been approximately 340 days since the new owners lodged their original plans with Council. This is a whole lot more than the statutory maximum of 40 days, but, most people would agree, it has been well worth the wait.

**How the  
Copyright Act  
saved a house  
that does not  
have a  
heritage  
listing**

***The book *The Industrial Village of Woolwich*,  
by Connie Ewald is  
available over the***

***counter at the Hunters Hill Post Office,  
Alexandra Street for \$12,  
or posted from the Treasurer,  
The Hunters Hill Trust Inc.,***

***P. O. Box 85, Hunters Hill, 2110 for \$14.***

***The book has been published by The Hunters Hill Trust assisted  
by a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society from  
funds allocated by the Ministry for the Arts, New South Wales.***

# I hoped that she and her house would live forever

**Cathy Sherry recalls a stroll around Hunters Hill**

**D**uring the school holidays we visited a friend who lives in an older suburb. With the exception of the odd, clashing 1960s apartment block, nearly all of the houses in her area date from the turn of the last century. They are small Federation houses and semis, along with a smattering of double storey terraces. As we ambled to her local park, a gaggle of kids in tow, I gazed wistfully over their fences.

One house in particular, caught my eye. It was a two storey, late Victorian house, with a peeling beige façade. The sizeable corner block was fenced with rusting corrugated iron. An outside toilet leaned heavily against the fibro add-on kitchen and old fruit trees dominated the yard. Most windows had no curtains, though a few pieces of material had been strung up in bedrooms. The house oozed history and romance. I wished that I could wake up in the morning and sit on its back step, drinking tea in the sun.

Sadly, this house is in an increasingly gentrified area. No doubt next time I visit my friend, or the time after, it will have been sold. The new owners will strip the paint from the façade and repaint it three or four appropriate heritage colours. The corrugated iron fence will be consigned to a skip and replaced with a tasteful, though anachronistic, paling fence with Federation features, in Brunswick green. The fruit trees will give way to standard Iceberg

roses, under-planted with clipped box hedges and mondo grass. Ruffled Austrian blinds will grace the windows.

The process of restoration will actually destroy the history of the house. The years of wear and tear, aging and change that are currently written on its façade will be wiped clean and replaced with a modern replica of what it may or may not have looked like a hundred and eighty years ago. The new house might look smart and clean, but it will have none of the charm of its former aged self.

I have no illusions about the difficulty of living in an old house. I have shared enough student hovels to appreciate the benefits of an internal bathroom and a Formica kitchen. However, it is possible to make an old house livable without sanitizing it - to retain its true sense of history, rather than creating a house that looks like it has been purchased from a mail order catalogue of fine historic homes. To conserve, rather than restore.

The suburb in which I grew up is gradually being ruined by overenthusiastic renovators. When I was a child it was full of ramshackle old homes in various states of disrepair. The big sandstone houses rose up from behind dry stone walls and iron gates, while the Federation cottages crouched behind high camellia hedges. Little old ladies, some of them no-

toriously bad-tempered, inhabited these gems of living history.

Now, the old ladies have gone. Their homes have been primped and preened, their hedges clipped and contained. At night, professionally installed garden lighting illuminates every nook and cranny of their gardens, high front gates are locked and fitted with electronic speakers.

One evening, as I walked around the suburb, increasingly depressed by what I saw, I came to a dead-end street literally cut into a sandstone cliff (it was called "Undercliff Street" in the nineteenth century). Overlooking the water, the houses here were prime candidates for excessive renovations. At the end of the street however, the garden lighting died out. Through the gloom I spied the suburb of my childhood. A sandstone house perched high on the cliff, in the midst of an overgrown garden. The wooden verandah still had its peeling white paint and there were no reproduction leadlights above the unassuming front door. The house was dark and quiet. Inside, an old lady may have been tucked up in a creaky iron bed, reading by dim lamplight. I stood outside on the street, under the cold stars, and hoped that she, and her house, would live forever.

*- Cathy Sherry*

First published in Melbourne  
*Sunday Age* 28 July 2002



# Gladesville Hospital and High School in Government real estate portfolio

**R**eal estate opportunities coming up in Hunters Hill Municipality - the High School site in Reibey Road and the Gladesville Hospital south campus. You know about the High School. On June 14, 2001 the Department of Education released a map which had 50 buildings sketched barrack style into the 6.569 hectares of High School land. We don't know whether these are intended to be single dwellings, medium density structures or a mixture. There is a

new road, 2/3rds of the way down, linking Mount Street and Reibey Road. A strip of 1.5 hectares is left along the river frontage as open space. Every building on the site at present would be demolished to accommodate the scheme. The school is due to close at the end of the year despite what must be the most thoroughly documented public protest in Australian history. Labor apologists say that the school is being closed because the well-off residents of Hunters Hill

(Continued from page 3)

not until May 1918 that Numa Joubert re-mortgaged his holdings of Lots 9-23 and in April 1920 a new owner S. Spencer then sold four adjoining lots each to the builders WILLIAM CORNWELL of Lane Cove and MATTHEW FLEGG of Chatswood. An architect, Reginald Joy, purchased Lot 14 (DP 9742) but immediately sold it to another builder R. Gravenen of Northbridge.

Clearly, construction of these houses by a small group of owner-builders over the next year or two explains their contemporary similarities of style and it is a remarkable fact that the outline of each house, precisely depicted on the 1928 MWSDB plan, remains with only minor alterations and retaining their original roof forms. The low key harmony of form and style, surviving as the most prominent unique cluster of early 20th century buildings in the municipality of Hunters Hill, should be considered worthy of preservation by the present Council.

As noted architecture critic/historian Robin Boyd observed, Australian houses of this period tended to be 'democratically equal in size and number of rooms... and nowhere else in the world have ordinary people had so much control over the architecture of their own homes, and therefore of the appearance of the country as a whole' (see *The Walls Around Us; a popular history of Australian Architecture* 1982 p 75).

Also of importance, is the fact that the buyers of these distinctive houses were tradesmen and their families - Bowser an electrician, Warrilow a painter, Logan an electrical engineer, Williams an ironmonger and Parkes also a builder, for example. It is these people and their dwellings that are as much a part of the ongoing history of Hunters Hill as are early settlers Hillman, Quirk, Rinaldi and others whose modest dwellings contribute to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century character of Madeline Street and the north side of Alexandra Street; all belong to the social fabric and context of a suburb which has, for more than 30 years, demonstrated a strong concern for conservation, protecting against demolition and inappropriately located high density development.

- August 2002

(eg. Liberal voters) have not been sending their children there. This argument denies the value found at the school by parents from Labor suburbs Ryde, Gladesville, Balmain, Leichhardt and Lilyfield.

**The hospital land development proposals** came to light when the school P and C members were searching for information on the school under Freedom of Information Act.

The plans were drawn up in 2000 then dropped. The author was the Urban Design Advisory Service within the N.S.W. Department of Urban Affairs. There are five separate scenarios. Tertiary education institutions are envisaged. The recommended scenario has six accommodation precincts featuring buildings from six to four stories high along Victoria Road and in Crown Close. There are three-storey buildings in other locations. There's a mixture of three-bedroom, two-bedroom and one-bedroom units. There would be three-bedroom town houses along Punt Road. Will workers at the site be able to afford to live there?

The recommended scenario forecast a projected population at the site of 3518, including 2000 souls at a college of nursing and working in health related commercial activities. Many of the hospital's existing buildings would be converted to residential.

The consultation process in the proposal shows opportunities for talks with stakeholders. In that capacity, Trust members attended the first round before the document was written. The document reports that at the first meeting, participants were mainly interested in heritage. We have not been invited back.

The Government says that the plans have been dropped. In view of their experience with the High School, residents can be pardoned for feeling uneasy with this assurance. —GW



# I hoped that she and her house would live forever

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*- Cathy Sherry*

First published in Melbourne  
*Sunday Age* 28 July 2002

# Federation Trust defines properties of the former defence site at Woolwich

**The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust is preparing plans for all of its sites, including Woolwich and Cockatoo. Members of the consultative committee, including Hunters Hill members, toured the sites by boat and bus on July 28 and met on 18 August to consider draft plans. This is an edited part of the presentation on Woolwich.**

- Woolwich is a clear example of some of the patterns that have shaped the harbour: The maritime industrial activity – dock, sheds, factories and reclaimed hardstand by the water, below the carved cliff face – industry interspersed with parklands and residential uses;

- Its centre piece is an exceptional dry dock carved into the rock, concealed from view and tucked between parklands in a place overlooking the meeting point between the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers – “Moocooboola”;

- The retail/commercial center on the ridge grew to service the needs of both the industrial workforce and the surrounding residential community;

- The rare surviving elements of the original foreshore topography – sandstone outcrops and cliffs are now set back from the water by an apron of reclaimed land defined by a sandstone retaining wall. Its form and development pattern has seen dramatic changes from the nineteenth century residential development related to the Clarke family, pioneer settlers of Hunters Hill from the 1830s to the industrial uses relating to Atlas Engineering and

Morts Dock and the Army’s marine transport operations; and

- More recently, the site has been used to assemble the ‘sea creatures’ which formed part of celebrations for 1999/2000 New Years Eve on Sydney Harbour and by the Water Police during the Sydney Olympics.

## **How it Evolved**

### *Natural Features*

- The dock at Woolwich cuts into sandstone that was laid down by an ancient inland river system. Weathering has resulted in a spur off the Hunter’s Hill / Woolwich ridgeline forming Clarke’s Point at the meeting of the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers;

- There are no apparent creek lines, although water seepage does occur through the layers of rock, particularly on southern facing slopes;

- The original open forest and woodland vegetation has been cleared. A few shrubs, ferns and young Port Jackson Figs have recolonised the natural joints in the cut faces of the sandstone. Some non-indigenous native species have been planted in Clarke’s Point Reserve;

## **Heritage Values**

*What are the features that make the Woolwich site special?*

### **Whole Harbour Values**

Ridgeline, peninsula, lookout and pub at change of direction of Woolwich Road. at the sites; Visual and maritime industrial use links with Cockatoo Island; Dock and associated maritime facilities, related to rise of shipbuilding in this area. Theme of peninsula/deepwater/industry. The dock is one of four surviving examples on Sydney Harbour/ Parramatta River;

Lane Cove/ Parramatta Rivers/ Iron Cove, Cockatoo/ Spectacle/ Snapper Islands – special space in harbour/river sequence; and sandstone, excavation/fill, sea walls, slipways, dock. Theme of excavation/land reclamation – dock spoil has modified the topography in addition to the apron.

### *Natural Values*

Location at the meeting of the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers – Moocooboola;

Spur off main Hunters Hill/ Woolwich ridge affording excellent harbour views to and from the peninsula;

The much modified cliff/knoll topography still retains pockets of remnant vegetation; and

The original cliff line is still visible and the dramatic dock cutting has revealed the sandstone strata

### *Cultural Values*

The Defence land is integral with Clarke’s Point Reserve for understanding the cultural evolution of this part of Woolwich;

Form and scale of the sawtoothed roof building (Blg.11) provides a strong visual symbol of the maritime industrial use of the site and a reminder of this once common but now increasingly rare activity on this part of the Parramatta River;

Archaeological remains and the subdivision pattern of Clarke family’s occupation of the site are still evident and able to be interpreted to explain the site’s European pre-industrial heritage;

The influence of the dockyard enterprise on the development of the surrounding neighbourhood with small lot subdivision for workers’ housing and the hotel and shops;

The dock, slipways reclaimed land and sea walls are reminders of Morts Dock and Engineering

Company, the largest shipbuilding and repair enterprise in Australia from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century;

Community involvement in fighting to protect the site's aesthetic qualities and recreational potential over a period of time from high rise development, expansion of defence activities and sale of the land. The fight to save Kelly's Bush also clearly demonstrated this concern; and

The Horse Paddock name relates most probably to the part construction and extension of the dry dock by the firm of W. Solomon and Sons, a leading Hunters Hill and Sydney contractor, who depastured their work horses there.

#### *Existing Heritage Listings*

- Registered on the National Estate Database No 002651;

- Hunters Hill Municipal Council LEP No.1 lists the following:

Mort's Dry Dock (Woolwich Dock), Clarke Rd and Franki St.

Site of Clarke's Houses, Clarke Rd, Army Reserve;

Clarke's Point Reserve, Clarke's Point; and

The subject area is also within the Hunters Hill Conservation Area No.1.

- National Trust lists the Dock Interrelationship with the Surrounding Region - The Planning Context.

#### *State Government*

A number of State government agencies have responsibilities and policies which are relevant to the future of Woolwich Dock. Plans and policies prepared by these agencies which have implications for the future of Woolwich Dock are outlined below:

Draft Sydney Harbour Catchment REP No. 32

The Sydney Harbour Catchment Regional Environmental Plan and associated Integrated Land and Access Plan may have implications for this area to be used as an access point to the Harbour Islands including Cockatoo and Snapper Islands.

Implication: Review when avail-

able to identify any implications.

#### **Local Government**

##### *Zoning and Land Use*

The Goat and Horse Paddocks are both zoned 5(a) Special Uses - Defence under Hunters Hill LEP No.

1. Surrounding land uses include Clarke's Point Reserve which is zoned 9(c) Reservation - County Open Space and Morts Reserve which is zoned 6(a) Open Space - recreation existing. These two pieces of land divide the two paddocks in addition to the access road Clarke's Point Road. Surrounding land is primarily zoned residential 2(a2) or 2(a3) with the exception of a small area of land zoned 3(c) Business Neighbour-

**GREEN BOOK** The third edition of *The Heritage of Hunters Hill*—The Green Book—is available over the counter from the Hunters Hill Post office and the Hunters Hill Council office for \$29.95.

You can order a copy from the Trust at P. O. Box 85 Hunters Hill, 2110, but please add \$8 for post and handling.

hood located on the northern side of Woolwich Road opposite Franki Avenue (refer Map X).

The whole of the area of identified as a Foreshore Scenic Protection Area under LEP No.1.

Adjoining Landholders

Nil applicable.

*(Continued from page 8)*

Town, Launceston's Trevallyn, North Adelaide, and Melbourne's St James Park.

By means of this comparative research I was able to establish that Hunters Hill is indeed the oldest garden suburb in the country. More precisely, it is the oldest *surviving* example of a suburb of detached houses in gardens. Many other early suburbs were overtaken by industrial, commercial, or high-density residential development—Potts Point, South Yarra, Hobart's New Town, Brisbane's Kangaroo Point. North Adelaide remains a close relative to Hunters Hill. Its stone buildings, as in Hunters Hill, immediately call up the past, but today some high-rise residential and large institutional buildings, plus the main interstate highway, have seriously eroded the original character of North Adelaide. Another cousin to Hunters Hill, though not as old, is the peaceful suburb of Trevallyn in Launceston. A development of detached houses in gardens overlooking the Tamar River, Trevallyn was pioneered in the 1880s as a haven for city workers and survives today unspoiled.

That form of residential development—the garden suburb—became an Australian ideal and, in spite of the push for urban consolidation, remains an ideal and central to the Australian way of life. Hunters Hill is our oldest example. Historic places matter. The residents of Hunters Hill, as custodians of the place, have a responsibility to the nation to preserve its unique historic character. The greatest threat was in the 1960s. If it had not been for the Hunters Hill Trust at that time, there would be high-rise unit buildings throughout Hunters Hill today. Australia's oldest garden suburb will always be under threat, to a greater or lesser extent, yet with every passing year its historic significance increases. The Hunters Hill Trust should continue to be in the forefront of battles to preserve it as an invaluable part of Australia's heritage.

Dr Beverley Sherry, a long-time member of the Trust, is author of the bicentennial history *Hunters Hill: Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb* published in 1989.



## THE HUNTERS HILL TRUST INCORPORATED

### Address mail to

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Hunters Hill, 2110

### Officers for 2002-2003

President – Tony Coote; 9817 3466

Vice-president – Gil Wahlquist

Secretary – Len Condon, 9816 2796.

Treasurer – Nicola Jackman

Journal editor – Gil Wahlquist, 9816 2627.

Committee – Sally Gaunt, Robyn Christie, Nicola Jackman, Brendan Stewart, Gil Wahlquist, Robin Bradley.

Committee meetings are held at 8 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Vienna Cottage, Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill.

In the last *Hunters Hill Trust Journal* (Vol. 41, No.1), Brendon Stewart wrote an article headed "Perhaps it's time to claim Gladesville for Hunters Hill." He proposed an expanding of the boundaries of the Municipality and even suggested a change of name, "the Municipality of Gladesville-Hunters Hill." I would like to respond by reaffirming the Hunters Hill Trust's slogan, "Preserving Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb."

"The case I am putting," writes Brendon, "is to imagine the municipality as much more than a garden suburb museum." First, Hunters Hill is not and never has been a museum. As I demonstrated in the bicentennial history *Hunter's Hill: Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb*, "the suburb is not a museum of antiquities but a place where the past is alive." (p. 117)

Second, the *Municipality* is in fact much more than a garden suburb, for the very reason that it includes Gladesville. Gladesville is not a garden suburb, although many of its quiet residential streets are of a garden-suburb kind and their character should be preserved. The origins of Gladesville pre-date the settlement of Hunters Hill: in the 1790s it was not a suburb but a farming district supplying produce to the town of Sydney. Some interesting vestiges of those origins remain, for example, at 19 Bateman's Road and 13 Mars Street. The Gladesville of today, however, is distinguished by a commercial heart and has a character of its own quite distinct from the suburb of Hunters Hill. Its difference should be respected. The Municipality benefits from such diversity. Whether it would benefit from further diversity by extending the boundaries as Brendon Stewart suggests, however, is not at all certain. The boundaries of the Municipality are in themselves historic and there have been continuing battles to preserve them. Particularly since the establishment of the Hunters Hill Trust in 1968, there has been a nucleus of concerned residents who see amalgamation with Ryde, for example, not as a strengthening but a

diluting.

Whether the boundaries change or not, the historic suburb of Hunters Hill as an area *within* the Municipality should continue to be protected, not as a museum but as a place of living history.

When I wrote the bicentennial history, I included some history of Gladesville and the establishment of the Municipality in 1861. However, I focused more closely on the suburb of Hunters Hill, that is, the area between the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers, unsuitable for farming, which was pioneered deliberately as a suburb by the

Joubert brothers in the 1850s. To broaden the perspective, I looked at other early suburbs throughout the country. These included terrace-

house suburbs, like Paddington and Glebe and Melbourne's Carlton; suburbs which had their origins as farming districts, such as Gladesville and Ryde; suburbs which began with a few large villas in expansive grounds, like South Yarra, Point Piper, and Darling Point; and suburbs which were developed originally as detached housing within reach of the city, like Potts Point (originally called Woolloomooloo Hill), Hobart's New

By  
Beverley  
Sherry

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