



Tree loss at 19 Bonnefin Rd as seen from the Lane Cove River September 2013

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

THE CONTINUING LOSS OF TREES IN HUNTERS HILL

A LOCAL RESIDENT'S CONCERN

Hunters Hill is frequently referred to as Australia's oldest garden suburb, with settlement dating from the 1840s. Its charm, and indeed the reason so many people chose it as home, comes from a few characteristics: First, the concentration of early sandstone houses, some large and imposing and others, the modest cottages of farmers and craftsmen interspersed with polite later federation and early 20th century brick bungalows;

Next, views of water at the bottom of steep streets and glimpsed in the spaces between houses which result from the rocky shapes of the skinny, finger-like peninsula, lying between the Lane Cove and Parramatta rivers; And last and perhaps most importantly, the green setting, as diverse in its character as the buildings themselves.

This green setting includes generous gardens, which surround our houses on four sides. These gardens

traditionally have more than just shrubs, but also substantial trees, which form a canopy overhead providing shade, habitat and corridors for wildlife. Our streets are leafy with mature street trees and wide nature strips. We are spoiled with tree filled parks and remnant bushland on the rocky foreshores on both sides of the peninsula.

This green setting is a dominant characteristic of the whole of Hunters Hill. It is the essence of our stonewalled streets and lanes, our houses, school grounds, parks, foreshore walks, the surroundings for our public buildings, cafes, tennis courts and hospital and even blocks of flats. Its impact is probably for most people, subliminal, but the effect is cumulative.

Flowering exotic shrubs are complemented by perfumed creepers such as Wisteria, Honeysuckle and Jasmine. The trees are diverse. They include gracious Sydney Blue Gums

and other Eucalypts, London plane trees, Oaks, Celtis, Box trees, marker trees such as Norfolk Island, Bunya and Hoop pines, Jacaranda trees, and Camphor Laurels. The latter were planted in municipal planting programs probably from the 1880s on to introduce shade. Many of the mature trees in Hunters Hill are very old. And though they look substantial, they are fragile and subject to abuse.

Our street trees are disfigured annually by contractors working for electricity companies and our garden trees are decreasing at an alarming rate as the scale and volume of development in the suburb increases. The removal of mature trees will change the character of Hunters Hill for generations.

As the population increases there is an influx of new owners, the new norm is for gardens to be subdivided and interwar houses demolished. Blocks are often totally cleared of structures and vegetation. New buildings extend from boundary to boundary and their gardens are manicured and formal, more suitable for apartment living. There is little or no room for trees to be planted, particularly any which will grow to provide an overhead shady canopy.

The streets of Hunters Hill too are steadily changing. The new houses dominate the landscape rather than sitting in it. Spaces between houses are vanishing, as are the old mature trees. Views of Hunters Hill from the water were always characterised by glimpses of buildings between tree canopies. That too is diminishing rapidly.

I believe that consideration of the green setting of Hunters Hill needs to be more rigorous and that mature trees should be given more consideration in the planning process. I believe that just as property owners generally recognize they are custodians of Hunters Hill's built heritage, this custodianship should extend to the care and management of historic trees.

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Preserving Australia's
Oldest Garden Suburb

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Publications

Heritage of Hunters Hill \$15
The Vision and the Struggle \$15
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MEMBERSHIP

The Trust welcomes everyone interested in preserving the unique character of Hunters Hill to become a member.

Single membership \$20
Family membership \$40

Contact the secretary to join or download a form from the website.

THE CONTINUING LOSS OF TREES IN HUNTERS HILL – continued from page 1

Council acknowledges the landscape of Hunters Hill in the Extract from HH LEP no 1 Hunters Hill, posted on its website in March 2013

"The character of the Municipality of Hunters Hill is distinguished by free-standing houses set in their own gardens and dominated by trees. Except for a few historic institutional buildings, the buildings of Hunters Hill are domestic in scale, and articulated in form....."

The freestanding small-scale buildings respect and reveal the landform of the

Hunters Hill peninsula, and views to and from the water are retained. Successive subdivisions have given the Municipality a range of different house styles. Building materials and man made surfaces are unobtrusive."

There is a strong case for placing more emphasis on evaluating the effect of development proposals on the setting and vegetation of a site and its street – in particular on mature trees. Hunters Hill Council needs to give this issue more weight and the community needs to be encouraged to take more responsibility for managing this fragile aspect of our suburb.



Tree at 27 Madeline St



Going, going . . .



Gone

We are losing too many trees. This is clearly manifested in the recent Council approvals for removing three one hundred year old plus trees from 3 Ady Street and 27 Madeline Street. Such trees belong collectively to us all and to future generations and not just individual property owners.

Helen Temple

Helen Temple has a strong family connection with The Trust – her mother Diana and father Richard were both committed Trust members. Richard was a member of the first permanent committee of The Trust and co-author of *The Vision and The Struggle, An Account of the Hunters Hill Trust's First Twenty Years*. Helen is a citizen's representative on Council's Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP).

When Helen became aware that Council had granted approval to remove the tree at 27 Madeline St, she wrote to Council expressing her deep concern about the approval process, particularly as the application had been reviewed by CAP, which had advised Council that the tree should remain. The retention of the tree became a condition of the development approval.

After development approval was granted, the owners submitted a Section 96 application to vary this condition and subsequently the condition was removed.

Helen questioned Council about why she, as someone who had made a submission about the proposal, was not notified of the Section 96 and why the tree removal request was not referred back to CAP. She then asked "What is the value of the Significant Tree Register, which includes the tree at No 27, when significant trees are removed on a regular basis and our "garden suburb" is notionally characterised by an environment of mature trees and established gardens?"

An issue that won't go away

Tree removal featured in both the May 2012 and in the May 2013 Journals.

Council's contribution to Madeline St



Council's yard on D'Aram and Madeline

The ugliest corner in one of Hunters Hill's most beautiful streets belongs to Council. There is a desperate need for something to be done to relieve the ugliness of the back end of Council's works yard and to increase the extent of large tree planting.

TREE REMOVAL IN TOOCOoya RD Local man found guilty

The unauthorised removal of four Hoop Pines from the Parramatta River frontage of a house at 9 Toocooya Road Hunters Hill has led to the conviction of the house's owner, Gary Johnston, who pleaded guilty to removing the trees.

The four Hoop Pines were specifically noted in the development approval to be retained and to be protected during the construction of Mr Johnston's brand new multi-million dollar, 3 level, two-storey house, which includes a 9 car basement carpark, outdoor pool and spar.

The Hoop Pines were protected throughout construction, but not long after construction was completed, the Defendant engaged a contractor, "Always the Best Tree Lopping", to remove the trees. A neighbour noticed that the trees were being cut down and immediately reported the unauthorised work to Council, who took the matter to the Land and Environment Court.



The hoop pines during construction of the house

In his judgment, Justice Craig pointed out that Mr Johnson, by acting against the conditions of his DA was guilty of an offence against the EPA Act, which carries a maximum penalty of \$1,100,000. Mr Johnston was fined \$40,000 and ordered to pay Council's costs, for which it has submitted a claim for \$265,000.

It's a tragedy that the trees have gone, but Council is to be congratulated in pursuing the case. It sends a message to those who choose to ignore Council's development conditions, which are designed to preserve the garden, tree dominated character of Hunters Hill, that the community is prepared to fight to preserve that character. Local resident Wendy Dennis is also to be congratulated on her quick response when she saw workmen from "Always the Best Tree Lopping" on site hacking into the trees. This allowed Council to gain solid evidence, which was essential to

prosecution of the case and the lack of which has hampered Council in pursuing other similar offences.

The case was given wide coverage in The Weekly Times, where the main focus of the article was on Mr Johnston's complaints about Council's legal costs. He is quoted as saying; "I do not think Council should have taken this legal action that has exposed ratepayers to a massive legal bill". The article goes on to state; "The Council's dispute with the Johnstons began over a decade ago when the family fought for and won the right to demolish a deserted World War One era cottage on the site and build 'Galileo', a spectacular home that integrates modern art with state of the art environmental technology".

Those who remember the previous house at No 9 Toocooya Rd will not recognize it from this belittling description. It was in fact a beautiful house with a fine slate roof, very similar to the house immediately next door at No 7. Unfortunately, it lacked the full protection of a listed heritage item – it was one of a number of fine houses in Hunters Hill that unfortunately slipped through the net when houses were first listed some decades ago. This was a factor in the owner's successful appeal against Council's refusal of the original application, which led to the house's demolition



House at No 7 Toocooya

Mr Johnston told TWT what he thinks about one of Hunters Hill's most distinctive street trees; "Camphor laurels are not even native to Hunters Hill, they are feral trees that were planted to be cut down for scrap wood and paper."

The article concluded with Mr Johnston's views on the amalgamation issue; "I don't care who they amalgamate Hunters Hill with, as long as it's someone professional".

FORESHORE CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

The photo on page 1 was taken from the same place along the Lane Cove River in September 2013 as the photo at the top of the next column.



The photo above was taken in March 2010. There was also a photo of this same spot along the river that featured in the May 2013 Journal.

In this photo, the property at No 19 (second house on the left) has substantial greenery and unspoiled natural rock outcrops. The page 1 photo of the new house under construction at No 19 clearly shows how much greenery has been removed as well as considerable work being done on and around the natural stone outcrops.

The Trust has written to Council on many occasions voicing our concerns about the destruction of the character of the foreshores of the Lane Cove River along Bonnefin Road.

We have advised Council of trees disappearing, unauthorised work and dysfunctional sediment and erosion measures taken by contractors, particularly in relation to the redevelopment of Boronia Park oval No 3.

We have also noted that the foreshores of The Lane Cove River are of State significance and that this is clearly set out in SREP (Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005).

Most recently we have written to Council about work taking place within the foreshore protection line at No 19 Bonnefin Road that does not appear to be part of the development consent granted for the demolition of the existing house and the construction of the new dwelling.

This apparently unauthorised work includes the removal of vegetation and the construction of rough stone walls. This has had a significant adverse impact on the existing sandstone outcrops on the site, which are a major part of the established character of the foreshores.

The impact is further compounded by the poor quality of the work.

The Trust received a response from the General Manager stating that Council “is aware of the situation and as you know this work is being overseen by a private certifier, which does create complications. Notwithstanding, the matter is being pursued with vigour and we will keep you informed”.

Part of that complication is that the certifier has gone out of business.

Stop work order

Council has now served a stop work notice on the site for both the works undertaken without consent and because there appears to be no certifier responsible for the development. The applicant has been ordered to remove the retaining walls and restore the rock outcrops. At time of writing Council's order has been removed from the fence and work is proceeding a pace.

Note that in our submission on the White Paper, The Trust argued that “complications” relating to the use of private certifiers will inevitably increase in scale and frequency if the proposed planning reforms ever see the light of day.

COLES DEVELOPMENT GLADESVILLE



Coles - artist's impression

A development application has been lodged with Council for the redevelopment of the Coles supermarket site at Gladesville.

Site consolidation

The existing carpark and Coles supermarket is to be consolidated with the Council-owned open-air car park in Cowell St, the Council-owned former community centre, the two-storey unit building in Cowell St and the Beta Electrics building. It is proposed to incorporate some of the existing car-

parking structure into the new development.



The site – bounded in red

Supermarket shops and parking

The new development involves the construction of a podium building that covers the whole site. This will be around 4 storeys high at the low end of the site at the corner of Flagstaff and Cowell Streets and will contain car parking, supermarket and specialty shops. The podium will have planted open space for the unit residents as well as the forecourt and plaza giving entry to the supermarket from Cowell St and via the existing arcade to Victoria St.

Residential Towers

On top of the podium structure containing the supermarket, parking and shops, it is proposed to construct four 8-storey high towers containing mostly residential units.

Access laneway

At the western end of the development a vehicle and pedestrian access laneway links Cowell and Massey Streets. This provides loading access to the existing shops in Victoria Road that back onto the proposal.

Design of the proposal

The Bernard Young Design Group of Help St Chatswood has designed the development. They are building designers not architects, which means that the proposal will need to be signed off by an

architect under SEPP 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Buildings.

Assessment process

Council have appointed the architectural and planning firm Architectus to analyse the proposal and report to them. Part of the reason for using an outside consultant is that Council has an interest in the proposal because it is selling property to the developer. Also, as with larger developments in Hunters Hill, Council does not have the resources to undertake proper assessment of schemes of this scale in-house.

The developers have submitted a quantity surveyor's estimate of \$88 million for the cost of the development. Because this is over the threshold value of \$20 million, The Sydney East Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) will make the final determination of the development, not the Council. To find out more about the JRPP process see <http://www.jrpp.nsw.gov.au>

Causes for concern

At this stage we have only had a cursory examination of the proposal. As well, the assessment of the proposal by the consultants employed by Council is not known. Also no attempt has been made to assess whether the proposal complies with the controls set out in the DCP for Gladesville. We assume the Architectus report will address these issues.

There are many aspects of the proposal that are seen as potentially problematic, for example -

The developer's nominated cost of the proposal of \$88 million. As the VPA is based on this figure, clearly it is in the developer's interest to minimise the stated cost of the proposal so his estimate needs to be properly checked. We are not sure if this is on Council's agenda.

The architectural quality of the proposal. It is most unfortunate that a respected architect is not involved in the design of this proposal. From a brief perusal of the documents it is clear that design excellence is not the main driver of the proposal.

A four-storey high wall of car parking and the back of shops. It would seem that where the corner of Cowell and Flagstaff is now occupied by a simple timber cottage, there will now be a four storey high wall containing the car park and back of supermarket.

The unresolved problematic access to and from the public car park. The existing supermarket and mall has very poorly

designed entrances and exits to and from the car park. They have dangerous site lines and the danger is compounded by the narrowness of Flagstaff Street. The new development appears to have done nothing to alleviate this problem.

The loss of a fine early 20th c cottage.
This timber-framed weatherboard cottage on the corner of Flagstaff and Cowell Streets is a fine example of its type and, more importantly, it makes a transition from the commercial scale of the Gladesville Shopping Centre to the residential scale of Cowell Street.



Information Evening Brigid Dowsett reports

An information meeting was held at the Hunter's Hill Town Hall on 18 September for the proponent (GSV Developments P/L) to provide an overview of the proposals for the Gladesville shopping centre re-development.

The meeting was poorly presented and managed but was well attended, mainly by neighbourhood residents, many of whom were irate and unaware of the site specific LEP and DCP and the potential for such a major development - or massive over-development as appeared to be the consensus view. Naturally enough, being advised by letter several years earlier that the height controls will be raised to 34 metres for your Village Centre meant little until the plans were up there on the screen.

Issues covered included the extent of the \$80 million development - 180 units in four 7-storey towers - its visibility, over-shadowing, intrusiveness to the existing residential area - and of great general concern was the enormous increase in traffic and use of Flagstaff Street (entry/exit points will go from 2 to 3) as well as parking capacity. These topics will be the subject of a further public meeting (see below).

Density issues were to the fore. Gladesville Public School had not been advised of the DA and the Principal stated

that the school is already full. Others gave details of additional major developments occurring within a small radius so that the DA could not be considered in isolation to those impacts on the area. Overall there was justifiable anger and frustration that neither the developer's spokesman nor Council seemed to be across the issues - even to the extent of uncertainty about the sale of Council land to the developer, integral to the proposal.

All this before the so-called Planning reforms are even through Parliament and notification becomes redundant - and woe betide you if you didn't get involved and have your say in the Community Strategic Plan phase for your Local Government Area.

Submissions deadline

The period for submissions to Council has been extended to **1 November** in view of the dismal lack of detail available from technical reports on critical matters, which will need to be explored (these will now be made accessible on Council's website).

Precinct Meeting

This DA will also be the major topic for the first of the newly convened Precinct Forums to be held on 9 October for the Gladesville precinct.

Traffic meeting

A meeting specifically to discuss traffic issues will be held on 16 October at 6.00pm at the Gladesville RSL.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There was unanimous agreement that this issue of the Trust journal should focus on the loss of trees in Hunters Hill. Trees, and green cover more generally, are an important component of the accumulated details that make the garden suburb overall, and conservation area in particular, special. They fill the spaces between the houses, soften new development and provide colour, shade and delight to our suburb and its unique foreshore. Too often new landscaping is "hard edge", with impermeable paving, low, tight clipped hedges and formal layouts. The traditional mix of native species and introduced plantings were asymmetrical in form and arrangement. Permeable paving allows storm water to drench and replenish rather than needlessly flow down the street. Retention of our trees is a crucial part of the "soft", but very vulnerable character of our suburb.

Ecopella choir celebrates Kelly's Bush

Interestingly, the short-term destruction of our trees is encapsulated in a song by Peter Klein, sung by the Ecopella choir at an event at Kelly's Bush on Saturday 14 September. The chorus lyrics are worth quoting:

*You gotta think....500 years from now
Plant a tree today, put it in the ground
Water it, nurture it, and watch it grow,
Be gentle with the earth, as we all know.*



While the event celebrated the Green Bans that saved Kelly's Bush, it was also a protest against the new planning laws that currently threaten our environment and the community. In addition to the choir, speakers included Jack Mundy, Greens Ban legend, Corinne Fisher from Better Planning Network, Sylvia Hale, former Greens MP and Joan Croll, Kelly's Bush veteran. Convened by Greens MP, David Shoebridge, the short-sighted and narrow alignment of development and planning are appropriately ridiculed in this verse.

New planning laws

As I write, the Premier has announced a delay in the new planning legislation in Parliament. But this is only temporary as the Government attempts to make changes to the Bill that will ensure its progress through Parliament. The Hunters Hill Trust supports the BPN's stance that no amendment to the Bill will be good enough - the only option we can support is for the Bill to be scrapped and re-written.

BPN Stakeholder Analysis

Speaking of alliances between the BPN and the Hunters Hill Trust, the Trust along with several other community groups made a financial contribution to the BPN's "An analysis of Stakeholder Submissions on the NSW Government's White Paper and Draft Exposure Planning Bills 2013". The document has been uploaded onto our website and it is well worth a good look. Of the 3269 submissions available electronically for review, a sample 257 submissions were selected for analysis - 26.6% represented government

stakeholders, 17% community organizations, 41.9% were individual submissions, 7.7% professional organizations, 2.4% industry, and 4.4% property developers.

While analysis of the data revealed some surprising areas of common ground, each stakeholder group held a slightly different emphasis in its primary concerns. To quote from the report's summary of key issues:

There was broad concern with the proposed legislation's emphasis on economic growth, without adequate balance with other values held by the community, specifically the absence of commitment to Ecologically Sustainable Development.

There was generally commonly voiced concern....in relation to the abandonment of well established principles of ESD to the more ambiguous "sustainability"; and most groups questioned the inadequacy of the community participation approach specified in the White Paper.

The reduction of community input was mentioned regularly. Concerns were raised by local Councils in relation to the efficacy and likely value of community engagement at the high level strategic phase where conceptual planning policy is less meaningful in a local context. The local Council submissions appreciated the implications of removing notifications at the Development Application stage and expressed considerable concern about this shift as did Individual and Community stakeholders.

There were consistent concerns expressed....in relation to the apparent mismatch between the Government's expressed intent in the White Paper and actual proposed content of the Bill. Further areas raised as matters of high concern across many stakeholder groups were expansion of discretionary powers and reduction of avenues for appeal and review.

Coles development

The current Development Application for the Coles supermarket site at Gladesville is a perfect illustration of the difficulty in involving the community at the strategic level – in this case when the Development Control Plan for the site was first written – and the importance of community involvement at the Development Application stage – the recent community meeting held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 18 September elicited a vocal and concerned participatory audience.

World Heritage

Our local concerns with State Government and the implications of its policies are reflected at the global level. I recently attended two talks given by Dr Ron van Oers, Vice Director of the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for Asia and the Pacific (WHITRAP). Based in Shanghai, China, the organization is a part of UNESCO. He is currently coordinator of the implementation of the new Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape passed by UNESCO in 2011. This is an evolution of several international charters that are concerned with the preservation of historic urban landscapes (HUL). We use the term "conservation area" rather than "heritage urban landscape", but they are essentially the same.

The HUL Recommendation is an attempt to plan for acceptable change to heritage urban landscapes, acknowledging the demands of both the environment and growth and development as a result of unprecedented global urbanization. You will understand the relevance of the approach if I quote from the document's six point definition:

The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes....



This wider context includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features; its built environment...its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization; perceptions and visual relationships....

This definition provides the basis for a comprehensive and integrated approach

for the identification, assessment, conservation and management of historic urban landscapes within an overall sustainable development framework.

The historic urban landscape approach aims at preserving the quality of the human environment, enhancing the productive and sustainable use of urban spaces while recognizing their dynamic character....

The historic urban landscape approach....ensure(s) that contemporary interventions are harmoniously integrated with heritage in a historic setting and take into account regional contexts. The historic urban landscape approach learns from the traditions and perceptions of local communities while respecting the values of the national and international communities.

Think of Hunters Hill and how large scale new development ignores and obscures the traditional pattern of dwellings, how the green spaces between are cut down and obliterated, how our sandstone peninsular is cut up for basements and five car garages. Think of the proposed new Planning Bill and its emphasis on growth over the environment and its potential lack of community engagement and local values, and we can see the relevance of this document.

Robyn Christie

COUNCIL AND THE WHITE PAPER PLANNING REFORMS

In early September an article in the Sydney Morning Herald stated that Ku-ring-gai, Strathfield, Burwood and Manly councils had joined Wollongong, Cessnock, Ashfield, Coffs Harbour and Kiama in asking the State government to re-write and re-exhibit the proposed planning bills, which were to be introduced to Parliament. And that Leichhardt, Marrickville and Willoughby were likely to join them.

The Trust wrote to Mayor Richard Quinn to see whether Hunters Hill was going to join these Councils. Richard replied that Council had adopted a mayoral minute that:

The mayor write to the NSW Premier, requesting that, given the concerns raised by the ICAC, the Australian Institute of Architects, the Law Society of NSW, this Council and the unprecedented volume of submissions, he commit to a re-writing of the Planning Bill 2013 Exposure Draft and a re-exhibition of the proposed legislation.

That the Mayor writes to Local Government NSW urging Presidents to make continued representations to the Premier that the proposed planning legislation should not be presented to parliament until further extensive re-writing and consultation has occurred with these organisations who will have the primary responsibility of implementing the Act i.e. Local Government.

There has also been mention in the press that some Councils may take direct action to prevent these reforms going ahead in their present form.

THE WHITE PAPER AND CORRUPTION

The ongoing Independent Commission Against Corruption's investigations into corruption at state and municipal level have drawn attention to the enormous potential for corrupt conduct associated with zoning and land use.

The involvement of a couple of Hunters Hill residents and the editor of the local newspaper in these investigations has brought the matter quite close to home.

Both the Law Society and the ICAC have made submissions on the White Paper. ICAC has warned that the new system could be an easy target for unscrupulous development.

Writing in the SMH in July this year, Leesha McKenney wrote: *The ICAC expressed concern the draft legislation created multiple ways to get a development approved against vague or subjective criteria.*

For instance, a non-compliant proposal could still be granted approval as a "complying development" if it is "not likely to cause any significant additional adverse impact". Or a development could be approved as "state significant", despite being partially prohibited under a local plan prepared by a council.

"The approval of prohibited development via this means creates the impression of 'backdoor' approvals which undermine the simplicity and overall integrity of the system," the ICAC said. In some cases, the discretion bestowed on decision-makers by the draft laws "appears largely unfettered," said the ICAC, citing the power granted to the minister to alter local plans.

The Trust has written to the minister requesting the plans be withdrawn and re-written

BORONIA PARK OVALS

The saga continues



Oval number 3

Finally the hills of soil and fill have been flattened and the full extent of the extension of the playing fields has been revealed. Over the years since this work began The Trust has attempted to understand why such a large-scale scheme has been carried out in such a haphazard and unprofessional manner and with little supervision and control from Council.

This project has been a continuing disgrace. It is still way short of completion and remains susceptible to erosion and run off. Turfing and surface drainage have not been completed. It is anticipated that after the turf has been laid it will take around 6 months for it to be established and only then will the drainage system be installed. It would seem that the first game of cricket or rugby to be played on oval number 3 is still 12 months away. This means that the oval will have been out of action for 4 years.

The new Cricket Club store



The new store for the Cricket Club equipment is nearing completion and it is clear that The Trust's concerns about this being an ugly eyesore were clearly well founded. The term "brick shithouse" comes to mind. It particularly stands out when viewed from the grandstand and with the light control-box and tower makes an ugly intrusion on the wooded skyline at the north east end of the oval.

RIVERGLADE RESERVE

Amenities upgrade

Council is currently considering proposals for the upgrade of amenities at the Riverglade reserve. This includes the provision of a new pathway along the southern edge of the ovals and the construction of new signage, dog bins, bicycle racks etc as well as a new restroom with two disabled cubicles. In the last journal we wrote about *Promoting Design Excellence* and featured the Weil Park shed designed by Council employee Charles Elfita. The Trust urges Council to ensure that the architecture of this facility is of the highest quality and designed appropriately for its location.

HUNTERS HILL'S OWN NAIL HOUSE



62 Gladesville Road



Nail house Zhejiang Province

Last May's Journal featured a photo of long time Trust member Pam Tompkins' house at 62 Gladesville Road with a massive hole right beside it on its eastern side. The latest photo shows excavation beginning for the underground carpark of the new development on its western side.

This is reminiscent of the photo of the Chinese "nail house" that went viral on the internet recently. This half-demolished building is standing in the middle of a newly-built road because a Chinese couple who refused to move out. The term nail house is given to residents who refuse to leave home for development projects.

Duck farmer Luo Baogen, 67, and his wife were offered payment to move but considered the amount too low.



Ballard Seattle

Such examples are not confined to China, here is Edith Macefield's house in the Ballard district of Seattle, where development ended up taking place all around her 108 year-old farmhouse. According to Wikipedia, Edith "achieved worldwide notoriety in 2006 when she stubbornly turned down \$1 million to sell her home to make way for commercial development."

No 5 ALEXANDRA ST UNVEILED



5 Alexandra St

Members of Council's Conservation Advisory Panel were given a guided tour of the now finished house restoration at No 5 Alexandra St.

Owners Bridget and Peter Hawthorne began the task of restoring the house at the beginning of 2012 and now 18 months later they have moved in.

This is a wonderful, and rare, example of what can happen when a house owner is able to see the full potential of a wreck (literally) and then decides to put their heart into making it good. Such dedication is rare these days and Bridget and Peter are to be congratulated on a wonderful job.

PARKS AND TREES COMMITTEE

Despite Council's recently adopted Consolidated DCP 2013 having strengthened some aspects of the management of trees and vegetation, many large established trees remain vulnerable within our garden suburb.

These days, decisions about trees are made by staff alone, but this was not always the case. From the early 1990s - The Parks & Trees Advisory Committee (PTAC) met each month and reviewed, with site visits where required, applications for tree removals as well as other matters.

Keen local residents with a suitable range of expertise contributed to this work in assisting Council to make the best decisions. The Committee also worked to develop policy on a range of issues including a street tree planting guide, the Tree Preservation Order, remnant bushland and tree management on private land and consideration of important trees for inclusion on the Significant Tree Register.

Some years ago the PTAC was abruptly abandoned. Clearly it's time this important committee was reconstituted.

Brigid Dowsett

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE

As a result of political pressure and months of attacks from the Australian newspaper, the National Civic Council and the Shooters and Fishers Party, the government reduced public funding to the EDO by 27%.

In response to a call for help, The Trust has made a \$1,000 donation to ensure that the EDO's vital work can continue.

MUSINGS

An occasional column

Where are the Conservatives?

Since coming into office, the NSW Liberal government has moved with lightning speed to initiate changes to the planning laws that are designed to make things easier for their developer and mining industry patrons.

This is truly radical politics and undermines a core democratic principle. The proposed new planning laws will effectively remove the right of people to

have a say in what happens in their neighbourhoods. This is also contrary to one of the foundation principles of the Liberal Party - the preeminence of the individual property owner.

The faceless authors of The White Paper and the Future Directions paper no doubt thought that resistance to the changes would only come from rabid, left wing, latte-sipping, inner-city, basket-weaving greenies.

They have failed to understand that they were tinkering with a fundamental idea that cuts across party lines. As well, they seem to have completely forgotten that a large part of their own membership is made up of people who are conservatives, who are opposed to change and who are naturally inclined towards conservation.

Tony Coote

HUNTERS HILL TRUST CHRISTMAS PARTY



**When: Friday 29 November 2013
At 6.30 pm**

**Where: Gladesville Hospital
Superintendent's Building
(Medical Board)** A map will be emailed as well as being available on the website

Cost: \$50 per person

**RSVP Maureen Flowers
maureen@fairfaxbm.com**

*Post your cheque to
The Secretary, Hunters Hill Trust
PO Box 85 Hunters Hill 2110*

Or *Direct deposit (with your name)
HHT Westpac Gladesville
BSB 032 185
Account No 500410*