

UPDATE ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THOMPSON SQUARE, WINDSOR

Since last reporting on the Battle to Save Thompson Square, Windsor - one of the earliest settled districts in Australia dating back to 1795 - the NSW Government has stepped up the pace of their destructive project *despite an Upper House Parliamentary Inquiry finding that the (currently \$137 million) project had 'multiple deficiencies', and recommending that the heritage 1874 bridge be preserved.*

The RMS' own Environmental Impact Statement from 2012 acknowledges that 'no other bridge like it has been identified in New South Wales'.

Robert Brown, MLC and Chair of the Parliamentary Inquiry said that 'the new bridge does not do what they said it would do ... It could have been put somewhere else.'

It is a tragedy for Australian history and heritage that the Berejiklian government has ignored expert advice calling for a bypass.

The Roads and Maritime Services own Heritage consultants even advised that "the most appropriate treatment of Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge is to avoid any further negative impact and to take the opportunity identified by the Heritage Council to remove through traffic."

Unlike this so called 'progress', that destroys our history and sense of place to facilitate more heavy traffic being funnelled through a fragile and incredibly important Community precinct, a bypass would deliver a proper traffic solution and preserve this unique location for all future generations

Before



After



As was anticipated by all the experts who opposed this project, it is causing the destruction of not only Australia's earliest convict built, military designed infrastructure, but also thousands of years of Aboriginal archaeology and important 'song-lines' connecting the place spiritually to the ancestors who gathered on the 'Green Hills' as they were first called by the early European settlers.

Daily since the project works started in late August, community observers have been heartbroken witnessing the destruction of stately mature trees; the killing of native water dragons and other protected species; and the removal of unique Australian convict-built infrastructure.

In their place a horrendous scar on what was once a delightful and tranquil remnant colonial landscape

so beautifully described in acclaimed author Kate Grenville's 'Secret River'.

The photos of before and after - work in progress say it all, the 'uglification' of yet another part of our state.

Before



After



The Trust would like to acknowledge the absolutely heroic efforts of the small band of dedicated protestors who guarded the site 24/7 against attempts to demolish it for the last 5 years.

We question the value of heritage protections if the Government of the day simply over-rides them whenever it wants and the community, which trusted the rules to protect their interests, are powerless to stop them?

With acknowledgment to Community Action Windsor Bridge



From the President's Desktop

The Trust was born early in 1968 when a protest rally on New Year's Day was held in response to the rampant march of developers wishing to demolish old homes and build apartments. Such was the outrage that the RSL Hall was filled to standing in the height of summer!

A small founding group was formed and a second public meeting was held on 7 February when 600-800 residents packed out the Town Hall. Nearly 250 people joined the Trust on that occasion and membership rose to over 800 in an era of rising civic awareness.

At that time, Hunters Hill Council was developing a Town Plan that would have made development easier and in the Council election at the end of the year, the Trust's nine endorsed candidates were elected to oppose the destruction of our heritage.

It was in the following year that the Council and the Trust were divided in their response to A V Jennings' proposal to build 500 home units in 8 storey towers on Kelly's Bush. The proposal was then downgraded to 2 storey town houses, then 94 single residences, but with the heroic persistence of the 13 housewives known as the 'Battlers for Kelly's Bush', assisted by Jack Munday and the Builders Labourers' Federation who placed the



Hunters Hill Town Hall

the world's first green ban on the site, the battle was finally won when in 1983, the State Government purchased Kelly's Bush as Open Space. In 1993 it was handed over to the care of Hunters Hill Council.

Unfortunately, we're now seeing that same 'profit at all costs' mentality and although developers may retreat for a time, as long as there's a profit to be made, they will persist in taking advantage of today's permissive planning laws. This has resulted in ever bigger dwellings and loss of tree cover and gardens in favour of concrete and paving.

Much of Hunters Hill is protected by being classified as a Conservation Area, but Boronia Park and much of Gladesville have no such protection. Unfortunately our Council's limited funds curtail its ability to pursue costly disputes through the Land & Environment Court.

Our 50th anniversary celebration and Christmas Party was held at the very same RSL Hall that housed our first meeting, and was a delightful nostalgic evening of music and memories.

Thanks to all our past luminaries who have served on the Trust's committee over those 50 years, for carrying the torch to defend Hunters Hill's heritage from inappropriate development.



Bev Sherry, Ros Maguire and Alice Oppen cutting our anniversary cake on the night.

PLANNING & PROTECTION

We were excited to find an archive copy of Newsletter no. 1 of the Hunters Hill Trust dated April 1968, which had these three resolutions directed to the Council of the day:

1. Preservation of Hunters Hill's unique character.
2. Deferment of home unit building until the proposed town plan is ready.
3. A town planning committee on which the Trust and ratepayers can be represented.

So where do we stand 50 years on?

Over seventy percent of Hunters Hill Council is within a Heritage Conservation Area (see map below). This means that any proposed works must comply with the controls and objectives set out in the Hunters Hill Council's Local Environment Plan (2012) and its Consolidated Development Control Plan (2013) that relate specifically to heritage.

Council's Conservation Advisory Panel – a body arising from a proposal by the Trust in 1968 – has an important role in maintaining the integrity of local heritage by providing advice on Development Applications with potential to detrimentally impact the special character of our historic area.

The Hunters Hill Trust has stated, and it has been proved, that buildings can be effectively ruined by over-sized or incongruous development nearby. It is for this reason that the Trust urged the formation of historic districts with special provisions for area preservation which have resulted in today's protections.

Hunters Hill Council's own Heritage Advisor Greg Patch confirmed that there is a level of protection for

heritage particularly in conservation areas. However, this applies mainly to the character (as set out in the Development Control Plan) of streetscape and setbacks.

If you'd like to nominate a period home for listing to protect it for posterity, an approach can be made to Council for inclusion in Schedule 5 (Heritage Items and Conservation Areas). Changes to the schedule essentially require official gazettal and concurrence by the Department of Planning.

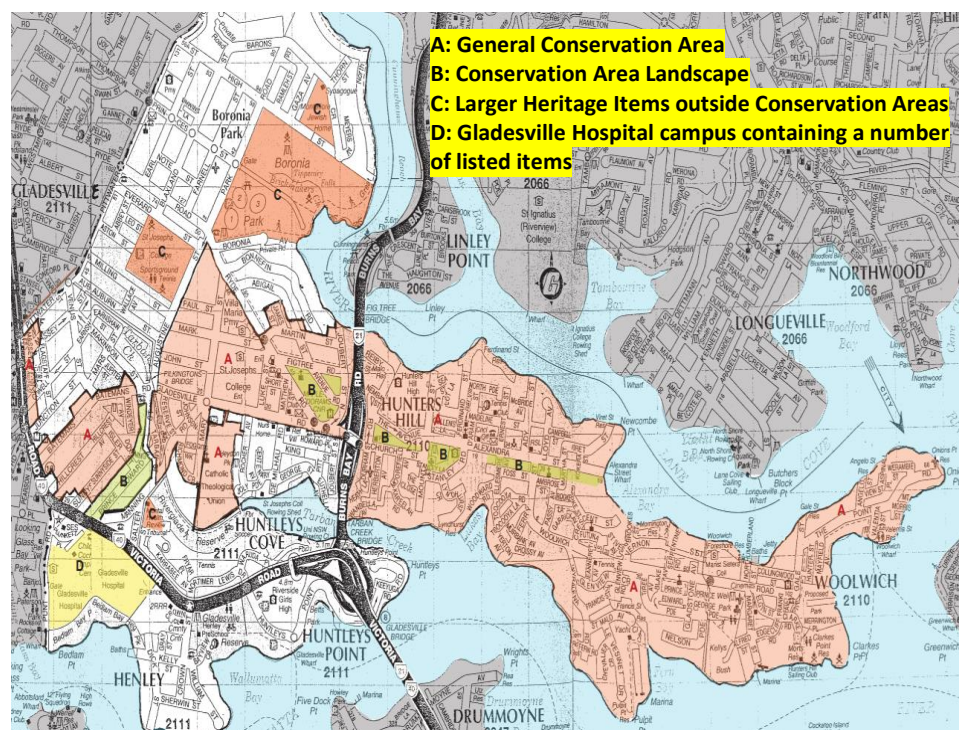
Part of today's difficulty with the planning laws is that planning approvals have largely been removed from the role of Councillors. There is also the somewhat contentious practice of Private Certification in areas where Exempt and Complying Development Codes apply. Fortunately these Codes do not apply to heritage-listed items or to works in the Conservation Areas, so in these cases Private Certification is not permitted.

However, if you become aware of local Development Applications that you feel are inappropriate,

excessive or threatening the character of your neighbourhood, you have the right to object and if there are more than 10 objections made to Council, the DA has to be referred to the Local Planning Panel for assessment.



Above is an example of how a growing family needing space, sensitively renovated an older home whilst retaining its streetscape and wall for the benefit of heritage and the neighbourhood.



NEWS & UPDATES

NEW SPORTS COMPLEX St Joseph's College

St Joseph's College is proposing a massive over-development of its site. Most concerning is the replacement of four outdoor basketball courts on the corner of Luke St and Gladesville Rd with an indoor sports building housing three courts.

The proposed building would sit just 1m inside the heritage-listed stone wall, would stand almost 16m high (about the height of a four-storey building), and run approximately 100m back along Luke St. Apart from overshadowing Luke St, this would create a precedent for constructing other buildings tight along this boundary. **Over 30 trees** will be sacrificed including the street trees in Luke St, just some of which are pictured below.



Considered as a State Significant Development, costed at \$38m, the proposal bypasses our Council. In its submission Council was strongly against the development and at their meeting on 12 November, unanimously voted to reject the proposal.

The Trust also made formal submissions objecting to this proposal, stating as follows:

The College is wholly within one of Hunters Hill Council's heritage

conservation areas. The proposal fails to observe the basic heritage objectives set down in the Local Environment Plan and raises concerns due to its:

- height, scale and lack of setback from the college boundary for the proposed Basketball Complex
- loss of over 30 trees, several of local significance
- lack of compatibility with existing college buildings and loss of internal open space
- incompatibility with the character and amenity of the residential neighbourhood

The proposal also fails to present design excellence and there is no intention by the College to contribute to a Voluntary Planning Agreement to benefit ratepayers.

ST PETER CHANEL

The Trust submitted a formal objection to the proposal to subdivide the site of St Peter Chanel Church in Woolwich. As no agreement was reached at the onsite mediation meeting with the Land & Environment Court Commissioner, it will again be progressing to the Land & Environment Court early next year.

NEW ART GALLERY

As reported a year ago, the 'Sydney Modern', determined as a State Significant Development, is a controversial proposal that was opposed on many grounds including its design, its close proximity to the existing much-loved Art Gallery of NSW Vernon building and the loss of valued public land.

Despite the number of submissions being 3 to 1 against and those opposing representing an impressively long list of eminent

people, experts and organisations, the project has now been approved by the Planning Minister with very little amendment.

There were powerful corporate forces in favour of the new gallery and its dominant position adjoining the Royal Botanical Gardens. It is being termed a 'private-public partnership' with a private sector contribution of \$100m to the current \$344m price tag.

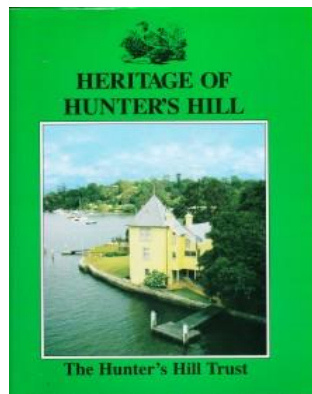
The works are described on the NSW Planning Department website as "Construction of a new separate building over five levels (known as the 'Sydney Modern') to the north-east of the existing gallery incorporating the adaptive re-use of the former navy fuel bunker adjacent to Lincoln Crescent. Further works include landscaping, a new public plaza, upgrade road works and installation of an ancillary seawater heat exchange system."

The Trust's submission objected to the gross over-development of the site, the encroachment of historically significant protected park land and the lost opportunity to explore alternative sites more suitable to high visitation levels and where it could benefit another part of the city of Sydney.

No business case was ever released and no independent planning review took place. Visitor numbers are anticipated to double - undoubtedly a traffic management nightmare in the making with so little public transport nearby.

With glorious harbour views and ample open spaces planned, it is easy to see the new Sydney Modern building as having been designed more to provide a function centre than for its stated purpose of displaying a contemporary art collection.

GREEN BOOK UPDATE



Much activity to report on since our last update in the May Journal. The Funding Grant from NSW Government's Office of Environment & Heritage was approved and we have been full steam ahead ever since.

The existing Green Book information has been converted into a digitised format to enable both the online searchable website and the new hard copy version. Although the information contained in the book produced in 2002 had already been thoroughly researched, we had to verify and add current information. The committee members have literally walked the streets checking out the houses, talking to locals and updating photos where required (to be added soon). The first tranche of the website containing the updated listings and information was launched at our Christmas Party on 7 December. You can check out the new online version at: <https://greenbook.huntershilltrust.org.au>

You can now also freely search on your phone or device to enjoy an online view of our heritage. We have the site structure in place to readily add new listings and make updates over time.

The next stage is the inclusion of additional houses constructed up to the 1920s which will be worked

through. We will also take this opportunity to ensure that any valuable heritage items missed last time are included.

VALE TO TWO PROMINENT HUNTERS HILL IDENTITIES

We were saddened recently to learn of the deaths of two long term members and keen supporters of the Trust.

Graham Percival, died in September after a period of ill-health. Graham was an enthusiastic and active member who for many years used his extensive local knowledge to lead walking groups and guide our river cruises.

In 2006, he was awarded Hunters Hill Citizen of the Year.

Our condolences go to his wife Carolyn and family.



We were also sad to hear of the loss of **Arthur Mashford** in October at the age of 104. Arthur was born in Gladesville and lived in the house he built in Boronia Park at the time of his marriage.

The Trust is fortunate to have recorded his memories of earlier days. Having lived in the area all his life, local history and the well-being of the area were his life-long passions.

We send our condolences to his daughter Rae and family.



Preserving our heritage

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SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS FOR 2019 NOW DUE!

Single membership \$30
Family membership \$50

Payment by cheque to the above address or by bank transfer to:
CBA Bank,
BSB: 062000 Acct No: 16211909
Acct Name: Hunters Hill Trust

NEW MEMBERS

To join please contact us by email on members@huntershilltrust.org.au or download a form from the website.

Publications:

Heritage of Hunters Hill
The Vision and the Struggle
The Industrial Village of Woolwich

Available at Hunters Hill Post Office

THE ONGOING SAGA OF THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Since our last Journal report, the NSW Government has continued to pursue its plans to demolish the existing Powerhouse Museum (PHM) in Ultimo and build a new museum in Parramatta, despite strong opposition. It is just four years since then Premier Mike Baird announced his captain's pick to sell off the PHM and send the remnants to Parramatta, launching Australia's world first museum demolition plan and one of the biggest controversies in Australian cultural heritage. Some may even call it vandalism.

Under sentence of demolition the PHM has endured four years of drift and difficulty with an unprecedented number of four directors in just six years, a huge loss of skilled staff and expertise, and a collapse in governance, donations and acquisitions, with some donors asking for their objects to be returned and changing their wills. The priceless Boulton & Watt engine, a centrepiece of the collection, has been inoperative since early September.

While the government has deliberately been running the PHM down with a lack of maintenance and reduction in capacity, with its major temporary exhibition space (renovated just five years ago for \$25 million) subdivided for use by the University of Technology as classrooms; more than \$10 million has been spent on consultants to try and justify the move.

Meanwhile an estimated \$645m in public funds has been allocated towards the \$1.17bn cost of destroying and moving the PMH - while developer deals at both the Ultimo site and the Parramatta location remain unspecified. The



long running Legislative Inquiry into Museums and Galleries has continued to call witnesses to try and understand the justification for the relocation of the Museum. Expert interrogation of the Government's Business Case for the move has revealed that the proposed exhibition galleries in Parramatta will be half the size of the current museum and overall the new museum will be less than half the size of the current PHM.

Added to the controversy is the poor choice of site for the new museum on the Parramatta River flood plain that was inundated during heavy November rains; and the threat to the significant local heritage of Willow Grove and the St George's Terraces that stand in the way of the 'New Museum Western Sydney'. A snap petition of 13,000 signatures from the Parramatta community was raised in opposition to this demolition.

Equally, there are strong fears for the loss of the much loved institution for yet another city block of apartments with the Government appearing to stall on the proposed listing of the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum on the NSW State Register. The 'New Museum Western Sydney' is the only

museum development project **anywhere in the world** where the new complex will be inferior to the existing facilities and potentially destroy significant community heritage as a result.

With acknowledgment to the PHM Alliance

1 & 3 Ryde Road



The neglected houses at 1 & 3 Ryde Road in the centre of the Hunters Hill 'village' remain in limbo. Council recently commenced Class 4 legal proceedings with urgent injunctive orders preventing further works and requiring remedial action. The developer now has to provide plans for landscaping and reconstruction of the demolished verandah. The fencing will remain and turf will be installed. The matter is now adjourned until 26 February 2019.