



Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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FORESHORES Public or Private ?

The majority of Hunter's Hill's boundaries are marked by rivers, and this topography has to a great extent protected the area from the ravages of commercial development. Most residents, too, are grateful for the cool and calm of the waterways which surround us on three sides, and for the green fringes along the water's edge.

The Hunter's Hill Trust has received complaints, however, that the foreshores are becoming inaccessible to most of the residents, to be owned and enjoyed by the few. The Trust has investigated these complaints as far as possible, and offers the following general study of existing areas open to the public, as well as recommendations for government policies concerning future treatment and acquisitions along the foreshores.

Reserves for Public Recreation

COMPLAINT 1: Where are the reserves? How can I find them if I don't know where they are already? Often they have been planted to look like a part of somebody's garden, and I don't know whether I am trespassing or not.

The Hunter's Hill Trust recently requested Council to mark reserves with appropriate signs and has offered to help defray costs of the signs. The map on pages 2 and 3 show foreshore reserves as proposed by the Town Planning Scheme in 1973. As the Town Plan may yet undergo changes before it is finalised, this map, or any other, cannot be taken as definitive. Clarke's Point has now been acquired by the State and is public (Crown land). Council will take over responsibility for it at some future date.

The Hunter's Hill Trust requests Council to require foreshore land as a Parks and Gardens contribution, wherever possible, when granting subdivisions on the foreshore. Mosman and Willoughby Councils now control huge areas of foreshores as a result of long-term acquisition policies.

High Tide

COMPLAINT 2: Some people have been told to "get off my land" when walking around the foreshores, even on the rocks below mean high water mark. Parcels of "land" have been sold for sums which seem paltry, considering that these sales bar the public from traversing the foreshores.

The Maritime Services Board is a descendant of the Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners, in whom was vested the control of the bed and shores of the waters of Sydney Harbour, together with the exclusive control and the general preservation and improvement thereof. The Act also empowered the Commissioners to lease for such considerations as they deemed reasonable, any

superfluous lands in such manner as they deemed most advantageous... (from The Sydney Harbour Water-side Zoning Plan)

LEASES

Leases apply either to reclaimed land or to the area between high and low water marks. The demarcation between the Lands Department and the Maritime Services Board, says one solicitor, is not clear. Leases now cost about \$12 a year, and the MSB can, by not permitting renewal, regain the land. This will be done in some areas. Until recent years, leases provided for public access, delineating a right of way so that the foreshore was not alienated from the public. Right of way is no longer provided, said one MSB employee, unless we remember.

FREEHOLD SALES

In the last few years, the MSB has been selling land below high water mark for amounts said to be just under property valuations on the block of land above water. While most owners have been eager to obtain a freehold title to the foreshore adjoining their homes, some owners who wished to continue leasing reclaimed land have been "encouraged" to buy when the MSB threatened to fence off the reclaimed land, making access impossible.

The MSB has thus presumably been attempting to defray its costs, at a very different sort of cost to the general public. One might well ask when, and under whose direction, this practice was started. Hunter's Hill Council, too, must pay for land acquired from the MSB. At least 150 segments of Hunter's hill foreshores have been leased or sold, probably many more. The MSB's mercenary attitude towards the foreshores is to be deplored; they are not in business for profit, but should hold the land in trust so that it may be appreciated by all.

HISTORIC INSPECTION
MARCH 28
GLADESVILLE HOSPITAL
see page 4

MAP

The five zones approximately marked on the map are:

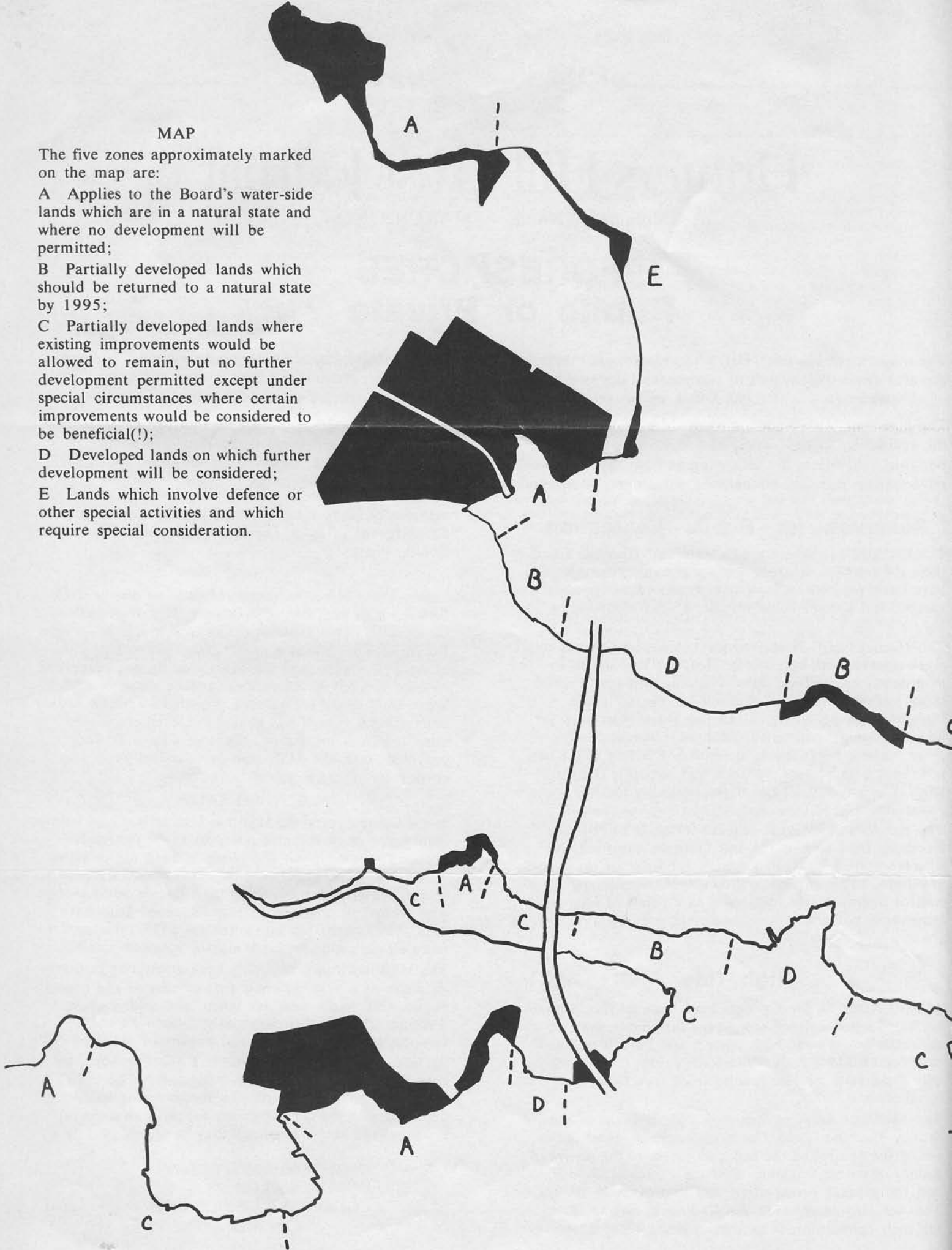
A Applies to the Board's water-side lands which are in a natural state and where no development will be permitted;

B Partially developed lands which should be returned to a natural state by 1995;

C Partially developed lands where existing improvements would be allowed to remain, but no further development permitted except under special circumstances where certain improvements would be considered to be beneficial(!);

D Developed lands on which further development will be considered;

E Lands which involve defence or other special activities and which require special consideration.



WORDS FLOWING

A very glossy public relations booklet issued by the MSB stated that facilitating a riparian owner to develop his waterfrontage was an approach about to end, with the introduction of water-side zoning:

The proposals outlined in this booklet, which are consistent with the Government's overall policy for the protection of the environment, constitute an ambitious scheme, but the benefits flowing from their implementation will be far reaching. Sydney Harbour exists not only for the people who live on its foreshores or work and move about its surface but for the whole community. Not only because the harbour is the birthplace of our national heritage, but also because of its abundance of beautiful foreshores, its exquisite natural landscaping and the variety of uses which it affords, the community as a whole carries a heavy responsibility to ensure that its natural beauty and the uses afforded by it are preserved for future generations.

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

Those statements were made jointly by the President of the Maritime Services Board and the Chairman of the State Planning Authority, in 1974. The purpose was to introduce zoning, but the Hunter's Hill Trust feels entitled to expect that the MSB after this date would have shown enough concern for its role not to sell off bits of the foreshore to individuals of that community which is to "carry a heavy responsibility", etc. Just how is the wider community to protect areas not under its jurisdiction except in a vague collective sense — under the Maritime Services Board?

The Hunter's Hill Trust calls for an end to the sale of the foreshore to private individuals and urges that leases include provision for right of way for the public. Zoning of the foreshores designed to protect and restore large areas to a natural state is most commendable, but the MSB will be best able to implement such zoning by retaining its control.

STOP PRESS

MSB DEFENDS FORESHORES LAND SALES

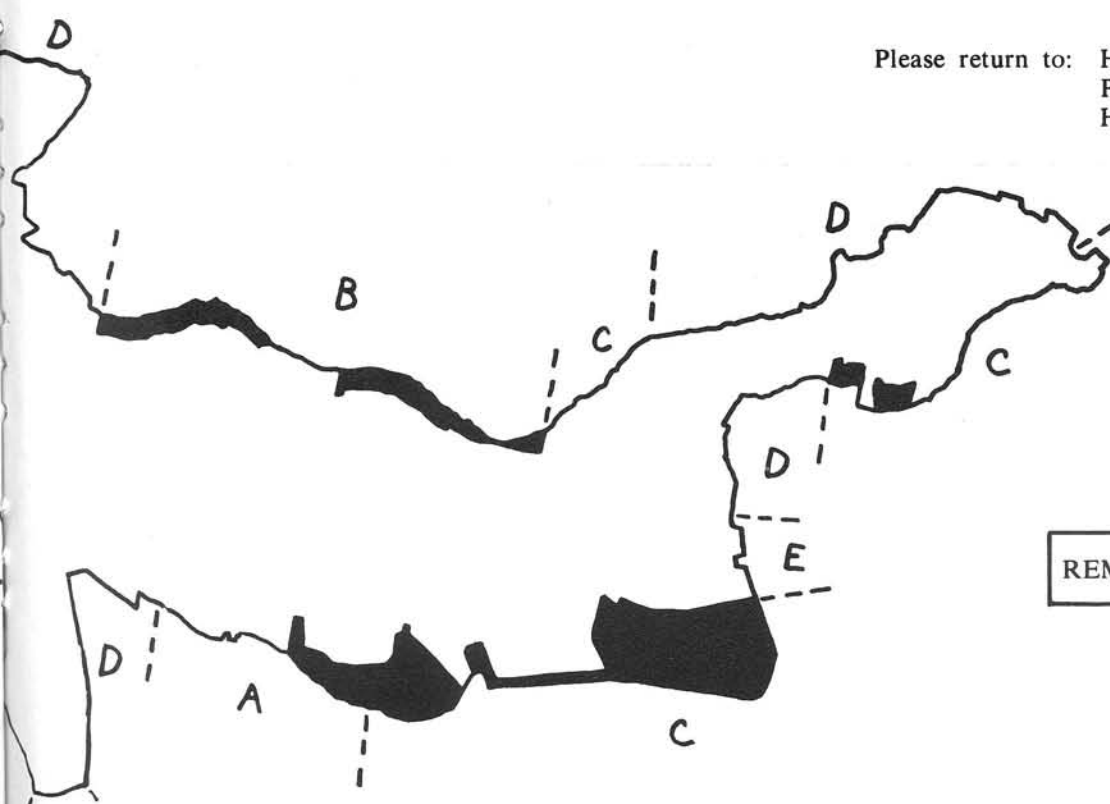
The vice-president of the MSB was reported by the Sydney Morning Herald Environment Writer as saying that the land has no purpose for port facilities, and the Board was involved in a lot of work preparing lease documents and collecting rents; therefore the Board decided to sell to the adjoining owners. So far, up to 200 sites have been sold in a number of council districts, including Hunters Hill. He is reported to have said that it was idealistic and impossible to retain public foreshore areas around all the Harbour, and that the only way to have a public right-of-way around the Harbour would be for the Government to buy the land at much expense. "If the State Government came out and said that this was their policy and they were prepared to meet the cost with local councils, that would be another matter". It would, indeed. And the less land the Government would have to buy back, the less expensive and more possible such a venture would be, even on a limited scale. The Hunters Hill Trust wish to express its surprise that the State Government should delegate decision-making at this level to the Maritime Services Board, and requests that the State Government reverse this "policy" of alienating the foreshores of Sydney Harbour, as soon as possible.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS — JOIN THE TRUST

Membership Form

Name.....
 Address.....
 Telephone.....
 Type of Membership: Single \$2.00
 Family \$4.00
 Pensioner \$1.00
 Youth \$1.00

Please return to: Hunter's Hill Trust
 P.O. Box 85
 Hunter's Hill 2110



REMEMBER THE TOWN PLAN?

Inspection at Gladesville Hospital

On Sunday, March 28th, the Hunter's Hill Trust is holding "Open Day" at Gladesville Hospital, at the kind invitation of the Hospital. Although many of us live so near the Hospital, few of us are familiar with its buildings and grounds, and this is an opportunity which should not be missed.

Photographers are invited to the Inspection, as there is much to photograph. Tea will be provided by the Trust. Children are welcome, and families are invited to picnic in the grounds during the day. For further information and for tickets, please telephone 89-2035 or 89-2248. Tickets are on sale at the Trust Office and at the milk bar at Figtree, or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill. Tickets are \$2 per person, \$4 per family.

The Old Concept of the Lunatic Fringe

In Colonial times, care of the insane was part of the commission of the Governor; for many years, all "lunatics" committed to an asylum were convicts and a charge on the English government. They were at first segregated in the Town Hall at Parramatta. In 1811 Governor Macquarie founded the first mental asylum at Castle Hill, but by 1825 these premises were overcrowded and were required for use as a church, and the thirty men and twelve women were removed to a renovated Court House at Liverpool, "to the great inconvenience of the magistrates".

In 1835 it was decided to build an asylum on the Parramatta River; a survey was made by Surveyor H. F. White of land to be used, and it was decided to build on that area where Tarban Creek entered the Parramatta River, known as "Bedlam Point". Why this name was already in use long before the asylum was planned is a mystery, but it was so known as early as 1820, when the only building there was a half-ruined stone house occupied by the Signal Man in charge of the Signal Post erected there as a means of communication between Sydney and Parramatta at a time when the Governor was in residence at the latter town.

The building for the asylum was designed by Mortimer Lewis in 1835, the year of his appointment to office as Colonial Architect. His first design was in the simple tradition of the rectangular facade with the small break forward in the centre, surmounted by the pedimented roof. Lewis added considerable sophistication to the rather naive earlier work, with a portico designed with Ionic columns, one of the first examples in Australia of the use of these more ornate forms, earlier columns having usually been made in the simple Doric form. The Ionic capitals had to be carved by hand, made possible by the increasing immigration of highly skilled craftsmen. Other works by Lewis are — the Darlinghurst Courthouse, Hartley Courthouse, Berrima Courthouse, Sydney Police Office, Church of St John the Evangelist, Camden, and Richmond Ville, recently demolished behind Parliament House. He was also responsible for creating the circular curve of Sydney Cove.

The new building at Tarban Creek was estimated to cost 4,000 pounds and was completed for 13,500 pounds. During actual building, Lewis changed the proportions of

his design, making the building wider and more squat. The pediment was replaced by a simple gable and finished with a square head, instead of the narrow arched door originally planned. The building was of stone with a slate roof. The first Keeper, or Steward, was Joseph Thomas Digby. He arrived in 1838 with his wife, who was to act as Matron. Digby clashed with the architect over the darkness of the corridors and suggested skylights. Lewis said this was planned "so that the Keeper should not easily be perceived moving from one group of cells to another".

In 1846 an enquiry was held in Sydney as to the treatment of the inmates of the Asylum, as a result of which Dr. Francis Campbell was appointed as the first Superintendent in 1848. Twenty years later, on his retirement, he wrote of the changes he had introduced, to set "the corporeal part of every insane man and woman in the asylum free... I think forever. Of course the disenfranchisement of their minds was the paramount object to be achieved, and though the lesser necessarily took precedent of the greater, at the beginning, they ran on parallel lines ever after."

Dr. Campbell was succeeded by Dr. F. Norton Manning, a member of an old Hunter's Hill family, and cousin to Mr. Justice Manning. His name is still revered for his humanity towards his patients, to whom he insisted on giving that name instead of "lunatics". He was responsible for many improvements. Large dormitories of wood and galvanised iron were erected in 1869 and a two storey building for women in 1871.

In 1888 a considerable property was added to the Asylum grounds, the house and land known as "The Priory". The original grant of 18 acres was to Thomas Stubbs, who built a house on it. This property was purchased and the house considerably enlarged, by the Marist Brothers in 1847, as a home for the French Mission. Father Rocher twice added to this estate, and in 1874 the older part of the property was sold to the Salter family for 2,000 pounds. The present function of "The Priory" is as a dormitory ward, a kind of hostel for rehabilitated patients who still need some supervision. Originally surrounded by fruit trees from St. Helena, this house now stands beside a vegetable garden which is worked by patients and supplies the hospital. Nearby are the attractive old stables, in a sad state of disrepair.

At the turn of the century considerable building was done, mostly in red brick; these buildings, like the early stone erections, are excellent of their kind. The grounds are remarkable also for the long series of beautifully built stone walls; the bay has been reclaimed from the original mangrove swamp and a sports oval fills its place. The views are fine and the gardens, although overgrown, are romantic. Near the Victoria Road entrance, one of the oldest buildings is used as a pottery, which will be open with a display of work of very fine quality.

The Hunter's Hill Trust wishes to thank the Gladesville Hospital in advance for the generosity and good will shown in opening the grounds on March 28. Gone are the days without skylights.

MEMBERSHIP FORM page 3
Renew Now — Avoid the May Rush