

Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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From the President's Desktop

AGM Report

This year's AGM was held on Thursday 16 May. An excellent turnout of members heard an intriguing and entertaining presentation, kindly given by Chris Schofield, President of the HH Historical Society, on his research into the life of Lottie Stewart 'A Saint from All Saints'.

Membership

The Trust's membership has again increased and we now number over 400. Very many thanks also to those life members who generously made donations to the Trust over the past year.

Interaction with Council

We're pleased to advise that some of our committee continue to serve as your representatives on various Council committees, as below:

- *The Boronia Park Plan of Management Community Advisory Committee;*
- *The Public Transport and Traffic Advisory Committee;*
- *The Property Advisory Committee;* and, after some strong representation by the Trust, the recently re-instated
- *Bushland Management Advisory Committee*

We're also very appreciative of Tony Coote's continuing service on Council's *Conservation Advisory Panel*.

Rather surprisingly, only 4½ years after it was finalised, Council is reviewing the Plan of Management for Boronia Park. Preparation of the current plan took 18 months. Councils are now obliged to prepare new Plans under changes to the Crown Lands Act and have until mid-2021 to do so. However this new Plan is scheduled to be finalised in just 6 months to enable expenditure of the \$1million grant from local MP Anthony Roberts for organised sport, announced at last year's Moocooboola Festival. Apart from this, and a grant of \$200,000 for an 'Inclusive Playground' (matched by some Council money) there is no budget for any other actions currently included in the Plan and more of this on page 5.

A review of the Plan of Management for Riverglade Reserve appears to be proceeding more slowly.



One of the 'Contributory items' in Hillcrest Avenue being included in the updated Green Book

Planning and redevelopment

The Trust's Committee keeps an eye on development proposals in Hunters Hill and indeed across all of Sydney.

Perhaps the most concerning proposal just now is St Joseph's College plan for a very large sports building to be positioned hard against the heritage stone wall boundary along Luke Street and Gladesville Road. As a State Significant Development Application (on account of its budget of \$38 million) the proposal was lodged directly with the NSW Department of Planning. Council's submission to the Department objected to both the size and location, as did ours. Apparently, the Department of Planning also found it excessive and at present the College is reviewing the design.

Walks & Events 2018-2019

Our schedule over the past year has again given us some fascinating tours, such as exploring our local foreshore and bays with their half-hidden Aboriginal rock carvings and strolling through the wide streets of the well-preserved Federation homes in the Isler Estate.

In December, we had a hugely enjoyable Christmas Party celebrating the Trust's 50th anniversary, with everyone relishing a trip down memory lane led by Col Joye.

Greg Griffiths of the Historical Society was our guide for our March walk, past magnificent Jeanneret homes and through lesser known areas such as the Mornington Reserve. In April, by popular demand, we repeated our heritage boat cruise, this time around Spectacle, Snapper and Rodd Islands - a trip enhanced by some good company, food and wine - and the planned walks for the rest of the year will again take us into more new territory.

In addition to our friends in the Historical Society, we owe a huge vote of thanks to our guides who give freely of their time and expertise, Len & Brigid Dowsett, Karen Presland and Maureen Flowers. We're grateful for their enthusiasm in researching and sharing with us so much about our beautiful neighbourhood.

We're also very grateful to Kate Russell for her extraordinary effort with our website over the past 10 years! We applaud Karen Presland for putting up her hand to continue the good work.

The Green Book

We have now identified, an additional 125 homes for inclusion, mostly of the period between 1900-1930 (see example above) and more of this on page 6.

Alister Sharp

HOW OUR GARDEN SUBURB IS CHANGING.....

A Case Study on the impact of Exempt and Complying Development Code

In Hunters Hill, a large amount of work over the years has gone into setting the controls designed to protect the unique character of the area. This is particularly so in relation to the DCP (Development Control Plan) where there are carefully crafted character statements and descriptions of building forms and features, designed to ensure that new work is compatible with the existing built forms and landscapes.

There is no question that the provisions in the new State Government Exempt and Complying Development Codes SEPP are diminishing control over appropriate development in Local Government Areas such as Hunters Hill.

A case in point is this recent development at 8 Earnshaw Street, Gladesville, which is an example of the detrimental impact of the NSW SEPP on the character and charm of our streets and the heritage items adjacent to new developments.

Were it not for the imposition of the Complying Development SEPP, as a single block with a proposal for a dual occupancy, these buildings shown here, would have been assessed under the controls of Hunters Hill Council's LEP and DCP and Council's Conservation Advisory Panel, whose advice would have been incorporated into Council's assessment.

Although at first sight it would appear to be a dual occupancy on a single block of land, there is an anomaly with this particular development. There are in fact two lots at 8 Earnshaw Street. One is just over 6m wide, while the other is a little over 12m wide. The smaller block has an area of around 230m² and the larger block's area is about 450m².

Neither block complies with the LEP minimum of 700m². How this unusual subdivision occurred is not known.

So, as the two blocks are deemed to be separate dwellings, the proposal for the two houses can be considered under the NSW Complying Development SEPP and are therefore able to bypass Council's controls, signed off by a Private Certifier.

In addition, Complying Development is allowable in this part of Earnshaw Street because it is outside a Conservation Area,

although there are three heritage items in close proximity.

8 Earnshaw Street (now demolished)



Above is the house that was demolished. Note the original single storey dwelling sitting centrally over the whole block, with a single driveway and garage situated well behind the building line and the large lawn to the front.

Even when not in a Conservation Area, residents expect that any new design would fit with the current character of the streetscape.

8 Earnshaw Street (new construction)



Note the completely unsympathetic architecture ranging from faux Spanish Mission to Developer Modern. Note also the totally unsympathetic use of materials, the huge double garage door facing the street (in contradiction of the guidelines in the DCP).

Also note the zero side boundary setbacks of the house on the left and zero side boundary setback of the garage in the house on the right. The setbacks are contrary to the guidelines in the LEP which specify a minimum 1.5m side boundary setback and which would have made it virtually impossible to build a separate dwelling on the smaller block.

Also unfortunate is the extent of the concrete cross-overs from the road, which have replaced much of the grass verge and the front yard, now mostly concrete.

The bulky structures dwarf the heritage item at no. 6 next door (image below) sited in its garden setting and enhanced by a mature Eucalypt.

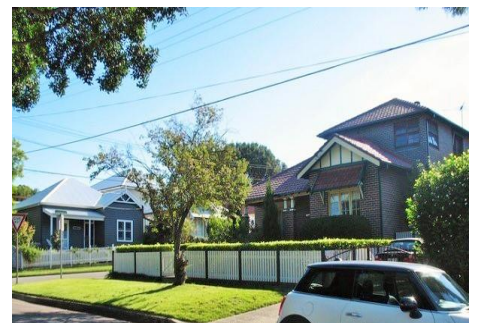
Clearly these two new houses have had a deleterious impact on the streetscape and on all the heritage items adjacent to them. Similarly, they do not pass the test that any new work should be an improvement on what was demolished. Nor do they pass the character and heritage tests as set out in the DCP to ensure new housing is in keeping with the existing character of the street, Part 2 of which has chapters relating to the following:

- Environmental qualities and features that contribute to the identity of Hunters Hill.
- Trees and vegetation relating to the existing character of Hunters Hill.
- Heritage Conservation requirements in relation to these significant elements in Hunters Hill.

It is clear that these two buildings have not been designed with any of this in mind.



The architectural character of Earnshaw Street is typified by the houses pictured here.



The fact that this development has been allowed to go ahead puts at risk the whole intent of the *Conservation Advisory Panel* and any chance that Council may have in continuing to preserve the unique character of streetscapes such as Earnshaw Street. It's a depressing outcome.

Tony Coote



31 Waruda Place

The Farm Attendant's Cottage

We're delighted to bring a good news report on a 'sympathetic' extension that doesn't impact adversely on its heritage home.

The Farm Attendant's Cottage located at Tarban was part of the Gladesville Hospital complex and is a listed, largely intact, heritage item. Research indicates that it was the first, and therefore the oldest, surviving purpose-built institutional building on the Tarban Creek side of Gladesville Asylum. It has social significance from its association with the Mental Hospital and aesthetic significance as an intact specimen of the Federation Arts & Crafts style, designed in 1917 by the then Government Architect George McRae, who supervised the completion of the Town Hall and designed the winning scheme for the Queen Victoria Building. He became the Government Architect in 1912 and held office till his death in 1923.

Although there is no direct evidence that it was ever used by the Farm Attendant, it is thought that the Cottage was built to oversee the adjacent farmland used by the inmates of the Asylum as the first use of rehabilitation for the mentally ill.

The Cottage retains a large amount of the original fabric and its physical integrity is exceptionally high. It has many of the key elements of the Arts & Crafts movement, such as the bracketed upper gable, prominent gable verge, roughcast render, stone base, tapering and Oriel window. The brickwork on sandstone foundation walls and the external walls are traditional cavity construction. The coarse roughcast cement is rendered and the sandstone is coursed sparrow-picked blocks. The interior had timber floors and deep skirtings, plastered

walls, picture rails, batted and metal ceilings, panel doors and sliding sash windows.



Waruda Cottage in 2000

By the year 2000, the cottage had been altered substantially internally and neglected for many years. A heritage assessment was done by the new owners who decided to return it to its former glory. Renovations were carried out to stabilize and restore the fabric of the building.

The Cottage again changed hands in 2011 when the curtilage was sub-divided and sold. The current owner bought the

property in 2016 and, as a passionate advocate for heritage, having previously restored period homes, set about returning the interior to closely resemble the original. His meticulous attention to detail is evident everywhere, right down to the restoration of the original brass light switches, the doors, door handles and architraves and even including commissioning a step leading to the new extension, of sparrow-picked sandstone to match the existing walls.



When it came to extending the living space, his personal philosophy of ensuring that the design and construction of any additional structure was sympathetic and respectful to the original, produced a low form design that closely mirrors the roofline of the existing house and sits neatly against the original building. The use of natural materials in the extension does not overpower the heritage home and the linkage for the two buildings seamlessly joins the old to the new.



His passion to ensure that the built environment complements the natural environment has continued through to the curtilage, which transitions smoothly from the formal planting of an English cottage garden to the sandstone retaining walls supporting citrus trees and Australian natives, through to regenerated bushland.

A heart-warming example of what can be achieved with the right mindset and a consideration for our shared heritage.



MORE ON HOW OUR GARDEN SUBURB IS CHANGING.....

Yet another example of what we are gradually losing. A solid interwar four bedroom home, listed on the Council's Environmental Heritage Schedule 5, set back from the street and nestling in established large front and rear gardens.



Same site below with home now demolished and replaced by a duplex structure filling the whole site and leaving little room for green space.



DA UPDATES

NEW SPORTS COMPLEX St Joseph's College

The latest proposal by St Joseph's College has apparently been scaled down somewhat but as yet there is no final determination from the Department of Planning. It will still not be compliant with local controls for surrounding streets. The controls for residential developments on the other side of Luke Street are; a maximum wall height of 7.2m; a maximum roof height (most commonly the ridge of a pitched roof) of 8.5m; and a minimum setback of 6m from the street boundary.

Even if the new proposal has the structure sunk 5m into the ground the walls will still be 2m higher than the maximum allowed

on the other side of the street and, unless the setback changes, it will be 4m closer to the street than it should be. This will be an unacceptable intrusion into the low-key neighbouring streetscape.

It will have a significantly negative impact on Luke Street and the houses opposite, as well as on the existing character of Gladesville Road. It will also cover up a large area of school ground currently open space and because of the 5m deep excavation, and without a significant setback from the two roads, it will require the rebuilding of much of the heritage listed stone walls along those boundaries.

Our understanding is that this proposal ticks the box for "state significant development" because under Clause 15 (2) Educational establishments of *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*, it is a "Development that has a capital investment value of more than \$20 million for the purpose of alterations and additions to an existing school."

Although of considerable size, there does not seem to be any explanation as to why a covered basketball complex with three courts and spectator accommodation should be removed from development assessment by the local Council.

There is little to be gained from this proposal by residents of the municipality. The College has stated that it is unwilling to contribute to the Voluntary Planning Agreement which is designed to give something back to residents in exchange for development in their midst with all its associated and inevitable impacts.

ST PETER CHANEL CHURCH

A Win for Heritage in the Land and Environment Court!

Following the formal onsite meeting of the Land and Environment Court on 28 May, we have just been notified that the Commissioner has taken barely a week to refuse the development application! Council's solicitors wrote to residents setting out the reasons for the judgement:

The Commissioner's 'reasons for refusal chiefly related to the proposal's detrimental impact on the heritage significance of the site, including impacting on views to and from the Church, the impact on the setting and curtilage of the Church as well as the uncertainty regarding contamination of the site.'



The Trust had submitted a formal objection and presented twice at onsite meetings of the Land and Environment Court, most recently on the 28th May. We fully supported Hunters Hill Council in believing the sub-division would be entirely unsuitable for this difficult site and would result in the destruction of the rock shelf and mature trees, as well as detracting from the character of the Church's setting within the heritage of Crescent Street.

We're delighted with the outcome (although we are aware there may be an appeal to the decision) and congratulate all residents and objectors who presented such a strong case and stood up in defence of heritage.

1 & 3 RYDE ROAD



The original verandah that has been demolished

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 latest news from Council is that the developer is still processing the plan for replacing the verandah and the landscaping on the street frontage. So the eyesore remains at a major intersection within our suburb. Not a good look for heritage protection in Hunters Hill.

THE DISMANTLING OF THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

A recent blow to heritage protection in NSW was the announcement by the re-elected Liberal State Government that the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) will be dismantled and its two principal functions absorbed by other departments.

The environmental protection and management functions of the office will be moved to an enlarged Planning, Industry & Environment Department under Minister Rob Stokes, while the heritage functions of the office will be moved to the arts portfolio under Minister Don Harwin. Speaking to reporters on 2 April, Premier Gladys Berejiklian said, "We've moved heritage into the arts, because heritage and the arts have a very strong focus."

As noted in the online magazine ArchitectureAU: "The Office has existed in its current form since 2011, first under the Department of Premier and Cabinet and then under the Department of Planning and Environment from 2014. It is responsible for the management and preservation of the state's natural and built heritage. It provides expert and independent advice on heritage issues through the Heritage Council of NSW".

Penny Sharpe, acting leader of NSW Labor and Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage, took to Twitter to criticise the decision. "The premier said she would make the environment a priority," she said. "Her actions today show that this was untrue."

It's becoming clear that no-one will really know how the new arrangements will work out until after the dust settles on 1 July. However, according to the Better Planning Network, the abolition of the Office of Environment and Heritage will mean that submissions and assessments previously lodged by the OEH as part of a planning consultation process by a stand-alone independent agency will no longer be visible to the public. This will happen as the OEH is abolished and the staff become a unit in the new department, so that all assessments and advice will go to internal managers and not into the public domain.

Nature Conservation Council CEO, Kate Smolski, said in a statement, "This shrinks the status of the Office of Environment and Heritage further and appears designed to reduce it to providing back-office functions enabling development".

As noted in the SMH of 2 April 2019:

"One senior staffer told the Herald, OEH had often provided a dissenting view to Planning, such as when new housing projects in the Sydney Basin threatened the dwindling natural reserves. Remaining koala corridors, for instance, were among the habitats at risk. Work that had previously been conducted by inhouse OEH experts was being diverted to external consultants - a process staff worry will accelerate with the bureaucratic overhaul now under way."

Enquiries to the Heritage Council office and the National Trust failed to provide any further clarity on the outcomes for heritage under the revised positioning. It leads us to fear that there will be no improvement on protection for the State's heritage forthcoming, at least not in the immediate future.

An update on the mega-Department of Planning Industry and Environment

The range and extent of the tasks facing the new Department will be considerable with responsibility for a huge portfolio of areas including environment, housing, regional development, science and industry, local councils as well as government property.

The advisory body set up by legislation in 2015 to lead metropolitan planning, the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) will return to the Planning Department with GSC's Chief Executive, Dr Sarah Hill, taking on the Deputy Secretary role. The Minister has commented that this will "support the work of the Department and GSC through a more cohesive, collaborative partnership to deliver great places for communities". (SMH 4 May).

The Executive Secretary of the new Department, Mr Jim Betts, has stated: "We all want NSW to be prosperous, liveable, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive, but in pursuit of these goals there are sometimes difficult trade-offs to be made".

So we will be watching with great interest Minister Stokes' second term of overseeing the Department. He has already shared his concerns on the controversial practice of 'spot re-zoning' used by developers and other proponents to gain approval for new housing developments outside existing planning controls. This has seen residents fighting ad hoc high-rise buildings across Sydney. Spot rezoning renders height and zoning controls of individual councils secondary to ministerial determination and makes a mockery of LEPs and the planning

system. Mr Stokes has also said he wants councils to update their local planning controls more often (SMH 1 June). Local groups will be calling on the Minister to back up his comments about "changing the culture" of development in the city by blocking the many contentious developer proposals.

The heritage-listed Boronia Park

You will have seen from our front page, news of the latest revision of the Plan of Management (PoM). Funding for on-park projects beyond those identified in an existing Plan can occur via Council itself and/or through Government grants. These projects inevitably become a 'high priority' requiring amendments to the Plan. Both current grants will mean further structures built and increased pressure on parkland.



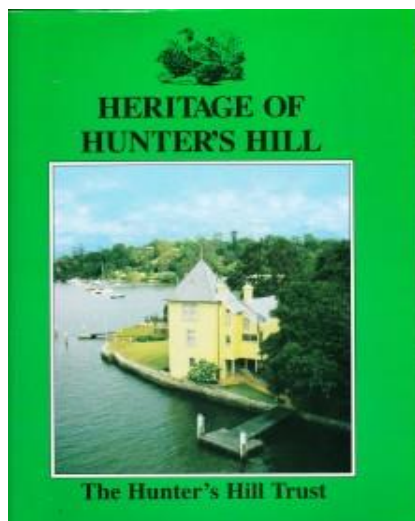
It is the Trust's view that the significant natural assets and cultural heritage of the Park deserve careful management that does not impinge on its precious bushland and open green space. This includes ensuring that the proposed clubhouse and inclusive play area are appropriately sited within the 'active sporting' area and do not encroach on sensitive bushland and the community's passive recreational use of parkland on the northern side of Princes St.



As you can see from the above photos, encroachment to green space is already happening, where cars are parked in sensitive bushland areas, in breach of Council's 'No Stopping' signage and the clear directions of the current PoM.

It is important that we use Council's survey on the draft PoM to express our views **by 21 June**. With Sydney's unabated growth, preservation of the Park's special values is ever more vital. You can access the survey at www.huntershill.nsw.gov.au

GREEN BOOK UPDATE



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The update of the Trust's publication the 'Heritage of Hunters Hill' is nearly complete and we need your help!

The online searchable database is up and running (although we do still have a few 'replacement' photos to upload) and now is your chance to really check out the new version for accuracy.



We now have 485 listings - an increase of 125 on previous versions - including a few heritage homes not previously recorded and some fine examples of the well-built Federation, Interwar and California style bungalows that sprung up in our suburbs in the years 1900 -1930s (as above).

To check out the listings, please go to the Green Book link below which sits on the Home page of the Hunters Hill Trust's website:

<https://greenbook.huntershilltrust.org.au>

Do you, or someone you know, own one of the homes listed? If so we'd be grateful if you could check, if you know it, that the

historical information is as accurate and comprehensive as possible. If there are corrections that need to be made to the listing, please email us as soon as possible on members@huntershilltrust.org.au

As you will see, we have been able to add images for the additional homes (and some original homes) in colour and we aim to replace more of the existing black and white photos with colour in order to display the homes more vibrantly.

So, if you have an improved high resolution image of your home that we could use, we'd love to see it. Please email it to the address above or send it to the PO address opposite.

This has been a lot more work than we, maybe naively, expected when we applied for a grant from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, but walking the streets with a camera has reminded us just how quickly we are losing our older houses, aided by today's access to Complying Development and private certifiers. This is why we feel it is so important to document our local heritage as it exists now.

The new hard copy version of the publication will be compiled once we are satisfied that all has been done to ensure the listings are as complete as possible and we hope to launch the book towards the end of the year.

We can really appreciate our special heritage when we showcase homes like this with its unique history:



ST JUDE'S OF INNISFREE
11A Ady Street

On 14 March 1861, the proclamation of Hunters Hill as a Municipality was read to residents in a ceremony held in this house.

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Preserving our heritage

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Why not join us?

and help swell the number of voices speaking up for our unique municipality

To become a member, contact us by email on members@huntershilltrust.org.au or download a form from our website under Get Involved at www.huntershilltrust.org.au

Annual subscriptions:

Single membership \$30
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Publications:

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

Available at Hunters Hill Post Office

The Historical Society's pamphlet
A Brief History of Hunters Hill
is available free at The Museum

All our previous journals (dating from 1972) are freely available on our website under Publications

NB: Correction to previous Journal December 2018 Volume 56 No. 2. The featured house on page 2 was erroneously identified as a renovation. It was in fact a completely new home replacing the original house. The new design was carefully built to respect the original home and responded sensitively to the streetscape of Woolwich Road and the environment of Hunters Hill.