

# Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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## From the President's Desktop

As we reach the end of our 55<sup>th</sup> year we are reviewing the status of some matters currently of concern.

Firstly, our much-loved **Boronia Park**, dedicated in 1887 as a Crown Land reserve for Public Recreation. Besides important remnant bushland, the park accommodates two playgrounds, passive enjoyment, playing fields and open green space.

Despite much public debate and opposition, our Council approved in 2021 the construction of a Sports and Community Facility funded largely from the public purse (NSW and Federal government grants) in a sensitive location in the middle of the Park. As the rugby club would not be charged for their use of this building, future maintenance and upkeep required a large ongoing subsidy - but no Council funding of construction costs of this contentious building.

But this stated commitment of no funding has now been abandoned due to the club failing to raise required funds. The divisive nature of this project has been compounded by Council's draft Licence Agreement with Hunters Hill Rugby Union Club, allowing almost exclusive 20 year access to the facility and all ovals.

The Trust objects to the new arrangement to provide financial support under the proposed licence. It will place an unjustified burden on ratepayers and is devoid of a convincing risk-averse business case.

In our view the draft Licence Agreement does not demonstrate the responsible, equitable management of Crown land under Council's care and control. It also fails to meet objectives of the 2020 Plan of Management for this precious parkland.



*Jacaranda season has been particularly spectacular this year with beautiful sights around every corner*

We were pleased that Council placed on public exhibition its policy for the **Disposal of Council Land**. Previously, land was sold piecemeal, without notice to the local community and often at substantially less than the value of adjacent land.

We are asking Council to strengthen this policy by maintaining a public register of so-called 'surplus' land, requiring it to be valued according to the Valuer-General's assessment, and for any proposed sale to be advertised and also considered for retention to provide for biodiversity corridors and other environmental heritage values.

Currently Council is revising its Local Environment Plan (**LEP 2012**) and the associated Development Control Plan (**DCP 2013**) which together are critically important to guide new development. While these Plans are designed to respect and protect the detail of existing built form and streetscape from inappropriate development, Council seems powerless to apply them except within

Conservation Areas. Elsewhere, Complying Development projects can bypass Council if managed by a Private Certifier (see more on page 2)

In August Council agreed to review their **Figtree Park DA** to remove 37 trees. The Trust welcomes the saving of some iconic trees and the modest reduction in oversized infrastructure, due to community pushback, but there are questions to be answered as to why there are still so many trees being removed (see page 5).

Continuing on from our previous Journal, inside this edition you will find the next of our special supplements, highlighting another two significant 20<sup>th</sup> Century homes.

***The Trust's Executive Committee wishes all our members and readers the very best of the season and we sincerely thank you for your support.***

***Alister Sharp***



## THE CONTINUING LOSS OF OUR TREES

Over recent years the Trust has been documenting the continuing loss of our mature trees which is radically changing the streetscape and character of our suburb.

Residents are increasingly frustrated by Council's diminishing capacity to counteract the problem and the Trust would encourage Council to develop and implement a strong and properly policed Tree Policy.

In the year to November 2021, 68 trees were lost, this year to date another 91 trees were approved for removal - a total of 159 trees over two years. That is without the addition of multiple trees quietly being disappeared under Complying DAs which do not need to specify if, or how many, trees are being removed (see more on page 5).

Some good news is that, for the time being at least, 47 trees proposed to be removed are still standing following the refusal of the DA for a 416 seat restaurant at The Priory!

However multiple trees are still earmarked for removal at Figtree Park, plus three large mature Eucalypts at Boronia Park for the sporting facility. The cumulative impact of this loss is becoming more and more noticeable with dozens of trees lost from our skyline.

There are at least 3 situations contributing to this:

1. DAs by homeowners for the removal of 'One (or multiple) Trees'. These can be for genuine reasons such as disease or serious damage to infrastructure where just pruning is inadequate, but can also be a way to remove trees that are now deemed undesirable.
2. The illegal poisoning of trees (see opposite).
3. The rise of new home builds using 'Complying Development' and private certification. There is an increasing preference for knocking

BEFORE .....



AFTER .....



down established homes with the consequent clearing of gardens and mature trees, in order to build to the boundaries ([see July Journal under 'Publications' on our website](#))

At left is an example of a location where members of the community reported the gradual death of three huge Eucalypts. Although Council looked into the issue, they decided they could not identify the perpetrators and the dead trees were deemed unsafe and allowed to be removed under the current Development Control Plan, with no further consequences or penalty.

We hope this anomaly will be corrected by Council in the forthcoming DCP review as it sends an unacceptable message to homeowners and developers that they can poison trees with impunity.

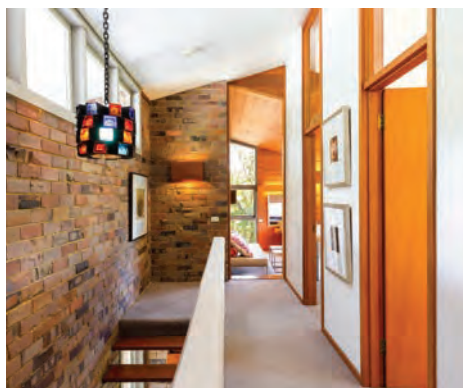
We trust Council will also use the solution that was put into action at Betts Park and declare that, if trees have been poisoned, they should be made safe and remain in situ to develop wildlife hollows. Where possible, banners stating the trees have been poisoned should be erected onsite to deter future vandalism.

We all know that tree loss contributes to urban heating and residents are concerned that the mature canopy is not further degraded. The Trust will be writing to Council to request that their existing position statement on Trees and Tree Vandalism is urgently reviewed to include clear rules as to what is, and what is not, allowed with regard to removal of trees on private land.

This could then be incorporated into a comprehensive policy on trees *on both public and private land* that reflects Council's stated commitment to protecting and enhancing tree canopy within our much admired but continually threatened, leafy municipality.



## HUNTERS HILL MODERN Part II



### 2b North Parade Hunters Hill

Located on a steeply sloping, north-facing battle-axe subdivision, the house at 2b North Parade was designed for the Gee family in 1975 by the esteemed Sydney architect Bruce Rickard (1929-2010).

The house sits atop a raised concrete floor that floats above a retained, or at least re-established, garden setting. It spreads its living rooms from east to west, with extensive glazing facing north, affording glimpses of the Lane Cove River. There are four bedrooms and a study on the upper level, which has a reduced footprint, giving the impression of a long, thin, almost weightless structure.

This house type could be characterised as related to Rickard's second stylistic period, encompassing the materiality of the Brutalist Style of later Modernism yet still indebted to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Gee House, with its response to its bushland setting, spatial arrangement and rich, warm interiors, is a good example of the style now known as the Sydney School or, as the architect and conservationist Milo Dunphy coined it, "Nuts & Berries" architecture. It was an approach that for a time was synonymous with a group of Sydney practitioners that included Rickard and others that feature in the modernist

**Images 1, 2, 4:** interior views, 2021. (Source: <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-nsw-hunters+hill-137363118> Accessed 11/12/21)

**Image 3:** View of original house from the north (Source: *Builder NSW*, vol. 7, no. 7, August 1978, pp. 328-29.)

story of Hunters Hill such as Ken Woolley, John James and Neville Gruzman.

Rickard enrolled in the Diploma of Architecture at Sydney Technical College in 1947, at the age of 17, simultaneously working first for his uncle Harry Ruskin Rowe, and later Sydney Ancher, before launching out in 1954 on the obligatory grand tour of Europe and employment in London. In 1955, he landed at the University of Pennsylvania, on a modest scholarship, to study for a Masters in landscape architecture under a pioneer of the ecological landscape movement, the Scotsman Ian McHarg. Rickard returned to Sydney in 1957, the same year he completed one of his earliest projects, the Clifton House at 6 Prince Edward Parade, Hunters Hill, this being a small, Modernist exercise, more Le Corbusier than Wright, and still constructed in the post-war materiality of paneling and light timber as opposed to the brick and concrete of later works such as 2b North Parade.

Rickard was a sole practitioner for the entirety of his professional life, and



the Gee House at 2b North Parade exhibits the singular and confident expression that comes with 25 years of practice within the realm of domestic architecture. The real estate listing from late 2021 indicates that apart from the requisite painting out of brick and concrete, 2b North Parade appears largely unaltered, with its timbered interior and expansive views the essence of a house that belies the weight of its materiality.

—Peter Lonergan

References  
Cracknell, Lonergan and Rickard (eds), *Bruce Rickard: A Life in Architecture*, Newsouth Publishing, 2018.  
*Builder NSW*, vol. 7, no. 7, August 1978, pp. 328-332.



## 10 Lloyd Avenue Hunters Hill

10 Lloyd Avenue was designed by architect Nino Sydney (1932-2022) for Lend Lease Homes Pty Ltd. It is an example of a 'Safari' project home which was released onto the market in October 1962 in both Sydney and Melbourne. Known examples exist in both capitals as well as Wollongong.

Nino Sydney's design for the first 'Beachcomber' model home, released exactly a year before the 'Safari', had proven very popular. The 'Beachcomber' was an unashamedly modernist box which was described as a 'cantilever design' because it was elevated above the ground on steel legs. Its external walls were timber framed with lightweight external cladding (Image 2).

There were many parts of Sydney in which subdivisions required a minimum build quality for any houses built there. The quality, which often materialised in the requirement for masonry external walls, was protected by legal covenants attached to the property title. The 'Safari', with its brick veneer external walls held aloft on a concrete floor and tapered concrete columns (Image 3), enabled people who wanted an elevated 'Beachcomber' style house to build one while still complying with the covenants.

Like so many of the architect-designed project homes of the 1960s, the 'Safari' was modest in size compared to equivalents today. 10 Lloyd Avenue has been altered to provide a significant increase in accommodation, including an extension to the side and the enclosure of the undercroft areas, yet it still retains the form and features of the original design, including tapered concrete columns (still visible internally), original balustrading and fenestration (Image 1).

An increasing awareness of the architectural and social significance of project home construction has seen a revived interest in the work of Nino Sydney, with the 'Beachcomber' achieving almost cult status within the genre. The 'Safari', however, was almost set to disappear into obscurity until 2009, when residents



1



2



3

**Image 1:** 10 Lloyd Avenue, Hunters Hill.

**Image 2:** 'Beachcomber' Mark I, Carlingford, 1961 (Source: <https://www.beachcomberhouse.com.au/beachcomber-mark-1/> Accessed 11/12/22).

**Image 3:** A 'Safari' (Source: <https://www.beachcomberhouse.com.au/?s=safari> Accessed 11/12/22)

in the Shellharbour suburb of Warilla joined with the National Trust and the Modernist Australia group to protest the proposed demolition of a highly appreciated local example. The house had been identified in the 2004 Shellharbour community-based heritage study and was affectionately known locally as the "Spaceship" house. The ensuing saga was captured by the Illawarra Mercury newspaper. Opposition to the demolition from residents, the National Trust, interest groups and even council officers resulted in the Shellharbour City Council administrator placing an interim heritage order on the house until further assessments could be carried out. The Australian Institute of Architects NSW Chapter also placed it on their Register of Significant Buildings in NSW. An independent heritage report was prepared in which Nino Sydney was consulted for information. The report concluded that examples of the 'Safari' model were rare during the 1960s and were even more so now. The

report concluded that the house demonstrated heritage significance under several of the NSW Heritage Assessment Criteria and recommended heritage protection. Yet a structural engineering report produced concurrently concluded that the structural integrity of the building could not be guaranteed "beyond another 10 years" due to the concrete frame and presence of breaking surf. The conclusion of the structural report won out. The interim heritage order was lifted. The rare 'Safari' home was demolished.

10 Lloyd Avenue Hunters Hill meanwhile appears to be a good example of a rare project home which almost received a statutory heritage listing in NSW. A rarity indeed.

– Stephen Batey

*For more information on the architect Nino Sydney and his 'Safari' and 'Beachcomber' houses see:*  
[www.beachcomberhouse.com.au](http://www.beachcomberhouse.com.au)



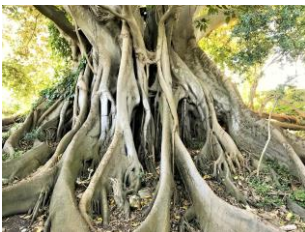
A comprehensive tree policy for Council needs to also include the NSW Housing Codes directive that a Complying Development certificate **cannot authorise the removal of trees that are on a Significant Tree Register, over three metres high (eight metres high for a new home).**

Unfortunately Council has little power to influence Complying Development projects but it could clearly publicise these directives so that homeowners or builders using Complying Development fully understand they need approval to remove trees falling within the above restrictions before starting work.

This could be relatively easy to manage at the time of the application for a Complying Development DA. We understand there is currently a new appointee on Council staff inspecting Complying Development projects who, once an application is received, could arrange to inspect the site to assess and/or establish a record of existing trees prior to DA approval. We also understand, a similar procedure has been used in the past.

This would ensure that tree removals under Complying Development are monitored and managed in accordance with the Dept of Planning requirements and a greater number of healthy trees would be preserved. We will be approaching Council to see whether they would consider adding this process to their Tree Policy.

## SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER



In early 2021, for the first time since 2015, Council opened their Significant Tree Register to receive community nominations of favourite tree/s or street/group of trees. An impressive number of nominations were received but these have not yet been assessed for inclusion. We understand resources are committed in the coming year to finally getting this done.

## FIGTREE PARK AMENDED DA

A major win for our trees, and for common sense, was Council reviewing their DA to remove 37 trees in Figtree Park, after adverse media publicity and community push back.

Residents agree a modest upgrade is overdue, to include a play area, more seating, fencing, and trees being cared for after years of neglect.

With \$4.75m in public funding at their disposal, it should have been entirely possible to prune and care for every single tree to maintain shade, amenity, biodiversity and small bird habitat.

Residents expect Council to lead the community in 'best practice' and set a high standard in terms of tree conservation and management, and



*The loss includes 11m & 9m Willow Gums, a 7m Native Daphne plus 10 middle storey trees above*

But Council's overly large development plans, unnecessary scale of tree removals and size of infrastructure were unacceptable to the community who expected designs to work around existing trees not remove them.

Unfortunately the recently Amended DA, while saving some trees, has inexplicably added other healthy trees, not originally under threat to the 'destroy' list! **Why?**

A tree deemed a 'priority for removal' is now being saved. Trees that were to be only pruned are now being removed. **So what's changed?**

To still insist on removing 27 trees without sufficient justification, after considerable community concern, is disappointing and Council's refusal to re-exhibit amended plans, suggests there are some decisions they do not want questioned.

our declining tree canopy. However, as well as many others, 14 of the trees above are being cut down in the very area where they could provide shade over proposed new seating.

The **Local Planning Panel** meeting for this DA is at 11am on Monday 19 Dec in Council Chambers. We trust the Panel will seriously question why decisions have been changed in the management of the trees and whether there is still a need to remove so many.



*Instead of being designed around them, these healthy trees are to be removed for footpaths!*

**MONTEFIORE RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE** intends to lodge a Planning Proposal with Hunters Hill Council seeking changes to the LEP to enable two six storey buildings (up to 26 metres), two four storey buildings along the Barons Crescent street frontage, multiple two storey buildings and underground car parking on a site zoned R2 residential. Achieving re-zoning that allows triple the height of buildings and double the floor space ratio will set a precedent that could encourage inappropriately scaled development across our suburb.

Local residents fear the garden character of the area would be changed forever, traffic and parking problems magnified and inevitably their quality of life will be impacted.

Changing the LEP would have potentially far reaching and long term consequences. A central aim of the LEP is to *"maintain and enhance the character and identity of established neighbourhoods in Hunters Hill by regulating the use and development of land."* This proposal is at odds with fundamental goals of LEP 2012.

It seems Montefiore invited only its nearest neighbours to view their plans. At a community meeting there was unanimous objection to the proposal and to any amendment of the LEP. Despite requests, Council has so far refused a Town Hall meeting, preferring to consult *after* the Planning Proposal to amend the LEP is lodged with Council. It is concerning that major projects such as Aged Care facilities costing over \$20 million can be considered as State Significant Development and therefore beyond the decision-making of Councils.

### BARANGAROO

Finally some good news on planning! The Trust was just one of many organisations strenuously rejecting proposals to increase the planned heights, density and scale at Central Barangaroo earlier this year which would have drastically disrupted historic views and amenity at Millers Point, the harbour foreshore and The Rocks, so passionately defended in the '70s by Jack Munday, the Unions

and all concerned for our city's unique heritage. Once again, the broader public interest was being ignored for private gain. Fortunately the outcry was heard loudly by NSW government who rejected the latest proposal to over-develop this iconic precinct.



### VALE CARL RYVES

Carl was born on 14 July 1940 and grew up on Bonnefin Road before his family moved to Passy Avenue. He attended Hunters Hill Primary School, then North Sydney Boys High School.

His childhood foreshadowed his future as a champion sailor; he and his friends would fashion make-shift canoes and sail the Lane Cove River. During his teens, the Ryves family informally adopted the late Ben Lexcen (who later went on to become an America's Cup yacht designer). Together the boys learned to build boats from Carl's father Jim. Carl was part of the International Flying Dutchman Class of Australia and he competed at the 1968 Summer Olympics as part of their sailing event.

Carl married the Ryves' family friend and Woolwich local, the late Alysoun Ryves (nee Weller) in 1971. They moved into their home on Werambie Street in 1975. Carl supported Alysoun in founding the Hunters Hill Quilters; and both were founding members of the Foreshore 2000 Group, an initiative that ensured that public access would remain to Goat Paddock and Woolwich Dock.

Carl was extremely active in the community and had a passion for protecting the heritage and leafy character of Hunters Hill. He was heavily involved in the National Trust and the Hunters Hill Trust and his charm and wit is sadly missed by many of our members.



### Preserving our heritage

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### Why not join us?

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

Membership year Jan-Dec  
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### RENEWALS FOR CALENDAR YAER JAN-DEC 2023 ARE NOW DUE

Single membership \$30  
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### Publications

#### The Heritage of Hunters Hill

Available at Hunters Hill Post Office  
HH Museum & Lost & Found Department  
Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill

Or online at:  
[www.huntershilltrust.org.au](http://www.huntershilltrust.org.au)

#### The Vision and the Struggle The Industrial Village of Woolwich

Available at Hunters Hill Post Office

We acknowledge the Wallumedegal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of all land and water of the Hunters Hill local government area and pay respects to their elders