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General Manager
Hunters Hill Council
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Hunters Hill
NSW 2110

24 May 2023

Dear General Manager

Submission to the Local Environment Plan & Development Control Plan Review

Further to our letter of 12 April and follow up communications requesting timings and details involved in the above process, we remain hopeful that a meeting can be held with the consultant to progress this matter as soon as possible. In the meantime we are submitting this letter to meet the 26 May deadline.

We were pleased to note the intention at the 15 March public meeting for Council to include a commitment to adhering to the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development within the revised LEP/DCP. This provides confidence that these established principles will guide and strengthen the objectives to take account of environmental and sustainability imperatives in local planning and development.

There is an urgent need for the LEP/DCP to have specific terminology to avoid further erosion of our garden suburb, particularly with the potential threats under the new employment zoning. The assault on heritage, landscape, stone walls, tree canopy and garden areas over time has detrimentally impacted local character and amenity and the current trend towards 'knock-down / rebuild' residential development is altering the streetscape of Hunters Hill with over-sized buildings and loss of garden settings. This LEP and DCP review needs to clearly articulate how critical it is that the unique layered history and values of our suburb be protected and enhanced.

Therefore we would include the following:

- There must be no move to diminish the extent of the existing Conservation Areas. Any reduction would result in increased complying development leading to further loss of character. Conservation Areas must be entirely retained within their current protected status and boundaries, with investigation to further include heritage items (as undertaken by Woollahra Council), particularly those buildings not yet listed but identified in our publication '*The Heritage of Hunters Hill*'. The identification and role of 'contributory' buildings, from the early and mid-20th century, must also be fully acknowledged and valued.

- A C4 'Environmental Living' zone must be introduced to provide greater protection from development on land adjoining high value conservation areas and sensitive foreshore. This could help address the worst excesses in some areas currently under complying development where the clear-felling of mature gardens is rife. In the meantime, we have already suggested a process (please see our letter of 11 January 2023 attached) whereby staff could inspect complying development applications prior to approval to document mature trees and safeguard their preservation.
- The current controls over Height, Floor Space Ratios, Landscape Area, Bulk, Scale and Proportions must be strengthened to be compatible with the existing character of our municipality, with particular attention to the tendency for development to fill the maximum permissible building envelope in height and scale which is detrimental to the streetscape and the historical values of our garden suburb. The expectation that houses can be endlessly altered and enlarged is resulting in the cumulative loss of our built heritage and natural environment. Capitalising on the economic value of property must be balanced with the broader community benefit in protecting the aesthetics, character and vital green lungs of the area.
- Council must commit to ensuring that the requirement for 50%/60% landscaping is redefined to guarantee that hard surfaces, narrow paved setbacks, paths and swimming pools do not reduce the garden area. The concept must be "*houses set in gardens*" rather than "*buildings surrounded by landscaping*". The provision of substantial areas of deep and continuous soil for tree planting is also crucial to maintaining our tree canopy, a notable feature of Hunters Hill, and a major contribution to mitigating climate change.
- Council needs to strengthen the link between the LEP and DCP. There is a significant disconnect between the existing planning controls for new development, including additions, in the LEP and those in the DCP, the latter having very targeted goals and detailed requirements to conserve our character, heritage, gardens and landscapes.
- Council must commit to tightening controls that limit the extent of demolitions and the increasingly excessive amounts of geological excavation causing irrevocable damage to the unique natural topography.
- There must be stronger controls around garages and carports to both street and laneway addresses to preserve the existing streetscape - a major component of the DCP objectives.
- Consideration must be given as to how sustainability measures, eg solar panels, can be appropriately integrated within conservation areas.
- Local hydrology must be strategically managed to ensure storm water is captured as a resource where appropriate while also effectively structured to avoid flooding.

We trust the above will be given proper consideration for incorporation into the Scoping document and would request your acknowledgement in relation to this.

Yours sincerely



Alister Sharp
President
Hunters Hill Trust