

# Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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## From the Retiring President:

As this is my last Journal report as President, it's my chance to thank our incredibly hard-working and multi-talented committee: Brigid Dowsett, Maureen Flowers, Caroline Mackaness, Lucy Creagh, Karen Presland, Karyn Raisin, Mel Malloch and Rod Stewart who have contributed their considerable individual skills over my time in the hot seat to fight for our heritage and environment. They are a superb team!

This year, besides keeping an eye on Development Applications, our focus has been on issues related to the Boronia Park Sport and Community Facility, the 'redevelopment' of Figtree Park and now the proposal to turn Montefiore into a multi-storey housing estate. All these involve considerable work at meetings and preparing submissions to address our Council. Much of what we do comes as requests from our members, including those relating to DAs. We fortunately have a representative on Council's vital Conservation Advisory Panel to review DAs affecting heritage.

In addition, we keep a close eye on Council's website, as often we find that contentious 'Late Agenda' items, requiring response, are unexpectedly put up for action at Council meetings.

Thank you all for your support and I am delighted to hand over to Karyn who is a superb advocate for our heritage.

**Alister Sharp**

## From the Incoming President:

I am extremely grateful and honoured to be asked to represent the Hunters Hill Trust as President and give you my wholehearted pledge to work hard to represent all our members across the Municipality. I am keen to uphold the Trust's mission to protect Australia's oldest garden suburb.



*One of the many well-built period homes set in established gardens that give our suburb its character and charm - potentially under threat from Complying Development*

I'm here because our wonderful long term President insists he needs a break, and according to our Constitution this is correct. Alister assures me he will continue to be a guiding hand when required!

I am a long term resident of Hunters Hill and grew up in Gladesville, attending both Boronia Park and Hunters Hill High Schools. I come with enormous passion for the rights of our community to protect our suburbs' heritage and its character from those who would look to demolish or degrade it in order to make big development bucks and move on.

In the last few years, we appear to be continually under attack from over-development and loss of trees particularly under 'Complying Development' and rezoning which are having a significant impact on the layers of history of our suburbs. We have already approached Council with suggestions to strengthen their tree policies and with input to the LEP/DCP vital for the protection of our heritage.

Alister has mentioned our outstanding team and we've also recently welcomed our newest committee member, Annette Gallard, who comes with enormous experience in government, economics and housing. The Trust is truly blessed with some exceptional people.

Inside this edition you will see, in place of our **Hunters Hill Modern** series (returning in the next edition) we have an excellent example of how renovation can work beautifully for both owners and residents, by maintaining the historical charm and streetscape whilst providing all the delights of 21<sup>st</sup> century living.

Our recent Members' Evening and AGM proved to be an informative and fun event with our speaker from The National Trust (NSW) sharing her latest research (see p2) counteracting the current claims that it's those of us living in heritage areas who are causing the housing shortage!

Looking forward to our time together.

**Karyn Raisin**

## SO WHO ARE THESE NIMBYs?

If you are becoming increasingly agitated at the plethora of media articles about NIMBYism levelled at suburbs like ours, you're not alone! Apparently heritage is part of the problem - according to the media.

Perhaps those convinced by this ridiculous slur should come and visit our LGA and see for themselves the extent of recent home-building, courtesy of 'Complying Development'.

It appears that preserving the history, and character of heritage areas like ours, implies we are the ones thwarting development. As you can see from the graph opposite, presented by Jane Alexander, Advocacy Manager for The National Trust (NSW) at our recent Members' Evening & AGM, there has never been such a spurious argument.

So with all the inaccurate information being thrown around, we are questioning who or what is behind this? Could it be the developer lobby is now so powerful it is able to skew the argument towards re-zoning and accessing precious Crown Land as being the answer to a housing shortage? It has done a great job in the media of insisting that simply more development approvals are what is needed. However, as many a mayor has recently pointed out, development must be compatible with local conditions, local communities and Local Environmental Plans.

Currently the argument is all about demand. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute recently released a report stating;

*"Over the past 30 years, in tune with the dominant neoliberal mode of governance, the focus has shifted almost entirely to **demand-side assistance**".*

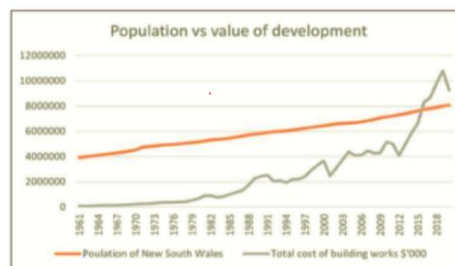
However, Australia's modern approach to housing when compared to similar countries has been extremely one-sided. According to the census data, (collected during Covid) there were 1m homes unoccupied on census night – which is 10 per cent of the total housing stock!

ANU demographer Liz Allen observes:

*"The fact that people are not living in these homes is an enormous oversight from a policy perspective, particularly when housing affordability and homelessness is such an issue in Australia".*

### DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

Since 2012, NSW has experienced a dramatic upsurge in building activity. The heritage of NSW has never been under such pressure.



Since 2000, NSW has built more than a quarter of a million apartments, and over half of them were snapped up by investors. More than 10 per cent of apartments in NSW are unoccupied. (Professor Cathy Sherry SMH 3<sup>rd</sup> July)

A recent article (SMH 8<sup>th</sup> June) by Dr David Hayward Emeritus Professor of Public Policy and the Social Economy at RMIT **questions that supply is the issue:**

***"We have been building vastly more dwellings than are needed to match population growth for decades, yet real prices and rents keep growing, affordability keeps falling and ever-increasing government subsidies can't keep up. We currently have 1 million more houses than households."***

Recently Local Government NSW boss Dariea Turley has been inundated with complaints about the government's move for concessions for developers to build social housing (SMH 16<sup>th</sup> June). She stated:

*....."we will be making it clear that planning processes must not violate council-led local plans and should allow councils to play a key role in assessing overall strategic merit."*

Leaving Councils out of the picture and instigating private certification has not produced the expected benefits of simplifying and speeding up the approvals process and has not led to guaranteed quality buildings.

Of 3.5 million land parcels in NSW, less than 1% are listed heritage items, including less than 30,000 total heritage items. (NSW Heritage Council, 2010).

Our much-needed green space and heritage is vital to our cities and future generations. Giving developers carte-blanche to add 30 per cent density to areas that are unsuitable for development, lack infrastructure and transport or are already buckling under growth pressure is definitely not the answer. As observed in **Council's own Executive Summary in the Local Housing Strategy 2021:**

*"Development in Hunter's Hill will remain highly constrained and land/property is set to become increasingly unaffordable. A capacity assessment under existing planning controls reveals very limited ability to support new development across the majority of the LGA. These factors, combined with slow population growth and a relatively small population, mean that implied dwelling demand as assessed by NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) capacity experts, remains low."*

We are expecting to meet or exceed our dwelling targets so impact on 'liveability' should be the overriding consideration in this push for greater density. In a changing climate, we need to urgently assess the carrying capacity of our suburbs and the natural environment that sustains us.



## IN TUNE WITH HERITAGE

We're delighted to feature the following article by Nina Ardill and Charles Waterfield about their award-winning renovation and extension of their home at 22 Batemans Road.

### Early history of 'Laureston'

The stone cottage seems to have been built in 1880 for David Poyntz, a hospital attendant at the lunatic asylum at Bedlam Bay.\* In 1879, Poyntz had married Mrs Mary Earnshaw, who owned several lots on Batemans Road. She died intestate later that same year and in 1880 a two-acre section of her property was transferred to David Poyntz who subsequently remarried. Poyntz tried to sell the cottage in 1881 and an advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald on 2 July 1881 described the property as "A cottage residence of stone and wood, and containing 5 rooms, fowl-house, well of water; flower garden in the front, fruit trees at rear."

In 1882, ownership of the cottage was transferred to Elizabeth Poyntz. David Poyntz died in 1890 and Elizabeth moved to another house further west on Batemans Road.

### The Bell family era

In 1898, the cottage was purchased by the Bell family, who owned No. 24 Batemans Road. James and Mary Bell moved into No. 22. James was also a hospital attendant at the lunatic asylum. The Bells used the name 'Amelia Cottage' for a short time and then 'Lauriston'.

In 1917 a brick addition was built on the western side of the cottage, consisting of two large rooms with fireplaces, and a kitchen and pantry. The stone cottage and new brick wing were joined at the rear by a verandah. In the same year, the front verandah was replaced and raised in height. A hut stood for some 60 years on the side of the verandah, over a well.

In 1929, after James Bell's death, ownership of the house was shared between the three children, David Bell, Miss Margaret Jane Bell and Mrs Frances Amelia Campbell (nee Bell), probably in trust for their mother, who



22 Batemans Road after renovation - with no impact on rear height or streetscape

continued to live at No. 22 until she died in 1933. David Bell lived at the house until his death in February 1938. The land was subdivided in 1939, reducing the Lot to what it is today. It was then owned and occupied by Mrs Frances Campbell until her death in 1959.

A Mr Vivian Atock, his wife, who was a family friend of Frances Campbell, and their daughter Pamela, rented the house and moved in with Frances Campbell around 1945. Mrs Atock suffered from arthritis and wished to move from the Blue Mountains to Sydney.

Pamela Holmes (nee Atock) recalled that during this time there was a glass house or fernery on the boundary with No. 24, and a lovely old cream and green enamel Early Kooka gas cooker in the kitchen.

### From the 1960s onwards

Pamela married Patrick Holmes in 1958. After Frances Campbell died in 1959, she left the house to the Holmes family who raised their three children there until they moved to Adelaide in 1967.

Pamela was a keen gardener and planted many camellias, a prunus in the front yard and a wisteria that grew along the top of the verandah.

Pamela's son played in the oak tree in the back yard, which she believed had been given as a seedling to Frances Campbell as a commemorative gift to mark the centenary of Anthony Hordern's department store in 1938.

The Holmes family sold the house to Ewan and Margaret Cheyne-MacPherson in 1967, still with its Early Kooka stove and no hot water. The Cheyne-MacPhersons were members of the Hunters Hill Trust (Ewan was also elected as President) and were committed to maintaining the heritage of the house. They renamed it Amelia Cottage and built a weatherboard extension at the rear in the late 1970s to accommodate their growing family.

Their four daughters sold the house to Sarah and Marco Fragiaco in 2010, who then sold it to us in 2017.

### A modern renovation



Removal of the old extension revealed the yellow paint indicating the outline of the old rear verandah



In 2019 we commenced a major renovation, including replacement of the weatherboard extension. The new addition was designed by James Cooper of Sanctum Design. The extension celebrates the history of the original buildings, but with a contrasting contemporary design.



*Skillion roof of the terrace captures light and vistas*

The strong roof geometry of the original hips and gables are echoed in the new extension. And while the dark steel beams and exterior cladding



*The roof geometry echoes the original buildings*

contrast strongly with the sandstone, the recycled brickwork provides a connection with the federation wing.



*Recycled bricks provide a link between old and new at the rear of the Federation wing*



*Interior of the pavilion-style extension*

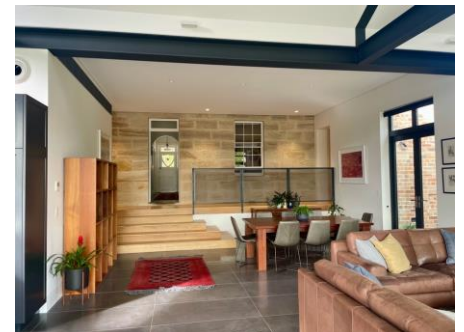
The design provides an enhanced connection between the landscape and the building, and has a focus on sustainability. As well as the recycled bricks, other sustainable features include large rainwater tanks under the carport (used for washing machine, toilets and garden), rooftop solar and an energy-saving passive-solar design.

*The project has been recognised with two design awards: the TIDA Australia Designer Renovation of the Year, 2020; and the BDAA National Design Award, Heritage Buildings/Adaptive Re-use, 2022.*

### The importance of the garden



Since completing the build in mid 2020, we have been working to create a significant new garden. To reflect the garden's past, we have planted many camellias, established a fern garden near the site of the old



*The restored rear wall of the sandstone cottage is now an interior feature*

glasshouse/fernery, and reinstated a flower garden in the front. The large garden is not only historically and aesthetically important, it is also important to the local environment, and we hope our diverse plantings will provide both habitat for wildlife and cooling shade in our warmer future.



*A strong connection between the house and garden*

*\*It was previously assumed that James Bell built the cottage, but research by Heritage Consultant John Oultram suggests it was built for David Poyntz*

### Sources:

1. Heritage Impact Statement, John Oultram, July 2018.
2. Personal communications, Pamela Holmes to Sarah Fragiaco, 2012.



## LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

We have been informed that progress on the draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) may be slower than expected as Council's planner has been dealing with other projects. Council's current timeline for *'Preparation of a Scoping Proposal and further Council and stakeholder consultation'* due this month, may now be delayed.

With recent planning changes legislated, a strengthened LEP and Development Control Plan are urgently needed to prevent the further erosion of our built and green environment, and address some of the poor outcomes that are clearly visible in our LGA. The steady assault on heritage, landscape, tree canopy and established gardens over time has detrimentally impacted the unique layered history and character of our municipality.

There is a need for specific wording in the LEP/DCP to avoid diminishing our garden suburb and prevent loopholes, arising under the E1 Employment Zoning reform, that would potentially further erode our streetscapes. Stronger Plans would help to limit the damage that could be caused by Council's failure to engage the community at the time of the public exhibition for the State Environmental Planning Policy, or to influence State Government reforms.

A critical issue for the Trust is that the extent of existing Conservation Areas needs to be entirely retained within their current protected boundaries - and even extended. Any reduction would result in increased *complying development* allowing the current trend for 'knock-down rebuild' residential development to alter our streetscapes leading to further loss of our suburb's history. For more details see <https://huntershilltrust.org.au/>

The general tendency to use the maximum permissible building envelope is also detrimental to the character of Hunters Hill. That our stunning sandstone topography continues to be disrespected should be of major concern. (Contd...)

## BORONIA PARK

**From This:**



**To This:**



Destruction of these valuable trees could have been avoided if, during the last review of Boronia Park's Plan of Management, which included the proposed Sports facility, Council had listened to its own independent consultant who reported an overwhelming 97 responses in favour of updating and expanding the existing heritage grandstand - for which the original \$1M NSW government grant was given. Only 6 responses were opposed.

This total disregard for the community's preference means we are now faced with an over-sized building on green space in the middle of our heritage park - and the loss of these magnificent trees.

### LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN (Contd...)

Council must also commit to ensuring current controls over height, floor space ratios, bulk and scale are tightened, for compatibility with the prevailing identity of our municipality.

The requirement for 50-60% landscaping should be strictly defined to ensure that hard surfaces, narrow paved setbacks and swimming pools are not allowed to reduce the garden and deep soil planting areas that characterize our leafy suburbs.

The reduced protections against over-development under the new Employment E1 Zones, particularly for target growth areas at Woolwich Corner, Garibaldi Square and Boronia Park are concerning. Council's public meeting in March did little to re-assure the community that heritage would not be subjected to further risk, or to inform us of their communications with the NSW Government on future planning decisions affecting our municipality.

In addition ratepayers have had to wear another \$1.73M of scarce Council funds being gifted to the Rugby Club, in spite of Council promising that residents would not be contributing to the build.

Ongoing costs of at least \$38,000 in annual maintenance add insult to injury. An income stream from community use of the facility is considered unlikely.

Due to the secrecy and lack of proper process around the tender selection, the Trust has submitted a Freedom of Information (GIPA) request to Council in an attempt to discover the detailed specifications and final plans for the project.

We are yet to learn if the conditions of the proposed 20 year Licence Agreement with the Hunters Hill Rugby Club have been approved by the Office of Local Government.

We will keep you informed.

## MONTEFIORE PLANNING PROPOSAL

We're relieved that the Independent Local Planning Panel recently rejected Council's recommendation '*...that the Planning Proposal be forwarded to the DPE for a Gateway Determination....*' and instead voted unanimously for further investigation and wider community consultation.

Amongst other concerns, the Panel determined there is a need for a contextual understanding of the impacts on similar aged care sites within the Municipality.

Council's haste to get this to the LPP and passed onto the State, conflicted with their own resolution in Dec 2022 **to consult the community as soon as practicable after** the Montefiore Proposal was received (26<sup>th</sup> May).

Rezoning from low density residential to the recently created zone of SP2 Infrastructure (Seniors' Housing) and the construction of 2, 4 and 6 (or potentially 8) storey apartment blocks will severely impact the surrounding area, sensitive bushland and native wildlife.

In addition the proposal will reduce 334 residential aged care beds to 194 and add 144 'premium independent living' units. The increased traffic associated with 280 car spaces and the movements of 24 hour staff will have severe local implications.

We understand that this Proposal has been worked on for at least 18 months with Council, but was only put to council meeting with less than one week's notice to residents. The Local Planning Panel was given only four days to consider a 1046 page report!

In her 'To the Point' article in the TWT 5<sup>th</sup> July, Heather Armstrong writes:

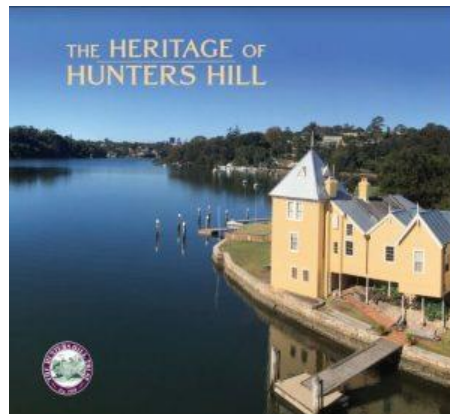
*"If the zone change sought is approved, the current review of the LEP faces a fait accompli. The rezoning would set a precedent for similarly increased density. A council keen on increasing density may take advantage of that precedent in its LEP review."*

### So what's next?

The Montefiore Redevelopment Community Action Group is looking at all the options and will no doubt contact us with updates. Watch out for an email and in the meantime keep up to date with the all latest via our website!

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## MOOCOBOOLA FESTIVAL SUNDAY 6 AUG



Come and join us at the Moocooboola Festival on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August - we'll be sharing a stand with the wonderful people from the Happy Hens Community Group.

You can speak to us about local development and the impacts on heritage and environment.

You'll be able to purchase *The Heritage of Hunters Hill "Green Book"* (special discounted rate for new members on the day) as well as other publications and linen tea towels – which make great gifts for Father's Day or for yourself.

See you there!



Henley Growers and Artisans Market 2022



### Preserving our heritage

PO Box 85 Hunters Hill 2110  
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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  
Become a member at  
[www.huntershilltrust.org.au](http://www.huntershilltrust.org.au)

To renew your membership email  
[members@huntershilltrust.org.au](mailto:members@huntershilltrust.org.au)

### Annual membership

Single \$30  
Family \$50

Payment by bank transfer to:  
CBA Bank  
BSB: 062000 Act No: 16211909  
Acct Name: Hunters Hill Trust

or by cheque to the above address

### Publications:

**The Heritage of Hunters Hill**  
Available at Hunters Hill Post Office  
32 Alexandra Street  
Wishbone and the Village Florist,  
Garibaldi Square

**Or online at**  
<https://greenbook.huntershilltrust.org.au/>

**The Vision and the Struggle**  
**The Industrial Village of Woolwich**  
Available at Hunters Hill Post Office

We acknowledge the Wallumedegal 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