

February 2013



Balmain east foreshores

*Lookes Avenue Reserve
Thornton Park
Illoura Reserve
Peacock Point Reserve*

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

LEICHHARDT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



Document Control

| Issue | Date | Revision | By | Approved |
|-------|----------|-----------------------|----|----------|
| 1 | 9.03.12 | Preliminary Draft | EB | AH |
| 2 | 5.05.12 | Draft | EB | AH |
| 3 | 31.05.12 | Updated Draft | EB | AH |
| 4 | 26.11.12 | Final | EB | AH |
| 5 | 20.02.13 | Approved document | EB | AH |
| 6 | 28.02.13 | Final document issued | EB | AH |



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1. INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Plan of Management

This Plan of Management has been developed to guide Council and the community in the future development, maintenance and management of foreshore reserves under its care control and management within East Balmain.

Leichhardt Council has established broad objectives in relation to public open space management:

- a) To improve the amenity of open space within the Leichhardt Local Government Area;
- b) To prepare and establish Plans of Management including Landscape Master plans for each area of open space that guides the future development, management and maintenance of its open space facilities;
- c) To actively engage community input in the preparation of Plans of Management for parkland areas and provide informed planning advice to Council;
- d) To reduce ongoing maintenance costs through the improved design and management of facilities;
- e) To implement sustainability principles with consideration of Council's Leichhardt 2020+ Strategic Plan; and
- f) To establish a proposed and documented program for staged improvement works which are prioritised and agreed to by Council.

This Plan of Management also supports the vision and directions outlined in Council's 2020+ Strategic Plan in relation to community well-being; accessibility; and a sustainable environment and specifically the objective to Plan open space and other developments to increase open space, enhance the natural environment and native biodiversity.

1.2 Overview of the foreshore parks

As identified in the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) 2005 the East Balmain Foreshore study area is of high local significance historically as it encompasses some of the earliest sites in Balmain to be settled. The area developed as a centre for maritime industries, including boat building, which provided employment for a significant proportion of the Balmain population during the 19th century. The area now strongly reflects the public attitude towards and State Government policy during the late 1960s concerning the provision of public recreational land on the foreshores of Sydney Harbour.

The CMP identifies that the East Balmain Foreshore study area generally consists of flat reclaimed land along the shore of Sydney Harbour that then rises up steeply towards the heights of the Balmain peninsula. With the exception of one small area of rocky shoreline, stone sea walls of varying construction define the eastern edge of the study area. The western edge is set against residential development, which generally in the south consists of small individual or terrace houses, but in the north, particularly around Lookes Avenue Reserve, consists of multistorey flat buildings.

The majority of the study area is laid out as parkland for recreational use. Darling Street wharf and the bus turning area at the end of Darling Street effectively split the study area into two distinct sections. The southern section includes Peacock Point Reserve, Illoura Reserve and the former Fenwick tugboat site. The northern section includes Thornton Park and Lookes Avenue Reserve. Each area is described separately below. Darling Street is the main arterial road servicing the East Balmain peninsula. It terminates at the Darling Street Wharf, where there is a major transport interchange between buses and ferries, both of which are heavily used. For those arriving by ferry, the wharf at East Balmain is the gateway to the suburb, and the parkland along the foreshore frames this arrival point.

The parklands that have developed along the East Balmain Foreshore study area now provide public recreational land of high aesthetic and social significance on the shores of Sydney Harbour. The whole study area provides excellent views of Sydney Harbour and the surrounding areas including the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Millers Point, the city, Darling Harbour and Johnston's Bay to the Anzac Bridge.

Illoura Reserve

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) 2005 identifies that Illoura Reserve designed by the noted NSW landscape architect, Bruce Mackenzie, is of state significance as it is a landmark in the evolution of Australian landscape design for public parklands, through its use of indigenous plants, natural landscape elements, and robust natural materials, with the intention of bringing spirit of the Australian bush to the densely populated city and creating a place for people to explore. The exposed rock faces (mostly man-made) provide a dramatic backdrop to the park and give, in their scale and form, some understanding of the form and geology of the natural landscape that once existed on the Balmain peninsular prior to European settlement.

1.0 BACKGROUND

They also provide evidence of the quarrying that took place during the 19th century to provide building material for the early settlement of Balmain and to develop the broad areas of flat foreshore land for industry. The park also interprets the past maritime connections of the place through its use of massive timber sections, including recycled wharf piles, in its structures. The park provides a variety of experiences from open grassed areas, to enclosed intimate walks that then open to panoramic views of Sydney Harbour. The simple and robust use of natural materials (timber and stone) for paths, walls, balustrading and park furniture enhances the organic and natural character of the park. The rocky shoreline at the southern end of the reserve is the only remaining section of natural shoreline in East Balmain and is thus extremely significant locally. Illoura Reserve contains archaeological evidence (mostly concealed) of the previous occupation of the site by maritime industries and private residences.

2-8 Weston Street

The former site of J.Fenwick & Co. Pty Ltd is of state significance as it is strongly linked historically to the development of Australia's busiest port, the port of Sydney. This area is addressed in the separate 2-8 Weston Street Plan of Management document.

Thornton Park

Thornton Park is highly significant at a local level for historic, aesthetic and social reasons. The park retains its original formal layout and concrete walling from the 1920s and provides a very attractive setting from which to enjoy the spectacular views it offers of the harbour. It contributes positively to the streetscape of Darling Street and the wharf precinct and is highly valued by the local community who help to maintain it. The footings of P.N.Russell's galvanised iron shed are still evident in the park

Lookes Avenue Reserve

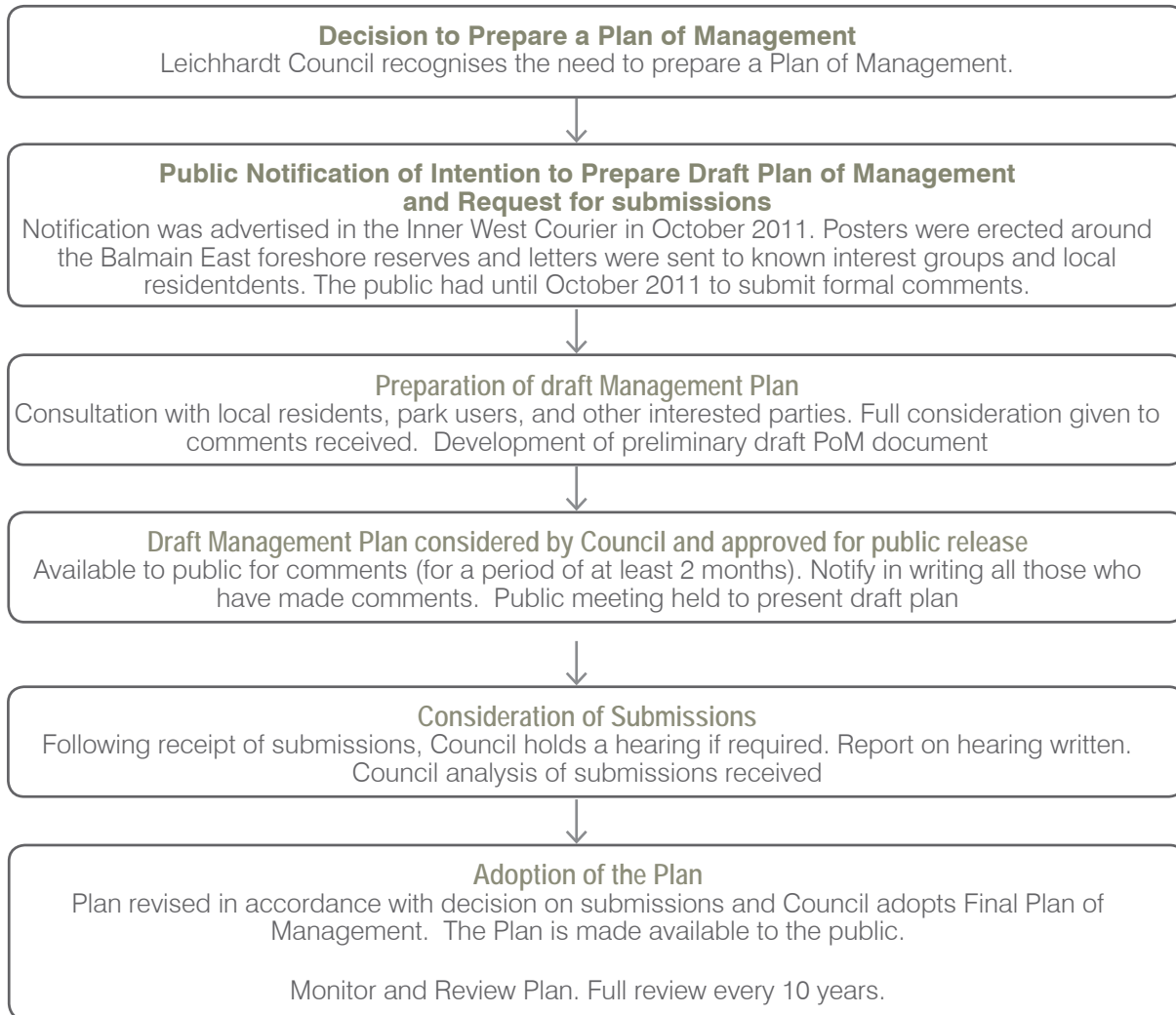
Lookes Avenue Reserve is of local significance as the site of the first boat building yards to be established at East Balmain, those of William Howard (1837) and Joseph Looke (1838). Little visible evidence remains of these except for the stone sea walls. At the north-east corner of the reserve are the stone footings of Little's bath house (c1860). Other subsurface archaeology may survive.



Figure 1: Balmain East Foreshores Open Space - component reserves

Source: Nearmap

1.3 Process to prepare the Plan of Management



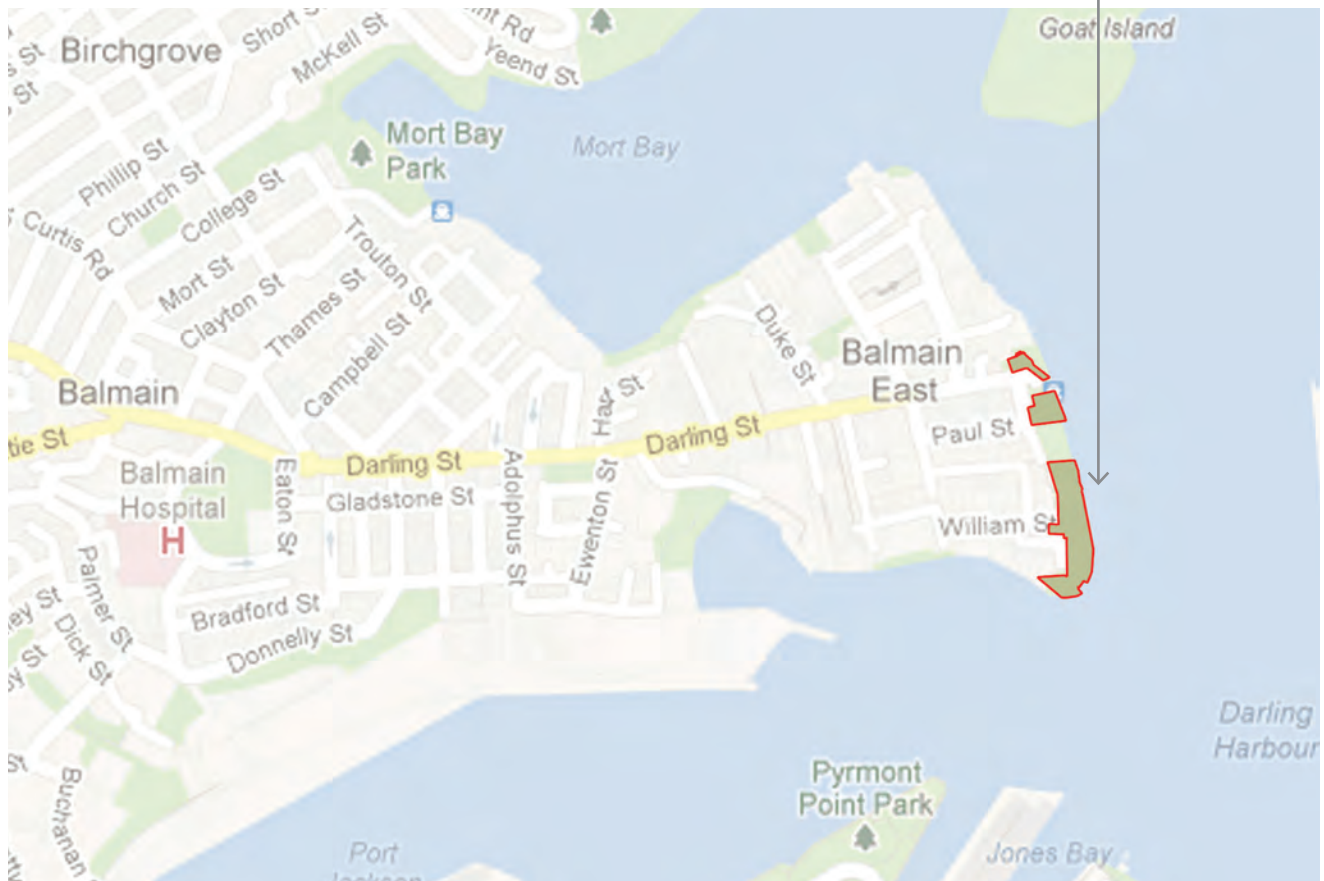
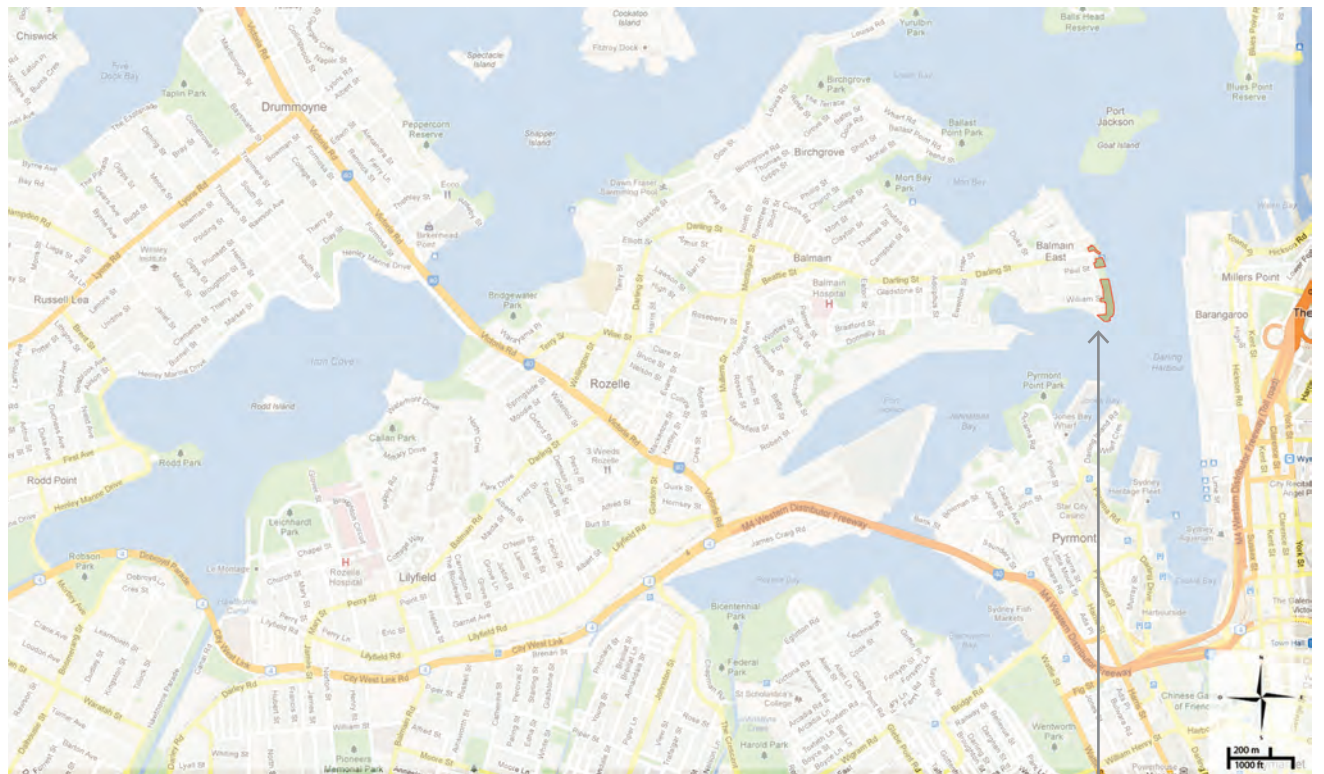


Figure 2: Site Location

Source: Google Maps

1.0 BACKGROUND



Figure 3: Site Location

Source: Google Maps

Leichhardt Council November 2012

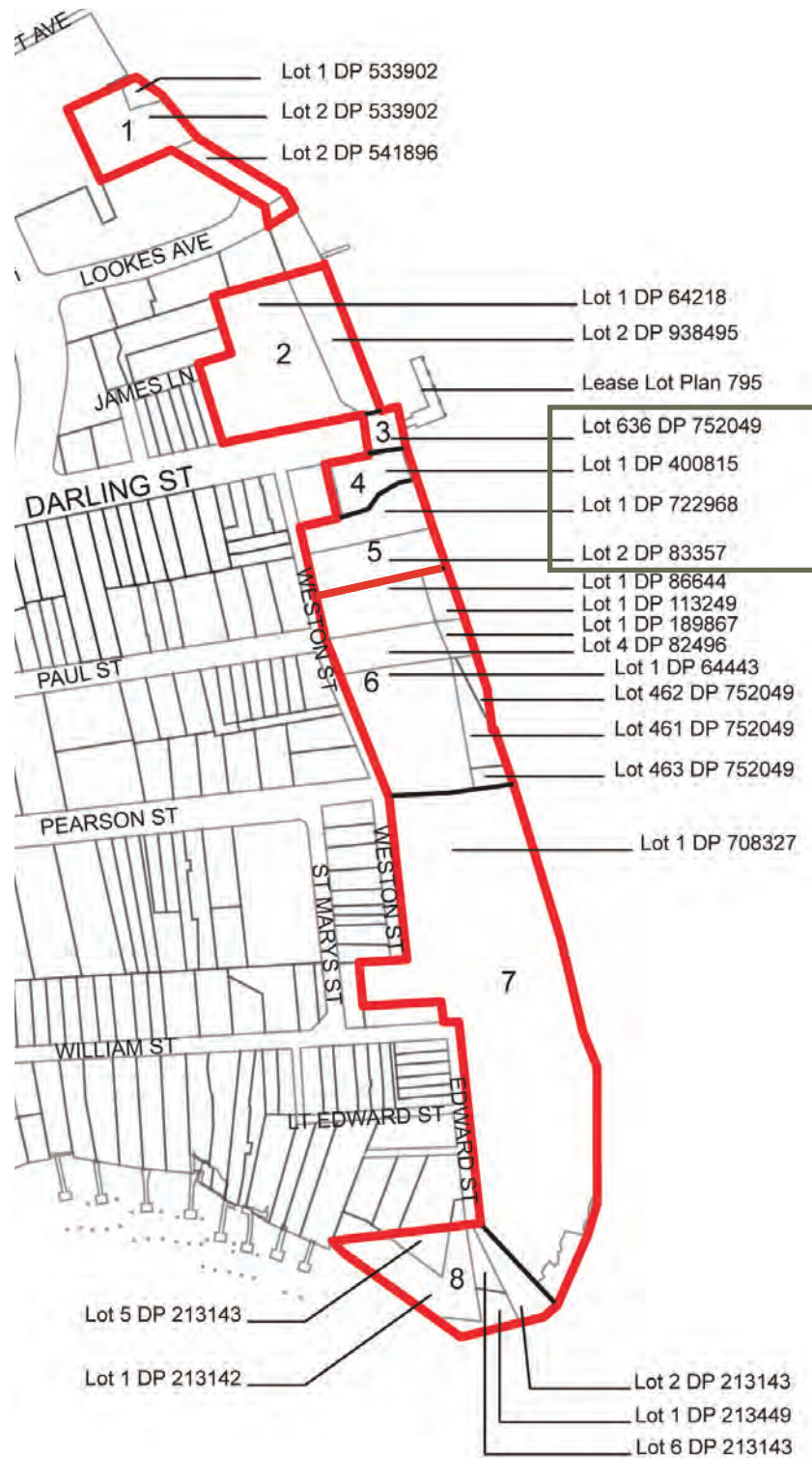


Figure 4: Site Description

Source: CMP 2005

1.4 Site Description

The following table summarises the land parcels subject to this Plan of Management

| Community Land | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Lot | DP | Category | Zoning |
| Lookes Avenue Reserve | | | |
| 1 | DP 533902 | Park | Open Space |
| 2 | DP 533902 | Park | Open Space |
| 2 | DP 541896 | Park | Open Space |
| Illoura Reserve | | | |
| 1 | DP 86644 | Park | Open Space |
| 1 | DP 113249 | Park | Open Space |
| 1 | DP 189867 | Park | Open Space |
| 4 | DP 82496 | Park | Open Space |
| 1 | DP 64443 | Park | Open Space |
| 462 | DP 752049 | Park | Open Space |
| 461 | DP 752049 | Park | Open Space |
| 463 | DP 752049 | Park | Open Space |
| 1 | DP 708327 | Park | Open Space |
| Peacock Point | | | |
| 2 | DP 213143 | Park | Open Space |
| 1 | DP 213449 | Park | Open Space |
| 6 | DP 213143 | Park | Open Space |

Note:

Refer to section 5.1 for full description of existing facilities and fixtures within each park

| Crown Land | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Lot | Crown Plan | Reservation Notified Gazetted | Zoning |
| Thornton Park | | | |
| 1 | DP 642218 | | Open Space |
| 2 | DP 038405 | | Open Space |

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2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

The statutory framework to guide the preparation and operation of the plan of management for The Balmain East Foreshores is primarily set by the:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Crown Lands Act 1989 (Thornton Park as Crown Land under Care Control & Management by LMC)

In addition, the other legislation, regulations and environmental planning instruments of relevance to the plan of management are:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000
- Leichhardt Local Environmental Plan 2000
- Companion Animals Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992

2.1 Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government Act 1993 (Local Government Act) is the legal framework for the system of local government in NSW. Provisions of the Local Government Act relating to plans of management are set out below. These prescribe the content of the plan; categorisation of land and objectives relating to these categories of land; and procedures relating to public notice, exhibition and amendments to the plan.

Integrated Planning

On 1 October 2009 the NSW Government introduced a range of initiatives designed to integrate and improve long term strategic planning within NSW Local Government. The reforms require that Local Government develops a series of inter-related plans comprising a:

- 10-year community strategic plan establishing strategic objectives (local priorities and future aspirations) together with strategies for achieving those objectives;
- Resourcing strategy including asset management planning, a workforce management strategy and long term financial planning. The resourcing strategy is to plan for the resources required to implement the strategies established by the community strategic plan that the council is responsible for; and
- Delivery program for every four years showing how projects and programs are going to be delivered during a council's term in office. The delivery program is to detail the principal activities to be undertaken by the council to implement the strategies established by the community strategic plan within the resources available under the resourcing strategy.

Leichhardt Council is in the process of completing its resourcing strategy and delivery program. The work carried out to date has confirmed the need for infrastructure improvements. In addition to ensuring that all existing assets are maintained Council also has other statutory responsibilities for example the implementation of its Disability and Discrimination Act Action Plan.

As such, in developing a Plan of Management, Council has a responsibility to ensure that the contents of the plan can be funded over a reasonable period of time. To facilitate this requirement Council staff will be assessing individual elements of the Plan of Management in terms of:

1. Their being a demonstrated need or requirement supported by relevant documentary evidence.
2. The likely cost and the cumulative impact on Council's capital works program.
3. The likely delivery date in the context of other items already listed on the Delivery Program. In this regard

Council list individual items in one of the following three categories:

- a. short term (1-5 years)
- b. medium term (5-15 years)
- c. long term (15 years plus)

2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

Prescribed Contents for Plan of Management

Clause 36 of the Local Government Act provides that a Council must prepare a plan of management for community land. This clause provides that a plan of management must set out:

- the category of the land,
- the objectives and performance targets of the plan with respect to the land,
- the means by which the council proposes to achieve the plan's objectives and performance targets,
- the manner in which the council proposes to assess its performance with respect to the plan's objectives and performance targets, and
- may require the prior approval of the council to the carrying out of any specified activity on the land.

The plan of management must include a description of the:

- the condition of the land, and of any buildings or other improvements on the land, as at the date of adoption of the plan of management, and
- the use of the land and any such buildings or improvements as at that date, and must:
 - specify the purposes for which the land, and any such buildings or improvements, will be permitted to be used, and
 - specify the purposes for which any further development of the land will be permitted, whether under lease or licence or otherwise, and
 - describe the scale and intensity of any such permitted use or development.
 - describe the scale and intensity of any such permitted use or development.

Clause 37 of the Local Government Act provides that a plan of management prepared for land not owned by a Council:

- (a) must identify the owner of the land, and
- (b) must state whether the land is subject to any trust, estate, interest, dedication, condition, restriction or covenant, and
- (c) must state whether the use or management of the land is subject to any condition or restriction imposed by the owner, and
- (d) must not contain any provisions inconsistent with anything required to be stated by paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

Categorisation and Objectives for Land

All council property classified as Community lands to be categorised in accordance with the guidelines for the categorisation listed in the Local Government (General) Regulation (cl.6B-6JA). For lands categorised as Natural Area, specific planning and management strategies are to be provided. Strategies must reinforce and reflect the core objectives for community land listed in the Local Government Act (s. 36E-N).

Under the Local Government Amendment (Community Land Management) Act 1998 Land is to be categorised as one or more of the following:

- (a) a natural area,
- (b) a sportsground,
- (c) a park,
- (d) an area of cultural significance,
- (e) general community use.
- (f) Land that is categorised as a natural area is to be further categorised as one or more of the following:
 - (a) bushland,
 - (b) wetland,
 - (c) escarpment,
 - (d) watercourse,
 - (e) foreshore,
 - (f) a category prescribed by the regulations

The table below outlines the potential community land category of park and sportsground for The Balmain East Foreshores and identifies the Guidelines for categorisation as listed in the Local Government (General) Regulation 1999 and core objectives for management of community land as listed in the local Government Act (Community Land Amendment 1998).

| Category | Guidelines for Categorisation | Core Objectives for Community Land Categories |
|--------------|---|---|
| Natural Area | The land, whether or not in an undisturbed state, possesses a significant geological feature, geomorphological feature, landform, representative system or other natural feature or attribute that would be sufficient to further categorise the land as bushland, wetland, escarpment, watercourse or foreshore under section 36 (5) of the Act. | refer to specific objectives for each natural Area subcategory |
| Park | The land is, or is proposed to be, improved by landscaping, gardens or the provision of non-sporting equipment and facilities, for use mainly for passive or active recreational, social, educational and cultural pursuits that do not unduly intrude on the peaceful enjoyment of the land by others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to encourage, promote and facilitate recreational, cultural, social and educational pastimes and activities, and (b) to provide for passive recreational activities or pastimes and for the casual playing of games, and (c) to improve the land in such a way as to promote and facilitate its use to achieve the other core objectives for its management |
| Sportsground | The Land is used or proposed to be used primarily for active recreation involving organised sports or the playing of outdoor games. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Encourage, promote and facilitate recreational pursuits in the community involving organised and informal sporting activities and games; (b) Ensure that such activities are managed having regard to any adverse impact on nearby residences. (Clause 36F) |
| | | |

The classification of Community Lands on the Balmain East foreshores is discussed further in Part 6.

Procedures for Public Notice, Exhibition and Amendments to Plan

Clause 38 of the Local Government Act provides that the Council must put the draft plan of management on exhibition for a period not less than 28 days. A public notice must specify that submissions can be made on the draft plan of management after the day the exhibition period ceases, for a period of not less than 42 days. Clause 39 of the Local Government Act provides that prior to the public notice being issued on the draft plan of management (Clause 38), the draft plan of management must be submitted to the owner of the land, and to include any provisions required by the owner of the land.

Clause 40 of the Local Government Act provides that after receiving submissions, the Council has the option to amend the plan of management or to adopt it without amendment. Should Council make amendments, it must again exhibit the plan in accordance with Clause 38 this is, unless the amendments are not considered as substantial, in which case, the plan can be adopted without the requirement for further exhibition.

2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

2.2 Crown Lands Act 1989

Whilst the majority of the Balmain East foreshore site is Community Land Thornton Park is Crown Land reserved for “Public Recreation” under the Crown Lands Act 1989. Leichhardt Council acts as the Trust Manager and as such is responsible for maintenance and upgrading works. All works must be undertaken within the guidelines of Section 11 of the Crown Lands Act, which details the principles of Crown Land Management including: observation of environmental principles; preservation of natural resources; and encouragement of public and multiple use.

Public use of the reserve will be in accordance with the purpose of “public recreation”. Commercial activities with a recreational focus such as fitness classes, recreational equipment hire, and recreational events would be subject to specific approval or licensing. Use of the reserve for large public group gatherings would also be subject to application and approval. Assessment will consider reserve zonings, and compliance with reserve objectives and relationship to (including impacts on) other reserve uses and values. Appropriate fees and charges for such uses would be applicable in accordance with the principles of Crown Reserve Management. Charges for public use that may be considered could include special recreational events, group hire of picnic areas, boat parking and launching, event parking.

Other commercial uses that do not comply with the purpose of “public recreation” (eg office space) will not be considered.

2.3 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) provides for a system of environmental assessment and planning for development in NSW. The EP&A Act establishes a hierarchy of planning instruments which zone land and regulate specific types of development across the State.

The EP&A Act is the principal environmental planning legislation controlling the development of land in NSW. All State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) and Local Environmental Plans must be consistent with the objects and controls contained within the Act. They include:

- the management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources,
- the promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use of land,
- protection, provision and co-ordination of communication and utility services,
- provision of public purposes,
- provision and co-ordination of community services and facilities,
- ecological sustainable development, and
- the provision and maintenance of affordable housing.

2.4 State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

Division 12 Parks and other reserves of the Infrastructure SEPP provides that development is permitted without consent for the following purposes where it is carried out by or on behalf of a council on a public reserve under the control of or vested in the council:

- (a) roads, cycleways, single storey car parks, ticketing facilities and viewing platforms, outdoor recreational facilities, including playing fields, but not including grandstands,
- (c) information facilities such as visitors’ centres and information boards,
- (d) lighting, if light spill and artificial sky glow is minimised in accordance with AS/NZS 1158: 2007, Lighting for Roads and Public Spaces.
- (e) landscaping, including irrigation schemes (whether they use recycled or other water),
- (f) amenity facilities,
- (g) maintenance depots,
- (h) environmental management works.

2.5 Leichhardt Local Environmental Plan 2000

The Leichhardt Local Environmental Plan 2000 (LEP) is the primary statutory instrument for controlling land use and development in the local government area of Leichhardt.

Zoning

The subject land is primarily zoned 'Open Space, Recreation and Leisure' (Clause 24) under the LEP. The objectives of the 'Open Space, Recreation and Leisure' zone are to:

- to maximise the provision of open space in order to provide a diverse range of settings and recreational opportunities to meet the needs of the community,
- to ensure the equitable distribution of, and access to, open space and recreation facilities,
- to retain, protect and promote public access to foreshore areas and provide links to existing open space,
- to ensure development is compatible with any Parks Plans of Management, Landscape Plans and Bicycle Plan adopted by the Council,
- to conserve and enhance the ecological role of open space, including flora and fauna diversity (including the genetic, species and ecosystem diversity of flora and fauna), habitat corridors and the potential of open space to cleanse air, water and soils,
- to provide opportunities in open space for public art.

Development allowed without development consent in the zone includes for the purpose of:

- ancillary sporting structures
- open space embellishment
- playgrounds
- recreation areas

Development allowed only with development consent in the zone includes for the purpose of:

- clubs
- community facilities
- community gardens
- jetties
- kiosks
- public amenities
- public transport stops
- recreation facilities
- demolition
- subdivision

All other development outside of these purposes above as defined by the LEP is prohibited in the zone. The LEP defines the types of key development set out above.

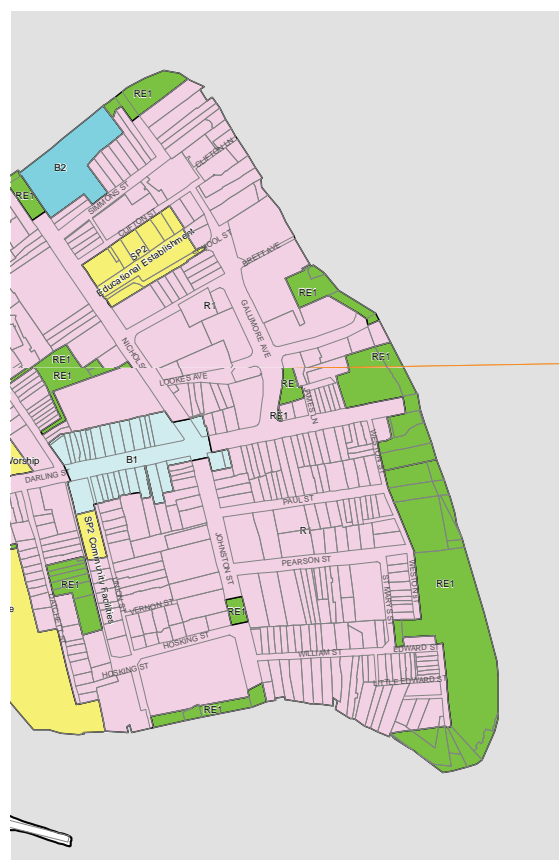


Figure 4: LEP 2011 Land zoning

Source: Leichhardt Municipal Council

2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

Conservation Areas and Heritage Items

The Leichhardt Heritage Conservation Map identifies Peacock Point, Illoura Reserve, and Thornton Park as locally significant “Landscape” heritage items. They are located adjoining a “General” Conservation Area. Lookes Avenue Reserve is located within a “General” Conservation Area.

The objectives in the LEP relating to heritage conservation (Clause 15) are as follows:

- (a) to protect, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and the evidence of cultural heritage, including places, buildings, works, relics, townscapes, landscapes, trees, potential archaeological sites and conservation areas, and provide measures for their conservation,
- (b) to protect, conserve and enhance the character and identity of the suburbs, places and landscapes of Leichhardt, including the natural, scenic and cultural attributes of the Sydney Harbour foreshore and its creeks and waterways, surface rock, remnant bushland, ridgelines and skylines,
- (c) to prevent undesirable incremental change, including demolition, which reduces the heritage significance of places, conservation areas or heritage items,
- (d) to allow compatible and viable adaptation and re-use of the fabric of heritage significance,
- (e) to ensure the protection of relics and places of Aboriginal cultural significance in liaison with the Aboriginal community.

The LEP contains related provisions concerning the development of heritage items or in the vicinity of heritage items. This requires the consent of Council.

2.6 Companion Animals Act 1998

The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 (Companion Animals Act) has as its object, the “effective and responsible care and management of companion animals.” The Companion Animals Act includes responsibilities for dogs in public places and public places where dogs are prohibited.

Clause 13 of the Act (‘Responsibilities while dog in public place’) sets out;

A dog that is in a public place must be under the effective control of some competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to the dog and that is being held by (or secured to) the person. This section does not apply to a dog accompanied by some competent person in an area declared to be an off-leash area.

Clause 14 sets out that there are some places where dogs are prohibited. These include:

- Children’s play areas (within 10 metres of any playing apparatus provided in that public place or part for the use of children);
- Food preparation/consumption areas;
- Recreation areas where dogs are prohibited (for public recreation or the playing of organised games and in which the local authority has ordered that dogs are prohibited);
- Child care centres.

Leichhardt’s Access to Open Space Strategy for Dogs is a strategy that determines levels of access of dogs to open space, in accordance with the Companion Animals Act.

Figure 5 on page 19 shows the areas of the park that are subject to off-leash restrictions, as found in Council’s adopted Open Space Strategy for Dogs. Associated with this figure are the following restrictions:

On-leash – Playing field other than when any sporting activity is being conducted

Off-leash – Southern end

Prohibited – Eastern area comprising children’s playground

Time share - Nil



Figure 5: Dog Control - Access to Open Space
Strategy for Dogs

Source: Leichhardt Municipal Council

2.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

2.7 Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Discrimination Act) sets out to eliminate discrimination against persons with a disability, including in relation to goods, services and facilities and access to premises. The Discrimination Act sets out provisions relating to "Access to Premises" (Section 23). This makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of their disability that includes denying access to or use of premises or facilities that are public; or by the path of travel to the premises. Exceptions to this rule include if the making of the access to premises would qualify as 'justifiable hardship' on the person who provides the access.

Section 24 of the Discrimination Act sets out provisions relating to goods, services and facilities that make it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of their disability by refusing to provide the person with or in the manner in which those goods, services or facilities are provided to the person.

Exceptions to this rule includes if the provision of the goods or services or makes the facilities available would qualify as 'justifiable hardship' on the person who provides the goods or services or makes the facilities available.

2.8 Balmain East Suburb Profile

Council's East Balmain Suburb Profile describes the existing and desired future character of the area.

The profile notes that East Balmain is the most prominent part of the peninsula in the views from the City. Its natural form is rocky edges falling into deep water. There has been extensive reclamations with narrow foreshore terraces behind stone sea walls. Extensive landscaped edges and parks to the foreshores give a semblance of naturalness. However, this is largely a created landscape, with excavation and reclamation producing an altered topography and loss of native vegetation. Clearing of the original vegetation for grazing, roads, housing and industry; the excavation for industrial sites and docks have greatly changed the landform of the area.

EXISTING CHARACTER

East Balmain is characterised by its close links with maritime industry and with the harbour. The neighbourhood is currently characterised by its predominantly residential nature, however, until the 1960s the area had been a varied industrial, maritime and residential neighbourhood. Presently, the neighbourhood has a small shopping strip at the crest of the Darling Street hill (part of the Darling Street Neighbourhood) and two remnant commercial /industrial sites on its northern shore. The remainder of the former industrial sites have been redeveloped, with much of the foreshore land having been converted to open space. Currently, more than half of the East Balmain foreshore is zoned for open space. The steep headland form of this neighbourhood gives prominence to its built character, particularly roof form. The small scale of the older buildings and the foil of high canopy trees, closely models the landform. This is abruptly broken by blocky flat buildings particularly along the eastern edge taking advantage of the prime aspect, with some walk up flat blocks and one tower block on the Nicholson/ Johnston Streets axis.

The Eastern Waterfront

The foreshore east of Nicholson and Johnston Streets, has numerous large waterfront houses. This area is characterised by freestanding dwellings which are predominantly two storey, many having views over the harbour to the CBD and the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Desired Outcomes - Landscape

- Maintain mature trees on public and private land.
- Preserve the integrity of the escarpments. Development around escarpments is to avoid cutting, changing the topography or removing associated vegetation around the escarpment. Buildings and structures are to avoid dominating the escarpment.
- This area is sensitive to overshadowing and view loss. All development activity should avoid overshadowing and blocking views. (filtered views are permissible).

Development Controls - Landscape

- Mature trees and other significant vegetation between development and the waterfront is to be preserved.
- Escarpments and stone walls are to be preserved. Construction on escarpments or cutting into stone walls (or into rock faces) is to be avoided.
- All foreshore development is to be assessed in light of Council's adopted Open Space Strategy.
- Where tree replacement is required this should be assessed taking into account the need for amenity planting to support open space use, habitat and enjoyment as well as the need for filtered views of the harbour foreshore and beyond.

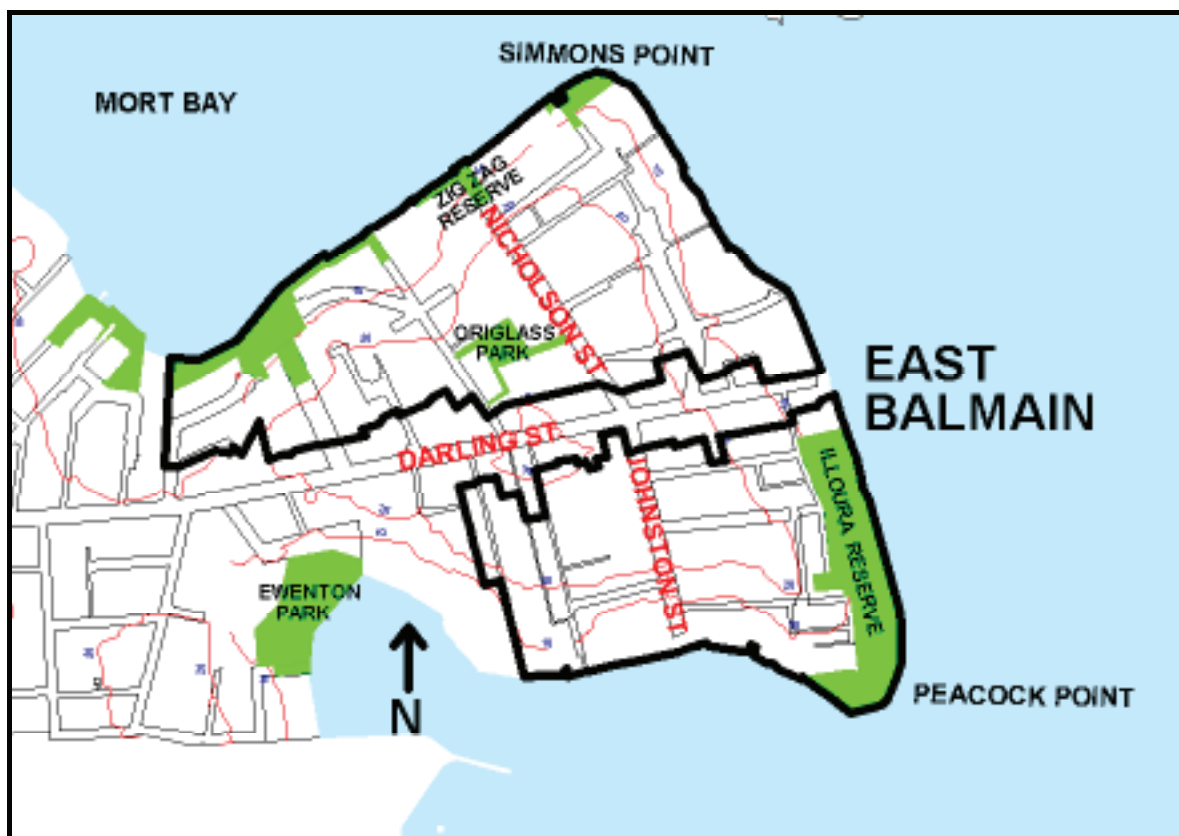


Figure 6: Suburb profile - Extent of Balmain East area

Source: Leichhardt Municipal Council



Images Source: Google maps & EP

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3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 Preliminary Consultation

Two stages of preliminary public consultation were conducted prior to formal exhibition of the draft plan of management. These consultation stages comprised:

1. Invitation for Written Submissions; and
2. Community Consultation Sessions prior to development of options
3. Community consultation session during the formal exhibition period.

Invitation for Written Submissions

Residents in the vicinity of the Balmain East Foreshores were notified by a letter drop of the intention of Council to prepare a plan of management for Balmain East Foreshores and written submissions were invited.

Nine (9) written submissions were received in relation to Balmain East Foreshores. Of these submissions all representations were made by local residents and park users

A detailed summary of responses is provided in the appendix to this plan of management. The key issues raised in the written submissions related to:

Heritage & Landscape character

- Bell's Foreshore and Illoura Reserve should form part of the one park and that its development should be sympathetic to the whole area.

Vegetation

- Illoura Reserve could become a natural, botanical compliment to the Botanical Gardens
- Potential to create themes within the park. Pockets of modern day exotics, creating a transition zone leading from and to Barangaroo, tease the senses with some highly fragrant plants, a reflection of European settlement and a blend of indigenous flora representing the centuries of aboriginal occupation of Sydney.
- Consider allocating a small portion of the public space to the establishment of a public vegetable garden or allotment.
- landscaping surrounding the playground at Illoura Res is in a poor state of repair
- Over the years the trees planted in the Peacock Point and Illoura Reserves have grown to such an extent that their foliage has become dense and obstructs the views that used to exist of the water from the streets and properties around the park
- appreciative of the removal of certain marked trees this year even though previous views of the Sydney Harbour Bridge have not been restored in most cases
- Concern is expressed that the planting of any replacement trees will again obstruct any remaining views
- no additional tree plantings - low growing shrubs and bushes are fine, however any more large trees will create unwanted shade
- all future tree planting in these parks should be designed to provide shade immediately beneath the tree; allow park users to sit in the sun around and between the trees; not obstruct views of the harbour from streets and properties around the parks; not obstruct views from the ferries and boats using the harbour of the streets and properties in the area surrounding the park; allow for children to run and play, fly kites, play ball games; provide for good sight lines for parents and other minders of their children while playing -
- the Draft Park Plans of Management should state that views should not be obstructed by very large trees being planted in parks (such as Angophora Costatas and Black Butt Eucalyptus or Moreton Bay Figs)
- replanting to be done with care and consideration.
- screening to allow partial views should not be overdone
- Provide low growing shrubs / plants / rockeries
- Trees removed as "unsuitable" provided some shelter from strong inds, especially NE – numerous walkers need shelter of some kind
- lopping should be done to preserve the views
- dead trees and branches be removed as soon as possible
- plantings should be of single trees through which the harbour can be seen and preferably of lower flowering trees to support native honey-eating birds
- Councils seem to have an antagonistic attitude to those who have views as if their only concern is for themselves rather than the views being for everyone

3.0 CONSULTATION

- Concern for planting design being overly manicured rather than continuing the more natural context of what is now there
- request for the removal of another tree situated at the bottom of Pearson Street, East Balmain. The problem is it drops seeds on the stairs and pathway to Weston Street and create a very slippery surface
- Council could consider the establishment of a Balmain East Parks Committee to facilitate consultation on future tree plantings.

Play

- provision of a family play area within Illoura Reserve - an area which is safe and protected from the elements is important. eg Epping Oval in Norfolk Road, Epping
- playground equipment should be suitable for a wider range of age groups. Currently the equipment is very dated and targets younger children
- opportunity to introduce the use of recycled water, as an entertaining, cooling option during warmer days and a calming, visual effect during other times?
- there has been an increased usage of the playground and surrounding area since the trees have been recently pruned/removed as this related directly to the amount of sunlight entering the playground area
- Designated sections for "kicking footballs" desirable
- Personal trainers to pay for use of area
- The noisy council basket ball court is next to our property
- Our side wall is used to bounce ball off, basket ball hoop should be relocated elsewhere in the park
- This same court attracts drinkers at night time, they also use the front of my house as a Toilet, using the Wooden Pylon fence located out side my window, this fence is also used to stand on our balcony Rail, as you can see we have a few issues arising out of the Courts being there.

Access

- Carparking area needs to be resurfaced and better managed.
- More parking
- Provide wheel chair access from carpark to park

Usage & facilities

- Existing parks are heavily used on fine weekends for picnics, sunbaking, children playing ball games and with kites
- Existing parks are used every day for access to the streets to go to and from ferries and buses and for dog walking
- are used on occasions for school activities, functions, weddings and large parties
- are heavily used for such events as New Year Eve Fireworks displays
- permit young children to use the playgrounds throughout the week
- attract fishing from the edge of the parks as a popular pastime
- The present timber platform which provides an opportunity to enjoy this "active" view of the harbour and Sydney Harbour Bridge, needs to be replaced. Opportunity to replace it with an organic structure, something which reflects Balmain's colourful working class/ industrial history.
- anti social behaviour by some fishermen is an issue. Not sure if bins closer to where they fish will help but the breaking of living branches for firewood, public defecation and the use of hooks suspended from branches to secure tarps is common place
- Lighting needs to be improved, more environmentally friendly and yet not invasive on the surrounding residents.
- Provide public toilets at Peacock point
- park seating at Illoura Res is limited and dated.
- Lookes Ave park is under utilised.
- A security management plan for the park needs to be created and implemented.
- Park is degraded when people do not clear up after their use of the parks – clearing up after picnics and fishing needs to be done as soon as possible after the event and, on some occasions people tend to leave their garbage in the park or on its perimeter, especially if the bins are full and not close to where people exit the park

Community Consultation Session

Residents in the vicinity of the Balmain East Foreshores were notified by a letter drop of the community consultation session that was held in Balmain East Foreshores on Saturday the 19th November 2011 from 3pm – 4:30pm at Illoura Reserve. A number of notices were also erected in the park to notify people about the consultation session. The workshop was held in the park because of good accessibility to surrounding residents and because it gave residents the opportunity to show presenters their issues 'first-hand' in the park.

This community consultation session was attended by approximately 21 members of the public.

The key observations and issues raised in the community consultation session related to:

Illoura Reserve

- Mature and relaxed park that is enjoyed by all users
- Well used by dog walkers early mornings and evenings (as well as some cats!)
- Replace current bubblers and provide with dog bowls attached
- Open space great, leave it as is for relaxed, informal use
- No BBQ's or extra furniture needed
- Tree plantings are too clumped together. Look at spacing so that the light filters in during the afternoon and views are retained
- remove dead trees
- rubbish from people fishing an issue, line bins need to be located at foreshore with possible some additional signage in various languages
- no wall on fence at foreshore, harbour is part of the park
- lighting is old and needs to be replaced. Reduce the glare and improve the safety (look at bollard lighting similar to Birchgrove Oval)
- Maintenance Issues – weeding, lights out
- parking needs to be looked at. 7 car spaces lost from construction. However carpark not to dominate the park
- fig trees multiplying – something needs to be done here
- walkway from Illoura Reserve to Peacock point along the foreshore over the rocks for better access to the point
- leave paths as they are (no concrete)
- playground is in a good position, no fence needed, however equipment is quite old. It is well used by kids
- basketball court is currently being utilised

Lookes Ave Reserve

- make it look like a public space rather than private property
- anti-social behaviour on weekends becoming an issue
- needs bins and lighting
- rubbish from people fishing and issue
- seating
- potential terracing of the hill area
- trees for shade??? Could be an issue due to ground floor apartments and views

Thornton Park

- play equipment is used
- toilets could be relocated here from ferry wharf (but with consideration of heritage issues related to toilet building)

Synthesis of consultation

Consultation through the submission phase and the community open day has confirmed that tree management and event management are the key issues from a community perspective. A balance needs to be achieved in developing management strategies that respond to expressed community concerns but also consider the broader community perspective, heritage, and natural systems management. The following summary positions each of these issues in the broader context of factors.

Heritage & Landscape character

- Each of the component parks has an identifiable character which should be recognised and conserved. In the case of Bells Store (2-8 Weston Street) it is important that this space integrates with Illoura Reserve and to Darling Street as per the design under implementation

Vegetation

Views

Of all of the responses received during the call for written submissions the most common theme was the impact of mature trees on views. This reflects the majority of respondents being immediate neighbours to Illoura Reserve on Weston Street. Councils implementation of upgrade works to 2-8 Weston Street has met with similar concerns from residents over the feared impact on their private views. Ultimately the plan of management must seek to provide an equitable way forward for integrated tree and view management.

In this process, the original design intent of the Mackenzie scheme for Illoura Reserve must be considered, as must be views to the Balmain East foreshores from such key locations as Observatory Hill, and from the river / harbour waterway itself.

The legal framework for managing trees and views is a further factor to be considered with regards views, shade etc.

Planting character

Comments were received regarding potential to create broader themes of planting through the park. It is noted that the planting palette in particular understorey and groundcovers has been altered significantly from the original Bruce Mackenzie scheme. The revisiting of these original themes as practical should be the highest priority rather than the introduction of new themes.

Planting placement (original design)

Whilst the species profile has changed from that originally planned so has the spatial arrangement of planting and grassed areas. The original extent of planted areas has been rationalised and the sequence of spaces and visual experiences lost to some extent. Turfed areas have evolved where planting once existed. The extent of planting in the original scheme should be analysed and where possible and within maintenance constraints the original intent be restored

Shade

Shade is mentioned in a number of submissions as being a parallel impact (to views) of mature trees, with the concern that there is excessive shade created by mature trees. This is predominantly within the park but does appear to extend to impacts of shade and light on residences in several locations through the mid and southern boundaries of Illoura Reserve.

Understorey

See Planting placement (original design)

Management

Council's capacity to maintain and manage vegetation is a critical consideration in tree management planning and decision making. A number of submissions have praised recent trimming and tree removal, but noted that this had been inconsistent over the years. Ultimately the approach to tree management will need to be sustainable within the context of councils resources.

Play

In general consultation confirmed that playspaces are desirable in Thornton Park and Illoura Reserve, and these are appreciated and used by the community. In general terms the specific locations of each and the nature and quality of elements within those spaces are the key issues to be addressed:

Thornton Park

- upper toddler playspace is now aged with an inappropriate style for the reserve - however it is unobtrusively placed
- lower swings are used and compliment passive / sitting use by families in the foreshore area
- effectiveness of surface treatments in area of swings should be monitored - any wearing surface must not be visually obtrusive

Illoura Reserve

- the existing playspace is worn and dated in terms of equipment, adjoining landscaping, and surfacing
- the original playspace implemented from the Mackenzie scheme was in the area below the southern viewing deck / tower and comprised "natural" themed custom play elements such as swings etc. This area should be reviewed in terms of its potential to provide for play and or activity (for example potential relocation of basketball half court and other activities).
- The existing playspace location was generally agreed by the community to be preferred as it had good accessibility to Darling Street in addition to the future upgrading of facilities at 2-8 Weston Street - as such a major upgrading in its current location was the most appropriate action
- Play facilities in the existing location and potentially below the viewing deck would be effective in supporting informal use of the open grassed "green" area - this area was felt by the community to be important to maintain in its current informal character.
- The nature of elements in these two areas should consider the community comment regarding being suitable for a wider range of age groups

Parking

Consultation identified that the condition and visual appearance of existing parking was of concern to residents. These issues along with the condition of existing fencing barriers need to be addressed. Although desirability of more parking was raised it is unlikely that significant increases would be possible without additional areas earmarked for parking - which would require loss of space to community use which would be undesirable. With rationalisation of existing spaces - some minor increases to numbers could be possible.

Access

The Illoura Reserve the potential for provide wheelchair and pram access from parking should be investigated. Path access was discussed at the community forum with potential to continue paved access along the foreshore worth investigating, as were potential to improve access links from upper path to open grassed areas and lower path system.

Usage & facilities

Consultation confirmed that the reserves are heavily used on fine weekends for picnics, sunbaking, children playing ball games and with kites and are used on occasions for school activities, functions, weddings and large parties. The foreshore reserves in particular Thornton Park and Lookes Avenue Reserve come under extreme pressure on New Years Eve fireworks. The existing parks are used every day for access to the streets to go to and from ferries and buses and for dog walking, whilst fishing on the foreshore draws users from a wide area. Some local respondents noted issues with the conduct of some fishing users in particular in relation to rubbish.

It was generally agreed that Lookes Ave reserve is under utilised.

There is potential to review the role of space under the existing viewing deck in Illoura Reserve to better contribute to park activation whilst the existing basketball courts have impacts on adjoining residences and need to be considered in an alternative location or site.

General facilities including lighting need to be improved, more environmentally friendly and yet not invasive on the surrounding residents along with park seating at Illoura Res which is limited and dated.

Council has previously considered its options for provision of toilets in the precinct. Potential for integration of toilets into the adjoining 2-8 Weston Street was investigated but at this time is not likely. It would be problematic to introduce toilets into Illoura Reserve or Peacock Point both in terms of services and impacts in addition to security issues.

Potential to reconstruction / reconfigure existing toilets on the southern side of Thornton Park adjoining the Wharf should be investigated.

Public exhibition and finalisation of plan of management

A further Community Meeting was held at the site on Saturday 27th October 2012 from 1.30-3.00 pm.

A summary of the draft plan was given by the project team and then general discussion and questions was taken. A summary of the workshop is provided in the Appendix.

A number of submissions were received during the exhibition period. The majority of these were from local residents living adjacent the park who were concerned about the potential number of tree plantings which the draft plan and the related Refurbishment Plan by the original park Landscape Architect Bruve Mackenzie may authorise in the park. The key issue for these residents is the potential loss of views however other issues such as impact on usability of park and amount of shade were also raised

Council and the project team reviewed these responses and resolved a suite of revisions to the draft plan which are included in this final plan of management:

- Illoura Reserve-Plan for Restoration - proposed tree planting locations rationalised to reduce number and generally maintain existing spaces on foreshore unbroken by tree canopy. Overall 54 potential new tree planting locations have been reduced to 36 new trees - a large number of these relate to replacement of existing trees which are expected to have limited lifespans. This would exclude replacement of any Casuarina specimens to the foreshore which need to be removed due to condition or to enable sewall or path works to proceed. A staged programme of planting over time is envisaged
- Basketball court to stay where it is currently located
- Boardwalk proposal from Illoura through to Peacock Point is supported for equal access. Further design work is required to ensure that the boardwalk is sympathetic to the rocky foreshore.
- Wheelchair access ramp adjacent to the stairs at Peacock Point is to be deleted.
- Car Park 3 is to be a high priority for improvement - Stabilised road base with markers rather than black asphalt-more in keeping with the park.
- Where sandstone paths are to be refurbished - these to be provided with a diamond edged finish to ensure they are smooth for prams and pushchairs/wheelchairs.
- Investigation of options for the replacement of toilets at the Darling Street Wharf with new toilets on the lower level of Thornton park is to be made a high priority. In this respect any new design needs to be undertaken in a manner which is robust and reflective of the heritage of the area.
- Liechardt council considered the adoption of the Plan of Management for the Balmain East Foreshore parks at its ordinary meeting on the 11th December 2012. The Plan of Management was adopted by council with the following amendments
- **ITEM D6 ADOPTION- EAST BALMAIN PARK PLANS OF MANAGEMENT C600/12 RESOLVED BREEN/MCKENZIE1.**
 1. That council adopt the original and exhibited Bruce Mackenzie Restoration scheme (attachment D) for Illoura Reserve which includes the planting restoration of 54 new trees within the park, the relocation of the basketball court, the development of a pleasure garden of indigenous planting (in lieu of the basketball court) and the provision of seating areas for public appreciation and enjoyment.
 2. That council refer the Plan of Management as relates to Thornton park (Crown land) to the Minister of Primary Industries for consideration and adoption.
 3. That council recognise the value and function that trees play within parks and the valuable role that trees perform in promoting the use and enjoyment of open space, the promotion of biodiversity and habitat creation, the cooling of spaces, the reduction of noise pollution and promote of natural settings.
 4. That council recognise the immeasurable work and assistance of Bruce Mackenzie in assisting with the restoration plan for Illoura reserve, historical information pertaining to its original design and intention and the contribution that Bruce has made to the development of parklands within the Liechardt local Government area over the last 40 years.carried unanimously

4.0 HERITAGE

4.1 Pre-European History

The Balmain East Foreshores CMP 2005 provides a comprehensive description of the heritage of the Balmain East peninsular and of the significant of the area and its fabric and views. Key points from the CMP are listed following:

Natural Landscape – Topography and vegetation

Balmain is located in the Leichhardt Municipality west of the centre of Sydney and covers an area of about 12 sq. km. Three separate sandstone ridges dominate its landscape (Solling & Reynolds, p9). The Balmain peninsular has a rocky coastline, which, prior to European settlement, featured many small bays and inlets. The major underlying geological deposit is Hawkesbury sandstone. Rock outcrops and cliffs dominate the landscape with shallow stony to sandy soils lying between.

The vegetation originally consisted of open woodland with a profusion of shrubs as an understorey. The principal trees were most likely Red Bloodwoods (*Eucalyptus gummifera*) and Sydney Red Gums (*Angophora costata*). (LMHS, McDonald McPhee, pp91-92)

Aboriginal (Wangal) Land

Before the arrival of the first British fleet in 1788, the land around Sydney Harbour was inhabited by Aboriginal groups or bands. The band was the basic unit of organisation in Aboriginal society, and ranged from small family units to groups of up to 100 people. Around 29 bands have been identified as living in the Sydney region in 1788, making up around 3000 Aborigines (Solling and Reynolds, p. 4).

Everyone belonged to a clan, which bound them spiritually to a particular territory and its sacred sites. Dharug was the predominant language used on the Cumberland Plain, and there were probably 8 Dharug speaking clans near the coast. Two of these clans were the Cadigal and the Wangal. The Cadigal occupied an area stretching between the southern side of Port Jackson from South Head to Petersham, and the Wangal occupied an area stretching from Petersham westwards to Rose Hill, embracing the present Leichhardt Municipality. The boundary that separated these two clans seems to have been the Balmain Peninsula (Solling and Reynolds, p. 4).

The Aboriginal people generally moved around seasonally within their tribal boundaries in search of food. Campsites of coastal Aborigines in the Sydney region were located near the sea and foreshores, where they used the rock shelters. Their diet was mainly fish, supplemented by shellfish, octopus and turtles, gathered from the bays of the harbour, small animals and local plants. This lifestyle was hugely disrupted by the arrival of Europeans, who were sedentary cultivators rather than nomadic gathers. Within 18 months of European settlement, the Aboriginal people were deprived of their lands, their traditional food supply and died of diseases, such as Small pox, introduced by the Europeans. The remnant bands combined to form new groups. However, these brought drastic changes to Aboriginal social relations and occupation patterns, which led to the bands withdrawing from the settlement.

A separate predictive survey/study was undertaken by Huys, Johnson, Wickman in 1995 to identify aboriginal sites on undisturbed foreshore areas within the Leichhardt Municipality, called Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal sites at Callan Point and Yurilbin Point. This report did not include any sites in East Balmain.

4.2 Aesthetic significance

The Balmain East Foreshores CMP 2005 identified that aesthetic significance covers such areas as massing, expression of architectural form and landscape quality. It noted that an individuals perception of these is via the senses of sight, sound, touch and smell and all form part of the aesthetic experience. The aesthetic significance of the East Balmain Foreshore study area lies in a number of areas and rather than separate these out, they are discussed below under the various sites, structures and spaces which make up the place.

Lookes Avenue Reserve

The blocks of units that surround Lookes Avenue Reserve have little aesthetic appeal and detract from, rather than contribute to, the setting of the park. In addition, the park itself has never been landscaped to provide a pleasant space for recreation. It is like a left over space between buildings with no apparent use. Despite this, the park has the most spectacular view of the harbour and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The space also appears semi-privatised rather than a functional area of public open space.

Thornton Park

The layout of Thornton Park, with its symmetrical arrangement of paths, walls and garden elements, strongly reflects the approach taken to park design in the 1920s-30s. The plantings on the upper level have matured to create a peaceful landscape setting for quiet recreational activities, even though the main path dividing the park provides an important pedestrian link between the wharf and the residential areas beyond the park. The rose garden helps to provide some degree of separation (physical and visual) between the through traffic along the path and those enjoying the park. The wonderful harbour views from the upper level are softened by the trees around the edges of the park. The park and its setting is popular for social events such as weddings and gatherings.

4.0 HERITAGE

The walls around the park clearly define the boundaries of the place and enclose it, creating a degree of privacy from the street. The walls feature a quality rendered finish laid out in roughcast panels set in smooth finished frames. The eastern retaining wall includes a central semicircular bay for sitting and viewing the harbour, which is flanked by two sets of stairs down to the lower level. The design is grand and matches that of the boundary wall to Darling Street.

The lower level of the park does not have the same aesthetic appeal as the upper level. It is bare and hard-edged, and not consistent with the design and finishes of the upper level. The glass wall at the northern end of the lower terrace particularly detracts from the setting of the park.

Illoura Reserve

Illoura Reserve provides a soft green edge to East Balmain, particularly when viewed from across the harbour or from the ferry. The southern end of the reserve contains the only remaining piece of natural shoreline on the foreshore of East Balmain. This, set against the rocky backdrop of Peacock Point provides a rare glimpse of what the natural coastline of the East Balmain peninsula was like prior to European development.

Illoura Reserve successfully endeavours to reestablish some of the character of the original natural landscape of the peninsula. The sandstone rock faces, which still retain evidence of quarrying by past generations, are exposed to view and provide the backdrop for large open grassed areas and mass plantings of native trees and shrubs. The character of the park is also enhanced by the robust use of natural materials for paving and structures. The park brings a sense of the bush back into this densely populated area.

The park is a place to explore. Enclosed walks through densely planted areas open out to framed views of the harbour and city. Several lookout points have been provided, each with a different view. Along the foreshore the view is filtered through the trunks of the casuarinas. This maintains a degree of privacy and intimacy within the park. A second character layer is added to the park through the interpretation of its maritime past. Old wharf piles are used for the construction of the observation deck and stair, and a timber wharf like structure has been constructed over a small inlet in the sea wall. The old sea wall, with all its variations due to past uses, has been retained and provides a rough and interesting edge to the park and harbour.

Illoura Reserve is aesthetically highly significant, for the spaces it contains, the textures and plantings used, its intimacy and relaxed layout, the relationship it has with the harbour, the views it offers (including its filtered and framed views, as well as its panoramic views), and the landscape setting it provides to the adjacent houses and the edge of the harbour.

Peacock Point

Peacock Point Reserve is one of the few places where people can actually have contact with the water of the harbour. The small beach area and rock pool are very important in providing the opportunity for people to get their feet wet and as a place for companion animal recreation.

The character of the park is very different from the character of the adjacent Illoura Reserve. The park is far grander in presentation than Illoura Reserve, mainly due to the grand staircase that descends into the park. Although stone facing is used for the paving and walls in this reserve, it is visually refined and hard edged, which contrasts greatly with the soft dull paving and walls of Illoura Reserve. The stair is also considered intrusive sitting on the landscape rather than being integrated into it. The planting scheme to Peacock Point is more complex than that used in Illoura Reserve, which incorporates mass planting of species to form more natural groves. The place offers extensive views of the city skyline, Darling Harbour and Johnstons Bay around to the Anzac Bridge. This view encompasses the large wharves built by the Sydney Harbour Trust during the early 20th century, particularly those at Jones Bay.



The Upper walk - Illoura Reserve - source Bruce McKenzie

4.3 Overall heritage significance

The Balmain East foreshores include structures, spaces and elements of a range of cultural significance. These were graded in the East Balmain Foreshores CMP according to their relative significance in the diagram on the following page

Spaces/elements graded 1: High significance

These structures, spaces or elements are of high cultural significance for historical, aesthetic, scientific or social values. They retain a high degree of integrity and intactness from their original construction or later significant period. They play a crucial role in supporting the significance of the Balmain East foreshores.

Spaces/Elements graded 2: Medium significance

These structures, spaces or elements retain some integrity but are of lesser cultural significance. Significant fabric may have been altered or obscured. While these elements may have been of high significance in their earlier context, the substantial loss or alteration of this context and its associated elements has considerably reduced this significance and it may be now one of association with the lost element. They now play a moderate role in supporting the significance of the place.

Spaces/Elements graded 3: Little significance

These structures, spaces or elements are of little cultural significance. They may have been substantially altered and/or play a minor role in supporting the significance of the place.

Spaces/Elements graded 4: Intrusive

These structures, spaces or elements are intrusive and are damaging to the cultural significance of the place. They obscure rather than support the significance of the place.

4.0 HERITAGE

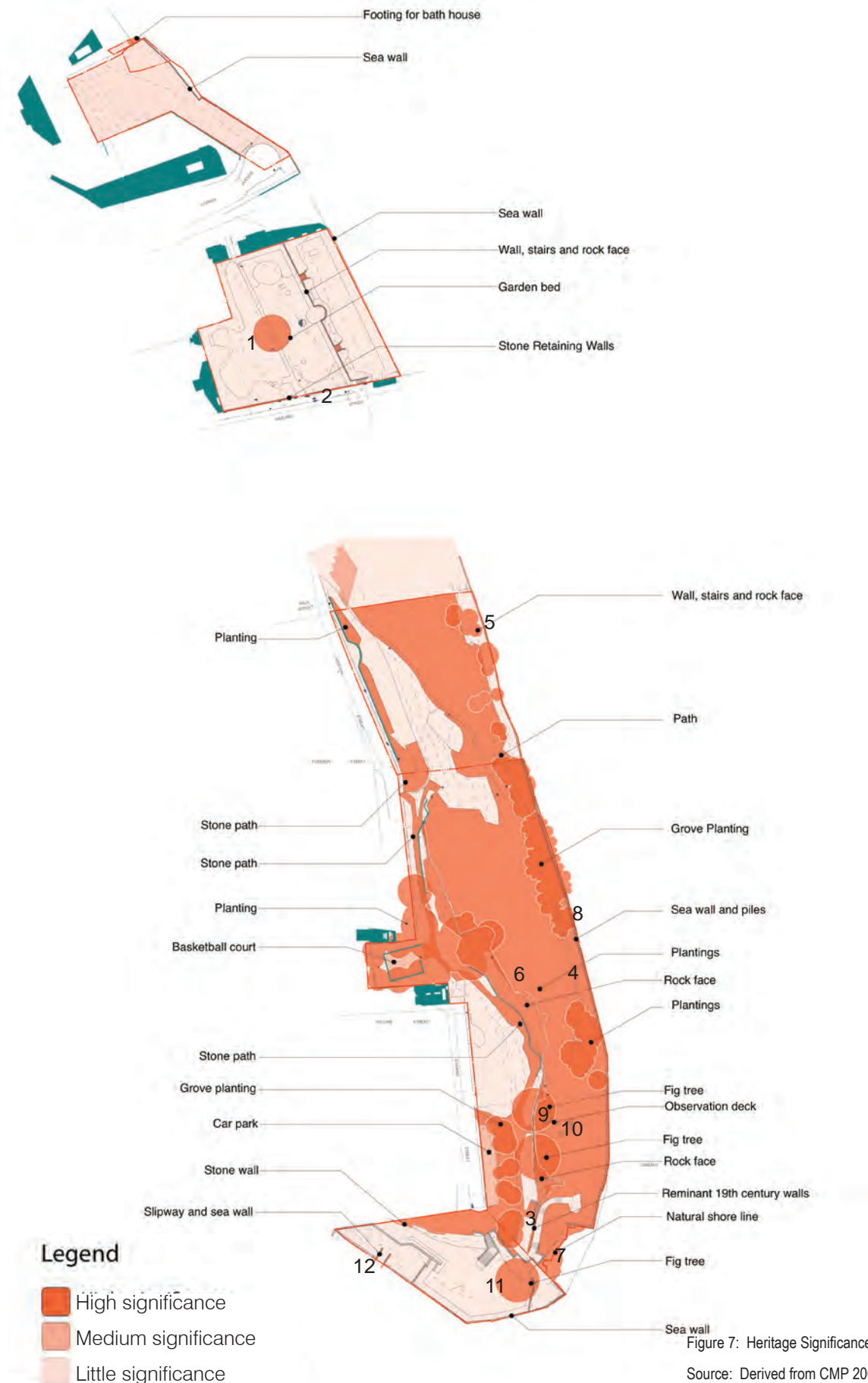


Figure 7: Heritage Significance

Source: Derived from CMP 2005



1



2



3



4



5



6

4.0 HERITAGE



7



8



9



10



12



11

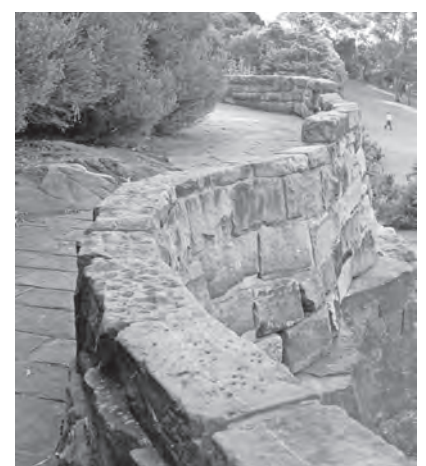
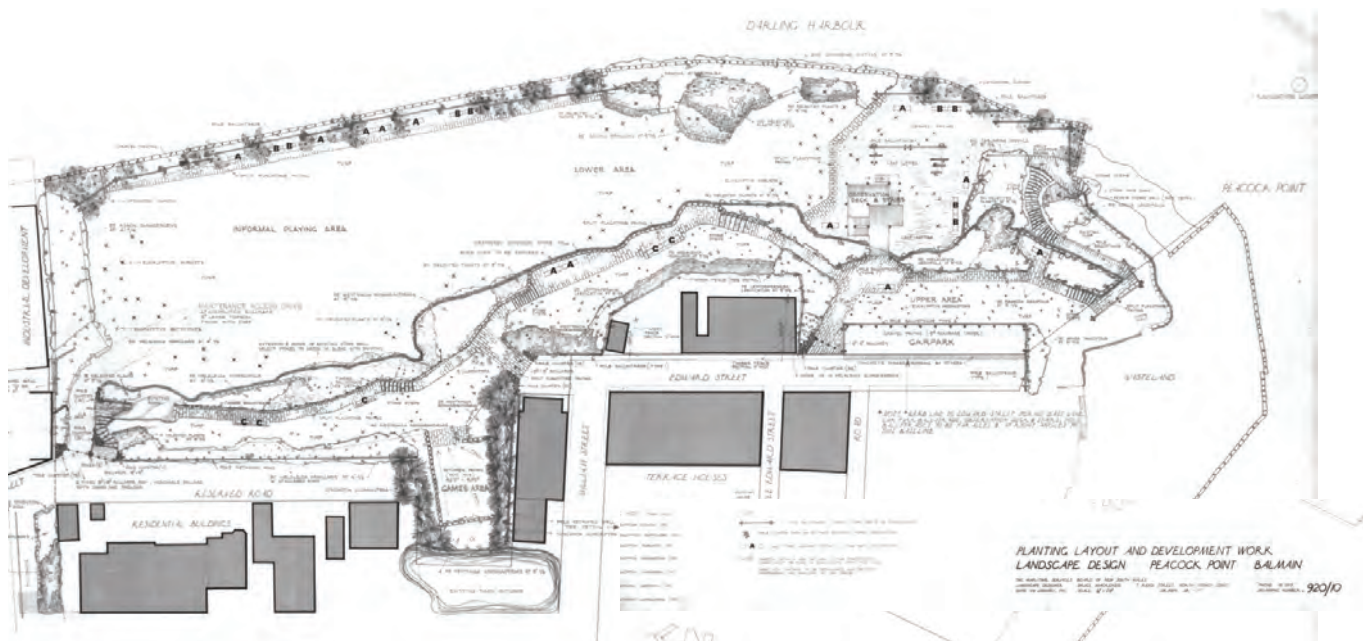


Figure 7: Heritage Significance
Source: Bruce Mackenzie

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Condition and use of the land and existing structures & facilities in the reserves

The table below outlines the key site elements of Balmain East Foreshores, their condition and present use. A brief description and summary outline of the condition of the elements is provided in the table below, incorporating a summary outline of the priority for improvements (having regard for their suitability and condition, and the masterplan incorporated in Section 8).

The priorities for improvements as set out in the table below have been categorised in accordance with the following:



| Priority | Timeframe |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| High (H) | Short (0 - 5 Years) |
| Medium (M) | Medium term (5 - 15 Years) |
| Low (L) | Long term (15+ Years) |
| Regular Maintenance | Ongoing |
| Not Applicable (N/A) | |

Lookes Avenue Reserve


Existing Condition overview 2005 Masterplan:

Lookes Avenue Reserve is located in the northern most point of the study area, accessed from Lookes Avenue in the south and fronting the Harbour. The reserve is surrounded by 4 storey and higher residential block developments, with a significant level change from the upper level, adjacent to the existing residential car park and the seawall level. This steep grass embankment contains shallow sandstone outcrops and concrete and asphalt debris, probably filled during construction of the adjoining residential blocks. The open exposed nature of the Reserve, in combination with limited planting gives park visitors the sense of being overlooked by the surrounding residential flats. This perception may limit use of the reserve. The reserve, is accessible from Lookes Avenue, from where pedestrians can connect through to Thornton Park and the Wharf through a narrow access path between two private residences.

There are no built elements in the reserve, with the Reserve being dominated by a large expanse of turf which banks steeply to the western edge. There are bins and gate access at the Lookes Avenue frontage. The seawall along the boundary, contains evidence of a former bath house below water level. Adjacent to the former bath house, there is evidence of lower lying land, with evidence of a former inlet or harbour at this location. There is also evidence of a curved seawall, part of the original seawall installed by Lookes in ADD. The park has no seating, lighting or signage facilities. The park appears from its edges to be a privatised space and has minimal relationship to the other 3 reserves on the Balmain East foreshores.

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|--|--|--------------------------|
| 1 Seawall  | Sandstone seawall - on varied alignments | Good condition - recent relaying of top 3 courses of seawall | N/A |
| 2 Bollards and gate and bins to Lookes Avenue  | Painted white steel gate - utilitarian style, painted white steel bollards, 140L bin racks | Aged - potential for replacement with more inviting treatment that promotes public access / use to the reserve | H |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| 3 Open grassed slope  | Steep grassed slope oriented towards views of harbour | Good condition - but challenging gradients for mowing - potential to reduce slopes and to encourage more public use and enjoyment. | M |

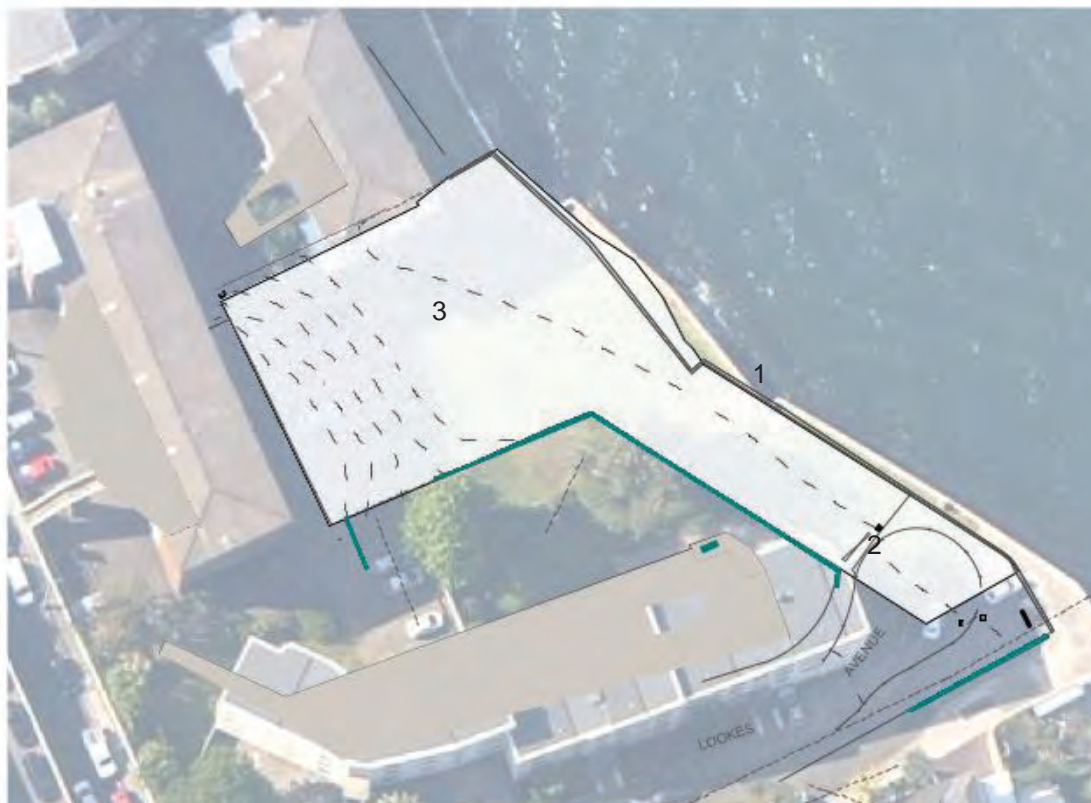


Figure 8: Lookes Avenue Reserve Structures and Facilities

Source: EP




Thornton Park

Existing Condition overview 2005 Masterplan:

Thornton Park, established in the 1930's, is a well loved park in a highly prominent location adjacent to Darling Street and the East Balmain Ferry Terminal. The park is divided into two levels, with the original sandstone escarpment running north-south defining the level change. The park has undergone a recent refurbishment, with additional perimeter planting, new play facilities and new paving and furniture installed. Thornton Park is well loved, with residents actively involved in the park's garden maintenance.

Thornton Park contains the original concrete walls and stairs from its establishment in the 1930's. There is minor cracking along sections of the external wall fronting Darling Street, with evidence of repair of the western section of the wall. Existing concrete paths through the site are in moderate condition. New random sandstone paving along the seawall is visually inconsistent with the rest of the park. Access to Thornton Park from Darling Street occurs at three locations, at the central section of the upper terrace and at the lower end of Darling Street, at the eastern and western ends of the existing toilet facilities. The eastern most point of access is inadequate, with a narrow concrete ramp that does not meet disabled access requirements. The new play area located adjacent to the rose garden in the centre of the park is well used. However there is limited shade around the play facilities, affecting the facilities use.

Existing furniture is in good condition, with limited damage and graffiti. Long benches with back rests located adjacent to the seawall, provide unlimited views of the harbour. The absence of trees on this lower terrace limits shade and use of seating. The northern edge of this lower terrace is dominated by the frosted glass screen fence of the adjoining residence, creating a visually prominent and inconsistent edge to the park. There is a range of memorials scattered in a number of locations throughout the park. The seawall has been recently stabilized and additional concrete mortar added.

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 Seawall  | Sandstone / concrete seawall | Fair condition - concrete coping adjoining sandstone flagging | N/A |
| 2 Seawall Balustrade | Timber and SS wire balustrade - wires have been retro-fitted to address safety issues | Poor to Fair condition - wires require ongoing maintenance - subject to heritage impacts - desirable to replace | H |
| 3 Foreshore promenade  | Sandstone flagging | Reasonable condition - monitor mortar joints | N/A Ongoing |
| 4 Foreshore grassed area & gardens  | grassed area and display garden beds adjoining terrace wall | Reasonable condition Grass / garden bed maintenance | N/A Ongoing |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES



| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 5 Foreshore seating  | Timber batten and steel frame seating | Good condition Ongoing painting and general maintenance | N/A Ongoing |
| 6 Foreshore swing  | Painted steel frame 2 swing set with 1 toddlers seat Soft fall pads | Good condition Ongoing painting and general maintenance Fair condition - monitor | N/A Ongoing Ongoing |





Figure 9: Thornton Park Structures and Facilities

Source: EP

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Terrace Wall</p>  | <p>Concrete terrace and steps Painted steel handrail - heritage significant</p> | <p>Reasonable condition Ongoing painting and general maintenance</p> | <p>N/A Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Upper path</p>  | <p>Concrete path and sandstone kerb</p> | <p>Fair condition - monitor mortar joints</p> | <p>N/A Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Terrace grassed area & gardens</p>  | <p>grassed area and display garden beds</p> | <p>Reasonable condition Grass / garden bed maintenance</p> | <p>N/A Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Playspace</p>  | <p>Toddlers play tower and slide with shelter Bark softfall</p> | <p>Good condition Bark softfall maintenance</p> | <p>N/A Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Seating</p>  | <p>Timber batten and steel frame seating Teak timber seat (donated)</p> | <p>Good condition Ongoing painting and general maintenance</p> | <p>N/A Ongoing</p> |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| <p>Frontage Wall to Darling Street</p>  | Concrete wall timber sign in garden bed | Reasonable condition Ongoing monitoring of sign | N/A Ongoing |
| <p>Bollard signage</p>  | Blade signs | Regulation signage hard to read - consider upgrading | H |

Illoura Reserve

Existing Condition overview 2005 Masterplan:

Illoura Reserve is recognised as a culturally significant landscape, distinct as one of the first peninsula parks, designed by Bruce Mackenzie and is one of the outstanding examples based on the 'Sydney school'. This is an architectural approach or philosophy from the 1970's which emphasised integration and sympathy with the natural environment - in particular bushland. The topography of natural sandstone shelves is exposed and overlaid with walls, paths and vegetation to create a series of framed, contrasted spaces. The complexity of the park spaces originate from the intricacy and contrast of the planting, geological and constructed compositions. The result of this complex interlocking relationship of landscape elements, is a series of well loved, distinctive and highly visited park spaces. The palette of materials for walls, paths and fences is primarily recycled timber and sandstone, with an emphasis on large scale robust details, that respond to the site's historic condition as a working harbour and ship docks.

The park is distinctive in its use of large, scale, robust materials and finish. The detailing reflects the character of the working foreshore, and materials are based on the natural features and characteristics of the area. The sandstone, sourced from site and from demolished sydney buildings is unique. Sandstone paths, walls and steps are generally in good condition, however there is evidence of minor cracking in some locations. The lower level sandstone path, adjacent to the waterfront is currently concealed under turf and leaf mulch. Paths of bluemetal and bitumen along the foreshore are in poor condition, with cracking and deterioration evident. Recylced timber is used widely in the reserve, for retaining walls, fences and entry features. The entry features and fences adjacent to the waterfront are in poor condition, and require a comprehensive review and strategy to be undertaken in collaboration with the original designer.

The play equipment dating to installation of stage 1 (circa 1980) has been removed, with the original timber poles still evident. Newer play area, is poor in condition, with graffiti on equipment and an inconsistent series of fences. It is understood that the 'off the shelf' plastic play equipment replaced the aged play equipment designed as part of the original commission. This is visually in appropriate and inconsistent with park components. The existing equipment is also in poor repair.

Bruce MacKenzie's scheme includes seating as an integral component of the design elements. Walls, steps and sandstone outcrops create effective informal seating areas in the reserve. Original timber benches are in varying condition, with timber supports cracking and slumping.

The park as a whole lacks a planned maintenance scheme. An open space of such significance justifies a dedicated knowledge base and adherence to key principles to maintain it's character and original design intent.








| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Northern carpark - Weston Street - available space is inneffiecent - potential to modify and make more effective</p>  | <p>Gravel surface Terrace stone walls to west side Garden area between stone terraces</p> | <p>Poor condition / inneffiecent Good condition Poor condition</p> | <p>H L H</p> |
| <p>Seawall</p>  | <p>Sandstone seawall of varied eras and stone types</p> | <p>Varied condition - some zones poor - with slumping - ongoing repair work required</p> | <p>M-H</p> |



Figure 10: Illoura Reserve Structures and Facilities






Source: EP

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES





| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| <p>Stone path link from carpark to lower grassed area & foreshore</p>  | Stone flagged path link varied width up to 1.5m | Fair condition - mortar jointing will progressively fail due to age - potential to widen for better access | M |
| <p>Foreshore walking / sitting area - north zone Will link through to Darling Street via 2-8 Weston Street</p>  | Gravel surface Timber walls Bench seats Trees in gravel | Varied condition high wear zone Poor condition Poor Condition Varied condition | NH H H M |
| <p>Foreshore path</p>  | discontinuous flagged stone path | Poor condition discontinuous nature means path is not functional as a link | H |
| <p>Path and step link - south end</p>  | Flagged stone path and steps linking to Peacock Point | Good condition Monitor mortar jointing Potential link to extended foreshore path | N/A Ongoing |
| <p>Viewing Deck</p>  | Timber framed viewing deck structure with timber stair link Deck undercroft area | Fair condition Posts require capping top prevent splitting Timber requires regular penetrating oil treatment to lengthen life | H H Ongoing |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Custom seating to lower grassed area  | Timber seating on stone / timber frame | Poor condition | H |
| Lower grassed area  | grassed area | Reasonable condition Grass / garden bed maintenance | N/A Ongoing |
| Upper path north  | Stone flagged path link varied width up to 1.5m | Fair condition - mortar jointing will progressively fail due to age - potential to widen for better access | M |
| Upper path central  | Stone flagged path link varied width up to 1.5m | Fair condition - mortar jointing will progressively fail due to age - potential to widen for better access | M |

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Upper path south</p>  | <p>Stone flagged path link varied width up to 1.5m</p> <p>Chain Link edge barrier</p> | <p>Fair condition - mortar jointing will progressively fail due to age - potential to widen for better access</p> <p>Poor condition</p> | <p>M</p> <p>H</p> |
| <p>Basketball court</p>  | <p>Concrete surface</p> <p>basketball hoop and backboard</p> | <p>Fair condition</p> | <p>L</p> |
| <p>Pole clusters at entry</p>  | <p>Telegraph pole group placed originally as cost effective entry marker</p> | <p>Poor condition</p> <p>Timber has degraded and requires removal</p> <p>Replace with alternative entry marker coordinated to other entry points</p> | <p>H</p> |
| <p>Pole clusters at entry</p>  | <p>Telegraph pole group placed originally as cost effective entry marker</p> | <p>Poor condition</p> <p>Timber has degraded and requires removal</p> <p>Replace with alternative entry marker coordinated to other entry points</p> | <p>H</p> |
| <p>Timber post walling - to south upper path</p>  | <p>Telegraph pole walling to edge of path</p> | <p>Poor condition</p> | <p>H</p> |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES




| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| Foreshore pathway  | discontinuous flagged stone path | Poor condition discontinuous nature means path is not functional as a link | H |
| Central carpark  | Gravel Carpark Timber fence / screen | Poor condition Fair condition | H H |
| Central carpark  | Gravel Carpark Degraded edge treatment | Poor condition Poor condition | H H |
| Timber post walling - to south upper path  | Telegraph pole walling to edge of path | Poor condition | H |

Peacock Point



Existing Condition overview 2005 Masterplan:

Peacock Point is a new addition to the foreshore open space network, connecting to Illoura Reserve to the north. The point occupies the western most part of the study area, with expansive views to Darling Harbour, Pyrmont, and the Anzac Bridge. It also contains a small section of natural shoreline to the north, and to the western boundary contains an area of beach front containing the sandstone walls of a slipway. This is the one of the few locations in the study area that allows access to the water. The scheme was installed by council in 2002. Subsequently planting schemes for the site has been prepared by Leichhardt Council and Bruce MacKenzie in 2003. It appears that the MacKenzie planting proposals with recommendations for installation of selected tree planting have not, to date been implemented. The open exposed character of Peacock Point contrasts dramatically with the intimacy of spaces and visual diversity of Illoura Reserve. Currently an adjoining property on the Northern boundary of Peacock Point is encroaching on park land.

The new additions of stairs, retaining walls and paving contrasts dramatically with the adjoining landscape works in Illoura Reserve. Although the new works use some of the same materials (particularly sandstone), the finish, scale and configuration of these elements does not reflect the character or detailing of Illoura Reserve. The sawn finish of the sandstone used in the waterfront paving and cladding for stairs and walls is in stark contrast to the roughly dressed sandstone used in the paths and stairs in Illoura Reserve. In general the condition of the built elements is good at this stage. However, as sandstone blocks used in paving, stairs and seawall construction have been cut across the natural bedding, there is evidence of deterioration of the material. This will hasten the ageing process. The new light columns installed in Peacock Point are in good condition. However the location of the columns, in the lawn and adjacent to the seawall, without the benefit adjoining treeplanting, makes the lights visually prominent

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| Seawall  | Sandstone seawall with raised hob | Varied condition - some zones poor - with slumping - ongoing repair work required | L |
| Stairway  | Recent stone stairway and steps - diamond sawn finish | Good condition Ongoing weathering / deterioration of stone | L |
| Foreshore promenade  | Sandstone flagged foreshore promenade | Good condition | L |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

| Item | Description | Condition | Priority for improvement |
|--|--|--|--------------------------|
| Lower grassed area  | grassed area Anchor feature Lighting | Reasonable condition Grass / garden bed maintenance Good condition Good condition | N/A Ongoing L L |
| Backed seating to lower grassed area  | Aluminium batten and frame seating on concrete pads | Fair condition Ongoing painting and general maintenance | N/A Ongoing |

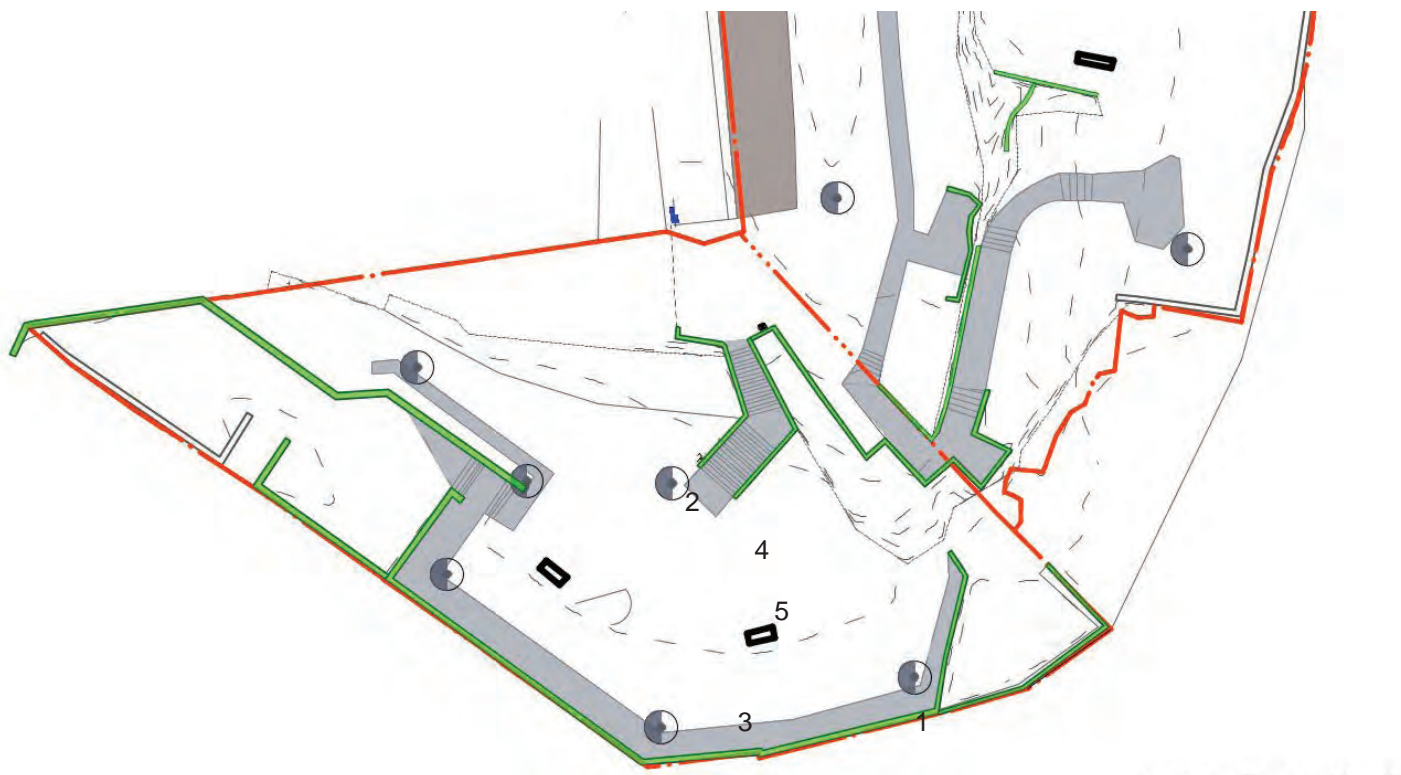


Figure 11: Thornton Park Structures and Facilities

Source: EP

5.2 Description of Proposed Future Development and Permissible Uses

The table below describes the purposes for which land at the Balmain East Foreshore Reserves may be used; the purpose as relates to future development of the land; and the scale and intensity of the development.

The priorities for improvements as set out in the table below have been categorised in accordance with the following:

| Area / Item | Purposes for which land / buildings are permitted to be used | Purpose for which further development of land will be permitted (incl. lease or licence) | Scale and intensity of permitted use or development |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Lookes Avenue Reserve | | | |
| Grassed slopes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Access to units - Companion animal dog exercise | Sitting terraces General park furniture and landscape improvements including new paths. | Refer masterplan |
| Level Grassed foreshore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Access to units | Foreshore path General park furniture | Refer masterplan |
| Thornton Park | | | |
| Lower promenade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Toddlers swings | Seating Shade planting | Refer masterplan |
| Upper Terrace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Toddlers play - Gardens | Seating | Refer masterplan |
| Top Terrace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gardens | | |
| Illoura Reserve | | | |
| North foreshore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Through foreshore access - Fishing (in accordance with site protocols) | General landscape upgrade | Refer masterplan |
| North slopes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Through access to parking area / Weston Street - Playspace | Upgrade of path Upgrade of play space | Refer masterplan |
| South Foreshore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Through foreshore access - Fishing (in accordance with site protocols) | General landscape upgrade | Refer masterplan |
| Lower grassed area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Picnics - Ball games - Companion animal dog exercise | | Refer masterplan |
| Viewing tower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sitting, viewing, and access to lower grassed area & foreshore - Possible play facilities or relocated basketball | General upgrading works / maintenance | Refer masterplan |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES



Figure 12: Permitted Uses

Source: EP

| Area / Item | Purposes for which land / buildings are permitted to be used | Purpose for which further development of land will be permitted (incl. lease or licence) | Scale and intensity of permitted use or development |
|---|--|--|---|
| Upper path link | - Through access | General path upgrading Barrier works Planting works | Refer masterplan |
| Basketball court | - Draft plan considered options for alternative use - resolved to maintain basketball use in this existing location | Maintenance of walls and landscape Maintenance of basketball infrastructure | Refer masterplan |
| North carpark Central carpark South carpark | - Carparking - Access to reserve | Improved layout Improved edging and drainage Planting | Refer masterplan |
| Peacock Point | | | |
| Upper viewing areas | - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Access to Lower Grassed area - Illoura Reserve - Access to Lower Grassed area - Peacock Point | Wall and path maintenance Interpretation Planting | Refer masterplan |
| Lower grassed area | - Sitting, viewing, and rest - Fishing (in accordance with site protocols) | Possible access connection to Illoura Reserve as passive / low key link across foreshore | Refer masterplan |
| Slipway area | - Interpretation - Swimming / Dogs access | Wall maintenance Interpretation | Refer masterplan |

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

5.3 Site accessibility and operation

Public Transport - Ferries and buses

As identified in the Balmain East Foreshore Masterplan 2005 water based transport, the generator for the urbanisation of Balmain continues to be significant in connecting East Balmain to Circular Quay and Darling Harbour. Bus services to the Darling Street Wharf realise a public transport circuit across water and land, connecting uptown Balmain to the City.

Ferry's and bus's usually operate from 7am to 10pm providing a 15 minute peak service frequency. Sydney Ferries promotes water based access to foreshore parks in their publication Go Walkabout which identifies numerous harbour side walks, connecting harbour side parks and ferry wharfs. This includes the Balmain History Trail connecting Darling Street and Yurulbin Point Wharfs

Balmain East is a point of origin for the 442 bus service via Anzac Bridge to Sydney CBD (QVB) which some services going onto the Art Gallery of NSW

Parking

the Balmain East Foreshore Masterplan 2005 identified that the harbour end of Darling Street acts as a major transport interchange, providing bus and ferry transport connections to the greater Balmain peninsula and the CBD. The current 3 point turn requires that pick up and drop off for bus passengers is required at two separate locations. Parking on the Balmain peninsula is limited due to the historic building and street configurations. The result is that a large proportion of local residents are reliant on scarce on-street parking. Parking on Darling Street is restricted to 2 hours for nonresidents.

Parking in Illoura Reserve occurs in the north western and south western edges of the reserve, accommodating 10-12 cars, and 20 – 25 car spaces respectively. Parking in the north western edge of Illoura Reserve is restricted to 2 hour. Parking is limited to the western edge of Weston Street.

Pedestrian

As identified in the Balmain East Foreshore Masterplan 2005 the study area has a range of pedestrian access routes, however there are zones of limited access and connectivity. Of particular note is the fact that there is no continuous foreshore access path.

Three tiers of pedestrian access are evident in Illoura Reserve; along the foreshore, along the cliff face, and at street level. Access along the foreshore to the ferry wharf was provided by Council in 2007, and access to Darling St is provided on a narrow footpath along Weston Street.

The ferry wharf is only accessed via the pedestrian footpath on the northern side of Darling Street whilst Thornton Park has three tiers of access, the private residence located on the foreshore prevents further connection.

Although access from Thornton Park is viable, a private garage in James Lane currently prevents connection. Lookes Avenue and the reserve are connected to Thornton Park and Darling Street, via a narrow pedestrian lane. Lookes Avenue has no pedestrian paths, and the steep grades create an almost inaccessible park for surrounding residents.

Bicycle

Access to Balmain East by cycle is limited to the road corridor of Darling Street. There are no identified cycle lanes to Darling Street although this is a link commonly used by cyclists. Levels changes preclude cycle access continuing along the foreshore beyond Peacock Point and Lookes Avenue Reserve.

Access analysis from the Balmain East Foreshore Masterplan 2005 follows

1. Darling Street

The existing three point turn requires two separate locations for bus passengers



1. Three-point turning area, Darling St

2. Illoura Reserve North

Existing parking in the public park alienates public space and impacts on the experience for users



2. Existing parking in Illoura Reserve north

3 & 4. Illoura Reserve South and Edward Street

The parkland edge is currently appropriated for public parking. This is overscaled, and could be reconfigured to accommodate capacity within a reduced area.



3. Existing parking in Illoura Reserve south



4. Existing parking under trees in Illoura Reserve south



Figure 13: Vehicular access and parking

Source: East Balmain Foreshores Masterplan 2005

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Lookes Reserve

From Thornton Park, access to Lookes Reserve is via a pedestrian laneway between two private properties which connects to a footpath on Lookes Avenue. There is no formalised path system within the park presently.

Thornton Park

Main access is from Darling Street. There are three formalised paths running north-south through the park. The park is accessible from Darling Street Wharf via a ramp, currently located behind the toilet blocks and steps. The central north-south path connects with a pedestrian laneway to Lookes Avenue and the reserve.

Illoura Reserve

Upper and lower pathway system. Lower pathway is associated with the water's edge. Upper pathway is on the escarpment edge and has various outlook areas which afford views across the reserve and harbour beyond. The waterfront path system is discontinuous, in poor condition and requires upgrading..

Peacock Point

Access to Peacock point is via a highly visible and somewhat intrusive stairway which connects to Edwards Street. The pathway system within the park is a closed network and is located along the water's edge. There is no equitable access into the reserve.

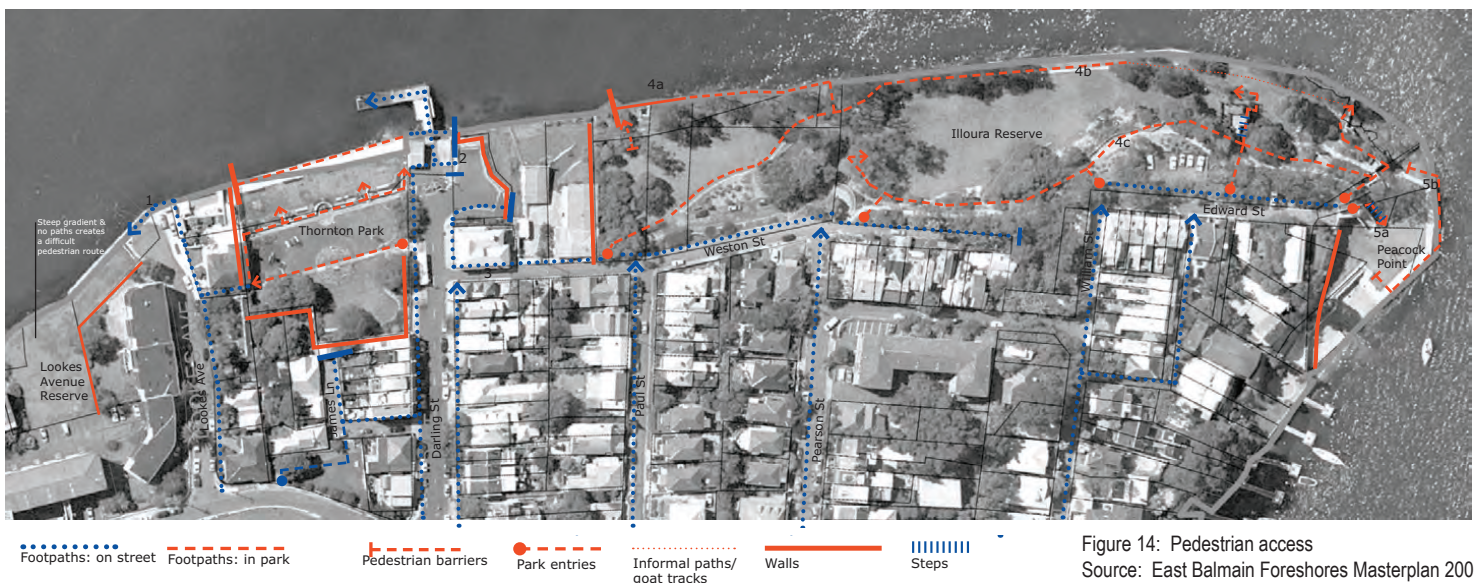


Figure 14: Pedestrian access
Source: East Balmain Foreshores Masterplan 2005

- Legend**
- Existing walls
 - Bench seat
 - Light post
 - Pedestrian path



Figure 15: Existing path surfaces
Source: EP

5.4 Landscape Character and views

Generally

As identified in the Balmain East Foreshore Masterplan 2005 The East Balmain foreshore has strong visual relationships to several harbour edge parks. These parks have significant numbers of well established trees, often characteristic of Sydney sandstone landscapes. These mature plantings contribute to the greening of the harbour.

Views from the East Balmain foreshore parks are implicitly reciprocal, the parks being equally viewed from these other parklands including Observatory Hill, Blues Point Reserve, and the future Barangaroo Parklands.

Views from the parklands are available from both the foreshore and elevated sections of the park.

Lower parklands / foreshore views

The foreshores of Lookes Avenue Reserve and Thornton Park are completely open and allows a expansive views. Lookes Avenue Reserve is oriented more to the north west (North Sydney) but with excellent views to the Harbour Bridge. Most foreshore views in Illoura Reserve are generally framed by vegetation and change in character depending on proximity to the foreshore. As the viewer approaches from deeper within the lower areas for the park the foreshore edge views open up. Foreshore tree canopy does now vary from the original planting scheme by Bruce Mackenzie with the norther zone adjoining the main grassed area much denser (*casuarina* sp) than originally with the southern foreshores viewing towards Darling Harbour now more open.

Elevated views

The steeply sloping grassed banks in Lookes Avenue Reserve offer good panoramic views to the harbour. The middle terrace in Thornton Park likewise provides expansive views over a wide angle. Regular elevated views are available in Illoura Reserve from the upper pathway and from Weston Street. These are framed by vegetation generally. It is notable that views are available from each of the east west roads that meet Weston Street and the reserve.

View management

Canopy in the area adjoining the elevated western section of the reserves resembles largely the original Mackenzie scheme. Notwithstanding this views management has been a major issue for Council in the past and currently. In developing the schemes for 8-10 Weston Street poposed planting in the upper part of the site was subject to consultation with local residents.

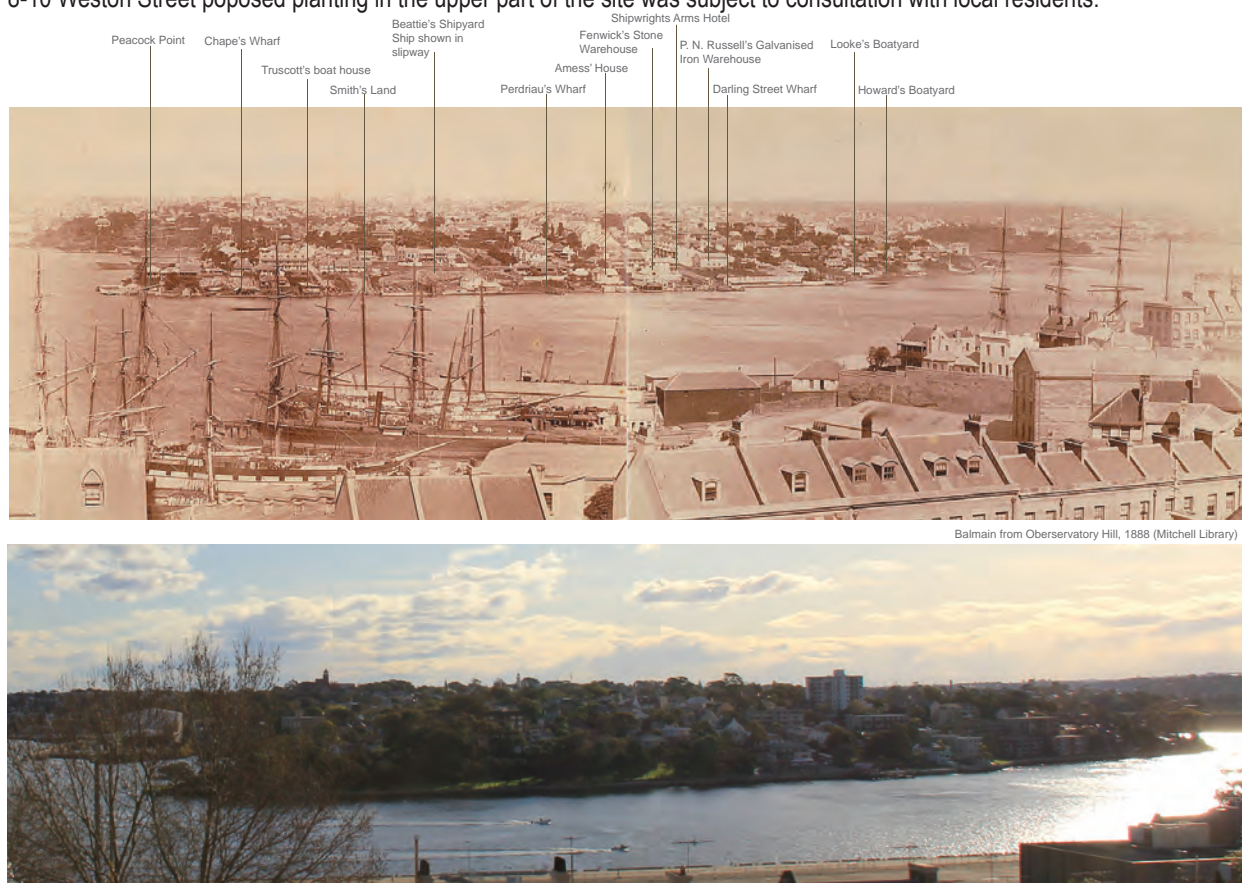


Figure 11: View to Balmain East from Observatory Hill 19 Source: Top: CMP 2005 / Bottom: EP

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES



1



2



3



4



5



6

Figure 16: Foreshore views
Source: EP



3



7



4



4



5



5



5



8



8



8



9



9

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES



1



2



3



4



5



5

Figure 17: Elevated views
Source: EP

5.5 Trees and vegetation

The 2005 Balmain East Masterplan undertook an appraisal of existing vegetation. The key observations noted are repeated following and supplemented where necessary by current conditions.

Vegetation condition- Lookes Avenue Reserve

There is presently no planting in Lookes Avenue Reserve. There is some exotic planting to the boundaries of the adjoining residential developments which act to buffer them from the reserve. Turf areas are in poor condition to rear of sea wall, where high water mark is washing salt water over the sea wall and killing the turf. There are also issues with erosion on the turf slope.

Vegetation condition- Thornton Park

Thornton Park is the most highly maintained of all the parks. Local residents take great pride in tending to this park. All plantings are healthy and well established. While formal in structure and layout, the park is a mix of both exotic and native plant species. Many of the native plantings are in keeping with those found in Illoura Reserve and Peacock Point. The canopy trees are predominantly established Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*). There have also been more recent planting of Spotted gums (*Eucalyptus maculata*) and some palms. There has also been some more recent under storey planting on the lowest terrace, to the base of the wall. Massed planting beds are generally concentrated to the edges of the park and act as a green buffer to both Darling Street and the adjoining houses.

Vegetation condition- Illoura Reserve

The Masterplan noted that there is a mix of new and established planting at Illoura Reserve. The existing condition of Illoura Reserve still reflects the basic structure of canopy trees (*Eucalyptus* species) and *Casuarina glauca* planting along the foreshore set out in Bruce Mackenzie's plans from the early 1970's. The major deviation from Mackenzie's plans has been in the deterioration of the integrity of the under storey and middle tier planting areas. Former planting of *Leptospermum laevigatum* and *Melaleuca armillaris* along the upper pathway (along the escarpment) which created dense thickets to the west have been removed and replaced with a mix of lower native shrubs and grasses. Many former mass planted beds with native planting have been overtaken with weeds due to lack of maintenance or overshadowing created by the dense canopies of Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) and some other exotic tree species that have established on the site.

Many existing native trees in the reserve are reaching their life span, with some species decaying. The reserve's significance is created by the interplay of canopy trees and spaces, therefore removal or replanting requires careful consideration. The silky oaks (*Casuarina glauca*) are in varying health. Some trees may be suffering as they have been out-competed by the *Ficus* spp. on the escarpment (near timber lookout structure). The health of others may be compromised due to poor park management practices i.e. Ring barking, termites. Understorey planting as established in the original design, has been incrementally altered, creating a garden style of planting as opposed to an urban park character.

Detailed under storey planting of native under storey species was designed to respond to the intricate network of walls, escarpments and pathways which hug the western edge of the site. New plantings including *Correa alba*, *Grevillia* spp., *Lomandra* spp., *Banksia* sp, *Melaleuca armillaris*, *Doryanthes excelsa* reflects a shift from simple palette based on plant forms to a more diverse, mixed scale palette. The planting palette for the reserve is predominantly native. There has been some invasion of exotics due to planting in private properties 'jumping the fence' or exotic trees self seeding or being seeded by local or transient fauna. Climbing Figs (*Ficus pumila*) is well established in the crevices and rock walls of the escarpment. Dense shade established by Moreton Bay Figs and other dense canopy trees (usually exotic species) in most instances prevents the establishment of under storey vegetation. Where under storey planting is not present there are often issues with soil erosion from overland flow from adjacent hard stand areas and road catchment or turf has been established changing the character / intent of the original scheme.

Removal of native shrubs has hastened erosion and degradation in some zones although, turf condition is generally good, growth is impaired to base of stands of *Casuarina glauca* due to acidity created by the fallen needles as they decompose.

Vegetation condition- Peacock Point

The majority of vegetation found at Peacock Point has been installed recently and responds to new hard works set out as carried out. Plantings are hence immature in some cases. New planting include three tiers of vegetation and include *Correa alba*, *Viola hederaceae*, *Westringia fruticosa*, *Banksia integrifolia*, *Callistemon* spp. and *Lomandra* sp. Plantings have been installed to screen the large wall to the rear of the site and define the edges to the site rather than creating spaces. Planting has also been installed as a border to new hard works along the waters edge. They are generally healthy and establishing well, except for in areas where planting density is insufficient to stop weed establishment.

The only established planting on the site is the large Moreton Bay Fig tree (*Ficus macrophylla*) on the corner of the site, probably planted when housing occupied the site. Turf is generally in good condition, except in areas where shadow from the existing Fig has impeded growth.

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Figure 18: Existing tree canopy
Source: EP



Part of the reserve has been appropriated by a private property at the end of Edward Street. The current design bears minimal resemblance to Bruce MacKenzie's plans from 1982 (Peacock Point Southern Extension – BM 1982) .

The 1982 Bruce MacKenzie designs reflect a design very much in keeping with the character of the Illoura Reserve precinct i.e.. mass planting of single native tree species and groupings of *Casuarina glauca* set in gravel to waterfront creating an intimate experience removed from the openness of the central turf expanse. The existing condition reflects a combination of the plan prepared by Leichhardt Council (Jan 2003) and Bruce Mackenzie's design from April 2003 (Illoura Reserve Peacock Point Balmain: Stage 3 Planting Design-preliminary).

In contrast to these plans, the proposed stands of canopy trees (*Angophora* and *Eucalyptus* spp.) are not evident. Bruce Mackenzie's plans also proposed planting of a more significant scale along the waterfront (including *Leptospermum laevigatum* and *Casuarina glauca*) which is not evident.

Vegetation and view management

Vegetation and view management is clearly one of the key issues for the Plan of Management to address. Inevitably there are a range of conflicting public / private values which need to be reconciled and an appropriate compromise reached. The conflicts mentioned lie in the public values of tree canopy and taller understorey:

- recognition of the original planting scheme for Illoura Reserve which formed a series of views and framed views as one moved through the reserve or took in a view from a vantage point;
- recognition of views towards the reserves from other public domain (eg Observatory Hill, Blues Point Reserve, and Barangaroo parklands, and the harbour itself, and the design intent to establish a green backdrop on the post industrial site;
- biodiversity and tree health;
- recognition of desirability of long term views to the harbour from a diverse range of locations through the reserve;

and the primarily private values for local residents:

- access from residences to views to the harbour;
- recognition of potential shadowing impacts of tree canopy on residential amenity.

This plan also stresses that Council should develop a detailed maintenance / restoration plan for the reserve.

Legal background:

It is relevant to look at the legal framework for view and shade management with regards to trees. The Law Reform Commission of NSW in 1998 examined various issues in relation to trees and neighbour relations. This identified that generally there no restrictions on the number of trees that land owners or occupiers may plant or allow to grow on their land. The law provides for control of noxious weeds but apart from this the focus of law had generally been to preserve trees.

Noxious Weeds

Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993 land owners are obligated to provide control of identified noxious weed species on their land.

Tree preservation

Tree Preservation orders are made by Local Government to prohibit harm to or removal of trees covered by the TPO. In Leichhardt all existing trees in the Leichhardt area are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). A tree is defined as a perennial plant generally with a single woody stem or trunk, usually unbranched for some distance above the ground. Exemptions to the TPO 1991 include Trees that are less than 4 metres in height and have a trunk diameter of less than 200 millimetres, when measured at height of 1 metre from the ground and the following species

- *Bambusa* Species (Bamboo)
- *Eriobotrya* Species (Loquat)
- *Ficus Elastica* Species (Rubber plant)
- *Ligustrum* Species (large and small leaf Privet)
- *Musa* Species (Banana plant)
- *Nerium Oleander* (Oleander)
- *Toxicodendron Succedaneum* (Rhus or Wax tree)
- *Morus* Species (Mulberry)
- *Arecastrum romanzoffianum* (Queen or cocos palm)
- *Schefflera* Species (Umbrella tree)
- *Persea* Species (Avocado)
- *Ailanthus* Species (Tree of heaven)
- *Lagunaria Patersonia* (Norfolk Island Hibiscus)
- *Mangifera Indica* (Mango tree)

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Pruning of less than 10% of the canopy or root system up to once every growing season and only of branches less than 100 millimetres in diameter is also exempt.

Nuisance

The common law of nuisance may provide a remedy where a person has been subject to significant interference or such is imminent. Nuisance protects against physical damage in addition to the less tangible “pleasure, comfort and enjoyment” a person normally derives from a piece of land”

Where trees block solar access (blocking of sunlight)

The law of nuisance provides little protection to neighbours who find that trees interfere with their enjoyment of occupancy by blocking out sunlight.

Where trees block views

The law of nuisance does not provide a remedy when trees block a neighbour's view. The common law of nuisance has consistently refused to protect a right to a view. The reasons appear to be that the interference with aesthetics is too subjective and that while obstruction of a view may cause annoyance and / or loss of property value, it will rarely result in the complete loss of enjoyment of land.

The review noted that common law did not as such reflect the evolving importance to society of access to sunlight and views. In its recommendations the report notes that in looking at options to enhance legal management of sunlight and views determining whether loss of access to sunlight or views in a particular situation is very site specific. The report makes the following recommendations:

“Generally, the social and environmental benefit to the community of maintaining the natural environment should outweigh an individual's interest in preserving a view. When a person buys a property with a view, it is reasonable to expect the buyer to take into account and to accept the fact that trees growing naturally in the area may, over time, block the view”

Ultimately for the Balmain East foreshore reserves legislation and the law do not provide a solution to the tree / view management issue.

It is noted that density of canopy varied greatly from south to north with residents at the south end of Weston Street and St Mary Street having a higher density of tree canopy and more enframed / targeted views. Adjoining the 8-10 Weston Street site and to Lookes Ave Reserve there is limited tree canopy currently. This condition reflects the past landuses of these sites, however does not account for public recreational use as is proposed on 8-10 Weston Street and to be promoted on Lookes Avenue Reserve. Furthermore, former planting of *Leptospermum laevigatum* and *Melaleuca armillaris* along the upper pathway (along the escarpment) which created dense thickets to the west have been removed and replaced with a mix of lower native shrubs and grasses. This has served to open views in some areas. Local residents may place greater value on this value that adherence to the original design scheme and any biodiversity benefits arising.

A considered approach to tree management is required including :

- removal of weed tree species
- potential to manage (prune) up to 10% of tree canopy to enable filtered / targeted views
- replacement of senescent trees in accordance with the original scheme

This aims to develop a compromise whereby design, biodiversity, and public view factors are balanced with management of filtered views from elevated parts of the site as a compromise solution.

A site walk around with the original designer Bruce Mackenzie has highlighted priority tree management tasks in Illoura Reserve, whilst to Lookes Avenue Reserve some shade / amenity planting is also proposed. (refer Appendix 4 Site assessment and Design Report.



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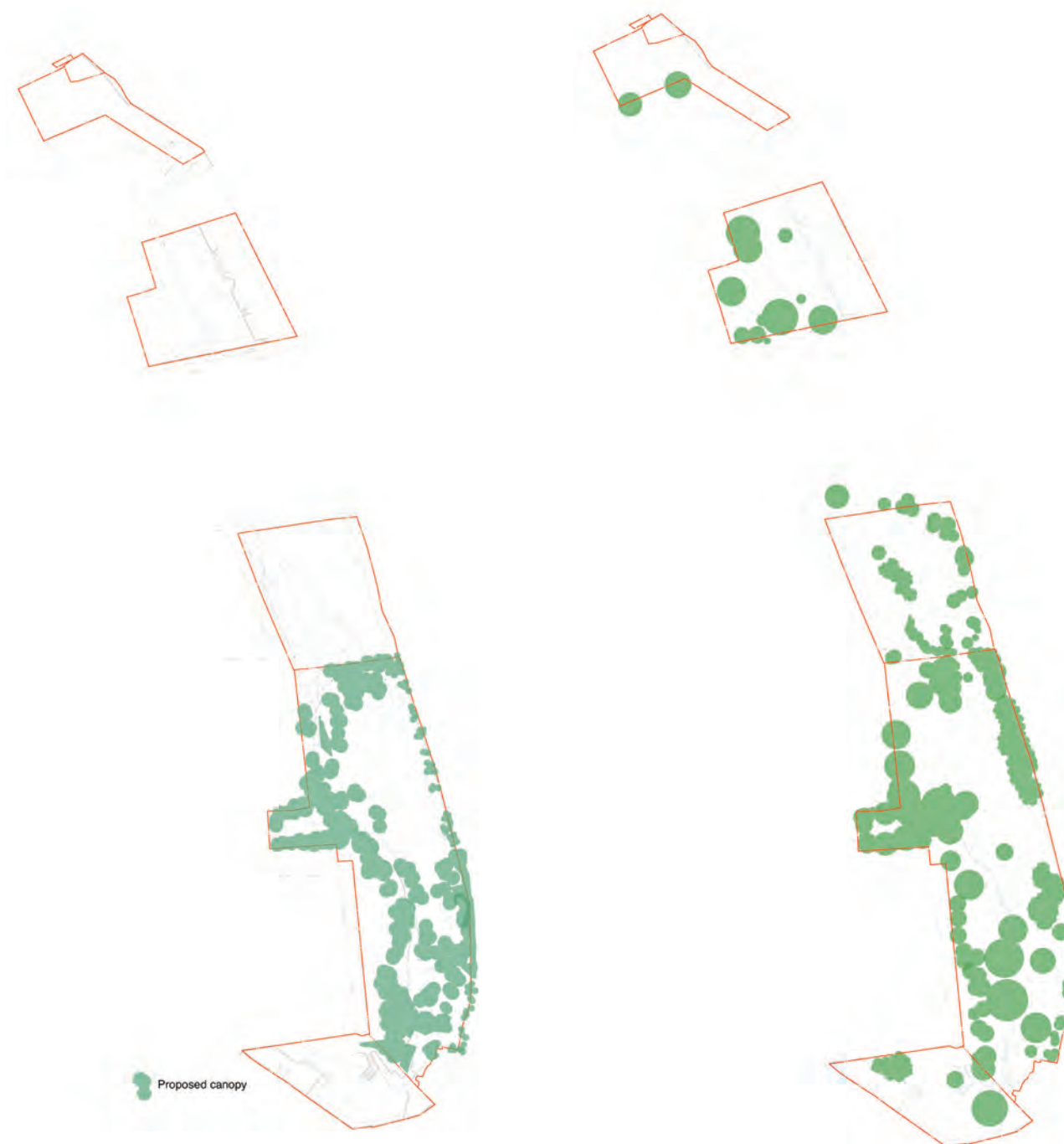
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1970 Tree canopy planting plan

Existing Tree canopy 2012

Figure 19: Existing tree canopy relative to original Mackenzie Scheme
Source: EP
Reefer to Appendix 4 for proposed opportunities for supplementary tree
planting.

5.0 PRESENT USE AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

5.6 Current and Projected Recreational and Open Space Needs

Leichhardt Recreational and Open Space Needs Study 2005

Open space provision

The Leichhardt Recreational and Open Space Needs Study 2005 identified that the Balmain precinct had an open space provision of 1.99ha/1000 people. This was less than the highest provision in the LGA of 2.56ha/100 to Lilyfield, and than adjoining inner west LGA's such as Strathfield 3.8ha/1000, and Canada Bay 3.87ha/1000. This places high importance of the Balmain East foreshores in both a local and district context. The report identified other issues and values relating to the provision and quality of open space including:

- Open space will become the “new backyard” for many people as high density residential development continues across the Leichhardt LGA.
- The waterways and foreshore reserves within the LGA continue to provide opportunities for developing quality and diverse recreation areas, and to establish linear linkages throughout the LGA.
- The provision and distribution of outdoor recreational areas/facilities for young people (14 – 24 years) is relatively poor, and appears largely confined to 5 informal basketball courts (half and full courts) and 1 skate facility.
- Some localities have limited open space but high recreation demands, thereby requiring these open space areas to provide flexibility and multi-use options to meet the community's needs, such as Trevor Street Reserve (Lilyfield), Marr Reserve (Leichhardt), and Ann Cashman Reserve (Balmain).
- Many parks and reserves are accessible by public transport, although park users tend to access parks by private vehicles. Some open space areas have inadequate provision for car parking when sporting events are conducted, such as Birchgrove Park, King George Park (Balmain) and Lambert Park (Leichhardt).
- Physical barriers, such as main roads, create limitations for some residents to access parks. It is important that Council work in partnership with the State Government, land developers, schools, and other open space managers to provide better access opportunities to and within open space.

Key recommendations with regards to open space provision included:

1. Liaise with adjoining Councils and other landowners both within and outside the LGA, to better cater for the open space needs in the Leichhardt LGA.
2. Give high priority to the acquisition of land where the development and completion of linear links might result.
3. Provide facilities for both passive and active recreation when assessing future development plans for major sites.
4. Advocate strongly for the development of linear links and corridors when investigating and considering development plans for major sites.
5. Ensure recreation facilities are distributed appropriately and with consideration to equity across the Leichhardt LGA.
6. Optimise the recreational use of existing open space resources through multi-using and design flexibility.
7. Provide recreational facilities that reflect the high value that the community places on open space for family and social activities.

Playgrounds

The scope of the study did not allow a comprehensive analysis of the provision and distribution of the 46 playgrounds located within the Leichhardt LGA, however, field surveys indicated that:

- There appears to be a relatively even distribution of playgrounds throughout the LGA.
- There is little diversity in the range of play equipment, that is, most offer similar experiences and cater for a limited age group, such as pre-primary (2 – 4 years) and young primary aged children (4 - 7 years).
- Play opportunities are not well provided for older primary (7 – 12 years) and teenagers.
- There does not appear to be a hierarchy of playgrounds that provides for the local, district and regional needs of the community.
- General quality and maintenance of playgrounds appears satisfactory.

Specific strategies

The plan identifies the following strategies of specific relevance to the Balmain East Foreshores

- 6f) Enhance interpretation of trails and park features through signage and education to foster appreciation of specific open space areas.
- 6g) Provide interpretive signage at appropriate locations in selected reserves to provide simple information in relation to their environmental and heritage values (such as foreshore areas, Whites Creek Valley Reserve, Leichhardt Park, Birchgrove Park and Illoura Reserve).

5.7 Environmental Management

Goals

Council's State of the Environment Report 2009-10 identifies the following objectives:

Land Management:

- To promote best practice environmental design and strategic planning
- To manage and maintain open space so that it meets recreational needs and biodiversity and protects environmental amenity
- To increase the tree canopy to improve amenity and extend wildlife corridors
- To manage and prevent land contamination

Air:

- To improve air quality in Leichhardt LGA
- To reduce community greenhouse gas emissions

Transport:

- To promote alternative modes of transport in order to reduce the use of fossil fuels, reduce air pollution, create fewer greenhouse gas emissions and alleviate traffic congestion.

Water:

- To reduce dependence on mains water
- To avoid water pollution
- To minimise the risk of flooding

Biodiversity

- To protect, restore and enhance our natural environment and improve opportunities for native biodiversity within our urban context.

Consumption

- To reduce the amount of waste per resident sent to landfill.
- To increase the community's commitment to reuse and resource recovery.
- To meet the 66% diversion rate by 2014 (as required by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water).

Noise

- To minimise noise pollution from all sources in order to protect and improve the health and amenity of the community within the Leichhardt local government area.

Heritage

- To protect, conserve and enhance the physical, social and cultural heritage of Leichhardt.

Community well being

- Develop a cohesive, connected and diverse and healthy community, and identifying and addressing emerging issues that impact on the local area.
- Foster a culturally active, creative and innovative community through both shared experiences and individual endeavours impacting on businesses, culture and community life.
- Express and celebrate the community's connection to the natural and cultural features in the landscape and engagement with the community's identity.

Accessibility

- Provide a range of services that meet the identified needs of the local community.
- Provide accessible community buildings and open space that allow the community to meet and for services/activities to be conducted.
- Provide accessible, up-to-date information that will inform and engage the community.

Corporate Sustainability

- To reduce corporate water use, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste to landfill and ensure its purchases are sustainable.
- To walk the talk and demonstrate to the community Council's commitment to environmental sustainability.

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