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Callan Point. Image by TYRRELLSTUDIO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE PLAN

Callan Park is a 61-hectare site on the southern edge of Iron Cove, a tributary of the Parramatta River. It is a historically significant site with potential to become an outstanding parkland destination in the heart of Sydney's Inner West. This Landscape Structure Plan (LSP) addresses the central and waterfront sections of the site and explores how the former mental hospital could become an iconic urban parkland for Sydney.

Callan Park offers great potential for a successful parkland, along with considerable challenges. Assets include buildings and gardens of exceptional heritage significance, open green lawns and mature trees in a prime waterfront location. Challenges include disused hospital infrastructure (selected buildings, service roads and carparks) that are poorly sited, limiting future uses or blocking significant views.

The vision is for a unified and welcoming parkland that protects its valuable heritage. The LSP proposes strategies to make Callan Park safe and accessible with a network of pathways and more open space along the waterfront. The LSP also offers ideas to protect and enhance eleven diverse character areas within Callan Park. Each character area contains specific natural and built features that require careful consideration to maintain its identity.

Callan Park contains over 130 buildings and structures. Each individual building is assessed for future use through retention and restoration, as well as the benefit gained by removing intrusive or low heritage value buildings. The LSP recommends retaining all buildings that are identified as medium, high or exceptional heritage value. Where buildings have been classified as intrusive, or where their removal may restore significant views, access or landscape potential, the LSP recommends investigation for removal. A total of 24 buildings and 10 ancillary structures (garages, toilet blocks and utility structures) are recommended to be investigated for removal.

BACKGROUND

With a long history of therapeutic health services, Callan Park continues to service the community in a variety of ways through the provision of government and NGO health services, passive recreation, and sports and community facilities. The landscape design of Callan Park ranges from the early houses of the estates, to the earth platform and architecture of the Kirkbride complex and Convalescent Cottages, the Kirkbride gardens and community-designed Broughton Hall gardens to bush regeneration sites, sporting facilities and the popular Bay Run along the waterfront at Iron Cove.

An information review undertaken prior to the development of the LSP synthesises the significant amount of publicly available information associated with Callan Park. The review synthesis document is an objective information resource to inform the ongoing management of Callan Park and considers in fine detail, the structure, history and values of Callan Park. The LSP responds to priorities expressed by the community, detailed site analysis, and the Premier's Priorities to increase Sydney's access to quality green open space.

The Landscape Structure Plan is grounded in a detailed understanding of Callan Park's landscape and character areas and focusses on the central parks of the parklands. While the LSP considers Callan Park holistically, its recommendations do not affect areas of the park that are currently tenanted for health, community or education uses: the Kirkbride complex, Broughton Hall NGO precinct, University of Tasmania, Ambulance NSW, and other Health managed precincts.

Detailed consideration of the character of Callan Park ensures the LSP provides a balance between creating a holistic vision while retaining the subtlety and diversity that exists across Callan Park.

METHODOLOGY

The early chapters in this report summarise previous studies and plans for Callan Park, define the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002, and provide a high-level summary of the site's layered natural, Aboriginal and built history and heritage. Analysis of the open space assessment, built form heritage and diverse landscape elements is presented. Site qualities and issues, and community consultation and engagement on the open space parkland approach is summarised.

The central chapters detail the key strategic moves and identify the defining features of the character areas of Callan Park. Eleven character areas are explored, their intrusive and contributing elements informing a concept plan for each area.

The final chapter suggests an approach to staging and prioritising projects to transition Callan Park from its current condition into an open space parkland.



An aerial photograph showing a coastal urban area. On the left, a large body of water is filled with numerous small white boats. A bridge spans across the water in the upper left. The central part of the image shows a park area with green lawns, trees, and several buildings. To the right and bottom, there is a dense residential neighborhood with many houses and streets. The overall scene is a mix of natural greenery and urban development.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A strategic framework to protect the unique heritage of Callan Park and increase Sydney's access to quality green open space.

PURPOSE OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN

The Landscape Structure Plan (LSP) has been prepared in response to priorities expressed by the community, through detailed site analysis, and having regard to the Premier's Priorities to increase Sydney's access to quality green open space.

COMMUNITY'S PRIORITIES:

Outcomes of community consultations about Callan Park held in 2007, 2011, and 2018 were analysed and the following common priorities emerged as common themes:

- Sharing our diverse spaces – The use of the site for a variety of purposes including sports fields, quiet spaces, places for active and passive recreation, areas for dog walking, community and health uses in the NGO precinct should continue. Effort should be made to resolve any conflict between activities so access is safe and equitable.
- Ensuring safe access and movement - Callan Park should be safe for all people by day and night and support easy pedestrian and cycle movement throughout the park.
- Preserving our history and heritage – Maintain and conserve the significant landscape, social and cultural heritage of the site, from the shell middens and rock shelters used by First Nations People, to the historic sandstone buildings and therapeutic landscape gardens of the former hospital.

PREMIER'S PRIORITIES:

- Greener public spaces - Callan Park can become a large urban parkland comparable to other iconic parks across Sydney, such as Parramatta Park, Olympic park, Sydney Park, Centennial Park or the Royal Botanic Gardens.
- The Sydney Green Grid - Callan Park plays an important role in the Sydney Green Grid, sitting at the intersection of a number of priority Green Grid corridors, with significant urban tree canopy, patches of rare remnant bushland and bushcare sites as well as a wide diversity of tree species.

PROTECTING HERITAGE BUILDINGS IN CALLAN PARK

The LSP recommends retaining all buildings of moderate, high or exceptional heritage value to provide opportunities to activate the unique character areas and open spaces of Callan Park.

The LSP proposes a series of moves to open up sight lines to significant vistas within the park, and to increase the visual connection to the waterfront. In some instances this involves the removal, or part removal, of around twenty-four unsympathetic buildings and ten ancillary structures throughout the park. At this stage, the potential to adaptively reuse these buildings has not been confirmed through detailed investigation. Further assessment of the activation outcomes, economic benefit and functional adaptive reuse potential of these buildings will be undertaken as a next step in the detailed design work for Callan Park.



INTRODUCTION

HERITAGE APPROACH AND FOCUS AREAS

HERITAGE APPROACH

Callan Park is a site of exceptional heritage significance. The architectural and aesthetic qualities of its buildings and landscapes are evocative legacies of a complex history.

Conservation management plans prepared by Tanner & Associates (2002, 2011) underpin this document, including the following priorities:

- Conserve and maintain the exceptional built and landscape quality of the site
- Conserve and restore the landscape setting and public presentation of Callan Park, including the open space and sloping grounds leading to Iron Cove, historic landscape gardens, remnant native plants, rock carvings and Aboriginal sites on the foreshore
- Investigate careful adaptive reuse and sensitive new development of significant buildings
- Investigate removal of intrusive elements
- Selection of appropriate tenants, and
- Effective management structures.

The LSP explored a range of ways for Callan Park to evolve into a successful urban parkland. Extensive studies of the significant heritage buildings considered their future use through retention and restoration, as well as the benefits gained by removing intrusive or low heritage value buildings.

FOCUS AREAS

The LSP focuses on Callan Point, Lower Central Slope and Upper Central Slope. There are a number of precincts outside the scope of the study area including the NGO Precinct, NSW Health managed land and the headquarters for NSW Ambulance, Broughton Hall and the Kirkbride Complex, although the significance of these areas is recognised.



INTRODUCTION

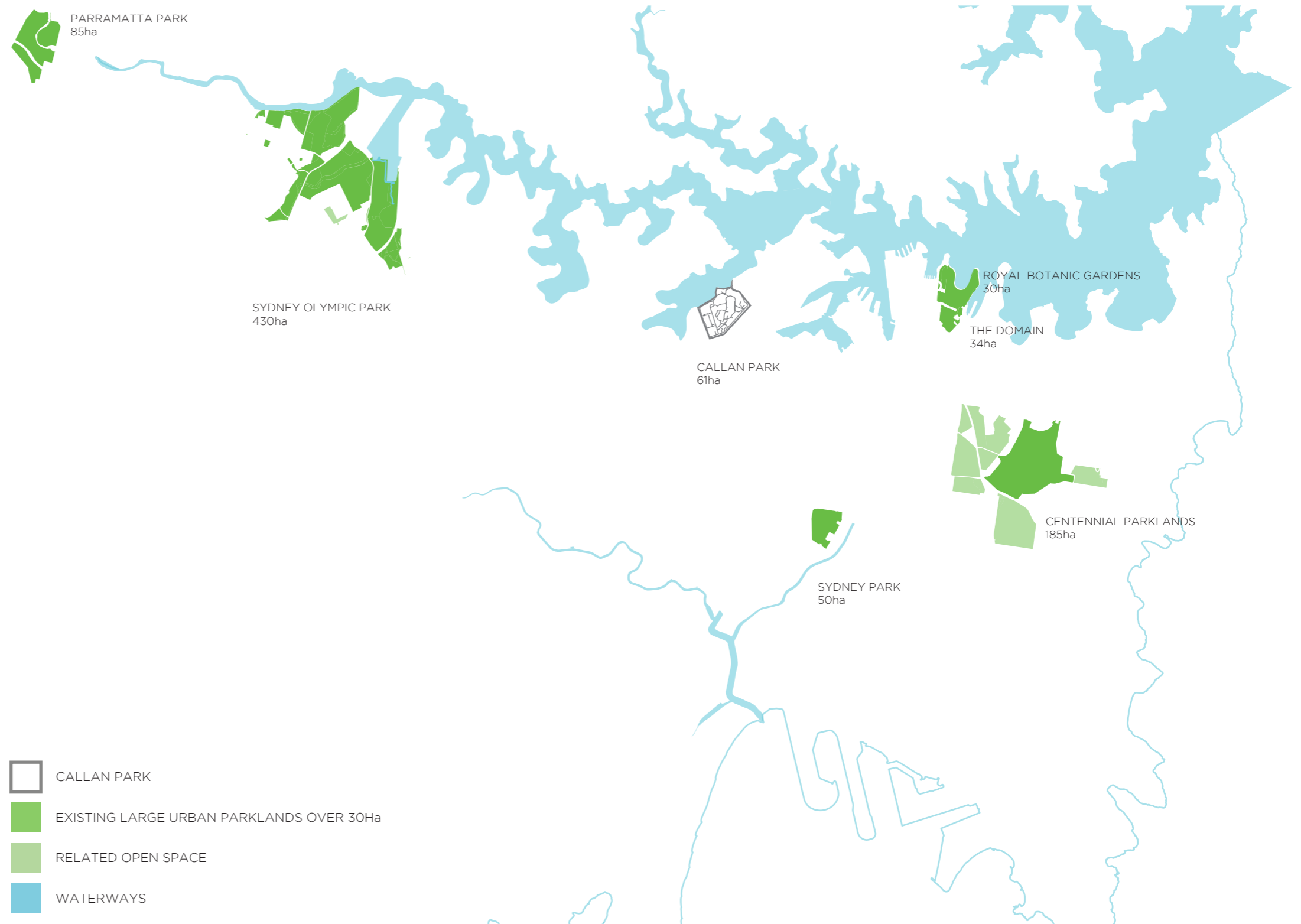
SYDNEY'S LARGE URBAN PARKLANDS

Sydney's large urban parklands are the green lungs of the city, containing water bodies, gardens and remnant bushland. Centennial Park, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney Olympic Park, Sydney Park and Parramatta Park offer a range of facilities and are highly-valued for passive and active recreation.

Callan Park can become a large urban parkland comparable to other iconic parks across Sydney. The park size, heritage buildings, landscape diversity and location on Sydney Harbour make Callan Park a unique opportunity.

The map, right, highlights the distribution of large urban parks between Sydney CBD and Parramatta.

Callan Park can become a large urban parkland comparable to other iconic parks across Sydney.



An aerial photograph of the Callan Park estate in Sydney, Australia. The image shows a large, historic stone building complex with a central clock tower. The estate is surrounded by lush greenery and overlooks a large body of water, likely the Sydney Harbour. In the background, the city of Sydney is visible under a hazy sky. The word "BACKGROUND" is overlaid in white text on the left side of the image.

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING

DEFINITIONS OF THE CALLAN PARK (SPECIAL PROVISIONS) ACT 2002

The 'Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002' was instated in 2002 and relates to the retention of public ownership and control of the park. The Act protects and preserves the existing open space, historic buildings and landscape, and public access to these characteristics. It is specific in its restriction of future development on the site, and limits commercial leases.

The Act stipulates that any built form that is removed or replaced on the site must be within the original building footprint, therefore not increasing the floor space ratio. Essentially, any change to Callan Park must not adversely affect its parkland and open space qualities. Health, education and community facilities are specified, and commercial enterprise including aged care facilities are forbidden.

The act has been successful in protecting the Callan Park as a large parkland. The key elements of the Act have been summarised on this page. Please see the act in full for more detail.

3 DEFINITIONS

The 'Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 No. 139' is a piece of NSW legislation that governs the area within Sydney known as Callan Park.

Callan Park is defined as: '...the land at Rozelle comprised in Lot 1, Deposited Plan 807747, including all structures that are fixtures on that land.'

Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 No. 139 Sect 3 - Definitions

Development is defined as:
(a) the use of land, and
(b) the subdivision of land, and
(c) the erection of a building, and
(d) the carrying out of a work, and
(e) the demolition of a building or work, and
(f) any other act, matter or thing... that is controlled by an environmental planning instrument, but does not include any development of a class or description prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this definition.

An environmental planning instrument is defined as: ...an environmental planning instrument (including a SEPP or LEP but not including a DCP) made, or taken to have been made, under Part 3 (of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979) and in force.

Temporary structures are defined as: ...including, 'a booth, tent or other temporary enclosure (whether or not part of the booth, tent or enclosure is permanent), and also includes a mobile structure.'

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 No. 203 Sect 3 - Definitions

4 OBJECTS OF THE ACT

The objects of the Act are:
(a) to ensure that the whole of Callan Park remains in public ownership and subject to public control,
(b) to ensure the preservation of the areas of open space at Callan Park that were in existence immediately before the commencement of this Act, and that extend to and include the foreshore of Iron Cove on the Parramatta River,
(c) to allow public access to that open space, including that foreshore, for public recreational purposes of both an active and a passive nature,
(d) to preserve the heritage significance of Callan Park, including its historic buildings, gardens and other landscape features,
(e) to impose appropriate controls on the future development of Callan Park.

Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 No. 139 Sect 4 - Objects of Act

6 LEASES, LICENCES AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

Section 6 of the Act prescribes procedures and applications for land use and leases on Callan Park. The following are relevant extracts from the Act:
(2) The term of any such lease or licence (prescribed in (1) not included), including the term of any further lease or licence that may be granted under an option for renewal of the lease or licence, must not exceed 10 years.
(3) However, subsection (2) does not prevent leases or licences being granted for terms of, or successive terms totalling, more than 10 years...
(4) The care, control and management of Callan Park, of any building at Callan Park or of any part of either of them may be contracted out with the consent of the Minister...
(5) A lease or licence referred to in subsection (1), and a contract to which subsection (4) applies, must not allow a use that is not authorised by section 7 (3).

Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 No. 139 Section 6 - Leases, licenses and Management Agreements

7 DEVELOPMENT AT CALLAN PARK RESTRICTED

Section 7 of the Act prescribes that development at Callan Park is to be restricted. The following are relevant extracts from the Act:
(3) Development may be carried out at Callan Park, with development consent, for the purpose of health facilities and educational or community facilities, but development for the purpose of retirement villages is prohibited at Callan Park.
(5) Buildings must not be erected at Callan Park outside the footprints or building envelopes of the buildings that existed immediately before the commencement of this Act. However, this subsection does not prevent the erection of temporary structures.
(6) Consent must not be granted for any development at Callan Park if the development would result in:
(a) less open space at Callan Park than existed immediately before the commencement of this Act, or
(b) an increase in the total floor area of all buildings that existed at Callan Park immediately before the commencement of this Act.
(7) Development at Callan Park must not adversely affect the Broughton Hall Garden, Charles Moore Garden or Kirkbride Garden.

Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 No. 139 Sect 7 - Development at Callan Park Restricted

BACKGROUND

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

CALLAN PARK IS CADIGAL WANGAL COUNTRY

Callan Park is the traditional land of the Cadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. The whole site is considered a cultural landscape that serves to promote and strengthen connections to Aboriginal culture and identity.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has adopted Our Place on Country – Aboriginal Outcome Strategy 2010-23 (June 2020) which acknowledges that Country is at the core of every Aboriginal person’s identity and sense of belonging. The Strategy will help the department deliver the vision:

The aspirations of Aboriginal people of NSW are advanced through the work of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and the Department of Regional New South Wales.

This Landscape Structure Plan commits to ongoing engagement with the Aboriginal community in taking further steps to implement the Plan and develop the project around Caring for Country principles, and in keeping with the principles underpinning OCHRE - the NSW Government’s community-focused plan for Aboriginal affairs, which promotes:

- Government working with Aboriginal communities differently.
- Meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities, beyond consulting.
- Co-design being the basis of engagement, with co-delivery where possible.

This includes engagement with the Metro Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) as a cultural authority for matters within its boundary; and Aboriginal people in the Inner West area.

Caring for the middens and rock shelters along the eastern shore and Callan Point headland, and enriching the setting and landscape at Callan Point and across the park, are key actions for delivery. An archaeological report by Australian Archaeological Survey Consultants in 1995 ‘An Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Sites at Callan Point and

Yurulbin Point’, recommended that access to Callan Point be maintained but restricted to paths, with the potential for board walks and restricted zones.

Cultural aspects of the site, such as the evidence of lifeways, fishing and gathering, indicate how Aboriginal people lived with this land. Engaging with MLALC and Aboriginal people of the area will guide the approach to interpretation that Aboriginal cultural heritage goes beyond the physical - that it is a physical, cultural and spiritual connection to Country which is reflected in the cultural practices on the land, and underpinned by the sentiment of “Country owns us” rather than “we own the country”.

Moving forward, the Landscape Structure Plan will work with the Aboriginal community to deliver Our Place on Country Outcomes, and the principles underpinning OCHRE, by embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge across the site, through ongoing collaboration, and co-design. Aboriginal people and communities determine the Aboriginal culture and stories that are reflected in the built and natural environment across NSW including Callan Park and a collaborative co-design will determine the approach across the site.

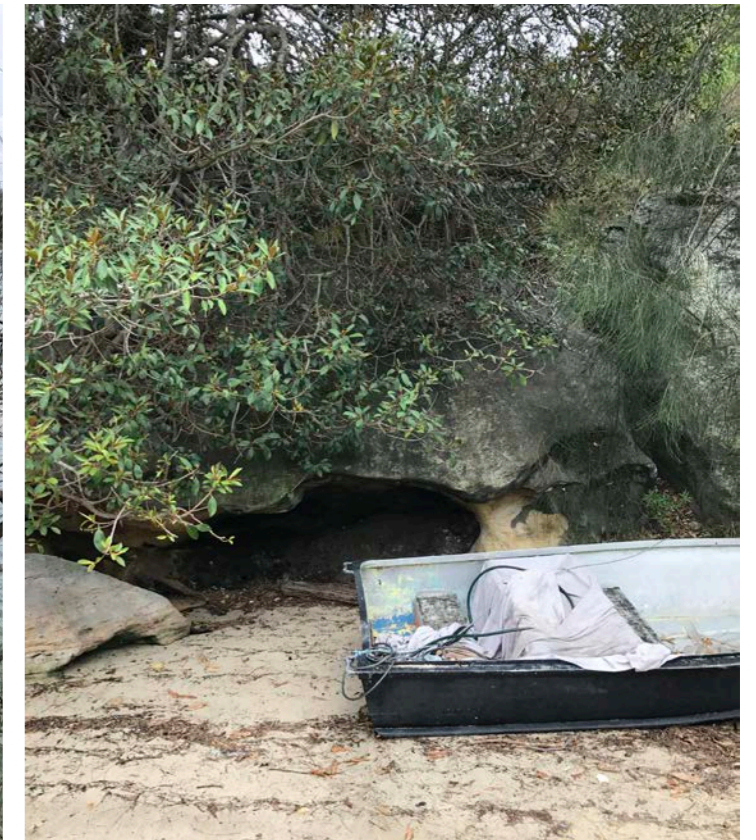
Callan Park presents an opportunity to engage with Aboriginal people, to demonstrate the meaning of Country and Culture to the general public through educational mechanisms such as interpretive signage, public art works, performance and display areas.

INDIGENOUS VEGETATION AT CALLAN POINT

Since photos were taken of Callan Point in 1998, the site has been successfully re-vegetated through efforts of the bushcare program, building and expanding on the remnant vegetation that survived. The images to the right (bottom) are historical images representing the scarcity of Indigenous vegetation in the late 19th century.

Indigenous vegetation can have cultural significance to Aboriginal cultural heritage, for example through cultural landscapes or foods, and this Landscape Structure Plan commits to exploring this theme further in the next stage of planning.

Callan Park is the traditional land of the Cadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation.



Historical Images:
Mitchell Library,
State Library of NSW

BACKGROUND

CALLAN PARK AS A THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPE

THE HISTORY OF CALLAN PARK CHRONICLES LAYERS OF USE THROUGH TIME

Callan Park has an extensive history which continues to inform our understanding of the site today. From the pre-colonial occupation of the site by local Indigenous people, through to the early 19th century farming estates, and the establishment of the largest purpose-built asylum in New South Wales, the history of Callan Park is complex and rich.

The landscape setting and extensive gardens are also historically significant for their role in patient therapy and reflect the development of the site as an integrated aspect of patient treatment.

Over time, the park has developed around a series of character zones that reflect the historical uses of the site.



Former boathouse and wharf.
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales



Former reclaimed farmland in location of current Callan Park Oval. c1903.
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales



Image taken from South of buildings showing the Convalescent Cottages prior to extensions. c1903. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales



Aerial image c1952.
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

Callan Park was designed as a healing, therapeutic landscape.



ENTRANCE GARDENS FROM BALMAIN ROAD

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales



THE CENTRAL SLOPE FROM THE KIRKBRIDE BUILDINGS

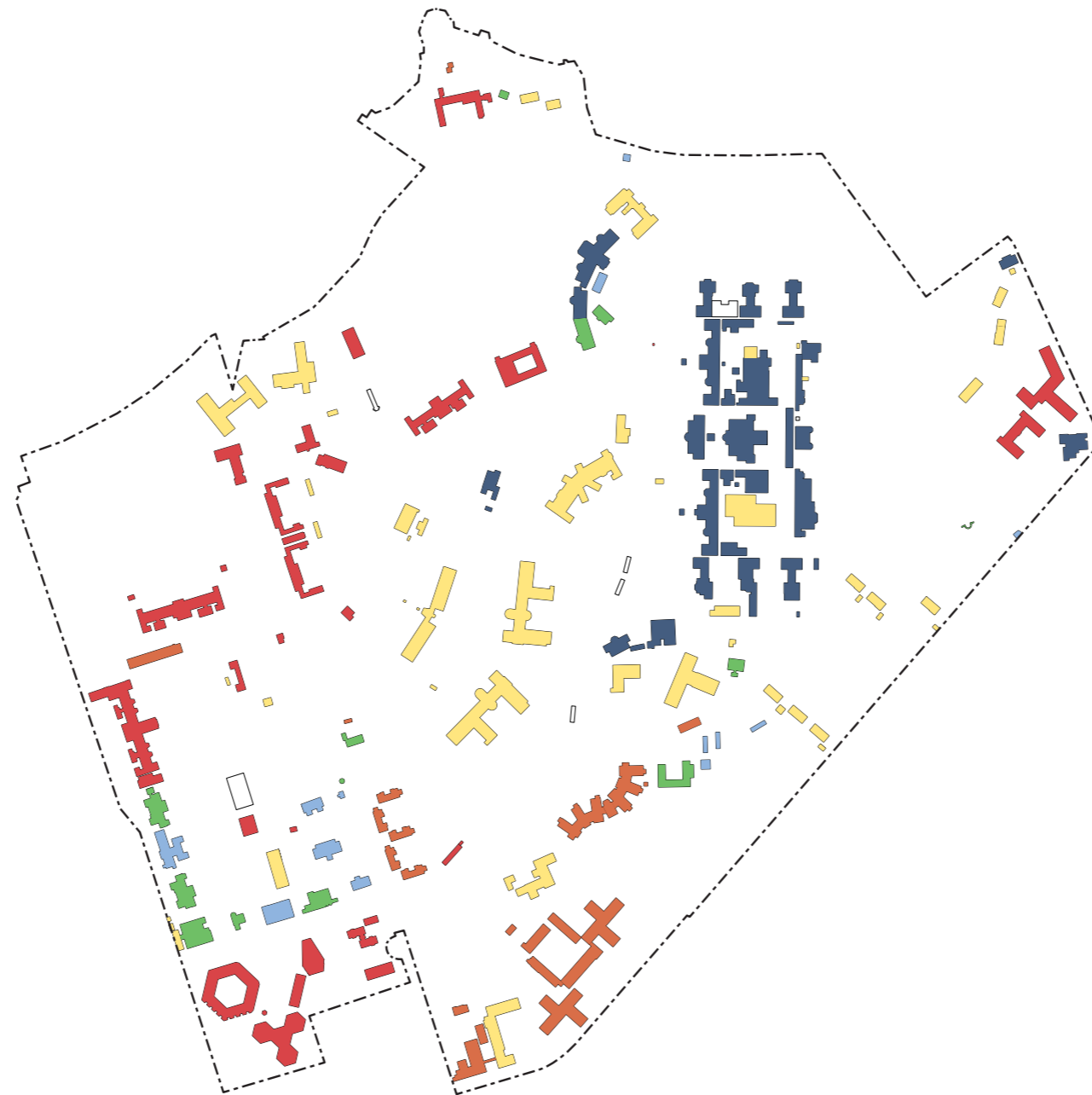
Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

BACKGROUND

HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Callan Park contains over 130 buildings and structures. The endorsed 2002 Conservation Management Plan and the revised 2011 Conservation Management Plan assesses each building and ranks its heritage significance.

The LSP recommends retaining all buildings that display moderate, high or exceptional heritage value. The LSP recommends investigation for removal of buildings only where they have been classified as intrusive, and where their removal may restore significant views, access or landscape potential.



CMP 2011 SIGNIFICANCE

INTRUSIVE	29.4%
NEUTRAL	12.9%
LOW	17.5%
MODERATE	7.2%
HIGH	6.7%
EXCEPTIONAL	20.1%

Significance Source: Proposed 2011 CMP
The heritage significance of the built form across the Callan Park site is classified as Intrusive, Neutral, Low, Moderate, High and Exceptional.

BACKGROUND

SITE ISSUES

Initially a therapeutic landscape, the site requires remediation and better connections to feel like one unified park.

EXISTING SITE ISSUES IMPACTING CALLAN PARK

Callan Park contains a series of intrusive structures and low quality buildings that impact the quality and character of the landscape.

This includes:

1. Extensive roads and vehicle access.
2. Low quality and intrusive buildings that block views and fracture the site into a series of small spaces.
3. The unstructured sprawl of roads and buildings across the landscape has led to a lack of clear structure throughout the site for people. While the park is popular and used informally, it lacks a structure and network that responds to the landscape and connects high quality moments that would unite Callan Park and give it a cohesive identity.



1. DOMINANCE OF EXISTING ROADS IMPACTING PARK USE

Many roads and car parks throughout Callan Park are unnecessary and of low use. They dominate important parts of the site where pedestrian access and safety should be prioritised. They also clutter what could be valuable open space throughout the central slopes.

2. EXISTING LOW QUALITY BUILDINGS FRACTURE THE LANDSCAPE

Scattered low quality buildings fracture the site and reduce the overall quality of the site preventing it from being able to function as a parkland. The waterfront and central slopes are significantly impacted by low quality buildings.

3. NO CLEAR SYSTEM THAT UNITES THE PARK

Callan Park lacks a cohesive pedestrian network that responds to the landscape and embraces the high quality character areas of the site. The current network of unnecessary roads and low quality buildings lead to poor wayfinding across the park.