



**Draft Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan
AILA NSW Response to Consultation
14th September, 2020**

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan (LSP). The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak national body for Landscape Architecture. AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities and greater environmental stewardship.

In operation since 1966, AILA represents over 3,500 landscape architects nationally and over 1000 in NSW in Sydney and the regions, and promotes excellence in planning, design and management for life outdoors. Committed to designing and creating better spaces in Australia, landscape architects have the skills and expertise to improve the nation's liveability through a unique approach to planning issues via innovative integrated solutions. In doing so, landscape architects contribute towards better environmental, social and economic outcomes for all Australians.

Callan Park is a site of high landscape significance within Sydney. We welcome the development of a LSP to direct the future of the site, placing landscape at the forefront of this prominent and valuable place. With that in mind, we have the following comments on the draft document:

1. The draft LSP places a strong emphasis on unlocking the latent opportunities of the site to form an iconic urban park for Sydney which, while being a worthwhile intention, does not adequately capture the exceptional significance of the Callan Park Site.
2. In 2018 the AILA NSW Landscape Heritage Report described in some depth the heritage significance of Sydney Harbour overall and specifically Institutional landscapes including Callan Park.
3. The LSP, while providing some aspirational guidance for the site, does not appear to build this guidance on the fundamental structural base of the landscape itself or on the cultural landscape continuum which is both evidenced on site and within the extensive documents contained in the conservation management plan of 2011. Given its fundamental importance to this place, we feel that the valuable work contained in the 2011 CMP has not been adequately integrated into the LSP. This, along with a comprehensive understanding of the natural landscape and landform of the site, should fundamentally underpin this LMP.



4. AILA NSW would like to raise the following issues:

4.1 Overall Structure of the Site

The original, underlying landform and landscape structure of the site is strong, and should be fundamental in the site planning. The LSP does not appear to recognise this, and the landscape character areas lack the simple coherence and clarity of the original landform and structure. Further, the initiatives suggested in the LSP serve to fragment that strong original character, rendering its layered history more difficult to intuitively understand.

The original structure of the land is a **promontory** with **shoreline** defined by steeper banks and rock outcrops and flanked by two (2) **creeklines** (west and east) and associated mudflats now reclaimed.

Recommendations:

Restructure the landscape character zones to better reflect strong, original structure of the landform.

4.2 No recognition of the landscape natural/cultural continuum

The LSP responds inadequately to the landscape cultural continuum from first nations to present.

The LSP references the significance of heritage buildings in some detail (diagram included p12) including detailed references within each Landscape Character Area. However, the same is not provided for the landscape. The CMP does provide the landscape significant elements of Figure 4-5 in CMP (from DPWS 1991) in the appendix, however none of these elements are referenced in the LSP despite their critical importance.

The landscape of Callan Park is highly significant, and should be considered much more than a park to be 'released for recreational purposes'. Key natural and cultural landscape elements include:

- a. The natural landscape structure of a promontory of Sydney harbour, with the corresponding significance to first nations people. The iconic composition of waters edge, creeklines, mudflats, foreshore outcropping sandstone and ridgeline can still be identified in the landscape.
- b. The overlay of colonial grants and pastoral landscape
- c. The therapeutic landscape, with both structured and unstructured spaces

This site is a highly significant example of the evolving institutional attitude to mental health under the influence of Fredrick N Manning who advocated the Moral Therapy philosophy of patient care as promoted by Thomas Kirkbride, including the role of landscape in hospital design and patient care.



Recommendations:

- i. Addition of landscape significant elements to the 'Background' section,
- ii. Review and rethink Landscape Character Areas to better reflect the original structure of the landform and the landscape cultural continuum
- iii. Inclusion of significant landscape elements into each new landscape character zone to enable intuitive interpretation and a clear response to the landscape cultural continuum.
- iv. Ensure building heritage is not prioritised over landscape heritage, which is of equal or greater significance.

4.3 Circulation

The lack of appropriate response to the original landform and the cultural continuum combine to produce a proposed Pedestrian, Cycle and Vehicle Circulation proposal that should be reviewed through the lens of the previous two points

Site circulation, with a hierarchy of entry, modal separation and safety for all users must fundamentally respond to the original landform and the cultural continuum.

Recommendations:

- i. Reassess the approach to circulation responding to the landscape cultural continuum.
- ii. Provide a clear hierarchy of entry and circulation that reflects the history and staged development of the site over time, and allows intuitive wayfinding and interpretation.
- iii. Ensure pedestrian priority is facilitated at all times.

4.4 Rationalisation of services

The LSP must address the rationalisation of service infrastructure, and provide a strategy for future servicing & sustainability, again working to safeguard the response to the original landform and the landscape cultural continuum.

CONCLUSION

AILA supports the formation of a landscape structure plan for Callan Park, noting its significance as a promontory within Sydney Harbour, and as a place with a diverse, layered and important cultural and natural history. In addition, it is an important open space resource for Sydney. The draft LSP however does not adequately integrate or respond to the inherent landscape of the site captured in the previous conservation management plan and the AILA NSW Landscape Heritage Report, and misses an opportunity to create a valuable asset grounded in history and place.

We would welcome the opportunity to consult further with the team should it be of assistance.



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

Sincerely,

Lee Andrews

AILA NSW President

Submission Team

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