

Woolwich Dock and Parklands

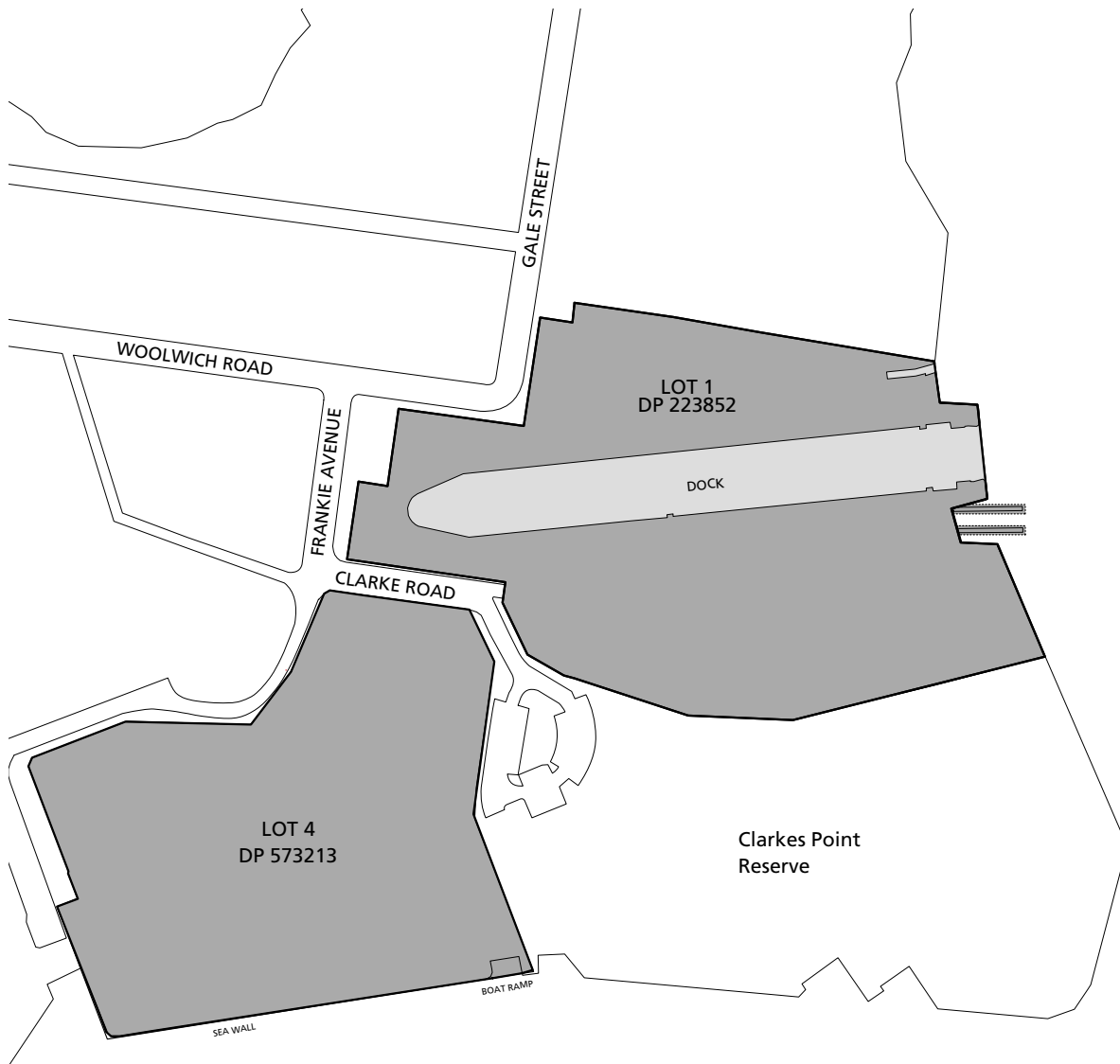
Moocooboola
(Woolwich / Hunters Hill peninsula)





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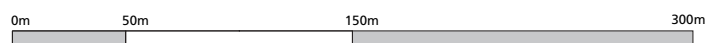


Fig. 4.1 Plan Area

Woolwich Dock and Parklands



-  Boundary of Trust Land Site
-  Boundary of Harbour Land Site
-  Land within Plan area
-  Water within Plan area



THE PLACE

Refer to Figure 4.1 Plan Area

The Woolwich Dock and Parklands Site is a clear example of some of the patterns that have shaped the harbour: The maritime industrial activity evidenced by the dock, sheds, factories and reclaimed hardstand, sit by the water below the carved cliff face, interspersed with parklands and residential uses.

Its centrepiece is an exceptional dry dock carved into the rock, concealed from view, overlooking the meeting point between the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers – *Moocooboola*.

The retail and commercial centre on the ridge grew to service the needs of both the industrial workforce and the surrounding residential community.

The surviving elements of the original foreshore topography – sandstone outcrops and cliffs, are now set back from the water by an apron of reclaimed land defined by a sandstone retaining wall. The area's form and development pattern have seen dramatic changes since the nineteenth century residential development by the Clarke family. Pioneer settlers came to Hunters Hill in the 1830s, followed by maritime industry (Atlas Engineering and Morts Dock) and later the Army's marine transport operations.

More recently, the site has been used to assemble the 'sea creatures', which formed part of celebrations for 1999/2000 New Years Eve on Sydney Harbour and by the Water Police during the Sydney Olympics.

The subdivision and subsequent sale of the Morts Dock site has led to the alienation of its slipways (located in Clarkes Point Reserve) from the dock itself.

Remaining today is the magnificent dry dock and the sawtooth roofed building that is a rare reminder of the scale of industrial buildings on the Parramatta River.

From the army era the site contains metal prefab buildings, concrete pier supports for a travelling crane (removed to Townsville) and an adjoining bunded hardstand area.

The Woolwich lookout area and stone wall are the interface between the dock area and the Woolwich village. An entry and new walking track now provide a link to the sloping plane of the Goat Paddock, an excellent harbour viewing area and a view corridor from the water up to Woolwich Pier Hotel.

The legacy of the industrial past has resulted in areas of contaminated fill material and the need to stabilise the dock's cut rock faces.

Adjacent to the Horse Paddock are a launching ramp at the end of Margaret St, the Woolwich Marina and the Hunters Hill Sailing Club. The sailing club has a launching ramp that is alongside an existing ramp within the Horse Paddock.

How the Place Evolved

Refer to Figure 4.2 Historical Development

Natural Forces

The dock at Woolwich cuts into Hawkesbury sandstone that was laid down by an ancient inland river system. Weathering has resulted in a spur off the Hunter's Hill/Woolwich ridgeline forming Clarkes Point at the meeting of the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers. The cliff lines on the Horse Paddock are part of the original land profile.

There are no apparent creek lines, although water seepage does occur through the layers of rock, particularly on southern facing slopes. The original open forest and woodland vegetation have been cleared.

Cultural History

Pre 1788

The Hunters Hill area was inhabited by the *Wallumedegal* clan and Aboriginal people would have used the Woolwich area for thousands of years prior to European settlement. However, due to industrial use of the dock and parklands no evidence has been found of Aboriginal habitation although evidence exists at Kellys Bush.

The Clarke family, Atlas Engineering and subdivision 1835 – 1898

The original grantees in the area were John Clarke senior and John Clarke junior, in 1835. They built several houses on the site including 'Viewforth'. The western portion of the grant was subdivided in 1880, creating Alfred and Margaret Streets.

The 10 acre eastern portion remained in the family until 1883 when it was sold to Davy & Co., iron founder and then to Atlas Engineering Company. The site was favoured for its deep water frontage and proximity to shipbuilding works on Cockatoo Island. One of the Clarke's houses was used as an office and new workshops were erected. A floating dock was imported from England. Areas of foreshore land were reclaimed and slipways were created on the southern side (now Clarkes Point Reserve).

In 1895 subdivision of the rest of Clarke's land resulted in 24 residential lots and the formation of Edgecliffe Road, Fernbank, Charlotte and William Avenues, the last three streets now lost within the Horse Paddock site. The 100 feet foreshore reservation was acquired for incorporation into the subdivision.

The Atlas Engineering Company went into liquidation in 1893 but work at the site continued until final closure in June 1898.

Morts Dock 1898 – 1958

The site was purchased in 1898 by Morts Dock and Engineering Company which began work on the new dry dock, reclamation work and sea wall construction. The dock, some 30 metres wide, was cut 175 metres directly into the sandstone point.

On 4 December 1901 the dock was officially opened and used for the repair and fitting-out of large ships.

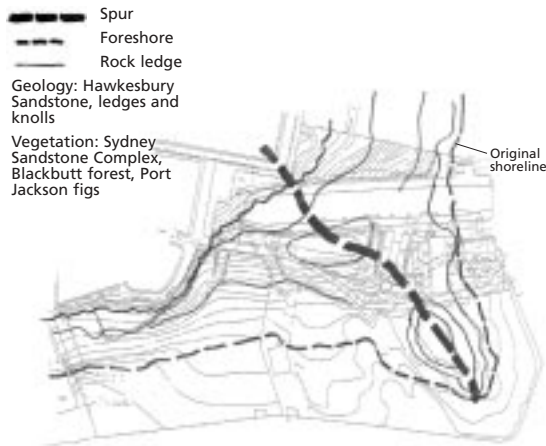
Several extensions were carried out between 1902 and 1918 by W. Solomon & Sons, which had completed the dock after the termination of the original contractor, and the dock was lengthened to 260 metres. To achieve this William Street was acquired and a new road constructed – Franki Avenue, named after the general manager and later managing director of the company.

The scale of the industrial enterprise influenced the character of the surrounding development with the provision of the Woolwich Pier Hotel and workers' housing.

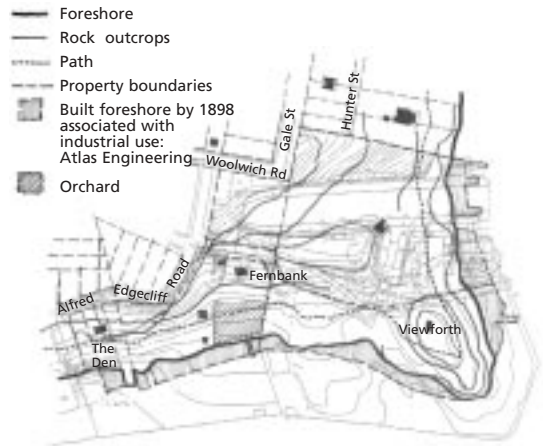
The Invincible Motor Construction Company and the Wallace Power Boat Company both set up near Clarkes Point around 1916–18 on leased land. The latter started reclamation works between Margaret Street and the point but went into receivership in 1923.

Fig. 4.2 *Historical Development*

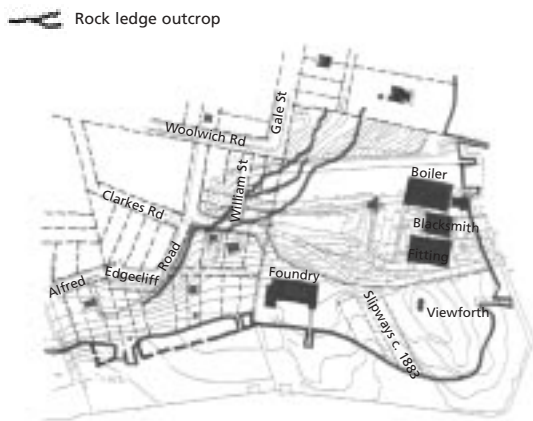
Woolwich Dock and Parklands



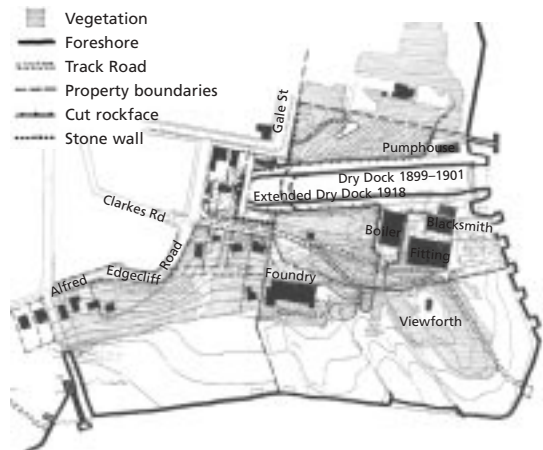
Geology, land form, water form, vegetation



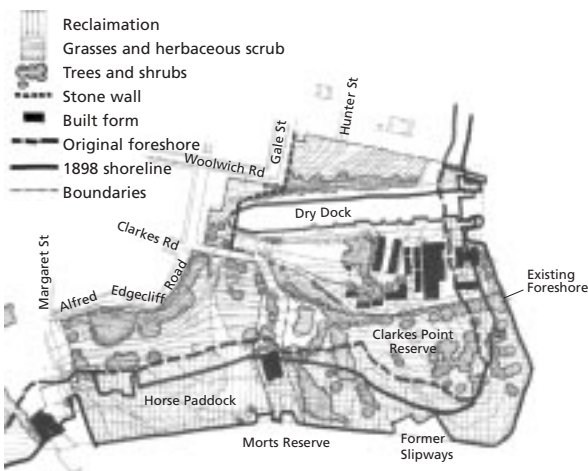
Clarke family occupation 1835–1890s



Residential subdivision and Atlas Engineering 1883–1898



Morts Dock 1898–1939



Army period (1963–97) landscape character



After the Depression of the 1930s, work did not pick up until the Second World War. The original blacksmiths and machine shop were replaced in the early 1940s by the current sawtoothed roof building. Other buildings on the site date from around this period.

The company ceased operations in 1958 and then went into voluntary liquidation.

Army 1963 – 1997

The site lay idle until the Army purchased it in 1963 for its water based transport operations. During this period the three oldest buildings on the site were demolished, the relocated Atlas boiler shop, the pump house and an old galvanised iron shed. The Army erected a number of metal prefabricated buildings, added timber fender piers and timber wharves to the dock itself and constructed a travelling boat crane beside the dock.

In 1997–8 the 35 Water Transport Division was relocated to Townsville.

Site Conditions Summary

Flora and Fauna

Although much altered, the Woolwich Dock and Parklands site retains important natural features such as knolls and small cliff lines of the original topography.

The original vegetation would have been forest on the lower alluvial areas and ridge-top woodland on the rocky slopes, similar to the present vegetation in the neighbouring Kellys Bush. The vegetation in the Horse Paddock is now mostly exotic grassland, with high to moderate weed infestation and little or none of the indigenous vegetation remaining. The Dock Area has some remnant coastal shrubland along the cliff top south of the dock. Ferns and fern allies including three uncommon species – Fork Fern (*Tmesipteris truncata*), Scrambling Clubmoss (*Lycopodium cernuum*) and Skeleton Fork Fern (*Psilotum nudum*) occur in the exposed sandstone cliff. These fern are important ecologically and require sensitive management. There are landscaped grasslands with planted native and exotic trees within the Goat Paddock. The highly disturbed and modified nature of the bushland within the site renders traditional vegetation classifications irrelevant. The original open forest and woodland vegetation has been largely cleared.

Some native species have been planted in Clarkes Point Reserve and cultural plantings of exotic species exist from most periods of occupation. Some recolonising, mostly by Port Jackson Figs has occurred.

Two animal species that are listed as vulnerable in Schedule 2 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995 have been identified as visitors to the site – the Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) and the Common Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*). The Grey-headed Flying-fox uses the Port Jackson and Moreton Bay fig trees located on the Horse Paddock for foraging.

Baseline flora and fauna studies of the site have been prepared.

Buildings and Services

All of the buildings on the Woolwich site are located in the dock area. There are 16 buildings (excluding the concrete finger wharves and the historic dry dock). The buildings range in size and function with the largest being the sawtooth roofed, industrial workshop that is clad with corrugated asbestos cement sheeting and is approximately five

storeys high. There is an asbestos management issue to be addressed with this building.

There are a number of brick ancillary buildings at Woolwich that are in serviceable condition requiring some basic maintenance. There are also the former military mess buildings requiring major maintenance if they are to be retained, and a number of Armco storage sheds on the site.

Mains sewer and water service the site, with Energy Australia providing the electricity. Five of the buildings have water supply and sewerage systems connected. The existing stormwater system is in a serviceable condition and fire systems will require an upgrading. Power is available to most buildings but switchboards will require upgrading and rewiring. All of the services at Woolwich Dock and Parklands will require some level of cleaning, repairs or upgrade to bring them up to existing standards. A more detailed summary of the site conditions is located at Section 12.

Contamination

The site's history of industrial engineering, dockyard and defence use has resulted in some elevated levels of contaminants in localised areas. Apart from the Horse Paddock, no levels have been identified that would require significant remediation or prohibit use of the site as parkland or open space.

A large proportion of the Horse Paddock (approximately 40%) has been reclaimed from the river by the placement of fill. The contaminant levels in the Horse Paddock are considered to be safe for immediate parkland use as long as a stable grass cover is maintained over contaminated areas. The sea wall along the shore of the Horse Paddock is deteriorating, causing erosion of the fill behind it during high tides. The Trust intends to repair the sea wall for safety reasons and to limit the migration of contaminated fill into the harbour.

The majority of the dockyard area has been cut out of a sandstone ledge, including the dock itself; therefore this area generally consists of sandy fill over shallow sandstone. The inclusion of small volumes of ash and other process wastes in fill in the dockyard are responsible for elevated and localized concentrations of heavy metals, PAHs and trace asbestos in the dockyard. Previous studies have indicated that levels of these contaminants meet requirements for parkland/public open space.

The dock area includes structures that may have been point sources for contamination including diesel and waste oil tanks, workshops, a grit blasting facility and chemical storage areas. It is possible that minor soil contamination is associated with these structures. Other hazardous materials associated with buildings in the dockyard area include asbestos, synthetic mineral fibre, PCBs in light fittings and lead-based paints. These are generally in good condition and will require continued maintenance.

A more detailed summary of Contamination Conditions is in Section 12.

Planning Context

Refer to Figure 4.3 Planning Context

The Trust land is located in the Municipality of Hunters Hill. It is on a peninsula, surrounded by a range of existing uses that need to be considered in the integrated planning of the area.

Woolwich is accessed by a single ridge road and as with other Trust sites, traffic management is an important issue. The ridge road is a bus route terminating at the Valentia Street Ferry Wharf. Vehicular access to the Trust site is via Franki Avenue and Clarke Road. Clarke Road also provides entry to an unformed road sloping down to the Horse Paddock and a 62-space car park serving Clarkes Point Reserve and the Hunters Hill Sailing Club. Margaret Street terminates in a boat ramp beside the Woolwich Marina.

Traffic analyses carried out in 1997 for the Department of Defence showed capacity problems with morning peak traffic at the Ryde Road/Burns Bay Road eastern ramps. Other intersections along the ridge road provided good levels of service. The environmental capacity of Woolwich Road as a collector road (500 vehicles/hour) is exceeded at some point west of Gladstone Avenue (probably near Wybalena Road).

Pedestrian access will be provided by a walking track via the Goat Paddock, across the dock on a temporary bridge then into Clarkes Point Reserve and across the Horse Paddock. Stage 1 of this track was opened in November 2002.

The plan recognises the potential for water-based access and the need for such links to respond to the ferry and bus network, small-scale local tours, boat operators and the public.

The main points where water and land interchanges are likely to occur will be adjacent to the existing dock and jetty areas, Clarke's Point Reserve carpark and the marina and boat ramp in Margaret Street.

State legislation and planning documents prepared by Hunters Hill Municipal Council have specific implications for the Trust in formalising its plan.

State plans highlight the maritime potential of Woolwich Dock and Parklands and the potential for open space and water access. This potential needs to be explored with the adjoining State-owned land at Clarkes Point Reserve and Kellys Bush.

The Trust site shares borders with Clarkes Point Reserve, which was an integral part of the Morts Dock site and is under the care and control of Hunters Hill Council. The Trust and Council will collaborate to produce the best outcomes for public access and integration of these sites as well as the Woolwich Lookout area.

More detailed information on these matters can be found in Section 12 – Background Material.

Consultation Outcomes Summary

Consultation with the community has revealed that the things that the community most values about Woolwich Dock and the Parklands include their:

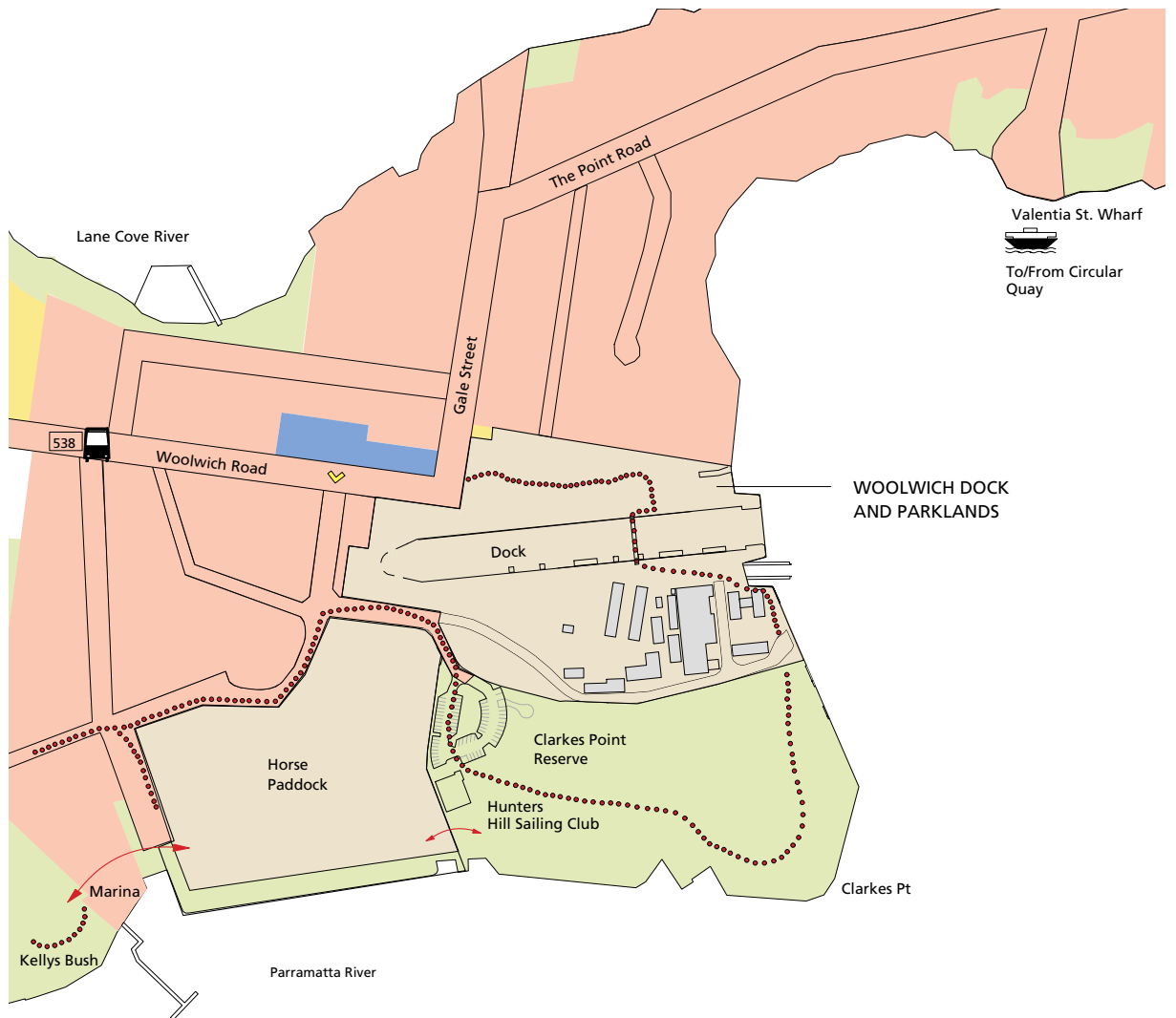
- Maritime and defence history
- Open space and links to Clarkes Point and Kellys Bush

The community also identified the need for a holistic approach to the planning of the publicly owned lands (at the meeting of the rivers) as very important.

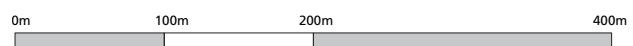
Issues for consideration include identification and remediation of contamination, provision of water access to the site, opening up the

Fig. 4.3 Local Planning Context

Woolwich Dock and Parklands



- Residential
- Open Space
- Business
- Special Uses
- Pedestrian Access
- Vehicle Access
- Major roads
- Proposed pedestrian link



parklands to public access and revegetating and linking the fragmented parks. Traffic and parking were also identified as requiring consideration.

Potential future uses identified included revitalising the dock for maritime use and a marine-oriented 'village' – provided land wasn't alienated from public use. There was strong opposition to the sale of land for private housing and this reflected the history of the local community fighting to protect Woolwich from sale for residential development in the past.

Qualities

Woolwich Dock is cut into the end of the peninsula that separates the Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers. The open space at the end of the peninsula is a legacy of former industrial uses that relied on access to the waterfront and occupied large areas of land. Now surrounded by gracious houses and approached from the mainland through tree lined streets, the remnants of industry now appear out of place. In the past industry would have been the predominant character of the area and although the vestiges are not conspicuous, they relate to the original reason for the development of the peninsula as one of a series of water-based industrial sites up the Parramatta River.

The dock is largely concealed from view by being cut straight into the bedrock, distinguishing it from the other dry docks in Sydney. The fill was used to create reclaimed land for ship building activities. The buildings are set well into the hill and the traces of shipbuilding in Clarke's Point Reserve are subtle. This concealment adds to the surprise of the dock from both the land and water.

The concentration of activity on the waterfront has meant that original outcrops of rock ledges and the sandstone knoll on the upper part of the sites have been left. The irregularity of these natural features contrast with the functional geometry of the constructed water's edge and the relatively flat aprons of the Horse Paddock.

The seawalls, jetties for the travelling crane, banded work area, stubs of original timber wharfs, the sawtooth roofed building and steps cut into the dock itself all suggest maritime activity of various sorts.

The overall quality of the site is a hidden, compact maritime precinct with a diversity of water edge conditions and built forms set into the original rugged sandstone topography.

Horse Paddock

- Large informal open area by the waterfront
- Sloping area behind the flat apron overlooks the river – the view gradually broadens moving down the slope
- Strongly defined at either side by sailing club and marina

Goat Paddock

- Informal but high quality passive recreation area
- Long views down the harbour are surprising after blockage by sandstone fence
- Strongly directional – a relatively narrow passage straight out to the harbour – the long view to Point Piper

Dock

- Sheltered from the strongest southerlies
- Scale of buildings: the landform is still dominant and the buildings are hidden. Although the sawtooth roofed building is large, the views are around it

- Nestled and close knit building group
- Mixed building scales – suggesting a mix of uses
- The aesthetic of the place can be contemporary and will emerge from judicious juxtaposition of new and old – eg. Stainless steel and sandstone; the old derricks directly fixed to the rock along the dock provide a clue
- Military use was extravagant. The actual activity was very specific and not as active as a private place would need to be in order to be economically viable
- The quality of the waterfront space in front of the buildings derives from its military use. Alongside the functional buildings, military personnel invariably create personalised places which also distinguishes it from private enterprise

Natural Values

Refer to Figures 4.4 Heritage Values and 4.5 Natural and Cultural Values

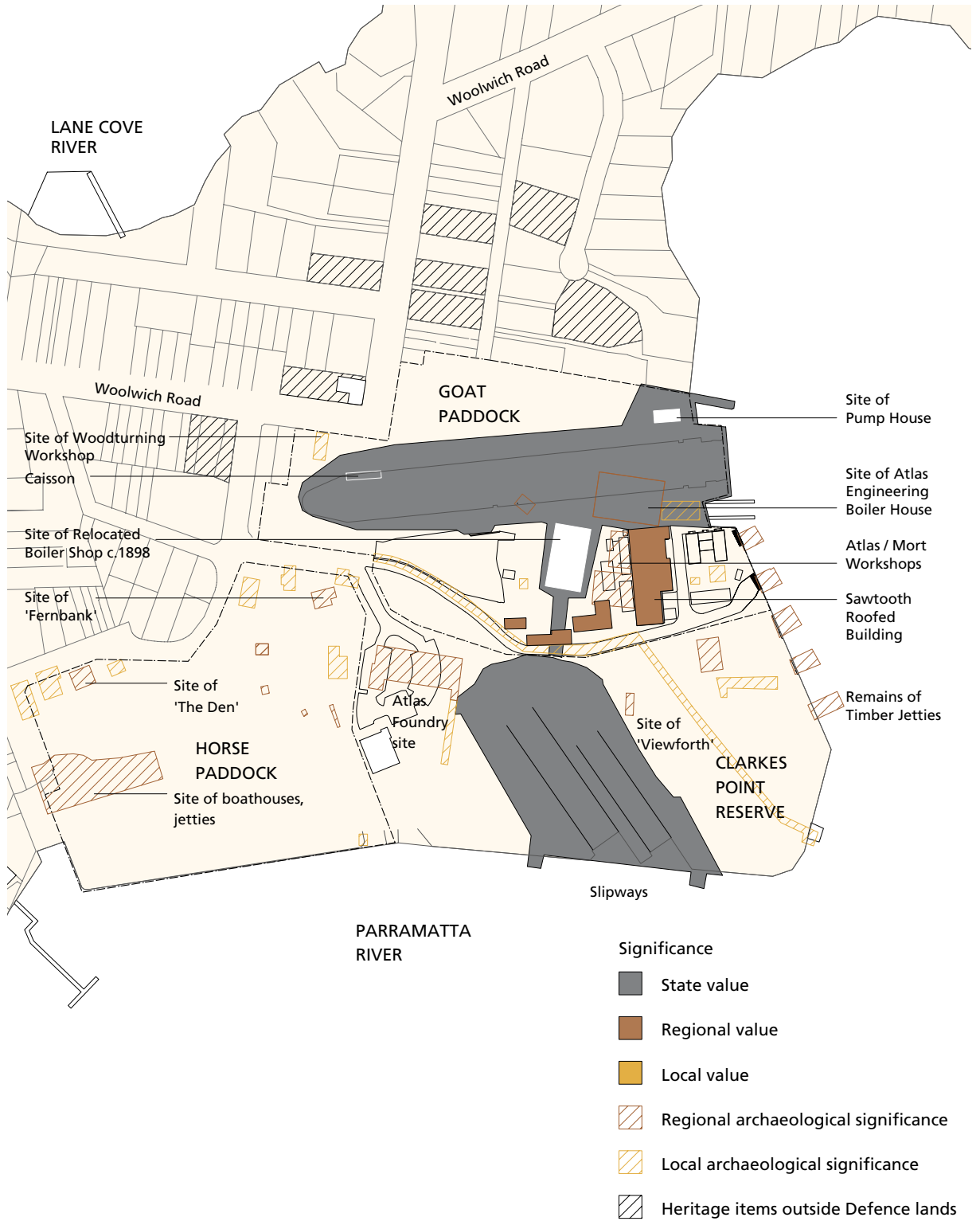
- A special space in harbour/river sequence; Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers, Iron Cove, Cockatoo, Spectacle and Snapper Islands
- Spur off main Hunters Hill/Woolwich ridge affording excellent harbour views to and from the peninsula
- The much modified cliff/knoll topography still retains pockets of remnant vegetation
- The original cliff line is still visible and the dramatic dock cutting has revealed the sandstone strata

Cultural Values

- The site is integral with Clarkes Point Reserve for understanding the cultural evolution of this part of Woolwich
 - The form and scale of the sawtooth roofed building (building.11) provides a strong visual reminder of the increasingly rare maritime industrial activity on this part of the Parramatta River
 - Archaeological remains and the subdivision pattern of the Clarke family's occupation of the site are still evident and could be interpreted to explain the site's European pre-industrial heritage
 - The influence of the dockyard enterprise on the development of the surrounding neighbourhood with small lot subdivision for workers' housing and the hotel and shops
 - Visual and maritime industrial links with Cockatoo Island
 - Theme of excavation/land reclamation as the dock spoil has modified the topography in creating the apron; sandstone, excavation/fill, seawalls, slipways, dock
 - The dock, caisson, slipways, reclaimed land and sea walls are reminders of Morts Dock and Engineering Company, the largest shipbuilding and repair enterprise in Australia from the late 19th to the mid 20th century and are important statements of the maritime heritage of this area
 - The Dock and slipways are an excellent example of the theme of peninsula/deepwater/industry location
 - Community involvement in fighting to protect the site's natural, cultural and aesthetic qualities and recreational potential from high rise development, expansion of defence activities and sale of the land, and also the fight to save nearby Kellys Bush
 - The Horse Paddock name most probably relates to the pasturing of work horses there by the firm of W. Solomon and Sons, a leading Hunters Hill and Sydney contractor, who finished the construction of the dock and complete the later extensions
- Figure 4.4 *Heritage Values* shows the ranking of buildings resulting from the Conservation Plan for Woolwich Dry Dock and the Horse Paddock carried out by Edward Higginbotham & Associates and others for the Department of Defence dated March 2000 and surrounding items from the Council LEP

Fig. 4.4 *Heritage Values*

Woolwich Dock and Parklands



Conservation Plan, Edward Higginbotham & Associates, 2000 and Hunters Hill Council's LEP



Fig. 4.5 *Natural and Cultural Values*

Woolwich Dock and Parklands



Above
View of the end of the dock

Left
View from dock towards dockside buildings

View eastwards down the dock

OUTCOMES

Vision and Benefits

Refer to Figures 4.6 Outcomes and 4.7 Concept Sketch

The plan for Woolwich proposes the consolidation of parklands to create a unified place at the meeting of the rivers with a maritime hub as its centrepiece.

The dock area and associated maritime facilities could be adaptively reused and a new water arrival and gathering place created. This could include studios, maritime repairs and the storage of boats including heritage vessels, café or restaurant facilities and other places of interest.

The dock could also be the starting point for tours of Hunters Hill and the harbour that would enable people to experience the rich contrasts of maritime industry, the bushland and heritage of the area.

The dock, adjacent parklands and neighbourhood could be integrated through:

- A network of circuit pathways – with the dock as the centrepiece
- The provision of pedestrian access across the dock
- The modification of the existing carparks, access ways, paths and landscaping to unify the sites
- The re-opening the cutting that originally ran from the dock to the slipway in Clarkes Point Reserve
- The extension of the bushland character of Kellys Bush along the slopes and the remnant knoll above the southern edge of the dock
- The landscape treatment of the horse paddock to relate to the northern apron on Cockatoo Island

It will be important to retain, enhance and re-instate views such as the:

- Dock, the water and the city from the hill top and Goat Paddock
- Water and Cockatoo Island from the approach roads
- Woolwich Pier Hotel from parts of the shore and the water

The Dock

The remarkable cutting of the dock will be revealed, explained and become operational again as the centre of a maritime hub.

This will be a new water arrival and gathering place where maritime functions including boat building and maritime services and repair are complimented by a diversity of activities and attractions including café and other refreshment outlets.

The cutting (now filled in and with the road constructed over it) that originally connected the slipways in Clarkes Point Reserve and the dock could be reinstated.

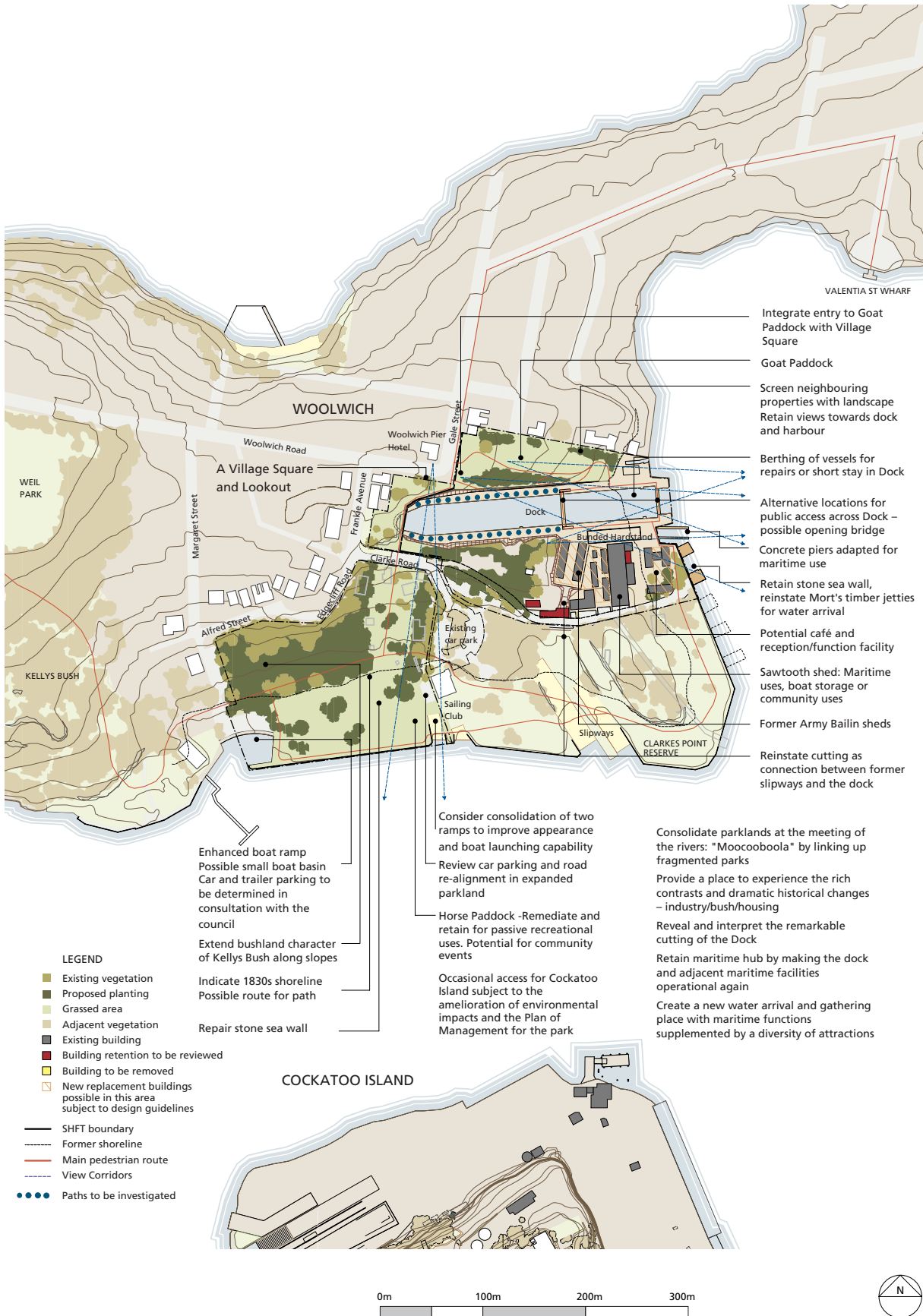
The dock has the capacity for alongside berthing for vessels being repaired, short stay visiting vessels and possibly permanent berths for small boats and/or heritage vessels.

The concrete piers could be re-used as part of the working maritime hub. The lifting crane could be re-instated or the piers could be used to accommodate an adjustable boat ramp/slipway or water arrival/berthing.

The stone sea wall would be retained, Mort's timber jetties reinstated and additional works carried out for small boat and possibly ferry moorings.

Fig. 4.6 Outcomes

Woolwich Dock and Parklands



The waterfront lawn area has the potential for a café or reception/function facility.

The sawtooth roofed building is suitable for maritime uses, boat storage, studios or to be adapted for community uses.

The dock could also be used as an occasional base for the transfer of supplies to Cockatoo Island.

Woolwich Lookout

The plan proposes the creation of a 'Village Green' at the lookout. This would be the culmination of the parkland extending down the hillside, once more linking the ridge with the waterfront.

Goat Paddock

It is proposed the Goat Paddock is developed as a park that will provide magnificent views of the harbour and special events. It will also give access to the dock with a walk that can be taken along the dock cutting. Neighbouring properties to be screened from the path, while retaining views toward the dock and harbour.

Horse Paddock

It is proposed that the Horse Paddock is remediated and developed as a place for passive recreation and community events.

It is proposed that the patterns of past uses, including changes in the shoreline, subdivision patterns and the sites of significant buildings are interpreted in a simple and subtle manner that allows the feeling of informal parkland to predominate. For example, the former shoreline could be interpreted through a new pathway and revegetation of the hillside.

There is potential to improve the area around the sailing club by landscaping and reconfiguring the existing carpark and boat ramps. To facilitate this the benefits of combining the boat ramp in the Horse Paddock with the one in front of the sailing club will be investigated.

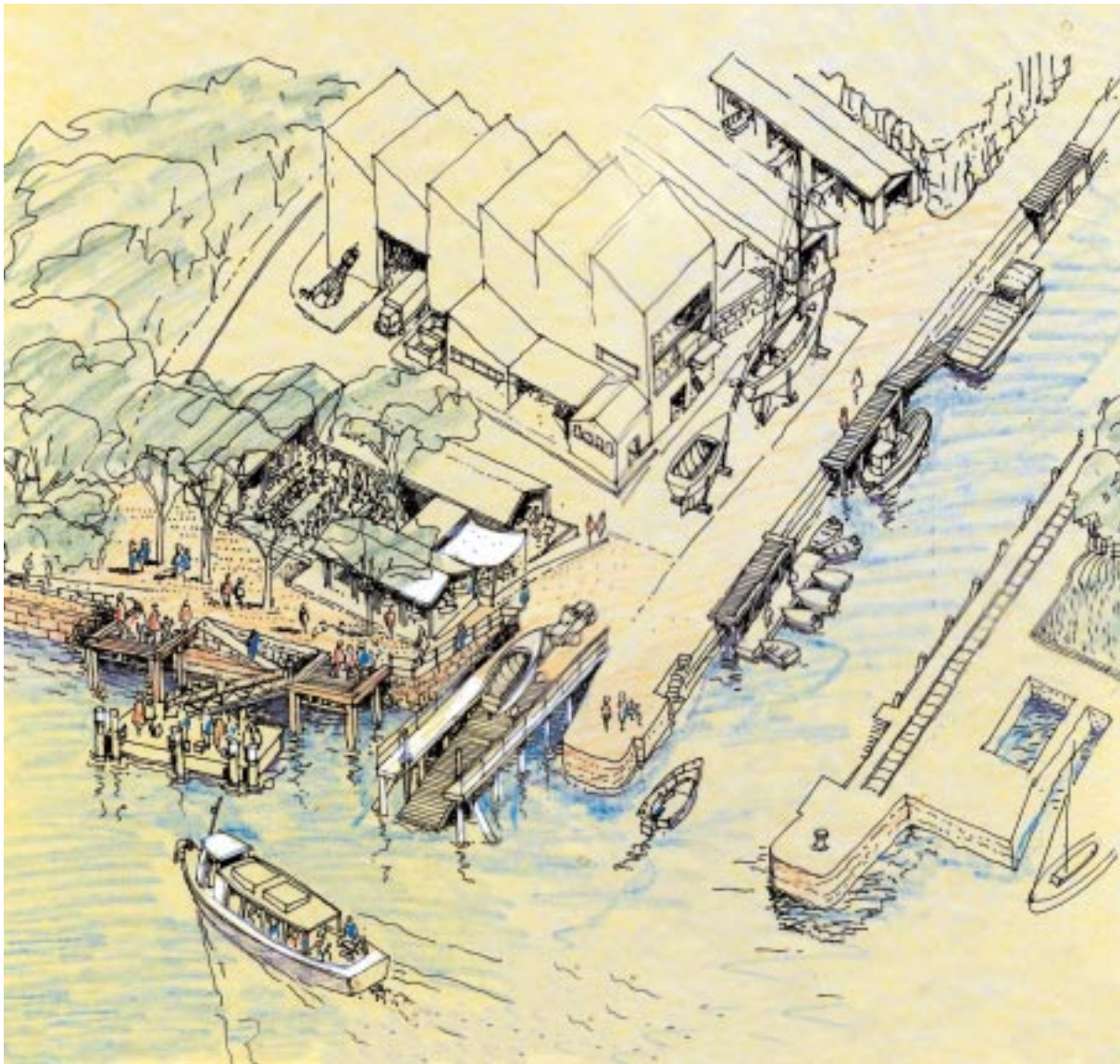
Existing car parking and road alignments within the parklands require investigation to cater for the expanded park and boat ramp facilities. The location and appearance of the car parking is to be subservient to the landscape and will be resolved in consultation with the council.

The existing ramp located in the Horse Paddock, adjacent to the Sailing Club, could be used as an occasional access point for vehicles being barged to Cockatoo Island. This would be subject to a detailed management plan that recognises the primacy of the site as a public place and protects the environmental values and amenity of the park and local area.

A small boat basin could be created at the edge of the Horse Paddock, adjacent to Woolwich Marina. This will be investigated with NSW WaterWays Authority and the council.

Fig. 4.7 *Concept Sketch*

Woolwich Dock and Parklands



Sketch of the mouth of the dock showing conversion of sheds to cafe/reception facility at the junction of the dock and parkland. The dock is sufficiently large to provide some day visit berths as well as berths for boats being worked on. The rebuilt timber jetties could provide the basis for a ferry or charter boat embarkation.

**Possible Uses –
summary of principles**

Future uses at Woolwich must contribute to the:

- Working maritime hub: the dock, sheds and associated hardstand e.g. boat building, repair and courses, commercial business, storage of historic vessels and associated workshops and boat storage
- Water gateway: potential for ferries, charter vessels, day visit private boats
- Diversity of attractions and activities: e.g. café, restaurant, functions, cultural facilities, related office studios
- Protection of the local amenity through environmental controls for matters such as hours of operation, noise, etc
- Public access network
- The significance of the dock, rock cuttings and benchings

**Principles for Building Retention,
Removal and New Buildings**

The existing configuration of paired piers, bunded hardstand, sawtooth roofed workshop and other buildings is not ideal for maritime operations.

The priority is to:

- Retain the significance of the dock, cuttings and benchings
- Retain the site's character – its '*grain*'
- Create a viable maritime hub and public gathering place

New buildings will only be permitted on the site if they:

- Are necessary for the viability of a desirable activity such as the maritime hub
- Interpret or reinstate significant elements of the site's history
- Do not obstruct significant views and vistas
- Are located and have a footprint, scale, form and finishes that are sympathetic with the setting

The alteration or demolition and replacement of the Army sheds could occur subject to any alterations or new building:

- Remaining below the adjacent rock face
- Not interfering with the reinstatement of the link via the cutting between the slipways in Clarkes Point Reserve and the dock
- Being consistent with the existing building line along the edge of the dock apron

Repairs and Remediation

Services and buildings in the dock area all require basic maintenance and upgrading. The sawtooth roofed building requires asbestos management while the sea wall is in need of repair for both safety reasons and to limit the migration of contaminated fill into the harbour.

A remediation strategy and an environmental management plan will be prepared for the site to ensure the continued management of hazardous materials.