



Mosman Parks & Bushland Association

National Parks and Wildlife Service
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DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association was formed in 1964 to protest against bushland being destroyed for the construction of a road at Bradleys Head. The Association continues to work for the preservation of public land, parks, and bushland in Mosman.

Middle Head/ Gubbeh Gubbeh is a headland of spectacular beauty and heritage significance. The landscape, natural features and bushland, the Aboriginal heritage and the particularly rich defence heritage make it a place of national importance.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE APPROVED

We are delighted therefore by the prospect of an Environmental Education Centre that would introduce children and older students to the values of this headland.

HOWEVER, THE ASSOCIATION OPPOSES THE DRAFT AMENDMENT.

We understand that the intention of the Amendment is to allow for the construction of a covered outdoor learning area, storage room and public toilets for the purposes of education.

These are to complement the adaptation of the Soldiers' Institute for the purpose of the Environmental Education Centre.

Whereas the Sydney Harbour National Parks (SHNP) POM allows buildings in certain areas of the park, Middle Head is excluded. If amended, the Plan of Management would include Middle Head in the list of places where new buildings are permitted. It would also specify what buildings may be constructed.

OUR CONCERNS:

1. This may be the thin edge of the wedge and that in future further new buildings may be permitted through a further amendment to the Plan of Management. This Amendment would set a precedent.

2. This particular precinct of Middle Head/ Gubbuh Gubbuh has a collection of buildings of similar scale, age, and vernacular style whose significance demonstrates the history of military development around the turn of the last century. We note in particular statements by Paul Davies in the Conservation Management Plan - Sydney Harbour National Park, Middle Head Historic Buildings, "The interrelationships between the buildings should not be obstructed by new structures. New structures would intrude on these relationships and break down the site's interpretive value."
3. The public is being asked to approve the Amendment which would allow the construction of new buildings without having any indication of their size (height and footprint) or of the material which would be used in their construction. An assessment of how a new building or new cluster of buildings would affect the heritage is impossible.

A BETTER OUTCOME

We have revisited our response in 2016 to the SHNP draft Middle Head & Georges Head Masterplan and note the following statements: "We are against increasing the built environment in the park" and "A new building should only be contemplated if it is essential to the purposes of the park and only where there is no alternative". Of the intention to retain the function of the Soldiers' Institute at that time as a base for community and volunteer activity we said "the Soldiers' Institute provides a base for community and volunteer activity which creates a sense of ownership, belonging, and pride in the park. We are pleased that its current function is to be retained."

Mosman Parks and Bushland would be very pleased to see the Soldiers' Institute adapted for use as an Environmental Education Centre if approval from Heritage NSW were obtained, but **without** an additional structure. A new structure will intrude upon the heritage significance of the precinct and its visual amenity. We would, of course, be sympathetic to the provision of toilet facilities provided their design and location is compatible with the design of the Soldiers' Institute.

The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management.

Yours sincerely



Kate Eccles OAM

President

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