



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NORTH HEAD

North Head is significant for Aboriginal people because it is unique. No other landscape with the same natural geography, flora and fauna and other resources exists elsewhere. North Head held a special place in the Aboriginal "Saltwater People's" culture as a burial island and a place of ritual and ceremony. Several historical events that occurred at North Head defined the shape of the non-indigenous colony and the relationship between both cultures. Nowhere else in Australia did an Aboriginal person spear a colonial Governor, as occurred at Manly. The initial impressions by the First Fleeters of the "manly" Aboriginal people, within their environment at North Head, can never be reproduced.

North Head is important as the northern expression of the seaward entrance to Sydney Harbour (Port Jackson) and played a major role in the cultural and military life of the colony of New South Wales, following the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. The 'Heads', have signified arrival and departure at Port Jackson since 1788 and are recognised as important, iconic, national landmarks.

North Head is an important part of the early trigonometric surveys of Sydney and its harbour as well as the location of early navigational aids.

North Head is important for its association with the establishment of quarantine in the colony of NSW and with Australia's development as an island-nation, susceptible to ship-borne disease. North Head has a rich and diverse character which stems from the layering and aggregation of uses that overlay the relict and evolving cultural landscape of the Quarantine Station. The assemblage includes cemeteries, carvings and engravings which are a record of the station's history and the diverse cultural and social backgrounds of quarantined passengers, including class and ethnicity. Archaeological sites within the Quarantine Station, and in other areas of North Head, have the potential to add to our understanding of the development and operation of nineteenth century quarantine practices and procedures from the 1830s -1870s, and in particular from the 1830s-1850s, a formative period for quarantine practices in the Australian colonies.

The North Head Quarantine Station, excluding the Seamen's Hospital, comprises the oldest and most intact example of quarantine facilities in Australia. The North Head Quarantine Station has the longest history (1828-1977) of quarantine use in Australia and provides the best evidence in Australia of the impact of changing social attitudes and scientific demands on quarantine from the 1830s-1980s, as well as the human story of quarantine.

North Head is significant as a place of recreation documented by the residents' desire to set aside, and improve, places of natural beauty as reserves for nature and for enjoying nature. The North Fort site is significant because it is associated with the activities of Sir Robert Archdale Parkhill in securing a large section of the Quarantine Reserve for recreational purposes and his later role as the Commonwealth Minister for Defence (1934-1937).



North Head is significant as a prominent landform which is a tied island of tilted sandstone, topped by deep windblown sand dunes and which has a hydrology system resulting in hanging swamps and unique sand dune, coastal heath and hanging swamp vegetation including the large area of endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

North Head is significant as an important and highly intact remnant of one of the series of coastal fortifications which were constructed immediately prior to and during World War II to protect the vital infrastructure of the major ports and natural harbours of the east coast of New South Wales stretching from Port Stephens in the north to Jervis Bay in the south.

#### **Statement of Significance for the North Fort study site**

The Fort on North Head is the most intact of the coastal defence batteries in NSW. The North Fort site is significant as an important element in the former military reserve and defence lands at North Head. The study site retains the perimeter walling, gun battery, most of the functional support buildings and remnants of the communications network and drainage system directly associated with the pre-World War II North Head Fort which was the last stage of development of the artillery-based coastal-defence of Sydney Harbour. Together with the permanent Barracks (now known as the former School of Artillery) the study site constituted North Head Fort.

The North Fort site is significant in the post-World War II period as a training ground for field and anti-aircraft artillery. The North Fort site also demonstrates the long association of the site with the training of defence personnel and the long-time use of the site for military purposes which has had the effect of preventing major urban development of the headland and its preservation as part of the landscaped nature of the major headlands of Sydney Harbour.

The North Fort site also contains significant remnants of the scenic drive which was constructed as a recreational drive through the Parkhill Reserve from Manly to North Head and which was also dedicated as a memorial drive to commemorate the fallen of World War I in 1933. The work to construct the road and the stone wall separating the Parkhill Reserve from the Quarantine Station was one of the largest unemployment relief schemes by a single council in the Great Depression.



**DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The National Heritage List citation of North Head should be expanded to include the significance of North Head to the Aboriginal people of Sydney, the significance of Parkhill Reserve of the interwar period, the Avenue of Honour and the military fortification of the headland as part of the coastal defence network protecting Sydney.
2. Focus the interpretation of the the North Fort site on the surviving physical fabric to demonstrate the use of the site as a recreational reserve, a war memorial avenue and as an integral part of the coastal defence of Sydney from ship-borne attack.
3. Integrate the interpretation of the North Fort site with the adjacent former School of Artillery site which was an integral part of the pre-World War II and World War II Fort on North Head.
4. Interpret the Parkhill Reserve tracks to lookouts and the World War II tracks of the Fort on North Head which will both control visitors' paths and lead them to points of cultural significance and scenic beauty. This includes the now lost portions of the Avenue of Honour south of the Battery.
5. Clear vegetation away from the Battery Observation Post and Command Post/Close Defence Battery Observation Post to allow the wartime clear view up and down the coast to be reinstated.
6. Halt the deterioration of the Battery Observation Post, the Command Post/Close Defence Battery Observation Post and the two searchlight Engine Rooms.

Refer to Chapter 7 of this report for detailed policies and recommendations.



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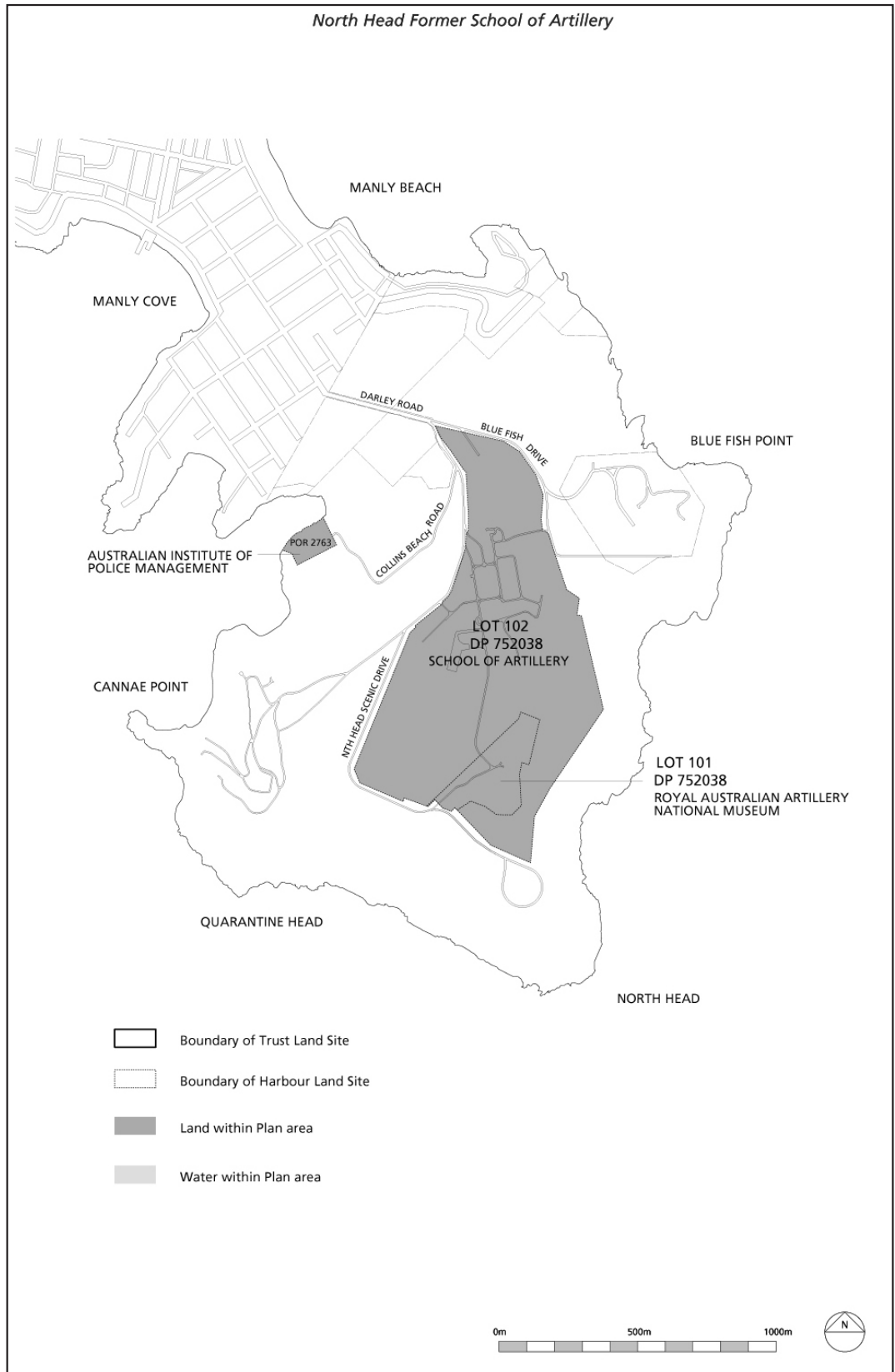


Figure 1.1

SHFT lands at North Head, including the portion occupied by the National Artillery Museum (formerly the Royal Australian Artillery Museum) (Courtesy SHFT)