PART 7: MANAGE SIGNIFICANCE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of Management of Significance for the School of Artillery has been examined in detail in *Volume 1: The Core Areas* and will be referred to in this study only to the extent necessary to understand issues which should be taken into account in relation to the Outer areas.

Unlike the Core Buildings, there is no cohesive character or common theme that is recognisable across the entire site extending to the outer areas. The site consists of many separated elements which vary in terms of significance, condition of fabric and accessibility. The individual structures and groups of structures in the outer areas of the School of Artillery site generally fall into the following categories, each of which requires widely differing approaches to the formulation of conservation policy:

- Highly significant group or individual item
- Groups of structures with some heritage values but due to configuration or condition are only suitable for adaptive reuse
- Utilitarian structures, useful support facilities, but without heritage values
- Intrusive or derelict elements which detract from other more significant elements of the site and obscure the interpretation of the site

As for the Core Buildings, the issues which must be addressed in formulating an appropriate set of Conservation Policies include opportunities and constraints arising from (in broad terms):

1. The heritage significance of the place (The Statement of Significance)
2. Potential use of the site, the requirements of the site users, owners, the community, and available resources
3. The physical condition of the place
4. Requirements imposed by external factors, environmental conditions
5. Statutory constraints.
6. Encroachment of coastal scrub around, onto and within structures and elements.

7.2 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Individual elements of the site are significant for a variety of reasons which must be protected and managed in an appropriate manner.

To protect the unique character and visual quality of the setting, and to ensure that both the integrity and legibility of significant elements is not lost through inappropriate development, the following constraints should apply to any future intervention:

- Usage which may affect the significance of the site or individual elements within the site should be prohibited.

- Alterations or new development should be strictly controlled to ensure that there is no loss of significant fabric, in accordance with policies outlined in individual inventories.

- Management policies must ensure that the School of Artillery and its curtilage are protected from inappropriate development. In the outer areas of the site, the significance of the many component parts of the site are not immediately evident to the visitor, and concise informative interpretive systems should be included.

7.3 OWNERSHIP AND USE

The SHFT Sanctuary Proposal

The SHFT aims to initiate the implementation of the Sanctuary at the former School of Artillery site. It is proposed that buildings and facilities will be adaptively re-used in ways that will complement the proposed Sanctuary. The variety of buildings available in the outer areas offer a wide range of support facilities. Many structures which are not of high heritage significance are suitable for adaptive reuse, alteration or extension to suit the requirements of the new sanctuary.

Opportunities for Future Use

Many of the outer buildings are readily adaptable for upgrading of amenities, services and occupational health and safety standards, consistent with improving access or safety. Alterations arising from future use should be carried out strictly in accordance with the guidelines of this Conservation Management Plan. Refer to Part 9 Implementation Strategies.

Future Ownership

The entire School of Artillery site has always remained in public ownership and should remain in public ownership as this offers the most effective possibility for its ongoing management and protection in the public interest. Any change in ownership should be accompanied by mandatory conditions for adherence to the policies of this Plan.

7.4 PHYSICAL CONDITION

There are over 80 buildings on the School of Artillery site and more than 60 are located in the outer areas. They include structures of variable size, types of construction and condition. Buildings include a number of large steel clad sheds, garages, storage buildings constructed since the War and more resilient concrete bunkers associated with coastal defence during the War.

Conservation and maintenance will require extensive repairs in many cases, with advanced steel corrosion and concrete spalling among the challenging problems to be addressed. There are also problems with water ingress through failures in roofing, flashings and drainage.

The physical environment of the outer areas places constraints on existing structures and redevelopment proposals, which are not as pronounced as for the core buildings. The comparatively large areas of natural bushland encroaching upon formerly open spaces obscures the extent of the original buildings, structures and paved areas. The condition of the outer structures has progressively deteriorated with a complete absence of

maintenance since the site was vacated in 1998. Many of the structures are derelict and others will prove uneconomic to resurrect in their present form. Nevertheless there are many opportunities for adaptive reuse and infill development that is not constrained by the imperative to retain and conserve architectural integrity that applies to the core group of buildings and its associated cultural landscape.

Refer **Vol 2A Inventories** for individual items**.**

7.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

(This section was included in Volume I, but is reproduced and updated in relation to the outer areas, where environmental issues are likely to be more critical and less clearly defined)

Site Contamination & Hazardous Building Materials Constraints

The North Head School of Artillery has a long history of military use dating back to the 1920s. As such, the site may reasonably be expected to have a degree of contamination arising from military activities or facilities, or related uses. Following its vacation of the School of Artillery, the Department of Defence carried out a program of contamination assessment, remediation and validation of the site to address potential contamination. Contaminant sources identified by these site assessments include those associated with building hazardous materials such as lead paint and asbestos, storage of petroleum fuels and chemicals, fuel spillage, filling and dumping, storm-water sediments, radioactive materials and the storage and use of military materials.

Hazardous Building Materials

Significant quantities of hazardous materials remain as part of the site building fabric. However, no information is available regarding the nature of these materials, location, quantity, condition or requirement for remediation. To the Trust's knowledge, no remediation of these materials has been carried out. Asbestos building materials are evident in a number of buildings across the site, including asbestos cement sheeting in deteriorating condition on a number of buildings. Building rubble has also been identified in a number of bushland areas where previous structures have been removed. Lead based painted surfaces were identified throughout the site structures. However, no information was presented regarding location, condition or requirement for remediation. To the Trust's knowledge, no lead paint abatement work has been carried out, apart from that carried out by the Trust for refurbishment of buildings to date.

Radioactive Materials

Two buildings in the outer outer areas were identified where radioactive sources were known or thought to have been stored. These buildings were the ARMCO facility (building B34) and building B213 [outside the CMP area]. A radioactivity survey was undertaken which did not identify any radioactive residues or sources in these buildings.

Underground Storage Tanks

At least four underground storage tanks (USTs) were located on the site. A petroleum UST was located to the east of building 1 (barracks), one large diesel UST was located east of the oil store (building B48), and two small diesel USTs were located in front of the workshops (building B20). Although it is unknown when this occurred, the two small USTs at the workshops are thought to have been removed when the large UST at building B48 was installed. The petroleum and diesel USTs were decommissioned, removed and

remediated by the Department of Defence in 2001. The assessment identified that the petroleum UST at building 1 had leaked due to the presence of petroleum hydrocarbons in the groundwater immediately down-gradient of the tanks. When this tank was removed, gross petroleum contamination was encountered in sandy soils beneath the tank and in the vicinity of the main mess building. It was reported that most of this contamination had been removed, but due to structural constraints some contamination was left beneath the building. Petroleum hydrocarbon exceeding relevant criteria has been identified in groundwater down-gradient of the tank at various stages following remediation.

It has been recommended that groundwater monitoring be carried out at wells down-gradient of the building 1 UST at six monthly intervals to confirm that contaminant levels decline to below the relevant criteria.

It was reported that no residual contamination remained in soils following removal of the diesel UST, and that no hydrocarbon contamination was found in down-gradient groundwater.

Military Materials

Various artillery weapons, both full calibre and sub-calibre, have been fired at North Head since the 1920s, with all full calibre firings being conducted seawards. Therefore, the Department of Defence lists the site on its unexploded ordnance (UXO) register, however it assesses it as having no significant residual UXO contamination.

An investigation and survey of residual military materials was carried out as part of the assessment. This indicated that there was a minimal risk to human health or the environment associated with military materials that may have arisen from the above activity. However, it is considered that a ‘reasonable quantity’ of ordnance waste is likely to remain on the site.

It was recommended that no further investigation or clearance were warranted at the site while it remained inaccessible to the public. However, mainly due to the perceived public risk, it was recommended that should public access or tracks be created in certain areas of the site, then an additional search and clearance of materials should be conducted. These areas are the former ranges to the east of the stone wall not previously adequately investigated due to vegetation density.

Stormwater Sediments

Stormwater sediments in 24 pits located in the School of Artillery area were identified to contain either heavy metal or asbestos contamination. This sediment was removed offsite to licensed landfill as part of the remediation program carried out by the Department of Defence.

Dumped Waste Materials.

A number of potentially contaminated waste material stockpiles were identified in the assessment. These were reportedly removed to licensed landfill as part of the remediation program carried out by the Department of Defence.

Services

In December 2001, PPK Consulting undertook a detailed survey in order to establish the extent and condition of site services. The study looked at water and fire services, sewerage, electricity, telecommunications, gas and fuel services. *(Refer Volume 1)*

7.6 PLANNING & HERITAGE STATUTORY CONSTRAINTS

Redevelopment of the outer areas, the construction of new buildings or the adaptive reuse and alteration of existing structure will be under the same planning instruments as the core buildings which are outlined in detail in Volume 1.

Development compliance must satisfy legislation at all three levels of government:

- Commonwealth Legislation
- State Legislation
- Manly Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1988
- Building Code of Australia

7.5 ENCROACHMENT OF COASTAL SCRUB

Throughout the outer areas of the former SoA site there is an inexorable natural trend for the surrounding indigenous vegetation to recolonise areas that have been cleared. This is currently affecting important open spaces as well as structures and relics.

While these cultural elements are important as part of the former School of Artillery site and military history of North Head the indigenous vegetation is also recognised in its own right as having high scientific value. This presents a potential conflict in managing the competing claims to significance of both entities.

Such a situation is anticipated in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter where, in its Code on the Ethics of Co-existence in Conserving Significant Places (Assumption (ii) and Article 14), it is noted that it may not be possible, nor is it necessarily desirable, to resolve such conflicts in favour of either entity. Instead, strategies need to be established to manage the co-existence of both that achieves a reasonable balance.

The nature of the majority of the outer areas is such that the management of these areas as cleared space - as was the case for most of the time the School of Artillery occupied the place – is simply not practical. It is accepted, therefore, that most of the outer areas should be allowed to resort to dense vegetative cover.

In those relatively few places where there are buildings, structures, relics or spaces that have an important bearing on the military significance of the place it is appropriate to keep a designated zone around these elements clear of the coastal vegetation. Strategies for doing so will vary depending on each individual context. In some cases the use of a firebreak may be appropriate while in others the use of built elements on the ground (such as retaining walls, steps, revetments and pathways) may be required. In each of these cases there is an obligation to construct additional elements within the landscape as well as commit to ongoing works in order to maintain them.

A further implication arising from the review of significance is that all of these entities should be the subject of engaging interpretation in order to convey the importance of both the built elements and the locally indigenous attributes. The interpretation could also cover the interaction of both and explain the necessary conservation responses of the site management.